



Research article

## Teaching Testing Nexus: Teachers' Perceptions and Practices at the Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims at demonstrating the nexus between teaching and testing. It investigates how tertiary-level teachers perceive and practice the nexus between English language teaching and testing in Bangladesh. It analyzes the variables influencing this nexus putting an emphasis on how much teachers align English language teaching and testing approaches. In this mixed-methods research, ninety-one public university, private university, and government college English language teachers were surveyed and five expert teachers were interviewed by five structured questions. The findings demonstrate that though English language teachers at the tertiary level in Bangladesh consider the nexus between instruction and evaluation crucial, many challenges hinder its uniform application. Because of outdated curricula and insufficient funding, government college teachers practice the least degree of alignment. Trained ELT teachers, on the contrary, align assessment and instruction on a greater scale. The challenges that obstruct teachers' practice of teaching and testing nexus are large classes, inadequate professional development opportunities for teachers, and a traditional evaluation system that prioritizes measuring reading and writing skills. The study proposes curricula development focusing on a communicative approach in language instruction, more funding for evaluation, and professional development programs to enhance teachers' assessment literacy to resolve these problems. The nexus between teaching and testing can be promoted by adopting various testing techniques comprising formative assessment and peer assessment.

### Introduction

The teaching-testing nexus plays a substantial role in providing English language learners with a coherent, meaningful, and constructive learning experience. In today's interconnected world, universities and colleges have to fulfill the crucial responsibility of equipping learners with language competency for academic and professional success. Accordingly, learners' functional and strategic competencies are seen to be dependent on the integration of English language teaching and learning methodologies and strategies (Biggs, 2003; Bennett & Gitomer, 2009). Therefore, strategies for teaching-testing alignment should be contingent on the complex process of learners' language acquisition which can help bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and the use of the concepts in real life (Lemke et al., 2004; Chen et al., 2022). In Bangladesh, the misalignment between teaching and assessment procedures (Hamid & Honan, 2012)

obstructs the path of successful language acquisition. Moreover, an examination-driven learning system has emerged where students prioritize test-taking techniques and test preparation over effective language acquisition (Islam et al., 2021).

Developing learners' communicative competency was the main objective of the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, introduced in the 1990s. Nevertheless, many challenges hinder this endeavour in Bangladesh. One of the major hindrances in putting CLT into real-life practice is the continuance of the traditional evaluation method that prioritizes exam accomplishment and rote memorization over the factual use of language (Rahman et al., 2019). In Bangladesh's exam-based education system, students' language skills are tested mostly through written exams, impeding the growth of critical abilities that are needed for practical purposes, such as speaking, listening, and interactive communication.

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Large classes, insufficient institutional support, and pedagogical constraints have all barred the promising integration of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) (Rahman & Pandian, 2018). High-stakes tests, such as SSC, HSC, and university admission tests, have historically been used largely, reinforcing a rigorous academic ambiance that suppresses critical thinking and creativity (Hamid & Honan, 2019). At the tertiary level, also in the semester final exams, students give more value to passing tests and scores on the tests than to active language learning. Hence, learners turn to memorization skills rather than getting a true achievement of the English language as a medium of communication.

Another challenge to the nexus between teaching and testing is the instructional strategy followed by many tertiary-level teachers. Existing research shows that a significant portion of teachers still apply teacher-centered approaches relying on lecture-based instructions, which limit students' proficiency to use language actively (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2019). The lack of structured professional development opportunities makes this challenge more difficult to overcome by leaving many English language teachers insufficiently equipped to exercise the evaluation techniques that support communicative language learning aims.

Institutional limitations, such as outdated curricula and a lack of technological utilization, further aggravate the disparity between teaching and testing. Many public universities, private universities, and government colleges use conventional assessment frameworks that do not test communication skills, even though some public and private universities have been using alternative and time-fitting evaluation models. The potential digital tools for teaching and testing, especially interactive learning modules as well as digital assessment platforms are still underutilized due to a lack of financial and infrastructural support.

Moreover, ensuring the nexus between instruction and evaluation is highly challenging for large classes at the tertiary level. Since many universities and government colleges admit a large number of students in every session, exercising individualized assessment techniques like oral tests, peer evaluations, and formative feedback sessions becomes arduous. Therefore, tertiary educational institutions are compelled to use standardized written examinations, which are widely considered deficient in gauging learners' language skills in real-world situations (Alam, 2022).

