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Causes of Tertiary Students' Failure in Projecting Voice in Academic Writing and Possible Solutions: Instructor and Learner Perceptions

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Abstract. "Voice" in academic writing acts like the author's authority by representing his thoughts produced by his intellect. Though it is a salient phenomenon in academia, the Bangladeshi education sector still remains ignorant regarding recognizing students' voices in their writing. Therefore, this paper aims to investigate the root causes responsible for the failure to project "voice" in students' academic writing, along with its possible solutions. It, moreover, takes into account the educators' and the learners' outlook as to the plausible sources of this issue and, at the same time, what both parties thought could help improve the skill of voice projection in students' writing. To this end, the current empirical study has chosen to use the mixed method approach where 30 Bangladeshi tertiary level EFL teachers and 433 students participated through survey questionnaires. In addition, 11 interviews from teacher participants and 5 interviews from student participants were conducted following a semi-structured approach. The study has found some significant obstructions in voice projection in academic writing. Hence, this study recommended some suggestive solutions to overcome the challenges in students' voice projection in academic writing at the end.

Keywords: Voice in Academic Writing; Teacher-Students' Perceptions; Tertiary Level Education; Writing Instructions; Teacher-training

1. Introduction

The ability to show the voice in academic writing is extremely important for the students at the tertiary level (Yuliana & Gandana, 2018). To show voice in writing refers to the ability to “imprint” one’s writing with one’s unique style and exhibit a conspicuous position in the writing (Chinn, 2017, p. 1). Many students at the tertiary level in Bangladesh utterly fail to show their voices in their writing. This failure can largely be attributed to the fact that writing is taught as a “product” rather than as a “process” in Bangladesh (Ferretti & Graham, 2019). The notion of encouraging projection of voice as well as student participation with regard to students’ education is not entirely novel at this point; yet, in the context of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), it appears to have been underused (Murphey et al., 2009). At Bangladeshi universities both in public and private, writing courses are offered with a view to developing students’ writing skills (Patwary & Sajib, 2018). By responding to the gap between the compositions the students produce and the writing support they get at institutions, this research attempts to promote a culture of autonomy coupled with supporting and instilling voices in writings to its participants.

This research project is not only unique in a way that no single pointed research has been done so far regarding projecting voices in students’ writing in a Bangladeshi context, but it is also trying to figure out what can be done to help students integrate voice or their own viewpoint in academic writing. In the realm of Harris and Graham’s (2016) Self-Regulated Strategy Development (SRS) approach to writing, where explicit writing support can enable them to compose their writing independently, this study plans to invest groundbreaking propositions in the academic setting of Bangladesh to make the tertiary students adept in projecting voice in their writing. Hence, the ultimate aim of this specific study is to find out the principal impediments working at the heart of students’ failure to project voice in academic writing while working out some practical solutions that can be implemented academically to mitigate the issue at hand.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Challenges Faced by Students

Even though varying conceptual standpoints are adopted by researchers on the topic of students’ voice in writing in an academic setting, still the concept of voice projection is alien to a majority of the students. Madi et al., (2021) stated that, “as a second language student researcher, I find writing with a strong voice in academic writing is challenging for me due to the differences in cultural backgrounds and not being familiar with the audience’s culture” (p. 6). French (2020), on the other hand, commented on the insufficient amount of verifiable proof on whether contemplating regarding individuality and associating oneself with a standard might assist learners in identifying and incorporating voice in academic writing. Therefore, the cultural gaps and linguistic diversities act dominantly in projecting voice in students’ academic writing.

2.2 Lack of Autonomy in Writing

Voice is more like a power that ensures students’ ownness in their writing and makes the writing as their own creation (Gennrich & Dison, 2018). However, the

majority of the students in Bangladesh deal with the predicament of organizing and brainstorming thoughts logically and cohesively as those are new to them and this phenomenon has resulted from the habit of rote memorization (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). Graham (2019) stated “Those who teach writing and reading, or use writing to support learning need to be knowledgeable about writing, its development, and writing instruction” (p. 293); hence, especial attention is required on the part of educators to understand writing as a whole and integration of voice in academic writing.

2.3 Voice According to Scholars

Voice is considered as the ultimate life-source of writing and has the power to make the audience acknowledge the author’s presence (Elbow, 1998), by picking up on and internalizing how voice is projected by different writers under different circumstances students would have a better grasp of how voice projection can be done by them. It is a salient aspect of writing to make it fruitful and the scholars claimed that L2 learners need to be taught and made cognizant of certain features that enhance a writer's voice (Cadman, 1997; Belcher & Hirvela, 2001; Hyland, 2001). With regard to this, French (2020) mentioned that even though students are able to receive some guidance on how to improve their “writing style” from the available “academic-writing literature”, they are seldom provided with any direct counsel on the incorporation of their own identity in those writings or how to expand that relevant writing skill.

2.4 Role of Teachers

Spalding et al. (2009) found that teachers in the workshop made the greatest gains in "voice" as compared to "ideas," "organization," "word choice," "sentence fluency," and "conventions." Teachers can import dialogue-based modules into their classes to make students active in projecting their voices (Iordanou & Rapanta, 2021). As a barrier to voice projection, the method of teaching can be a significant factor, so they need to incorporate more techniques in their teaching to make students project their voice independently, and this can be done by encouraging students to read more and enriching vocabulary (Aldabbus & Almansouri, 2022). It should also be vitalized to improve the knowledge of grammar, word composition, and paraphrasing skills to portray the ideas vividly by the teachers (Budjalemba & Listyani, 2020). Nonetheless, they can also accommodate students with the proper appliance of linguistic devices or figurative techniques, which are vital to expressing proper voice in writing (Barbara et al., 2024). Therefore, teachers can directly stimulate learners to get empowered in navigating academic discourses (Baktash et al., 2024).

2.5 Cultural Influences

The role of culture of the L2 writers is also essential for consideration in this regard. According to Matsuda (2001), L2 writers who belong to interdependent cultures often tend to portray collectivism through their writing instead of placing focus on their individual identity or voice. Learners often get jeopardized while writing in L2 because of the pre-perceived harsh concepts of L1. Likewise, Matsuda (2001, as cited in Javdan, 2014) claimed

“then L2 learners need to be taught or at least made familiar with certain features that enhance a writer’s voice” (p. 632).

