

Original Research Paper

Improving Oral English Skills Through Rubric-Based Assessment: A Dual Perspective in Bangladeshi Tertiary Education

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Abstract: Rubric-based assessment has recently become a valuable approach for fostering fairness, transparency and constructive feedback in the context of language pedagogy. This study examines the perceptions of the students and teachers regarding the application and effectiveness of rubrics in order to improve oral English skills in Bangladeshi tertiary education. Data were collected through a mixed-methods design from 253 students across 8 universities and 25 teachers from 15 universities. Quantitative data from students were analyzed descriptively, while qualitative data from teachers were examined thematically to identify emerging patterns. The results showed that rubric-based assessment was perceived by students to be fair, transparent and motivating which subsequently increased their participation and awareness of evaluation criteria. Similarly, teachers observed that rubrics were effective in identifying the strengths and weaknesses of students, in the instructional practices, and in the increased engagement in oral activities. However, issues relating to implementation and institutional support were also identified. The integration of quantitative and qualitative results indicates the complementary perspectives of students and teachers on the overall effectiveness of rubrics. Ultimately, the study underscores rubric-based assessment's significance in tertiary English education and informs curriculum development, assessment practices, and teacher training.

Keywords: Rubric-based assessment; oral English skills; transparency; motivation; reflection; constructive feedback; tertiary education; Bangladesh.

Introduction

A rubric, as defined by Merriam-Webster Dictionary, can be perceived as an evaluative guide, which outlines pre-established standards in which academic work, projects or performances can be evaluated or graded. On the same note, Cambridge Dictionary (2020) provides the definition of a rubric as a collection of guidelines that are applied in assessment of academic work. However, a rubric does not only constitute an instructional guideline, but also serves a versatile purpose in the context of education. It functions as a scoring instrument, performs as an instructional design tool, provides systematic feedback, and creates greater accountability and transparency in assessment practices (Wolf & Stevens, 2007). Among the main functions of a rubric, it helps the instructor in conducting systematic and objective assessments of the learners (Brookhart, 2013). On this note, a rubric plays a crucial role for teachers as it helps make the grading of academic writing fair, valid, and reliable.

In the light of the rubrics in oral assessment, the instructors compare the samples of the spoken language of the learners as per the stipulated criteria in which they make systematic and consistent judgments (Hughes, 2003). These criteria usually entail fluency, pronunciation, accuracy in grammar, lexical range, coherence, cohesion, communicative



competence and interactive competence. In order to evaluate oral skills, rubric opens a possibility of a thorough and systematic approach to each applicable criterion, due to which validity and reliability can be guaranteed. In addition, a rubric is able to help teachers conduct effective and time-saving assessment practices and aids in the improvement of the instruction (Andrade, 2000).

It is also important to note that a rubric is not only an effective tool for teachers for evaluating learners' performance but also a highly important pedagogical tool for students as it helps them to evaluate their learning process and self-assess themselves. In oral assessment, a rubric enhances transparency by bringing evaluation criteria well ahead of time and thus, assists students to understand their strengths and weaknesses. By fostering engagement in self-assessment, a rubric supports the development of self-regulated learning strategies (Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013) and increases learners' awareness of performance expectations, which can contribute to measurable improvements in academic outcomes (Jonsson, 2014; Kerby & Romine, 2009). Besides having an instructional purpose, a rubric also plays a valuable documentation role, since it not only makes the process of assessment transparent, but also offers systematic feedback, which informs further learning (Jonsson & Svingby, 2007). A rubric has different conceptualizations in the sphere of education where the implications and usage of the concept are built up by the purposes to which they are applied (Dawson, 2015; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). In any case, it is broadly regarded as a student-centered evaluation tool which defines the evaluative standards and describes precisely outlined performance indicators at every level of performance (Brookhart, 2013, 2018; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). As performance-based assessment has gained prominence, researchers such as Andrade (2000), Jonsson and Svingby (2007), Silvestri and Oescher (2006), and Spandel (2006) have highlighted the educational value of a rubric, as it supports student learning, ensures assessment accuracy, and assists learners to identify gaps in their knowledge. Thus, a rubric extends beyond evaluation by serving not only to assess performance but also to facilitate learners' development and self-regulation.