Cultural trends also widen the gap between teaching and testing. Many learners in Bangladesh, instead of considering English language learning as a useful skill for communication, see it merely as a means to get superior grades. They are deterred from engaging in interactive language activities because of the pressure to do well on examinations, which further increases the incongruity between test results and instructional aims (Rahman et al., 2021).

Despite these challenges, the congruence between instruction and assessment can momentarily intensify language learning outcomes. According to Biggs's (1996) study on the constructive alignment theory, curriculum, teaching, and evaluation should function in harmony. In Bangladesh, putting this paradigm into practice will

require adjustments that promote realistic assessments that measure students' real-world language usage rather than their theoretical comprehension. To improve learning outcomes, formative assessments have been shown to alter the teaching and learning process by offering regular feedback (Alderson & Banerjee, 2001). However, they face several obstacles, including a shortage of funding, insufficient training for teachers, and socioeconomic inequality, especially in poor countries (Kirsch et al., 2007; Kohnke et al., 2023).

To reduce the gap between teaching and testing, technology is found to be the most effective tool. ITSs (Intelligent Tutoring Systems) and AI-based tools (Artificial Intelligence-based) and applications provide personalized feedback and facilitate students' adaptive learning by tailoring the information to their needs (Tiwari et al., 2024). Students can choose their own learning routes because of these productivity and scalability improvements. However, the scarcity of these technologies and the absence of organizational infrastructure necessitate more targeted efforts that would help ensure the equitable distribution of technology (Sharifi et al., 2018; Polakova & Klimova, 2024).

It is also important to identify how professional development programs can help achieve teaching and assessment nexus. Teachers having adequate knowledge of assessment literacy are more equipped than others to apply modern teaching and learning techniques and set up an integrated classroom (Chen, 2008; Deocampo, 2013). The Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) in 2006 suggested several professional development programs for linking teaching and testing to ensure quality teaching and learning. It addressed the extrinsic limitations, like test-oriented cultures and a shortage of resources, by imparting teachers with the knowledge and training to use innovative pedagogies.

Reforming instructional and evaluation methods is necessary to address these challenges. In this study, the perceptions and practices of Bangladeshi tertiary-level teachers concerning the link between English language teaching and testing are assessed, emphasizing the importance of aligning test procedures with instruction to heighten learners' language skills. Regarding the variables impeding these processes, it looks at how teachers adapt teaching and assessment approaches that work well together. In light of these concerns, the current study intends to answer the following research questions:

- What are the perceptions of Bangladeshi tertiary-level teachers regarding the nexus between language teaching and testing?
- How much do English language instructors apply test ideas to their teaching in various academic contexts?
- What resources and institutional obstacles affect teachers' practices of teaching and testing alignment?
- How can educators overcome the obstacles in integrating teaching and testing for effective language learning?

The study used a structured questionnaire to survey 91 respondents from public universities, private universities, and government colleges. Interviews were conducted with five experienced educators who specialize in English language instruction and evaluation using five structured

questions. The findings demonstrate that even when teachers recognize the importance of integrating testing principles into their lectures, several barriers still stand in the way of the teaching-testing interaction. This study shows that different types of institutions face disparities; there are resource limitations, inadequacy in institutional support and so on. To overcome these difficulties, it is urgently required to execute professional development programs, supplement funding, and incorporate technology into examinations.

### Literature Review

Enhancing learners' English language proficiency at the university level requires that effective teaching strategies complement evaluation procedures or vice versa. Teachers' teaching methods, evaluation methods, and technological integration to improve learners' language proficiency in Bangladesh are studied in this part. It reviews pertinent studies on the link between teaching and testing, the usage of technology in evaluations, challenges faced by teachers, and possible solutions to improve teaching-testing congruity in higher education.

A fundamental factor of successful language acquisition is the interaction between instruction and evaluation. When assessment aligns with the instruction, learners focus on building communicative abilities instead of simply memorizing materials for examinations. However, many tertiary institutions place more importance on assessment scores than language learning, which begets a misalignment (Rahman et al., 2019).

Effective assessment allows students to apply what they have learned, get feedback, and make corrections. Making sure that assessments appropriately reflect learning objectives is a critical responsibility of teachers. According to Deocampo (2013), teachers who incorporate evaluation principles into their lesson plans can improve learning outcomes and student engagement. However, a lack of training and institutional limitations make it difficult for many teachers to implement communicative assessment strategies.