Ivanic and Camps (2001) have recommended that

“an L2 writing pedagogy that raises critical awareness about voice can help learners maintain control over the personal and cultural identity they are projecting in their writing” (p. 3).

Fox (1997) in a study found that L2 writers do not project appropriate authorial presence while this is deemed as an important quality in English writing. Culture also plays a key role to assist learners to project their voice in their writings. Ultimately, the significance of teachers' profound comprehension of voice projection in academic writing is a lot. It emphasizes the role of teachers in patiently assisting students in transitioning from writing as academic English writers to expressing their unique voices. Encouraging learners and providing guidance are highlighted as crucial steps in helping them develop their writing voices while retaining their individuality. It discusses how culture, first language (L1), and societal norms impact learners' writing voices, often causing a struggle to align their cultural influences with the expectations of English academic writing. Teachers are seen as pivotal in guiding students to grasp and effectively convey their voices in writing without the L1 influence (Zhao, 2019).

From the aforementioned notions, it can be said that, the idea of voice projection in academic writing is a largely explored field in academia but due to contextual restraints it is much not explored in Bangladeshi context which the current study intended to do and fill the gaps in the existing literature.

3. Research Questions

The research questions were as follows:

1. What are the perceptions of the tertiary students regarding the causes for the failures in projecting their voices in academic writing and the possible solutions to these problems?
2. What are the perceptions of the writing instructors regarding tertiary students' failure in projecting the voices in academic writing at the tertiary level and the possible solutions to these problems?
3. How valid are the government's policy promises to facilitate students' voice projection in academic writing in Bangladesh?

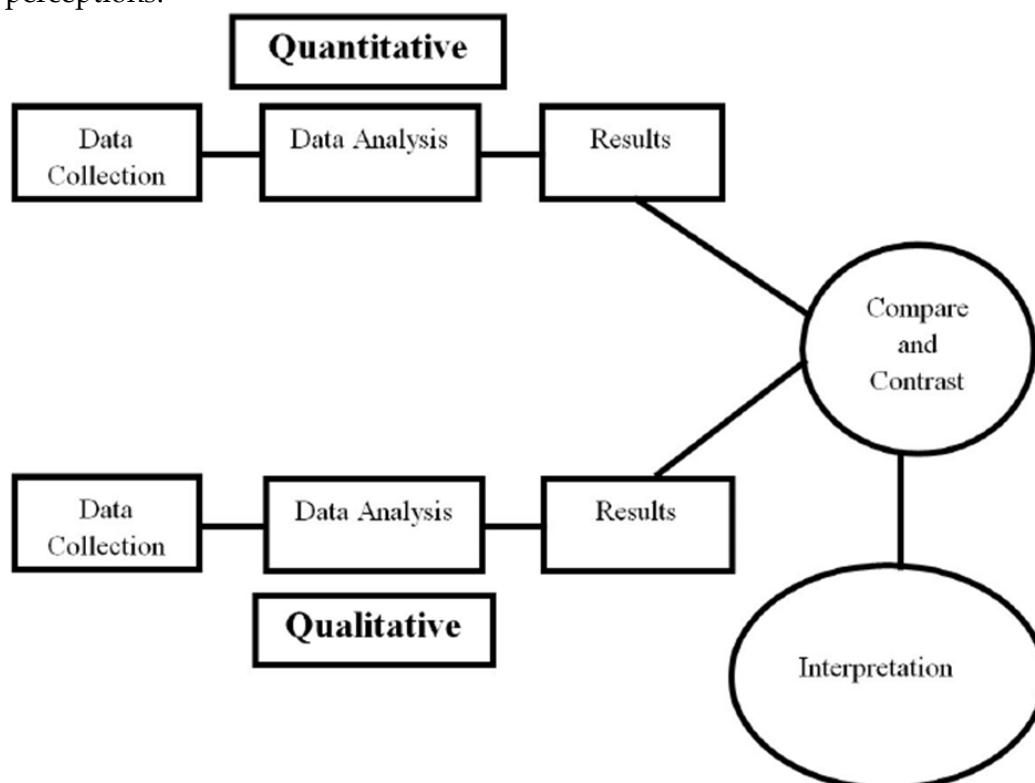
4. Methodology

As the objective and essence of this research corresponded to those of a quantitative and qualitative study, the researchers selected the mixed method approach for this empirical research. As this paper's primary goals are to illustrate teachers and students' perceptions about the causes of failure to project voices in their academic writing, the empirical study attempted to examine the current factors related to teachers and students' perceptions and developing academic writing in English in Bangladesh. Data from various sources were obtained in this study by using various methods to collaborate with the findings. For this research, a semi-structured interview and questionnaire survey method were implemented. Consequently, the data collection methods that were used for the analysis were 1) Students' Questionnaire Survey, 2) Students' Interview, 3)

Teachers' Questionnaire, and 4) Teachers' Interview. In order to ensure triangulation and to improve the precision, credibility, validity and reliability of the research, obtained data were appropriately analyzed.

4.1 Mixed Method Approach

The mixed methods research design involves the collection and analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data within a single study. The process entails the gathering and examination of both qualitative and quantitative data in order to enhance comprehension of a certain phenomenon and address the research inquiries (Plano Clark, 2016). The Explanatory Sequential Design was used for this study due to its classification as a mixed methods research approach (Creswell & Clark, 2018). This methodology involves the first collection and analysis of quantitative data using survey questionnaires, followed by a subsequent qualitative phase through interviews, which further investigate the obtained results. In this methodology, scholars employ a qualitative phase to elucidate the preliminary quantitative findings comprehensively. This approach was employed to gain a comprehensive understanding of the participants' perspectives and perceptions.



Mixed method research design approach (Adopted from Creswell 2013)

4.2 Data Collection Process

4.2.1 Survey questionnaire

For doing the quantitative research on this project, 2 sets of surveys were conducted. One set of survey questions was prepared, incorporating both close-ended and open-ended questions for the student group, and another one has been designed for the teachers' group at the tertiary level. A total of 11 survey questions

were designed for the student group whereas there are a total of 10 questions for the teacher group.

