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Graduates' English communicative competence and its impact on academic success: Implications for EFL learning in Bangladeshi public universities

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ABSTRACT

In Bangladesh's EFL context, English communicative competence plays a critical role in shaping students' academic success. This study examines the impact of English language skills on the educational experiences of public university graduates and identifies key instructional and curricular gaps. Using a mixed-methods explanatory sequential design, the study surveyed 100 graduates from three major public universities and conducted semi-structured interviews to explore their language challenges and perceptions. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, while qualitative responses underwent thematic analysis. Findings reveal that although many graduates self-rated their English skills as "good," significant deficiencies, particularly in speaking and writing, frequently hindered academic tasks such as essay writing, presentations, and research communication. Notably, over 60% of participants reported a mismatch between university English instruction and the language demands of academic work. Qualitative insights further emphasize the emotional struggles and performance anxieties associated with low communicative competence. The study highlights the pressing need for curriculum reforms that focus on English for Academic Purposes (EAP), provide interactive speaking opportunities, and incorporate performance-based assessments. These findings advocate for skill-based, context-aware EFL instruction to better support academic achievement and professional preparedness in Bangladeshi higher education.



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1. Introduction

In today's globalized world, English serves as a primary medium of international communication, widely used across various domains, including education, business, travel, and academia (Seidlhofer, 2001; Rao, 2019). It has become one of the most commonly spoken languages worldwide, often serving as a second language or lingua franca in multilingual contexts (Suna & Durmu^oçelebi, 2013; Broughton et al., 2003). The global role of English has enhanced cross-cultural

connectivity and facilitated access to information, making it a vital tool for academic and professional success (Rao, 2019).

In the realm of education, English holds a prominent position. Since it is the language of textbooks and the medium of instruction, it is practically indispensable in the field of education. It is also widely acknowledged that proficiency in the English language can enhance a student's overall academic effectiveness and credentials (Ahmed et al., 2022). Moreover, it is evident that language plays a dynamic role in various aspects of our day-to-day lives, and its influence extends into the broader spheres of learning and knowledge acquisition in academic sectors. Hence, considering the broadened role of language efficiency, academicians worldwide regard language as a significant tool for both cognitive exercises and acquiring new knowledge, which regulates learners' ability to access academic texts and critically evaluate intangible concepts and ideas (Bachore, 2022).

Recognizing this factor, numerous universities worldwide implement English as a Foreign Language (EFL) or English as a Second Language (ESL) courses into their curricula. These programs are often included at the beginning of higher education to ensure students develop their sub-skills in English, including reading, writing, listening, and speaking. It is believed that a basic level of working knowledge in the sub-skills of the language is essential for academic success. For example, Sayed (2018) notes that the introduction of a specialized course, such as English for Academic Purposes (EAP), further highlights the perceived connection between language proficiency and academic success. However, the correlation between English language aptitude and advanced academic attainment has not been proven unanimously and empirically worldwide (Black, 1991).

English communicative competence is particularly vital at the tertiary level, where academic discourse demands high levels of clarity, engagement, and collaboration. Students must not only comprehend academic lectures and texts but also make significant contributions to research, seminars, presentations, and findings. Also, Strong communication skills facilitate collaboration, enhance learning, and improve academic performance by allowing students to engage fully with course material and interact meaningfully with peers and instructors. As Vinke & Jochems (1993) found, improved performance in the four language skills facilitates academic achievement, especially among young and active learners. However, older learners may not exhibit similar benefits, possibly due to a reduced connection between language skills and institutional goals or a more relaxed academic mindset.

In a related study, Martirosyan et al. (2015) investigated the impact of English language proficiency and multilingualism on the academic performance of international students enrolled in a four-year degree program at a university in the United States. Their statistical analyses revealed substantial variations in language proficiency and multilingualism in academic performance. The highest mean GPA was observed among students who demonstrated high levels of self-perceived English language proficiency and among students who spoke more than two languages, particularly those who did so. In response to these findings, Sayed (2018) claims that EAP has emerged as a vital genre within EFL teaching, preparing learners with the language competencies needed for the academic arena, which is an unavoidable aspect of study and research in many institutes, and has a significant success record, albeit not without exceptions.