According to Bennett and Gitomer (2009), assessments should do more than just determine how well students are performing; they should also help plan lessons and encourage student participation in the learning process. Alongside the high-stakes exams, formative assessments provide ongoing feedback, allowing modifications. Lemke et al. (2004) noted in their study that students are better prepared to meet academic objectives when technology is used in assessments that automates individual performance and provides real-time feedback, which leads to improved learning. Chen (2008) observed that teachers typically struggle to balance their enacted roles in high-stakes learning situations with their perceived positions on e-technology. This disparity leads to traditional methods of instruction that rely on information transfer rather than group learning or broad critical abilities.

Teachers at Bangladesh's higher education institutions frequently use antiquated techniques for evaluating students' communicative skills, like standardized written tests (Chowdhury & Kabir, 2019). Observations in the classrooms show that a lot of teachers prioritize exam preparation over interactive language

exercises, which hinders students' capacity to improve their speaking and listening abilities. To overcome these obstacles, educators must change the way they teach to incorporate oral proficiency tests, peer assessments, and formative assessments.

Language assessment literacy of teachers plays a pivotal role in coordinating evaluation and instruction. Teachers having strong assessment literacy can design assessments that are pertinent and gauge students' communicative language proficiency rather than memorization of concepts (Mogashoa, 2014). However, despite the importance of assessment literacy, studies unveil that many tertiary-level teachers obtain little training in this area. Rahman and Pandian (2018) declared that a deficiency of professional development opportunities results in a reliance on conventional assessment methods that do not match the goals of communicative language teaching (CLT). Tertiary institutions can organize focused training programs for educators to provide them with the skills to create tests that harmonize with CLT.

The nexus between teaching practices and evaluation strategies in Bangladesh's tertiary education system is still extensively unexplored. Studies that have been done by and large have focused on teaching techniques or evaluation structures separately, overlooking how misalignment between the two negatively affects students' English language acquisition. This study attempts to fill the gap by pointing out the causes of the differences between teaching and testing and giving suggestions for reducing the gap. The results may help design assessment tools that aid learning objectives and advance professional development programs that furnish teachers with the abilities they need.

### Methodology

In this mixed-methods research, structured data was gathered from 91 teachers at government colleges, private universities, and public universities using a descriptive survey research approach. Interviews are conducted with five proficient teachers with a view to acquiring a deep understanding of the matter. The study was conceptualized by reviewing pertinent books, journals, research papers, and review articles and taking into account the advice of experts. Teachers with differing years of experience in English language instruction and assessment were chosen using a purposive sampling technique, which ensured a representative distribution of participants across various institutions and geographic areas. To ensure validity and clarity, a structured questionnaire was designed and piloted with a small group of educators. Demographic data, teaching and testing methods, difficulties in coordinating instruction and evaluation, etc. were all covered in the questionnaire.

Both digital and paper-based survey techniques were employed to gather data; online responses were made possible by Google Forms, while in-person surveys were used on-site for direct assistance. Participant's informed consents and Khulna University's Research and Innovation Centre's approval were obtained under ethical guidelines for the study (Reference No: KUECC\_2024-07). For confidentiality, data anonymity was assured. The questionnaire was validated by including expert opinions

and evaluating reliability using Cronbach's Alpha. To evaluate the link between teaching and testing, data analysis was done using SPSS 25 and Microsoft Excel. Both descriptive (frequency, percentages, mean, standard deviation) and inferential statistical methods (Independent Samples t-test, One-Way ANOVA, Two-Way ANOVA) were used. To guarantee the quality and reliability of the data, the study also used cross-checking procedures that obtained a reliability score of  $\alpha = 0.780$ .

## Data Analysis and Findings

Table 1: Teachers' Perceptions of the Nexus between English Language Teaching and Testing

S N	Statements	Mean	SD	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Tests should focus on teaching practices.	4.47	0.65	54.9	38.5	5.5	1.1	0
2	Teaching methodologies should be aligned with tests' requirements.	4.60	0.53	62.6	35.2	2.2	0	0
3	Integrating teaching with tests enhances students' language proficiency.	4.46	0.60	50.5	46.2	2.2	1.1	0
4	Nexus between teaching and testing can be challenging.	4.02	0.85	27.5	56.0	8.8	6.6	1.1
<b>N=91</b>		<b>4.39</b>	<b>0.66</b>					

According to the findings, teachers firmly believe that teaching and testing are connected. With a standard deviation of 0.66 and an overall mean value of 4.39, the responses showed a high degree of agreement among respondents on the importance of alignment between tests and instruction.