4.2.2 Semi-structured interview

The interview has been designed in a semi-structured manner. For the data collection method, 5 interview questions have been designed, each for teacher and student groups, and those are developed by a predetermined thematic framework.

4.2.3 Participants' profile and characteristics

Both the teachers and students at the tertiary level have participated in the data collection process. The students were from different private universities and have completed an academic course on argumentative writing/essay writing/voice projection etc. Almost all the participants were aware of the core concept of this research- voice projection. The purposive sampling method was used here (Patton, 1990).

4.2.4 Students' profile

The students who participated in the survey and interview process were mainly tertiary-level students from different private universities, located in Dhaka, the capital city in Bangladesh. Students from undergraduate and postgraduate levels participated in the data collection process. Besides, students who have graduated also took part in this process. They were both male and female and their age ranges from 19-25. In the survey questionnaire, students were presented with 11 questions. It is essential to point out that a total of 433 students participated in the survey; out of which majority of the students (71%) were from North South University whilst the rest of the participants belonged to other institutions. The survey questionnaire included the participants' academic status where 69.7% were undergraduate students while 25.4% had already graduated from tertiary education while the rest had recently graduated.

4.2.5 Teachers' profile

The participating teachers in this study encompassed a wide age range, spanning from 30 to 70 years. This diversity in age allows for a comprehensive examination of how different generations of educators perceive and practice various aspects of teaching and learning in the university context. The study included both male and female teachers, reflecting the gender inclusivity prevalent in the academic workforce of Bangladesh's private universities. This gender diversity provided a balanced representation of voices and experiences, ensuring that the research findings are inclusive and applicable to all educators.

For the quantitative phase of the study, a total of 30 teachers actively engaged in teaching at private universities in Bangladesh participated in this study. Their input was invaluable in providing statistical data and quantitative insights into various aspects of the research topic. In the qualitative phase of the study, seven teachers were selected for in-depth interviews and open-ended discussions following a semi-structured format. These educators were chosen for their willingness to provide detailed insights, narratives, and personal experiences related to the research questions, thereby enhancing the depth and context of the

study's findings. The participating teachers held diverse academic backgrounds, with various degrees and areas of specialization, and they were selected purposively focusing tertiary education level. This diversity adds depth to the research by allowing for exploration of how educators from different academic disciplines approach the teaching and learning process.

4.3 Data analysis process:

The authors analyzed the quantitative data descriptively by inserting tables, and the qualitative data derived from interviews thematically. Moreover, data derived from open-ended questions of the survey questionnaires were analyzed descriptively here as per the mode of Explanatory Sequential Design. After collecting the survey data, the authors divided the questions on the basis of different viewpoints on projecting "voice" in academic writing and then categorized on different notions under the umbrella of descriptive analysis. For interviews, Braun and Clarke's (2019) reflexive thematic analysis method was incorporated by following the phases of data familiarization, generating initial codes, generating initial themes, and reviewing the themes. The collected data was read and re-read by the researchers several times over to familiarize the themes with all the facets and features of the data. In the second phase, the researchers came up with some initial codes, prepared the initial themes, and then sorted the codes into initial themes. In the last phase, the researchers undertook the tasks of thematic analysis and write-up of the analysis, which required presenting a logical and coherent story through the themes that can demonstrate the merit and validity of the study while making a relevant argument to the research question.

5. Data Findings

5.1 Analysis of Quantitative Data

5.1.1 Findings from the Student Survey

The student survey (see Appendix 1) has helped in answering research question 1 which was concerned with the perceptions of tertiary students regarding the causes for the failures in projecting their voices in academic writing and the possible solutions to these problems. The total number of participating students were 433 in this survey and the demonstration of their nominal responses is given in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Nominal responses with yes/no/maybe/not sure

Questions	Yes	No	May be/ Not sure
Are you aware of the projection of 'Voice' in argumentative writing?	68.8%	18.7%	12.5%
Have you learnt how to write an argumentative essay/writing at your university?	82.5%	13.3%	4.2%
Have you learnt regarding projecting "voice" in an argumentative essay?	61.8%	21.2%	16.6%
Have you received effective feedback from the teachers on your argumentative writing?	63.9%	16.7%	19.4%

Regarding the awareness of voice projection, most students responded affirmatively, portraying their familiarity with the concept of "Voice Protection." Most of them learned how to write argumentative essays during their university life. In this writing procedure, most of them got aware of projecting "voice" as per the data on Table 1. In addition, they received effective feedback in their writing which is again a vast number of students. However, as per the data from Table 1, the respondents with negative and neutral responses were not less in the survey, indicating that many students remained on the opposite side of the coin and needed to be acknowledged and enlightened regarding voice projection in academic writing.

The participants who opted to affirm that they were introduced to Voice Projection in Argumentative Essay in their tertiary education elaborated their answers by affirming that they were guided by their English teachers. While some of the respondents said that they followed structures from textbooks and some directly memorized from their suggested textbooks. On the other hand, some students learnt it in various methods, like in taking IELTS preparation, from debating, from school but 7.4% learners responded negatively here (See Table 2).

Table 2: The strategies for practicing argumentative writing

Response types	Percentage of responses
I followed the structures from the textbook	25.2%
I memorized the essays from the suggested textbooks	5.3%
Guided by English teacher	61.1%
Learned it from the school	0.2%
I learned it when I was preparing for my IELTS test	0.2%
We are given the format but were not practiced in the class	0.2%
I used to write my debate speech.	0.2%
Negative responses (no, not yet, not aware of it, none, didn't learn)	7.4%

In analyzing the challenges faced by the students while projecting their voice in their write-up, 40.9% of the participants struggled to find logic and rationale in their writing; the other 38.8% had trouble forming or developing supporting ideas. 32.3% of the students were not able to generate counter arguments whilst 27.5% of the respondents had difficulties establishing opposing arguments; 0.8% of respondents faced language barriers in vocabulary and grammar. The rest of the students responded negatively, and they did not face any challenges (See Table 3).