In Bangladesh, the demand for English communicative skills has increased significantly in recent years. Fatema and Sultana (2020) stated that acquiring English as an EFL has become critically

essential in Bangladesh due to the necessity of English proficiency for pursuing higher education and securing a job. According to Stiglitz (2002), an individual can cultivate a prosperous career if they possess proficiency in the English language in academic pursuits. In the 21st century, as Trevelyan & Tillie (2010) state, fluency in English is widely anticipated for university graduates in both academic and professional settings. Shobikah (2017) also emphasizes the need for early instruction in English to help students compete in a globalized world. Unfortunately, many graduates in Bangladesh still face difficulties in achieving the necessary level of communicative competence, which hinders both their academic and professional aspirations (Zeigler, 2007).

Hence, this study aims to unearth the role of English communicative competence in building the academic success of public university graduates in Bangladesh. Despite teaching English from the very beginning in the country's education system, low communicative performance is still evident among graduates (Hamid & Baldauf, 2008). Several students complete their graduation without acquiring adequate English language skills, often relying more on memorization than on the practical use of language (Rahman et al., 2019). Consequently, they face difficulties in academic pursuits such as reading and writing, and also fail to actively participate in classroom activities, discussions, presentations, and research (Chowdhury & Kamal, 2014). These limitations are particularly problematic, given that university curricula increasingly demand critical engagement, academic writing, and participation in seminar-based learning, all of which require a strong command of the English language.

The study is based on the framework of the Outcome-Based Education Curriculum (OBEC), which is implemented by the Bangladesh Accreditation Council (BAC) and monitored by the University Grants Commission (UGC). These frameworks highlight graduate outcomes in terms of academic performance, employability, and global competitiveness (BAC, 2021). In this regard, English communicative competence is very much crucial at the graduate level. However, in the Bangladeshi context, few empirical studies have been conducted systematically on the graduates' communicative skills and their immediate impact on academic achievement (Hasan & Akhand, 2009; Kabir, 2015). Although Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been implemented in many educational institutions, research indicates that pedagogical objectives and classroom realities remain misaligned, particularly in public universities where examination-driven learning and teacher-centered instruction still prevail (Ali & Walker, 2014; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). This disparity necessitates a comprehensive examination of the impact of English communicative skills on academic performance during undergraduate studies and beyond.

Furthermore, although global research has identified the correlation between communicative competence and academic achievement, the specific context of Bangladeshi public universities remains under-examined. There is a lack of empirical data on how well Bangladeshi public university graduates perform in English and how these skills impact their academic performances (Ahmed et al., 2022). For example, according to Sultana and Ahsan (2013), many students acquire a cursory knowledge of English that aids in their exam-taking but does not equip them for communication in the classroom or at work. In a similar vein, Karim and Mohamed (2019) note that students' academic mobility and access to global knowledge are significantly restricted when they lack instruction in speaking and writing. Hence, this study not only addresses a local research gap but also contributes to

broader discourses on language education and academic achievement in EFL contexts. Therefore, this study seeks to answer the following key questions:

- 1) To what extent did English communicative competence influence graduates' academic performance or success during their undergraduate studies?
- 2) What academic challenges and achievements did they encounter, and how did their English communication skills shape these shape these?
- 3) What gaps do graduates now recognize in hindsight regarding their English communicative skills?

By addressing these questions, the study aims to offer insights into the role of English communicative competence in shaping academic outcomes and to inform more effective English language instruction within the context of Bangladeshi public universities.

2. Method

The methodology employed in this research was to investigate the extent to which university graduates' communicative competence in the English language contributed to their academic success. Hence, the study employed a mixed-methodology approach, combining both qualitative and quantitative methods, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the research questions. According to Enosh et al. (2014), employing mixed methods enabled researchers to offer thorough and detailed responses to their research questions. This mixed-method design allowed for a comprehensive exploration of the research problem, incorporating both structured facts and customised realities (Axinn & Pearce, 2006). Among the three basic mixed methods research designs (parallel design, explanatory sequential design, and exploratory sequential design), this study used an explanatory sequential design that started with quantitative data collection and analysis and then followed up with qualitative data collection and analysis, which led to interpretation (Ivankova et al., 2006). The qualitative method, along with open-ended questions such as interviews and self-reflective responses, provided in-depth insights into participants' perceptions, experiences, and challenges related to their English language skills.