A significant 93.4% of instructors (54.9% "strongly agree," 38.5% "agree") agreed that tests should focus on teaching practices (statement 1). With a mean score of 4.47 and a standard deviation of 0.65, there is broad agreement on this matter. This implies that teachers see assessment as an essential component of instructional design.

With 97.8% of respondents (62.6% strongly agreeing and 35.2% agreeing) endorsing the notion that teaching strategies should align with assessment criteria, this statement generated the highest degree of agreement (statement 2). Teachers believe that teaching and assessment methods should be strongly aligned, as evidenced by the mean value of 4.60 and SD of 0.53.

Students' language competence is improved by integrating instruction with tests. Over half of the respondents (50.5% "strongly agree", 46.2% "agree")

The analysis of the collected data and the related findings are shown as follows:

### Teachers' perceptions of the nexus between English language teaching and testing

Teachers' opinions about the relationship between teaching and testing English are examined in this section. A summary of the survey's findings is provided in Table 1.

stressed that students' language skills improve when assessment principles are aligned with instruction (statement 3). A broad consensus about the beneficial effects of teaching and testing nexus on student learning outcomes is indicated by the mean value of 4.46 and SD of 0.60.

Teachers find it difficult to integrate their instruction with tests, as seen by the significantly higher agreement rate of 56.0% "agree" and 27.5% "strongly agree" with this assertion (statement 4). Although the majority of teachers are aware of these difficulties, they nevertheless view test integration as crucial, as evidenced by the mean value of 4.02 and SD of 0.85.

### Teachers' practices of the nexus between teaching and testing

The way that tertiary-level teachers align English language teaching and testing is examined in this section. Teachers' use of assessment techniques, resource availability, and general alignment between instruction and evaluation are highlighted in the responses. The survey findings are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Alignment between teaching and testing

S N	Statements	Mean	SD	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
5	I align language test principles with my language teaching activities.	3.82	0.85	16.5	60.4	13.2	8.8	1.1
6	I use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students' language proficiency.	3.82	0.99	23.1	53.8	6.6	15.4	1.1
7	I have access to resources or supports that facilitate the nexus between teaching and testing.	3.11	1.13	7.7	37.4	22.0	24.2	8.8
<b>N=91</b>		<b>3.58</b>	<b>0.99</b>					

According to the statistics, although most teachers agree that aligning English language testing with instruction is important, actual implementation is hampered by practical issues. With a standard deviation of 0.99 and an overall mean value of 3.58, the results indicated a moderate degree of congruence between teaching and testing.

About 76.9% of educators reported that they aligned language test principles with language teaching activities (16.5% “strongly agree,” and 60.4% “agree”). While the majority of teachers make an effort to match instruction with assessments, the mean score of 3.82 and SD of 0.85 indicate that there might be some discrepancies in their methods (statement 5).

The majority of teachers (76.9%), with 23.1% strongly agreeing and 53.8% agreeing, reported using a variety of assessment techniques to gauge their pupils’ language proficiency (statement 6). Diverse evaluation methods in the classroom are strongly emphasized, as seen by the mean value of 3.82 and SD of 0.99.

Getting the required resources to integrate teaching and testing proved to be a major obstacle (statement 7). Here, 45.1% of respondents (7.7% “strongly agree”, 37.4% “agree”) said they had sufficient resources to align instruction and evaluation. While 8.8% “strongly disagreed” and 24.2% “disagreed” with the statement, the mean score was the lowest at 3.11 and the SD was the greatest at 1.13. This implies that the inability to adequately align teaching and testing may be caused by a lack of resources.

According to the results, teachers firmly think that matching English language instruction to assessments is crucial. However, there are still issues, especially about resource availability and the actual application of the nexus between teaching and testing.

### Inferential statistics

#### Null hypotheses:

i. There is no significant difference in the alignment of teachers’ instructional practices with testing approaches between male and female teachers.

ii. There is no significant difference in the alignment of teachers’ instructional practices with testing approaches between trained and untrained groups of teachers.

iii. There is no significant difference in the alignment of teachers’ instructional practices with testing approaches among teachers’ age groups.

iv. There is no significant difference in the alignment of teachers’ instructional practices with testing approaches among public and private universities and Govt. college teachers.

**Hypothesis I:** An independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean of the alignment of teachers’ instructional practices with testing approaches between male (n=59) and female (n=32) teachers (Table 3). The t-test was statistically insignificant, with the mean score of females (Mean=3.57, SD= 0.95) and males (Mean=3.59, SD=0.72). Therefore, the null hypothesis cannot be rejected.