Table 3: Challenges faced by students while writing argumentative essays at their university

Response types	Percentage of responses
I struggled to establish my claim with logic and rationale	40.9%
I struggled to develop supporting ideas	38.8%
I struggled to establish opposing ideas	27.5%

I struggled to refute the counter-arguments	32.3%
Language barriers	0.8%
Did not face challenges	6.4%

In the survey a question was asked about how students could learn about projecting voice in argumentative writing and the responses are showcased in Table 4 below.

Table 4: What challenges did you face at the university level while writing argumentative essays/writings? (more than one options can be chosen).

Response types	Percentage of responses
I struggled to establish my claim with logic and rationale	40.9%
I struggled to develop supporting ideas	38.8%
I struggled to establish opposing ideas	27.5%
I struggled to refute the counter-arguments	32.3%
Language barriers	0.8%
Did not face challenges	6.4%

In the survey, participants were asked about the reasons for the failure in the projection of voice at the tertiary level for argumentative writing, and they responded in the following manner (See Table 5).

Table 5: Reasons for tertiary students' failure in projecting voice in academic writing.

Response types	Percentage of responses
They always follow the teacher's given structures	21.7%
They heavily rely on memorization from the textbook	49.49%
They are not taught various writing approaches	27.5%
They lack proficiency in the writing skills	45.7%
They lack independent writing practices in the English classes	38.8%
They lack knowledge about various writing strategies for voice projection	39.2%
They lack awareness about the importance of voice projection in argumentative writing	30.3%
They are not being taught the skills of argumentative writing in their English classes	25.9%
All the given options	20.6%

When it was asked how tertiary-level teachers should teach students the methods of learning about voice projection, the nature of student participants' responses is portrayed as follows.

Table 6: Students' stances for teachers regarding teaching argumentative writing by projecting voice.

Response types	Percentage of responses
Educating students with the strategies to project voices in writing	40.9%
Teaching students about writing tone, styles and audience	39%

Emphasizing argumentative essay writing	26.8%
Teaching process and free-hand writing	37.6%
Raising consciousness about the art of voice projection	30.5%
All of the given options	36.7%

Lastly, in the question regarding suggestions on how to improve the strategies of projecting voice in their writing, they provided the following recommendations (See Table 7).

Table 7: Students' viewpoint regarding learning to project "voice" in writing effectively.

Response types	Percentage of responses
Making a habit of reading to form own opinions	41.7%
Incorporating own opinions into writing	33.7%
Practicing argumentative writing on a regular basis	33%
Interacting with the teachers and peers in the classroom	38.8%
All of the given responses	37%

5.1.2 Findings from Teacher Survey

The teacher survey (see Appendix 2) has helped in answering research question 2 which was concerned with the perceptions of the writing instructors regarding tertiary students' failure in projecting the voices in academic writing at the tertiary level and the possible solutions to these problems. A survey questionnaire consisting of 9 quantitative questions employing dichotomous questions (yes/no/maybe) and MCQ questions along with 1 open-ended question were presented to a total of 30 tertiary level teachers regarding their beliefs and opinions related to the projection of individual voice in academic writing, and these were prepared keeping in mind the aims and objective of the study. It should be noted that data was collected from 10 different universities throughout Bangladesh; out of which 43.3% of the participating teachers were from North South University, 23.3% from BRAC University, 6.6% from University of Dhaka, 6.6% from Independent University, Bangladesh whereas the rest of the teachers belong to miscellaneous institutes.

It was notable that the teaching experience of the teachers, in this regard, ranged from 2 months to 28 years. 33.3% of the participants reported that they have been teaching for 3-5 years, 20% for 6-8 years, 23.3% for 10-13 years, 10% for 16-18 years, 6.7% for 25-28 years, and 6.7% for 2-6 months. The extracted data from nominal responses showed that the majority of the teachers taught argumentative writing in their institution. Though it is extensively taught, to some extent it cannot be properly implemented due to lack of enough facilities and teacher training that the teachers expressed. In Table 8 below, the different viewpoints of teacher participants gathered in dichotomous mode are portrayed.

Table 8: Nominal responses with yes/no/maybe/not sure

Questions	Yes	No	May be/ Not sure
Do you teach argumentative writing at your institution?	90%	6.7%	3.3%
Do you teach voice projection such as positioning and standing at your institution?	73.3%	13.3%	13.3%
Are the tertiary teachers trained in teaching voice projection to students?	30%	39.9%	30%
Do you think there are enough facilities for the tertiary teachers to receive training on voice projection in academic writing in Bangladesh?	10%	66.7%	20%
Is teachers' training essential for educating tertiary students about projecting voice in their argumentative writings?	73.3%	6.7%	20%

The reasons behind tertiary students' failure in projecting voice are demonstrated in Table 9.

Table 9: Reasons behind tertiary students' failure in projecting voice.

Response types	Percentage of responses
They always follow the teacher's given structures.	20%
They heavily rely on memorization from the textbook.	16.7%
They are not taught various writing approaches.	20%
They lack proficiency in the writing skills.	40%
They lack independent writing practices in the English classes	33.3%
They lack knowledge about various writing strategies for voice projection.	36.7%
They lack awareness about the importance of voice projection in writing.	36.7%
They are worried their teachers will disagree with their perspectives and prefer to go for a neutral voice.	3.3%
All of the above options.	46.7%

The solutions to assist learners in projecting "voice" in academic writing are expressed in Table 10.

Table 10: teachers' suggestions on what should be done in the classroom to help tertiary-level students project their voice in their academic writing.

Response types	Percentage of responses
Teaching process and free-hand writing.	10%
Emphasizing argumentative essay writing.	23.3%
Educating students with the strategies to project voices in writing.	40%
Teaching students about writing tone, styles and audience.	30%
Providing students with effective feedback on voice projection.	33.3%
All of the above options.	63.3%

Thus, the aforementioned data indicated that the majority of the teachers taught argumentative writing in their institutions. Though it is extensively trained, it

cannot be adequately implemented to some extent due to the lack of necessary facilities that the teachers expressed. In addition, concerning the reasons behind students' lack of voice projection, they said that the students solely followed the teacher's instruction without independent writing. Also, the rote memorization tendency, lack of various writing strategies, and awareness about the natural writing process hinder the writing flow. Initiatives like free-hand and argumentative writing inclusion and teaching students the strategy of projecting voice along with writing techniques can be done to reduce the failure rate. Lastly, feedback can be fruitful to ease learners' struggles.