2.1 Research settings and population sampling

To provide context for the study, the following table outlines the research settings and the demographic profile of the sampled population across selected public universities in Bangladesh.

Table 1: Sample population profile (Students N = 100)

No	Universities	Number of Students		Total
1.	Jagannath University	Male	20	40
		Female	20	
2.	Jahangirnagar University	Male	12	30
		Female	18	
3.	University of Dhaka	Male	20	30
		Female	10	

The study's setting comprised three purposively selected major public universities in Bangladesh: Jagannath University, Jahangirnagar University, and the University of Dhaka. Purposive sampling from these three universities selected a total of 100 graduates from various fields. A total of 40 participants from Jagannath University, 30 participants from Jahangirnagar University, and 30 participants from the University of Dhaka were involved in this study.

2.2 Data collection process

Data collection involved both open-ended and closed-ended questionnaires, consisting of a total of 12 questions to explore a combination of structured facts and customized realities. This approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the graduates' English communicative skills and the challenges they faced. Additionally, semi-structured interviews were conducted over the phone with 10 graduates to understand their experiences of how English language competencies affected their academic success during their graduation. The majority of the survey questionnaires were distributed via Messenger, WhatsApp, and other social sites. To ensure participants understood and consented to the study, the researchers occasionally had to speak with them by phone. Additionally, they had to remind participants on social media platforms to complete the form to finalize their participation.

2.3 Data analysis procedure

This study employed a mixed-methods approach, integrating both quantitative and qualitative data analysis. The questionnaire items, comprising both closed-ended and open-ended questions, were carefully aligned with the central research objectives. Quantitative responses were analyzed using Microsoft Excel to identify patterns and trends, while qualitative responses were examined through thematic analysis to uncover recurring themes and insights. This dual approach provided a holistic understanding of how English communicative competence influenced academic performance. The findings aim to inform policy development and curriculum enhancement efforts aimed at enhancing English language proficiency among graduates in Bangladeshi public universities.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Findings and Data Analysis

1) Quantitative data analysis

To begin the analysis, the study first explores how graduates self-assessed their overall English communicative competence, providing a general overview of their perceived proficiency levels. The following figure presents a summary of these ratings.

Figure 1 illustrates the distribution of respondents' self-assessed proficiency in English communication. The majority of respondents (45%) rated their skills as "Good," while 25% assessed themselves as "Excellent." A smaller portion (20%) rated their skills as "Fair," and the smallest percentage (10%) described their communicative skills as "Poor." This distribution indicates that a significant portion of respondents consider themselves proficient in English, with only a minority rating their abilities as below average.

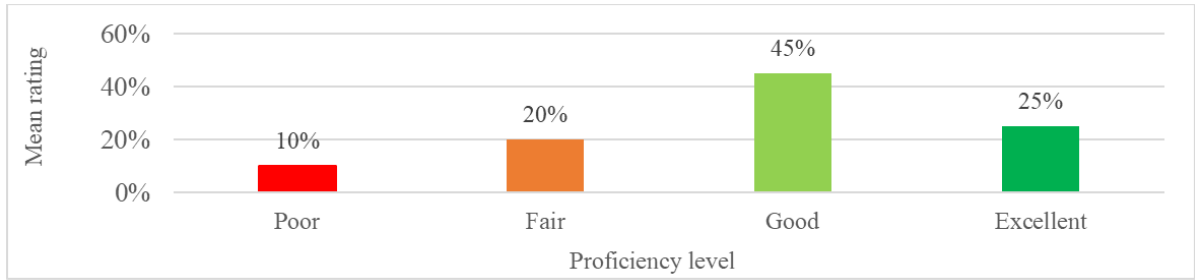


Figure 1. Graduates' overall rating of English communicative skills

Following the general assessment of overall communicative competence, the study then focuses on specific language skills, beginning with writing. In Figure 2, the findings reveal a distribution of confidence levels among participants. The data indicates that a majority of respondents (58%) reported being *confident* in their English writing abilities.