Table 3: The mean difference in alignment between English language teaching and testing based on gender and training group

			N	Mean	SD	t
Alignment of Teachers’ Instructional Practices with Testing Approaches	Gender	Male	59	3.59	0.72	-.114
		Female	32	3.57	0.95	
	Training	No	51	3.39	0.87	-2.59*
		Yes	40	3.82	0.65	

\* $p < 0.05$

**Hypothesis II:** No difference was found between male and female teachers’ choice of testing approaches aligning with instructional practices. Moreover, an independent samples t-test was used to compare the mean between trained group of teachers (n=40) and non-trained group of teachers (n=51) groups on the issue. The t-test was statistically significant, with the mean score of the trained group (Mean 3.82, SD=0.65) and untrained group (Mean=3.39, SD=0.87), indicating that the trained group teachers are highly encouraged to make alignment between English language testing and teaching approaches for the better performance of the learners.

**Hypothesis III:** A one-way between-groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was used to investigate the impact of age groups (e.g., 25-34 years, 35-44 years, 45-54 years,

and 55 and more years) on teachers’ perspectives on the alignment between teaching and testing approaches.

As illustrated in Table 4, the mean value is lower for the older (55 or more years) age group (M = 2.83, SD =0.79), indicating that older age group teachers are less inclined to align teaching and testing practices. Moreover, the overall mean score is near neutral, indicating there is a gap in the teaching and testing approaches at the tertiary level in Bangladesh.

The difference is statistically significant at the  $p < .05$  level on teachers’ teaching practices aligning with English language testing approaches for four age groups:

F (3, 87) = 3.899,  $p = < 0.05$ , as shown in Table 5. Therefore, the null hypothesis that there is no difference in teachers’ practices in aligning English language teaching and testing among the four age groups is rejected.

Table 4: Descriptive information regarding the alignment between English language teaching and testing practices

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean		Minimum	Maximum
					Lower Bound	Upper Bound		
<b>Total</b>	<b>91</b>	<b>3.5861</b>	<b>.80483</b>	<b>.08437</b>	<b>3.4185</b>	<b>3.7537</b>	<b>1.67</b>	<b>5.00</b>
<b>Age (Years)</b>								
25-34	41	3.8130	.55302	.08637	3.6385	3.9876	2.00	4.67
35-44	29	3.5172	.92833	.17239	3.1641	3.8704	1.67	4.67
45-54	13	3.4872	.93902	.26044	2.9197	4.0546	2.00	5.00
55 and more	8	2.8333	.79682	.28172	2.1672	3.4995	2.00	4.00
<b>Institution Type</b>								
Public	35	3.6381	.71112	.12020	3.3938	3.8824	1.67	4.67
Private	43	3.9070	.56963	.08687	3.7317	4.0823	2.00	5.00
Govt. College	13	2.3846	.59076	.16385	2.0276	2.7416	1.67	3.33

Table 5: One way ANOVA on the nexus between English language teaching and testing

ANOVA					
Nexus between English Language Teaching and Testing					
	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
<b>Age (Years)</b>					
Between Groups	6.909	3	2.303	3.899	<b>&lt;0.05</b>
Within Groups	51.389	87	.591		
<b>Institution Type</b>					
Between Groups	23.288	2	11.644	29.269	<b>&lt;0.05</b>
Within Groups	35.010	88	.398		
<b>Total</b>	<b>58.298</b>	<b>90</b>			

It can be concluded that there is a significant difference in teachers' instructional practices and testing approaches among the age groups (Figure 1).