5.2 Findings from Qualitative Data

5.2.1 Thematic Findings of Student Interviews

A semi-structured interview (see Appendix 3) was conducted with 5 student participants (SP) to gain an in-depth understanding of the students' perspective with regard to causes of students' failure in projecting voice in academic writing and possible solutions. A detailed discussion on the results of the data analysis has been provided in the following section.

Causes of Failure in Projecting Voice

Issues with the Education System: The Bangladeshi education system which is more concerned with rote learning, according to a few interviewees, is a glaring issue when it comes to voice projection in writing. The students were less accustomed to creative writing and did not know how to project their voice while writing. Particularly, the students from Bangla medium schools lagged behind in flaunting their voice in academic writing due to the loopholes in the teaching system. As the notion of voice projection is not explicitly taught in school, students struggle more at the tertiary level to do it as it is a whole new concept to them.

Less Scope for Projecting Voice in Research Papers: According to the students, failure in projecting voice stems from the fact that teachers, in the case of research papers, give less importance to the students' own opinions. SP2 claimed that the major impediment to students' voice projection was that many of the teachers just said,

"go for formatting, and how to do in-text citations...they don't really focus on the writers' own voice for the paper."

The participants further expressed that they were not taught properly how to project voice in academic writing at the tertiary level; hence, they faced significant problems while writing papers for academic consumption.

Conflicting Views Concerning Grammar and Rhetoric: When probed regarding the importance of grammar and rhetoric in terms of academic writing, differing views were found among the participants. Few of the students did not see the appeal of grammar and rhetoric in projecting one's voice and did not believe that simply knowing grammar or rhetoric could be significant in this regard. SP3 stated,

"[for] an argumentative essay, mostly, we need to agree or disagree and give reasons. So for that, I don't think that having good vocabulary or good grammar can help..."

However, some other participants opined that not knowing proper grammar and rhetoric affected how a writer projected their voice in academic writing. SP4 aptly said in this regard,

"...they are just not understanding what kind of words or grammar to use to express their ideas or emotions."

Students' Diffidence About Making an Absolute Thesis Claim: The student participants noted students' lack of confidence in general, which extended to not being able to take a proper stand or to make a thesis claim in their writing. As SP1 mentioned

"The fact that we have to take an absolute thesis claim, I think that's what makes us a bit hesitant about what we want to say to convince the reader."

Some of the interviewees went as far as to suggest that the requirement of absolute thesis claim be made non-obligatory. In this regard, one of the interviewees reported that they did not believe that it was always necessary to argue in absolutes, rather arguing from a standpoint which elicited "genuine response" should be the usual practice in writing according to them.

Solutions for Alleviating Issues with Voice Projection

Writing Courses with Explicit Instructions: One of the solutions that emerged in analyzing the qualitative data from student interviews was the need for writing courses that were more focused on voice projection and writing as a whole. SP2 stated,

"So the courses should be more well-organized and, you know, more focused on how to give importance to the writers' own thoughts."

The participants also expressed that, given all the students did not necessarily come from the department of English, they might not be well-versed in the technicalities of writing in English; hence, writing courses that provided explicit instructions could be beneficial.

Increasing Students' Confidence: Few of the interviewees advocated raising students' self-confidence as a way to tackle the hurdle of failing to project voice in their writing. The participants noted that students had to first convince themselves that what they were writing and the argument that they were choosing was good, and it would, in effect, spark off their voice in writing. Apart from self-motivation, some other strategies to generate confidence in the students have been pointed out, such as working in groups or joining debate clubs.

Changing Students' View Regarding Grammar and Rhetoric: Some of the participants highlighted that grammar and rhetoric were of paramount importance for projecting voice in academic writing. Subsequently, SP4 reported, "I think grammar is really important. It makes the paper rich and it makes [the writing] more believable, debatable." Grammar, thus, helps in making a piece of writing more comprehensible for the reader. Moreover, the students expressed their thoughts on how not using proper grammar and rhetorical sentences took away from effectively representing their ideas. Hence, the use of rhetoric can help

a writer substantially to project their voice in such a way that is significantly more impactful.

Thematic Findings of Teacher Interviews

The 11 teacher participants (TP) were presented with 5 open-ended questions (see Appendix 4) with an intent to try and understand what the teachers' thought regarding students' voice projection in academic writing. Correspondingly, several causes as they relate to failure in projecting voice as well as several interesting solutions emerged once a thematic analysis was performed on the qualitative data, which has been discussed in detail below.

Causes of Failure in Projecting Voice

Educational System: Behind students' failure to project voice in academic writing, one of the most echoed causes was the education system. According to several teacher participants, as the Bangladeshi education system is primarily dependent on rote learning (while in school and college), students are given the resources beforehand, which they memorize and eventually regurgitate on the exam script. In connection to this, TP5 mentioned,

"I feel with a lot of students when you give them a sample essay, they tend to memorize that and just repeat what's been given to them."

This hampers their originality and creativity on a major level, especially when it comes to writing and in turn, their ability to project voice.

Lack of Writing Instruction at the Root Level: The teacher participants strongly believed that the lack of instructions in school about writing worked as a major setback for the students once they started with tertiary level education. TP5 stated,

"...if you don't know how to do basic writing, how to write a basic essay, how will you go on to project voice?"

The students have no prior knowledge in regards to structure, e.g. how to write a thesis statement, topic sentences, controlling ideas. The participants further mentioned that students were not familiar with the concept of refutation, and they were not used to expository or argumentative writing, and were not exposed to different writing styles in schools or colleges.

Students' Shortcomings: Teachers noted students' lack of proactiveness resulting from excessive reliance on guidebooks, class lectures, and Google and/or other secondary sources online, which hampered independent thinking and worked as a major obstacle in voice projection. TP10 expressed that

"...they [students] do not analyze or critique what they read. They relied mostly on class lectures/notes which is a major hindrance for independent thinking."