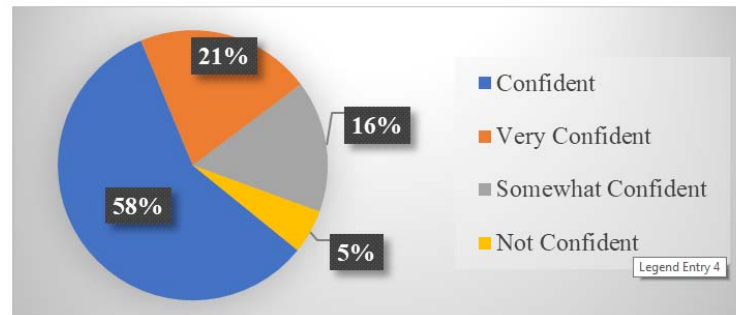


Figure 2: Graduates' confidence level in English writing skills

Figure 2 illustrates the distribution of participants' confidence levels in English writing skills. The majority (58%) reported feeling confident, while 21% indicated they were very confident, reflecting a strong sense of self-assurance among a significant portion of graduates. Another 16% described themselves as somewhat confident, suggesting moderate proficiency, while only 5% reported being not confident, indicating a small group with low self-perceived ability. Overall, the data suggest that most graduates possess moderate to high confidence in their English writing skills, with relatively few experiencing notable insecurity.

In addition to writing confidence, the study also explored graduates' experiences with receptive skills, particularly their ability to comprehend spoken academic English.

Based on the data provided, Figure 3 illustrates the challenges respondents face in understanding English lectures. The distribution indicates that a significant proportion, 58%, reported never experiencing difficulties in comprehending English lectures. However, 26.30% of respondents often encounter such challenges, suggesting that over a quarter of the participants regularly face difficulties. A smaller segment, 15.80%, sometimes finds it challenging to understand the lectures, implying occasional comprehension issues. Notably, none of the respondents reported always struggling with understanding English lectures, as reflected by the 0% in this category.

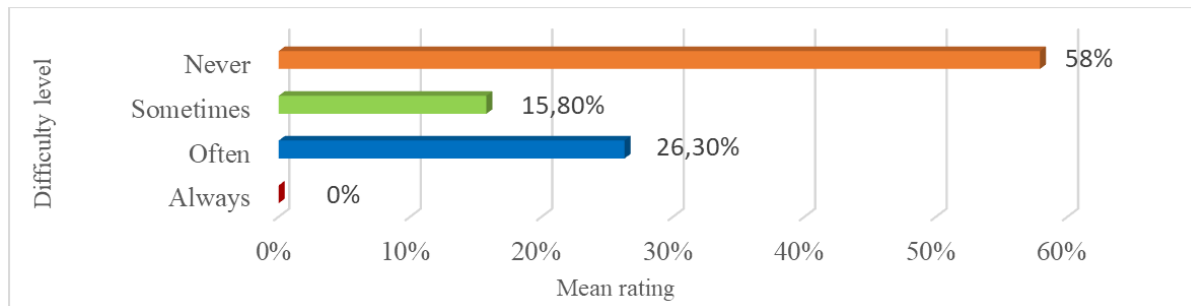


Figure 3. Graduates' difficulty in understanding English lectures

Following the analysis of listening comprehension challenges, the study shifts focus to the productive use of English in academic contexts, particularly in writing tasks such as essays and research papers. Figure 04 illustrates the frequency with which graduates used English in academic writing during their undergraduate studies. This data provides insight into the extent of their exposure to and engagement with English in formal academic writing tasks.