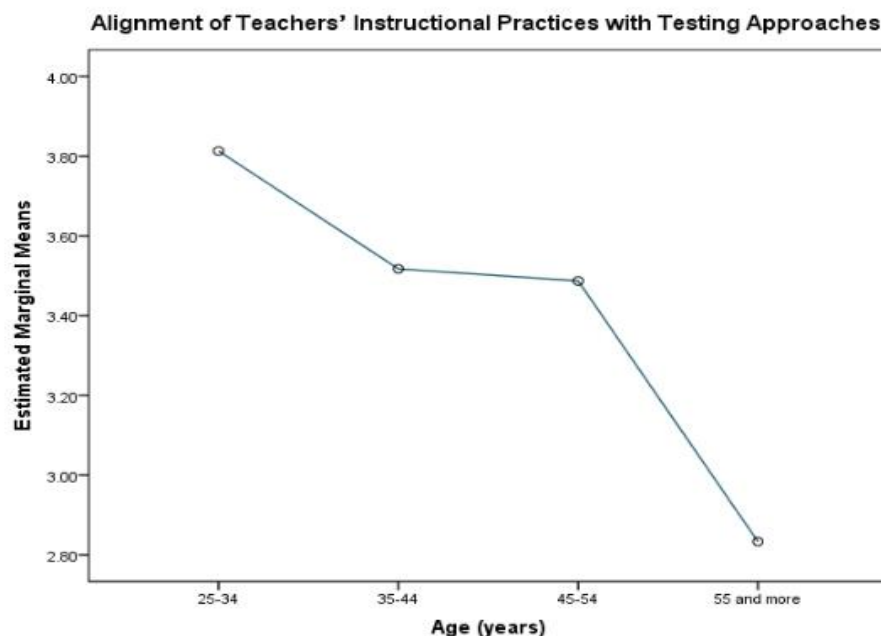


Figure 1: Means plot by age groups regarding the nexus between teaching and testing

**Hypothesis IV:** The fourth hypothesis investigated whether instructors at public universities, private universities, and government colleges differed in how well their teaching methods matched testing practices. Teachers at private universities (Mean=3.91, SD=0.57) had the highest alignment, followed by those at public universities

(Mean=3.64, SD=0.71) and government colleges (Mean=2.38, SD=0.59). The one-way ANOVA revealed a significant difference ( $F(2, 88) = 29.269, p < 0.05$ ). This implies that teachers' capacity or willingness to match instructional strategies with assessment methods is strongly influenced by the institutional setting. Teachers at

private universities typically have better alignment, which may be because of more opportunities for professional growth, easier access to resources, or a more advanced educational atmosphere. Teachers at government colleges,

on the other hand, can find it more difficult to align teaching and testing because of institutional lack of resources.

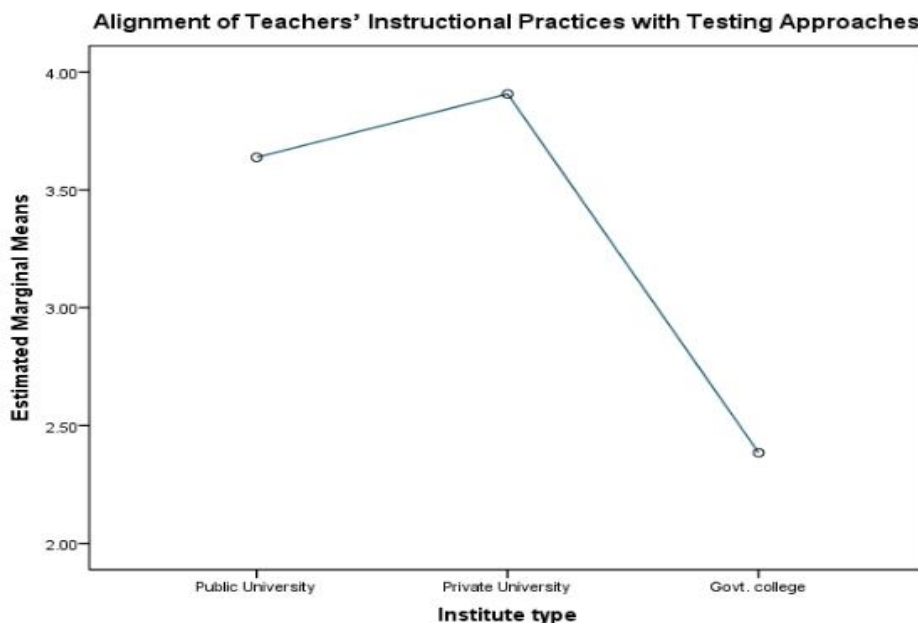


Figure 2: Means plot by institution type regarding the nexus between teaching and testing

### Findings of the teacher interviews

To gain deeper insights into the nexus between teaching and testing at the tertiary-level English education in Bangladesh, structured interviews were conducted with five university teachers. Their responses were categorized into five key themes: perception, practices, challenges, prospects, and solutions.