Additionally, instead of brainstorming first on their own, they at times lean towards plagiarism. Another reason mentioned by the teachers was students' scarcity of knowledge on various topics; thus, they sometimes invented or fabricated evidence to try and support their claims. Furthermore, the teachers mentioned how the students had a fear of presenting their arguments, especially

when they're confronted with a topic that was controversial or unfamiliar, and they were concerned about other people's judgment regarding their stance.

Teachers' Lack of Efficacy: A number of participants voiced their concern regarding lack of proper mentoring and supervision from teachers as well as lack of teacher-training. Most of the teachers at schools, colleges, and even some at universities were ill-equipped to help their students with voice projection in writing as they themselves lacked knowledge in the field. While most teachers at school level, regrettably, are not competent enough to teach writing, one participant pointed out a relatively shocking yet true scenario of Bangladeshi educational context where English teachers at schools sometimes were without a degree in English and had their background in mathematics, biology, and such. Time constraint and course workload were also found to be some significant issues, which deterred teachers from teaching students about voice in writing.

Solutions for Mitigating Voice Projection Issues

Introducing the Concept of Voice at the Preparatory Level: The teacher participants called for the introduction of voice projection in academic writing in schools. The participants conveyed that English medium schools were ahead of Bangla medium schools given the English medium students were made to do presentations through which they built a habit of expressing their ideas and views, and it helped them move away from the practice of rote learning. The participants further recommended arranging debate sessions in class, which would help students to understand the correlation between speaking and writing and assist in projecting their voice. Per TP1,

"It can help them express their opinions and mostly that it can be practiced orally and then in writing."

Teacher-Training: More or less all the teacher participants during the interview acknowledged teacher-training to help students' voice projection in writing. One of the interviewees advocated teacher-training would aid in shifting towards more communicative methods that would help students tap into their creative side instead of simply memorizing the given materials. Training has a direct role to play in terms of familiarizing teachers with the writing basics, such as the structure of an essay and idea development which would ultimately lead to emergence of voice in the written text by their students.

Teachers' Role in Helping Students to Project Voice: With regard to projecting their voice in academic writing, the participating teachers suggested motivating students to help fight hesitation, and TP2 in this regard stated,

"I'm telling you as a teacher that you [the students] need to train your mindset, that you, as a student exist, your voice also matters."

The teachers mentioned the need to create an ethos free of insecurities where the students would know that they were not going to be judged either by their teachers or their peers for using wrong English considering the focus was going to be on their arguments or opinions. Furthermore, TP6 mentioned,

"if we force unfamiliar or strange or controversial topics on them [the students]...the task gets daunting for them."

By giving them more familiar options for argumentative tasks, the students can come up with logical ideas and the fear will subside.

Providing More Exposure to Various Materials: The teacher participants, first and foremost, endorsed a need for developing reading habits. According to them, once the students were exposed to different types of writing styles, they would see how other writers wrote and how they projected themselves. In this regard, TP8 suggested reading materials, such as

“journals, scholarly articles”, and TP11 suggested using video materials, such as “TED Talks, any awareness campaign videos.”

6. Discussion

The focus of the current study was to explore the factors which were contributing to the overall failure of the learners while projecting voice in writing as well as possible solutions from the perspective of both the teachers and the students. As a matter of fact, Hyland (2008) defined voice in writing as an expression of the writers' subjective observations, solidity, and existence. Right at the outset of the research it was observed that many of the learners at the tertiary level were either yet to learn about this concept or not yet familiar with the practice of illustrating voice in writing at all (Hasan & Akhand, 2010). Following its independence in 1971, Bangladesh initiated English instructions focusing on the Grammar Translation Method (GTM), which came to an end in 2001 by replacing it with the Communicative Language Teaching Method (Milon & Ali, 2023; Rahman, 2015). The CLT method was supposed to teach the four skills of a language focusing on real-life communication, but the reality is in Bangladesh. Still disguised GTM method is getting followed in the name of the CLT approach (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2023). Primary and secondary level teachers in Bangladesh are not well-equipped with state-of-the-art training, and as per the response of one teacher participant, some of the rural area teachers are not even from English discipline backgrounds. Moreover, the culture of Bangladesh restrains the CLT approach to be implemented adequately because here the majority of the individuals focus on rote memorization and getting good marks in the examination. This culture is fueled by the stakeholders of shadow education, who bring different suggestions and short notes that ensure good grades with less effort. This tendency hinders students' potential to write using their creativity because spontaneous writing can make more mistakes than writing from rote memorization (Al Amin & Greenwood, 2023). For the actual instillation of the CLT approach, the gap between the government's policy promises and actual classroom objectives should be alleviated in the primary level of education (Al Nahar & Kashem Hira, 2024).

A major hurdle standing in the way of voice projection was found to be students' reluctance towards being proactive. According to the teacher participants, students were heavily dependent on readymade materials from textbooks and other resources. The quantitative data from the students' survey also backed up this claim made by the educators as the student participants noted they had a hard time with materializing supporting details for writing tasks. Although writing courses are offered with the intention of improving the writing skills of students,

many are unsuccessful at developing their abilities of composition at the tertiary level (Afrin, 2014); hence, their projection of voice also falls below standard in terms of academic writing. The interviews with the teachers clearly indicated the lack of writing instructions at the root level as in schools since as the key impediment working against the students in this case. Considering, prior knowledge on thesis statements, topic sentences, and essay organization were, more or less, absent from the students' years of educational experience; these students came up with written pieces which were disjointed.

The quantitative data from teachers' survey showed that the teachers were aware of their students' anxiety, and this worked as a significant factor in affecting students' writing attitude. Thus, to make students better aware of voice in writing, a pedagogy specifically designed for L2 writing should be there to alleviate these issues (Ivanic & Camps, 2001).

Graham (2019) opined that it is a prerequisite that teachers have appropriate expertise regarding writing, its growth, and specific directions on writing, specifically those who are teaching reading or writing, or utilizing writing in order to aid learning obligation. In line with this, two kinds of lack in teacher competence can be referred to the teachers' lack in writing expertise and a lack of teacher training. In addition, both the teacher participants and student participants realized the need for effective feedback, and the importance of it can be witnessed in the statement of Saha (2017) who mentioned that constructive feedback coupled with learner autonomy and making known the significance of the lessons can help to resuscitate discouragement of students.