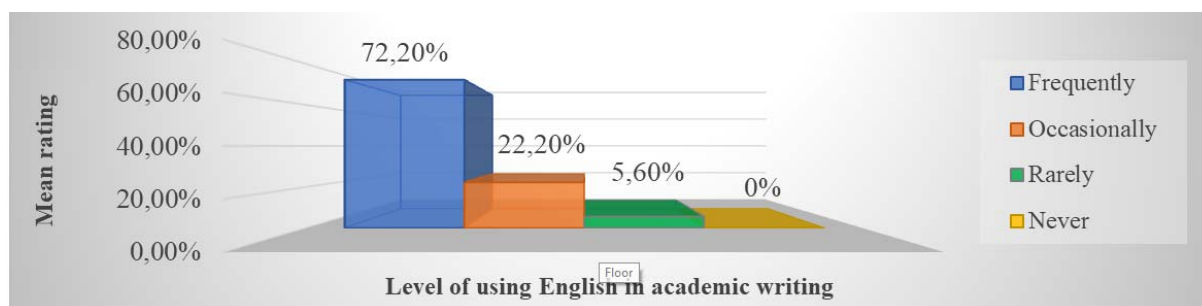


Figure 4. Frequency of using English in academic writing: essays and research papers

The figure depicts the frequency of English usage in academic writing, specifically in essays and research papers. The data shows that English is used frequently in 72.20% of the cases, indicating its dominant role in academic discourse. Occasional use is reported in 22.20% of instances, while rare use is observed in 5.60% of cases. Notably, there are no instances where English is completely absent, as the never category registers 0%. Additionally, 5% of the responses did not provide data. Overall, the findings suggest a clear predominance of English in academic writing, particularly in frequently used contexts.

After examining patterns of English use in academic writing, the study further investigates the specific difficulties graduates encountered as a result of limited communicative competence.

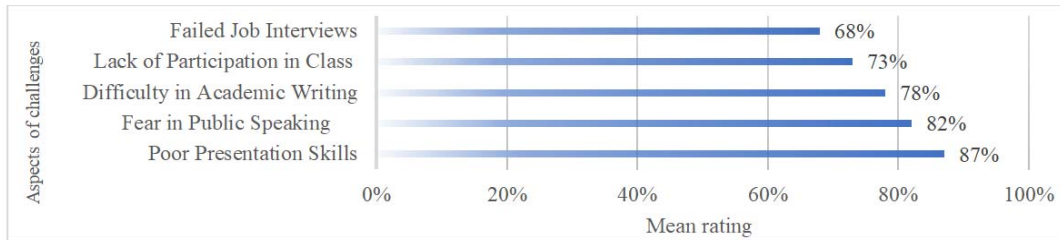


Figure 5. Challenges faced by the graduates due to lack of communicative competence

Figure 5 presents a breakdown of the specific areas in which graduates experienced difficulties due to inadequate English communication skills. The tallest bars (presentation and public speaking issues) show where students struggled the most, aligning with both qualitative quotes and quantitative trends from our study. To further understand the specific skill areas contributing to these academic challenges, the study examined graduates' self-reported deficiencies across core English language skills.

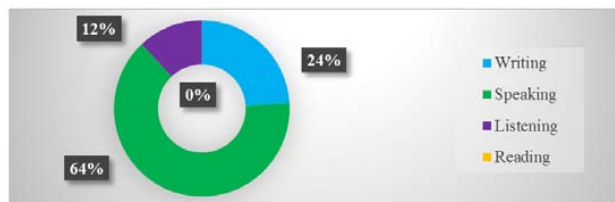


Figure 6. Common deficiencies in English skills observed in academic studies

Figure 6 highlights notable variances in perceived weaknesses in Writing, Speaking, Listening, and Reading. Writing deficiencies are noted at 24%, indicating moderate inadequacy in written communication. In contrast, speaking deficiencies are markedly higher at 64%, revealing a substantial concern in oral communication skills. Listening deficiencies stand at 12%, while reading deficiencies are negligible at 0%. These findings underscore a critical need for targeted interventions, especially to address the high deficiency rate in Speaking, and suggest that while Reading is less problematic, improvements in Writing and Listening should also be prioritized to enhance overall language proficiency.

In addition to self-perceptions of skill deficiencies, the study also explored participants' experiences with formal English proficiency assessments during their academic journey.