#### Teachers' perceptions of teaching and testing nexus

The teachers who participated in the interview acknowledged the significance of the relationship between instruction and assessment in promoting students' acquisition of English language skills. However, they pointed out that assessments often fail to be an actual representation of the instructional strategies used. Teacher interviewee one stressed designing assessments that assist communicative learning. Opposing rote memorization, the second teacher highlighted the contradiction between interactive teaching strategies and conventional, inflexible testing styles. Teacher interviewee three raised concerns about the disparities in evaluation practices in different institutions, which make a united approach to instruction and evaluation even more challenging. Despite a growing trend towards CLT, teacher interviewee four claimed that examinations still put strong importance on grammar, vocabulary, and translation. Teacher interviewee five also pointed out how assessment techniques and technology-assisted teaching are nonaligned, causing a gap between assessment expectations and teaching practices.

#### Current practices in teaching and testing

The interviews unveiled that even though many tertiary-level teachers endeavor to apply the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach, tests are still traditional. Teacher interviewee one used oral

presentations, group discussions, and debates in classroom instruction but faced difficulties in integrating these strategies into summative assessments. Though teacher interviewee two very often integrated multimedia and authentic materials into teaching, he claimed that test formats impede real-life language use. It was acknowledged by teacher interviewee three that private universities are adopting more advanced testing methods, while many public universities and government colleges are predominantly dependent on written tests. Teacher interviewee four supported portfolio-based assessments but faced rigid institutional policies that restricted the use of this approach. Lastly, teacher interviewee five utilized AI-driven language exercises in the classroom but observed that similar evaluative methods were not followed in the examinations.

#### Challenges in aligning teaching and testing practices

The smooth integration of teaching strategies and evaluation procedures is hampered by a number of important obstacles. Three of the teachers who were interviewed emphasized that many educational institutions follow traditional exam frameworks that limit the use of different evaluation techniques. The implementation of contemporary assessment procedures is further hampered, according to all five educators, by the lack of standardized training for instructors and the lack of access to digital resources. Furthermore, two teachers noted that the academic culture is so embedded in traditional, paper-based examinations that both educators and policymakers are reluctant to abandon them. It is extremely difficult to match teaching and testing strategies in a way that supports modern pedagogical goals because of this opposition as well as institutional limitations. All five interviewees acknowledged that a nexus between teaching and testing is



necessary for developing learners' communicative language proficiency.

### ***Prospects for the alignment between teaching and testing***

The nexus between teaching and testing has huge prospects for Bangladesh's tertiary education system. Two teachers assumed that the nexus would upgrade skill-based learning and reduce dependency on memorization. Three teachers considered well-designed tests as a means to encourage learners to learn things external to the textbooks and enhance their academic progress. All of the five teachers reported that the nexus can develop fairness in assessment, reducing variations among different tertiary institutions. The nexus also helps graduates be more equipped for the job market by making a link between job expectations and academic knowledge.

### ***Solutions to the challenges***

To overcome the problems in bridging teaching and evaluation, the interviewees recommended several solutions. Three ELT teachers suggested that the universities should use flexible assessment systems comprising project-based assessments, oral tests, portfolio assessments, etc. to reduce over-reliance on traditional written exams. All five teachers acknowledged the requirement for standard training programs for reinforcing technology application, alternative evaluation techniques, and designing tests that aid communicative teaching approaches. Two professors suggested that tertiary educational institutions should fund digital infrastructure to ensure teachers' and learners' easy access to modern assessment tools, such as online platforms for English language proficiency tests and AI-driven assessments. Two teachers also talked about how important it was to change the culture of education so that teachers and policymakers would work together to improve the way students are evaluated so that they can learn skills.

### ***Discussion***

The research raises a fundamental concern regarding the lack of a nexus between English language teaching and testing methods. The findings of the study demonstrate that while most participants (93.4%) agree that the test methods should focus on teaching practices, their actual practice of this nexus is not satisfactory. Nearly 60% of teachers stated that they incorporate language test principles into their teaching activities and use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students' language proficiency. The majority of the teachers agreed with the statement that the alignment between teaching and testing can be challenging. Most of the teachers (97.8%) agreed that teaching practices should be aligned with tests' requirements and about 96.7% of the teachers expressed that the alignment between teaching and testing can enhance students' language competence. Less than half of the participants (45.1%) reported having adequate access to resources or institutional assistance to maintain the balance between teaching and testing. This want of support hinders the effective implementation of the teaching-testing alignment in the classroom (Ehsan, 2021; Haque, 2022; Latif & Wasim, 2022; Bui & Bang, 2024).