Brainstorming was seen as a valuable aspect in voice projection, which may be achieved by holding discussion sessions or utilizing task-based learning. Teacher participants believed that this would be a successful way of stimulating interaction between teacher and student and also between student and student. They also thought this would make students more receptive to the other side of the argument and better equip them for producing counterarguments. Student participants, during their interviews, also reiterated similar notions of group work or debate clubs having the power to raise students' confidence in projecting voice in their writing.

The majority of the teacher participants from the study believed that teacher-training played a crucial role in teaching students to project their voice in their writing. The qualitative data from the teacher interviews also mirrored this finding. A review of the past literature supported the view of teacher-training as a prerequisite in the L2 writing context as well (Hyland, 2019). Due to the lack of any proper training in this field, the teacher participants claimed that dated teaching techniques were being utilized by educators. The quantitative data from the teachers' survey also revealed that they were not receiving any significant training in voice projection. During the interviews the teachers pointed out the importance of teacher-training to acquaint them with the fundamentals of writing (essay structure and idea development) to yield more success in voice projection. A study by Spalding et al. (2009) also suggested that compared to the other

elements of writing (i.e. ideas, organization, word choice, sentence fluency, conventions), the participants in the teacher workshop showed more improvements in regards to voice in writing.

It was also found from the students' responses that behind their inability to effectively project their voice was the fact that it was not given much importance in academic writing and they get intimidated by teachers sometimes. Concerning the student participants, the data from other scholarly resources were deemed to be more valuable by their teachers while their own opinion was sidelined and the struggle of projecting their voice in writing ensued. Hyland (2008) in this regard, emphasized the need for writing in first-person for better projection of the writer's identity and hence better projection of their own voice. The student participants, however, found that rather than being trained in voice projection in academic writing, all their attention was being driven towards learning how to master in-text citations and formatting. In that case, culture and environment played a crucial role. The current study also found that L2 learners' cultural attitude, social norms and education mode halted the students from making their own claims in a strong and confident manner and establishing their presence in writing according to past literature as well (Cadman, 1997; Fox, 1997; Hinkel, 1999; Kaplan, 1987; Matsuda, 2001; Ramanathan & Atkinson, 1999; Ramanathan & Kaplan, 1996; Wu & Rubin, 2000). The study also found some other elements like learners' attitudes to school learning, motivation for learning, socio-cultural background, oracy to express proper words in writing, and lifestyle affect their writing attitude (Wyatt-Smith & Castleton, 2004).

Besides other educational elements, virtual spaces can play a significant role in overcoming the mentioned notions. As this is the era of the fourth industrial revolution, wide-ranging virtual spaces are readily available to students that could assist them in learning from different resources. As per the interview response, the more the students get exposed to various materials, the better they learn to portray argumentative reasoning in their writing. These materials are not always available locally, but the virtual spaces reduce this gap by providing access to a myriad of international journals, scholarly articles, TED talks, and awareness campaign videos. Moreover, virtual spaces like online discussion forums can be introduced to students to facilitate their critical thinking capabilities by discussing their thoughts with their peers. In terms of conducting research, the array of existing knowledge helps them form and prove their thesis statement. Virtual elements act as active agents to accelerate students' active learning capacity by providing accessibility to diversified, engaging content (Kivunja, 2013). These specially help students in a pre-writing stage that functions as a foundation for the composition by giving access to L2 articles that help in planning and preparing the writing (Biju & Vijayakumar, 2023).

Therefore, from pre-writing to post-writing stages virtual spaces are crucial from idea generation to final composition. Tuning with Stiegler's (2012) theory of writing and technology and its impact on composition studies, it can be said that adopting different technologies in teaching writing can modify the past writing trends and break the stereotypical mindset by opening the door to diversified

resources. Moreover, the study echoes with sociocultural theory of mind and the concept by Daniels (2016) where social interaction can be an active kindler to instigate writing capacities and the vastness of linguistic capacity can stimulate the voice projection in writing which the tertiary students in Bangladesh lack due to the stereotypical study mode from the beginning of their education life. Therefore, this study also advocates for arranging training for teachers that they can make students apt in creative writing which can be done by creating an environment combining deductive and inductive modes of teaching and learning.

By reviewing the existing literature, it can be stated that the current study is relevant to the study of Graham (2019), which showed the lack of teacher knowledge, so teacher training can be an integral step to be incorporated (Iordanou & Rapanta, 2021). In line with French (2020), though the directions are provided to students, they do not know how to utilize them in their writing due to their mode of initial education. The study is relevant to the study of Matsuda (2001), where cultural elements play a major role in projecting thoughts in writing English. Madi et al. (2021) also stated about the cultural influences that the present study detected in the investigation. The study also can be correlated with the studies of Barbara et al. (2024), Aldabbus and Almansouri (2022), Baktash et al. (2024), and French (2020).

7. Recommendations

It is advisable for educational institutions to integrate voice instruction and practice into their curriculum, which should commence early in education, emphasizing its significance, and providing many opportunities for argumentative writing skill development. The utilization of technology should also be done to engage learners in rigorous practice and enhance their proficiency. Furthermore, the government should actualize the education policies according to the promises to nurture the potential of students from their initial stage of education.

8. Limitations

The current study could not collect data from overall Bangladesh due to time and resource constraints. The extensive exploration of the country can provide more insights into voice projection academic writing and add more to the existing knowledge gap.

9. Conclusion

To conclude, the resolution of concerns about voice projection in written communication necessitates a comprehensive strategy that encompasses the collaboration of educators and learners. Hence, this research has identified some significant factors that contribute to Bangladeshi tertiary-level students' lack of proficiency in using voice in written expression, such as - a limited understanding of the notion of voice, practice of rote learning, students' hesitancy to take initiative, linguistic obstacles, and cultural factors influencing prioritization of collective goals. Furthermore, the researchers discovered substantial obstacles in insufficient teacher preparation, the omission of voice projection in academic writing, and their suggestive solutions. This study advocates identifying the gaps

in voice projection in academic writing, and by filling the gaps, this study plans to stimulate learners to become effective communicators and critical thinkers. Therefore, by implementing the suggested principles and cultivating a nurturing learning environment, educational institutions, as well as other educational stakeholders, can empower students to effectively express their perspectives in their academic writing and other contexts. This empowerment will lead them to be a responsible individual of the nation by unwrapping their rational and critical thinking capacities.