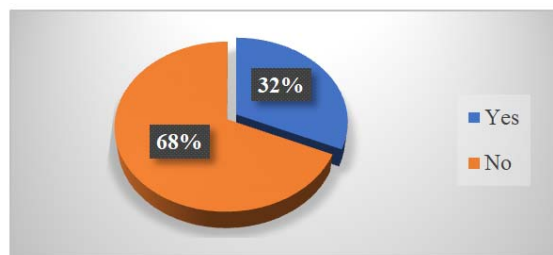


Figure 7. English proficiency assessment experience

Figure 7 indicates that 32% of respondents reported a favorable experience. In contrast, the majority, at 68%, showed an adverse or less favorable experience. These findings suggest that a significant portion of participants encountered challenges or dissatisfactory elements during the assessment process. This disparity may indicate potential areas for improvement in the design, implementation, or accessibility of the assessment, particularly in terms of user experience or perceived fairness. Further investigation into the specific factors contributing to these perceptions is recommended to gain a deeper understanding of the underlying causes of dissatisfaction.

To complement the analysis of graduates' language experiences, the study also examined their perceptions of the effectiveness of English instruction received during their undergraduate studies.

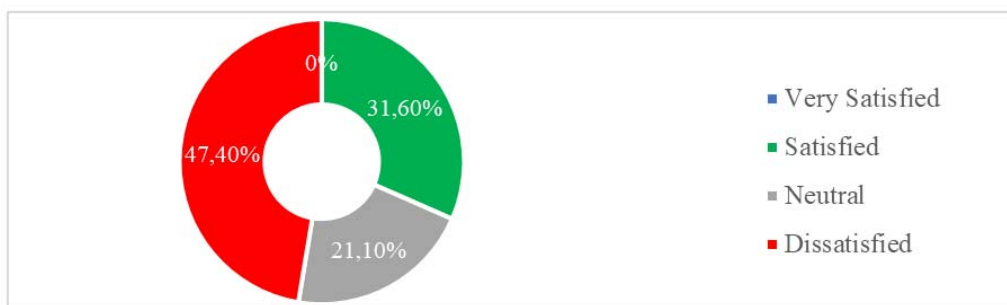


Figure 8. Level of satisfaction with university English language instruction

The figure presents findings on the level of satisfaction with university English language instruction across four categories of response: *Very Satisfied*, *Satisfied*, *Neutral*, and *Disagree*. The data indicates that none of the respondents (0%) expressed being *Very Satisfied* with the English language instruction. A minority of participants, constituting 31.60%, reported being *satisfied*, while 21.10% of respondents maintained a *Neutral* stance. Notably, a significant proportion, 47.40%, expressed dissatisfaction, as indicated by their selection of *Disagree*. These results suggest a general trend of ambivalence or dissatisfaction among the respondents regarding the effectiveness or quality of English language instruction at the university level.

To deepen the understanding of instructional effectiveness, the study also explored how well past English language instruction aligned with the demands graduates later faced in academic and professional contexts.



Figure 9. The gaps between previous English language instruction and current graduate-level success requirements

The figure presented illustrates the disparity between previous English language instruction and the requirements for success at the graduate level. Specifically, it highlights that 61% of respondents believe there is a significant gap between the foundational English language skills acquired through prior education and the advanced competencies necessary for graduate-level academic achievement. Conversely, 39% of respondents do not perceive such a gap. This discrepancy underscores the need for a reevaluation of English language curricula to better align with the rigorous demands of higher education, thereby ensuring that students are adequately prepared to meet the challenges of graduate studies.

2) Qualitative data analysis

In addition to the quantitative findings, qualitative responses were analyzed to gain deeper insights into graduates' lived experiences and perceptions related to English communicative competence. Table 2 presents the thematic analysis organized according to the study's key research questions. The table highlights recurring themes, representative participant quotes, and interpretations that further enrich the understanding of how English communication skills influenced academic success and perceived challenges.

Table 2: Thematic analysis based on research questions

No	Research Question	Emerging Themes from Qualitative Data
1.	How does English communicative competence influence academic success?	Inability to comprehend lectures, difficulties in academic writing
2.	What challenges do graduates face due to lack of communicative skills?	Fear of public speaking, job interview failure, research writing struggle
3.	What curriculum interventions could enhance communicative skills in EFL learners?	Practical communication-focused activities, ESP/EAP integration

The qualitative results indicate that poor English communication skills significantly limit students' academic performance by hindering their ability to comprehend and write academically. Graduates frequently struggled with research writing, public speaking anxiety, and job interview failure, indicating a structural deficiency in practical language instruction. According to the statistics, communication-focused instruction—including ESP/EAP components should be given priority in curriculum revisions. According to this study, which aligns with international EFL best practices, learners are not adequately prepared for the academic and professional demands of the real world through traditional grammar-heavy training. To ensure relevance, employability, and confidence in Bangladeshi EFL contexts, the themes necessitate immediate pedagogical adjustments.