This study also finds disparities among different types of tertiary-level institutions. Government college teachers demonstrate the least practice of the alignment between

teaching and testing compared to their peers in public universities and private universities. This poor performance may result from variations in institutional funding, training on pedagogy, and technical infrastructure (Shohel et al., 2021; Alam & Ahmed, 2024).

The link between teaching and testing can be a difficult task due to the diversity of tertiary-level English classrooms, and the technological constraints of assessments (Elder, 2017; Rahman et al., 2019; Kovalev, 2021; Ren & Seedhouse, 2024). The teacher interviewees also acknowledged these issues. They also claimed that aligning teaching practices with testing methods is essential for the assurance that students attain the best possible outcomes. Sultana in 2019 talked about the same thing. A proper balance between teaching and testing imparts a more inclusive and effective language learning experience to learners and the lack of it creates a gap that deteriorates students' performance in examinations (Bui & Bang, 2024). The results also urge the necessity for taking actionable interventions, comprising continuing professional development opportunities, sufficient resources, and institutional financial investment, to help educators successfully align teaching and testing activities using technology tools (Islam, 2019; Rahman et al., 2019; Sadeghi, 2022).

### ***Conclusion and Recommendations***

In conclusion, enhancing tertiary-level learners' English language skills and enabling them to be prepared for the demands of the competitive world badly require the nexus between teaching and testing. However, an effective alignment is mostly challenged by outdated curricula, insufficient financial investment, teachers' lack of language assessment literacy, cultural trends, disparities among the institutions, limited digital literacy, etc. These impediments can be overcome by increasing institutional support, organizing teacher training programs, and ensuring ethical considerations like data privacy and security, easy access to technology, and so on. Moreover, the use of digital tools, especially AI-powered platforms, can automate assessments and provide interactive learning, tailored and immediate feedback.

At the tertiary level in Bangladesh, several initiatives should be taken to face the challenges that impede the nexus between teaching and testing:

- Infrastructure should be developed to help teachers use cutting-edge methods in teaching and assessment.
- Well-designed teacher training programs should be increased to enhance teachers' skills and assessment literacy so that they design and execute lesson plans that are compatible with modern assessment procedures (Tiwari et al., 2024).
- The curriculum should be developed to enhance learners' critical thinking, pragmatic language use, and learning experiences so that learners do not merely pay attention to test preparation (Deocampo, 2013; Hamdoun, 2023).
- Tertiary institutions should invest in using AI-powered learning platforms, technology-assisted tests, and VR (virtual reality) classrooms to offer adaptable and individualized instruction and feedback to increase student engagement and performance.



- Data privacy and security, easy accessibility, and rigorous protocols should be addressed to guarantee that technological advancements do not widen already-existing inequities (Polakova & Klimova, 2024).
- The negative washback of the digital divide can be lessened by ensuring equity (Kirsch et al., 2007; Ren & Seedhouse, 2024), especially by providing underprivileged learners with equal access to technical tools and resources.
- Teachers and policymakers should work together to develop solutions that tune instruction and assessment, causing a more harmonized learning environment.

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### Competing Interest

The authors report that there are no competing interests to declare.

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### Appendix 1-Questionnaire for Tertiary-Level English Teachers

Dear Teacher,

Please select the most pertinent option to indicate your agreement or disagreement with each of the statements. Your participation is voluntary and your responses will be kept anonymous and used only for research.

SN	Statements	Strongly agree	Agree	Neutral	Disagree	Strongly disagree
1	Tests should focus teaching practices.	5	4	3	2	1
2	Teaching methodologies should be aligned with tests' requirements.	5	4	3	2	1
3	Integrating teaching with tests enhances students' language proficiency.	5	4	3	2	1
4	Nexus between teaching and testing can be challenging.	5	4	3	2	1
5	I align language test principles with my language teaching activities.	5	4	3	2	1
6	I use a variety of assessment methods to evaluate students' language proficiency.	5	4	3	2	1
7	I have access to resources or supports that facilitate the incorporation of test principles into teaching.	5	4	3	2	1

### Appendix 2-Teachers' Interview

- How much do the present test practices align with the teaching strategies used in tertiary-level English education?
- How well do you incorporate the communicative language teaching (CLT) approach in your instruction and evaluation?
- What are the major institutional or structural barriers that prevent the integration of innovative assessment methods in English language teaching?
- In what ways can a strong nexus between teaching and testing enhance students' English language proficiency?
- What strategies do you recommend for improving assessment practices to ensure that they complement modern teaching methodologies, including technology integration?