Declaration of Conflicting Interests

Authors have no conflict of interest to declare.

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Appendix 1

Questionnaire for the Student participants

1. Name of your institution.

2. What is your current level of education
 - Undergraduate Student
 - Graduate Student
 - Recent Graduate

3. Are you aware of the projection of 'Voice' in argumentative writing?
 - Yes
 - No
 - May Be
 - Other:

4. Have you learnt how to write an argumentative essay/writing at your university?
 - Yes
 - No
 - Not Sure
 - Other

5. If the answer of Question # 3 is yes, how did you practice writing argumentative essay/writing at your university? (You can choose more than one option)
 - I followed the structures from the textbook
 - I memorized the essays from the suggested textbooks
 - I followed what my English teacher suggested me to do
 - I followed the structures but have written on my own
 - Other:

6. What challenges did you face at the university level while writing argumentative essays/writings? (You can choose more than one answer)
 - I struggled to establish my claim with logic and rationale
 - I struggled to develop supporting ideas
 - I struggled to establish opposing ideas
 - I struggled to refute the counter-arguments
 - Other:

7. Have you learnt regarding projecting "voice" in an argumentative essay? (Projecting voice means presenting your own thoughts, views and standing in favor of your position in an argumentative essay/writing)
 - Yes
 - No
 - May Be
 - Other

8. What reasons do you think are responsible for tertiary students' failure to project their voice in argumentative writing? (You can choose more than one answer)

- They always follow the teacher's given structures
- They heavily rely on memorization from the textbook
- They are not taught various writing approaches
- They lack proficiency in the writing skills
- They lack independent writing practices in the English classes
- They lack knowledge about various writing strategies for voice projection
- They lack awareness about the importance of voice projection in argumentative writing
- They are not being taught the skills of argumentative writing in their English classes
- All above Other:

9. As a student what do you think you should do to learn projecting voice in argumentative writing efficiently ? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Interacting with the teachers and peers in the classroom
- Making a habit of reading to form own opinions
- Incorporating own opinions into writing
- Practicing argumentative writing on a regular basis
- All above
- Other:

10. How can the teachers teach projecting voice in argumentative writing efficiently at the tertiary level? (You can choose more than one answer)

- Educating students with the strategies to project voices in writing
- Teaching students about writing tone, styles and audience
- Emphasizing argumentative essay writing
- Teaching process and free-hand writing
- Raising consciousness about the art of voice projection
- All above
- Other

11. Have you received effective feedback from the teachers on your argumentative writing?

- Yes
- No
- May be
- Other:

Appendix 2

Questionnaire for the Teacher Participants

1. Name of Your Institution:

2. How long have you been teaching English?

3. Do you teach argumentative writing at your institution?
 - Yes
 - No
 - May be
 - Other:

4. If your answer to question (#3) is 'Yes', do you teach voice projection such as positioning and standing at your institution?
 - Yes
 - No
 - May be
 - Other:

5. What reasons do you think are responsible for tertiary students' failure to project voice in argumentative writing? (You can choose more than one answer)
 - They always follow the teacher's given structures
 - They heavily rely on memorization from the textbook
 - They are not taught various writing approaches
 - They lack proficiency in the writing skills
 - They lack independent writing practices in the English classes
 - They lack knowledge about various writing strategies for voice projection
 - They lack awareness about the importance of voice projection in writing All above
 - Other:

6. Are the tertiary teachers trained in teaching voice projection to students?
 - Yes
 - No
 - May be
 - Other

7. Do you think there are enough facilities for the tertiary teachers to receive training on voice projection in academic writing in Bangladesh?
 - Yes
 - No
 - May be

- Other
8. Is teachers' training essential for educating tertiary students about projecting voice in their argumentative writings?
- Yes
 - No
 - May be
 - Other
9. What should be done in the classroom to help tertiary level students project their voice in their academic writing? (You can choose more than one answer)
- Teaching process and free-hand writing
 - Emphasizing argumentative essay writing
 - Educating students with the strategies to project voices in writing
 - Teaching students about writing tone, styles and audience
 - Providing students with effective feedback on voice projection all above
 - Other:
10. What are your thoughts on English teachers' role in helping tertiary level students project their voice in academic writing?
-

Appendix 3

Interview Questions for the Student Participants

1. Why is it important to have a voice in an academic paper at the tertiary level?
2. What role does a teacher have to play when it comes to inciting one's own thoughts and perspective in a paper at the tertiary level?
3. To what extent grammar and rhetorics enable a student to produce a paper consisting of a voice?
4. Are the current students at the tertiary level capable of differentiating between "process" and "product" when it comes to writing in Bangladesh?
5. Does the lack of having a voice and dependency on the available information lead to the production of a paper which is substandard for a student at the tertiary level?
6. From the perspective of a student, what are the obstacles in generating a voice at the tertiary level for a paper?
7. Do courses with the focus on writing enable students to find and harness a voice in their writing?
8. What factors may help a student to generate a voice in terms of writing?
9. Should the habit of memorization single-handed be blamed to lower the chances of having a voice in a paper?
10. Would proper feedback from teachers enable a student to find a voice which could be easily portrayed in a paper?

Appendix 4

Interview Questions for the Teacher Participants

1. As an instructor of the tertiary level, do you think that the students can exhibit their voices (taking a side or stand) in the argumentative writing? For example, "Facebook should be banned. To what extent do you agree or disagree?"
2. What do you think are the probable causes of this failure to project voice in argumentative writing by our students at the tertiary level.
3. What do you think are the possible solutions to these problems of failing to project voice in an argumentative piece of writing? You can discuss elaborately.
4. As English instructor, what should we do to help our students learn how to project voice in an argumentative piece of writing at the tertiary level?
5. What should the students do to improve their ability to project voice in an argumentative piece of writing?