To complement the graduates' perspectives, the study also gathered input from current students to capture their perceptions of challenges related to English communicative competence. Table 3 presents selected quotes from 10 student participants, highlighting the specific academic difficulties they encountered due to limited English skills. These qualitative responses shed light on ongoing issues in areas such as writing, speaking, comprehension, and classroom engagement, offering a comparative view alongside the graduate experiences.

Table 3. Students’ perception of challenges (Students’ N=10)

No	Student	Quote
1.	S1	“I couldn’t express my ideas in class though I had good content knowledge.”
2.	S2	“Due to poor speaking skills, I avoided presentations and group tasks.”
3.	S3	“Writing a research paper felt impossible—I didn’t know how to start.”
4.	S4	“During job interviews, I froze. I couldn’t answer in English.”
5.	S5	“Even understanding academic texts was a big challenge for me.”
6.	S6	“I failed my thesis viva because I couldn’t explain my work confidently.”
7.	S7	“I always feared seminars. I knew what to say but couldn’t say it.”
8.	S8	“My low band score in IELTS stopped me from applying abroad.”
9.	S9	“We memorized grammar rules but never practiced speaking in class.”
10.	S10	“Most of our assignments were copied because we lacked writing skills.”

The qualitative data in Table 3 highlight the emotional and academic toll of limited communicative competence among graduates. Due to their weak speaking and writing abilities, students reported avoiding involvement, failing important examinations, and having trouble during job interviews. These quotations highlight how grammar-focused education often fails to prepare students for effective communication in the real world, resulting in a mismatch between their expressive abilities and their knowledge of topics. The results highlight how students are left unprepared for the demands of both the classroom and the workplace if they do not engage in active, skill-based English practice. This highlights the need for urgent adoption of communicative, interactive, and context-based methods in Bangladeshi tertiary EFL instruction.

Building on the challenges identified by both graduates and current students, the study also explored their suggestions for addressing these gaps and enhancing English communicative competence.

Table 4. Factors that would help students improve English communicative competence

No	Potentially Helpful Factors	Students Mean Reporting
1.	English Speaking Clubs	82%
2.	Regular Academic Presentation Practices	74%
3.	Feedback from Teachers on Writing & Speaking	68%
4.	Multimedia Language Labs	65%
5.	Industry-based English Communication Workshops	61%

The results demonstrate how strongly students believe they need hands-on, interactive learning experiences to improve their communicative English skills. Presentation techniques (74%) and English-speaking clubs (82%) indicate a need for active, in-the-moment interaction. Feedback on multimedia labs (65%), which is also supported by Hossain and Al Hasan (2023), and writing and speaking (68%) indicates a desire for organized, skill-focused assistance. Real-world application awareness is demonstrated by the lower but noteworthy interest in industry-based workshops (61%). These findings suggest that developing communicative competence requires immersive, feedback-rich settings that simulate real-world language use, in addition to academic education. Institutions should consider incorporating these resources to meet the needs and expectations of their students.

3.2. Discussion

RQ1: To what extent did English communicative competence influence graduates' academic performance or success during their undergraduate studies?

Based on the findings, it was shown that graduates' academic performance was significantly impacted by their communicative proficiency in English, particularly in academic writing and lecture comprehension. Although the majority (72.2%) reported frequently using English in their academic work, 64% acknowledged having significant speaking problems and 24% acknowledged having significant writing problems. These findings support Vinke and Jochems' (1993) contention that academic success is enhanced by English proficiency, particularly in global or multilingual learning environments. Contrary to Vinke's hopeful conclusions, the Bangladeshi context reveals that students often struggle to articulate their thoughts, even when they possess knowledge of the material, which undermines their academic confidence and classroom engagement.

This discrepancy may result from an educational system that places too much emphasis on rote memory and grammar instruction at the expense of practical language use (Rahman & Pandian, 2018; Ali & Walker, 2014). Deeper engagement with academic subjects is hampered by the under-valuation of critical thinking and expressive skills, especially in research, presentation, and seminar settings. Students with higher self-perceived language proficiency also typically perform better academically, according to Martirosyan et al. (2015), indicating that competence and confidence are interdependent factors that contribute to success.

RQ2: What academic challenges and achievements did graduates encounter, and how were these shaped by their English communication skills?

Significant difficulties were observed by graduates in research writing, academic presentations, and public speaking skills essential to academic success. According to Figure 05, the two biggest challenges are public speaking and presenting anxiety. These are reflected in qualitative narratives, such as S2's avoidance of group projects and S4's failure in job interviews, resulting from weak speaking skills. Despite their conceptual grasp, graduates' accomplishments were frequently hampered by their low communicative competence, as these issues demonstrate.

The importance of English for Academic Purposes (EAP) in closing the proficiency gap between language and academic work is emphasized by Sayed (2018). But according to the report, EAP or ESP (English for Specific Purposes) components are either lacking or underemphasized in English instruction in Bangladesh, leaving students ill-prepared for more challenging academic tasks. Bachore (2022) asserts that language serves as a medium for knowledge generation and assessment in addition to being a tool for communication; academic achievement is elusive for students who lack the linguistic skills necessary to articulate complicated concepts. Furthermore, 68% of respondents had unpleasant experiences with English proficiency tests, indicating emotional resistance that ill-conceived, anxiety-inducing evaluation procedures may cause. This suggests the necessity for formative, feedback-rich assessment models. Additionally, using diverse media formats can accommodate various learning styles, making feedback more accessible and meaningful for a broader range of students (Kristianto & Harendita).

RQ3: What gaps do graduates now recognize in hindsight regarding their English communicative skills?

Sixty-one percent of graduates specifically agreed in the study that there was a significant disconnect between university English training and the demands of the academic world. As demonstrated by S6's incapacity to defend their thesis viva and S10's remark regarding assignment plagiarism owing to inadequate writing skills, this gap is especially apparent in speaking and research communication. These retrospective observations are important because they reveal institutional inefficiencies in aligning curricula with academic and professional realities, as well as a lack of readiness.

According to Sultana and Ahsan (2013), a large number of Bangladeshi students only acquire exam-focused English, which leaves them unprepared for academic and professional responsibilities that need a lot of communication. The curriculum's focus on form over function does not promote pragmatic competence, which is further exacerbated by teacher-centered instruction and limited classroom interaction (Karim & Mohamed, 2019). Furthermore, the lack of real-time language production assignments hindered their development of fluency and confidence, despite the fact that grammar-focused schooling dominated their experience (as indicated by S9).

The strong demand from students for academic presenting training (74%) and speaking clubs (82%) indicates a need for real-world, interactive learning settings. This supports Hossain and Al Hasan's (2023) argument for utilizing multimedia laboratories and EdTech to simulate real-world communication situations, making learning more engaging and relevant.

4. Conclusion

This study critically investigated the impact of English communicative proficiency on the academic achievement of graduates from public universities in Bangladesh. Using a mixed-methods approach, it was found that although most students believed their skills were sufficient, significant gaps still existed, particularly in speaking, writing, and academic expression. In addition to impeding academic achievement, these deficiencies left graduates ill-prepared for the academic and professional obligations that await them after graduation.

The results highlight structural flaws in the way English is taught today, which still places too much emphasis on grammar and test-taking strategies at the expense of critical thinking and communicative engagement. The study promotes curriculum reform that incorporates technology-enhanced learning environments, real-world performance tasks, and English for Academic Purposes (EAP). Additionally, formative evaluation, feedback-rich education, and the incorporation of interactive platforms, such as academic seminars and speaking clubs, need to receive more attention.

The core of tertiary education in Bangladesh must focus on communicative competence if the country is to produce graduates who are competitive on a global scale. Along with addressing a major research need in the Bangladeshi EFL environment, this study offers pedagogically valuable insights to other EFL-dominant countries seeking to bridge the gap between linguistic form and communicative function.

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