Despite the well-established value of rubrics in international educational contexts, the rubric is not well known in Bangladeshi education system especially in English language teaching. A large number of students do not know the meaning of a rubric or how it informs their assessment, and there is an overall lack of empirical studies in the area of Bangladesh (Chowdhury, 2019; Uddin, 2014). Against this background, the current paper compares student and teacher perspectives on rubric-based assessment, particularly its role in facilitating oral English proficiency, along with the challenges and opportunities of its use. The study addresses the following research questions:

1. What are students' views on using rubrics in developing oral English proficiency in Bangladeshi tertiary education?
2. What are teachers' opinions on using rubrics to foster students' oral English development?
3. What drawbacks and opportunities are involved in implementing rubrics for developing oral English skills?

Literature Review

Transparency and Fairness in Academic Assessment: The Role of a Rubric

Evaluation of spoken English can be done subjectively or objectively (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Though subjective assessment can be prone to personal bias and, may lack reliability, objective assessment can be considered more credible and consistent (Holmes & Smith, 2003). A rubric may be a powerful tool to ensure transparency, fairness, and consistency in academic assessment which ensures objectivity in oral performance assessment. Its major role is to promote valid and reliable scoring since it offers pre-vectored and clear standards on which a performance can be rated (Wolf & Stevens, 2007).

In addition to the use as a grading instrument, rubric clarifies the performance expectation, aligns the assessment process with the instructional objectives, minimize the arbitrary judgments and promote fair judgments (Brookhart, 2013; Arter & McTighe, 2001). Despite the fact that it is considered as a practical and efficient tool in ensuring objective assessment (Andrade, 2000), it has a pedagogical value in creating clarity in the performance expectations. Empirical research also supports the idea that rubrics increase reliability and validity of the assessment practice, and it is an indispensable measure in language education (Brookhart & Chen, 2015, Djordjevic, 2025, Jonsson & Svingby, 2007, Reddy & Andrade, 2010).

Monitoring Progress and Providing Feedback: The Pedagogical Value of a Rubric

A rubric can become a highly effective tool for students to learn and improve by getting positive feedback. In addition to functioning as a performance-recording tool (Dickinson & Adams, 2017; Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Reddy, 2007), it provides systematic framework through which teachers and students go through the progress of systematic learning, as observed in subsequent research (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Wollenschlager et al., 2016). According to Holmes and Smith (2003) effective grading involves summary of remarks where areas of improvement are mentioned alongside the accomplishments of the learner, for which they are able to identify their strengths and opportunities of improvement. In such a manner, a rubric empowers students to reflect on their learning and make informed adjustments to their work.

Further, rubric has been identified as one of the factors that can improve the academic outcome, as well as instructional practice. Andrade and Du (2005) stated that students, who use rubric strategically, become aware of the expectations of their instructors as well as learn to evaluate their performances. It has also been stated that a rubric is indeed a very important component in terms of determining grades, improving the standards of academic work, and reducing the fear of grades (Reynolds-Keefer, 2010). Such observations have been preserved by the past researchers (Brookhart, 2003; Zimmerman & Schunk, 2001; Moskal, 2003) who have emphasized the ability of rubric to communicate learning objectives clearly and to promote reflective learning process. Therefore, a rubric not only provides a fair and clear evaluation but also enables the learners to keep track of their progress.

Rubrics for Oral Assessment: Motivation, Autonomy and Metacognitive Awareness of EFL Contexts

A rubric, when integrated into oral performance assessment, has been found to enhance learner motivation by providing clarity, structure, and constructive feedback. A rubric is founded on the concept of the Zone of Proximal Development also called ZPD that is a scaffolding tool proposed by Vygotsky (1978) which helps learners to reach better performance if the necessary instructions are provided (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976). Such scaffolding as proposed by Hammond and Gibbons (2005) helps the students to perform task that may not be able to do on their own in the first place. In a quasi-experimental study, Nadolski et al. (2021) showed the significant improvements of secondary students in terms of oral presentation skills with the assistance of texts and video enhanced analytic rubric. These benefits were mostly attributed due to the inclusion of self-assessment, peer-assessment and reflective goal-setting practices which not only enlightened students on performance expectation but also increased student motivation and interest in oral tasks.

Other than the motivation, rubric can play a transformative role in fostering learner autonomy if the students are actively involved in the assessment process. Involving learners in the process of developing a rubric encourages a sense of ownership, for which, they remain in charge of their learning. Abdul Ghaffar (2021) found that co-construction of rubric with students developed students' awareness of assessment criteria and stimulated self-directed learning behaviors. Similarly, Fraile et al. (2017) demonstrated that collaborative rubric design cultivates essential components of autonomous learning, such as structuring, monitoring, and assessing one's own performance. This data implies that an interactive approach to a rubric's use can transform students, who are non-engaged receivers, into self-directed participants in their learning journey, especially in the case of the EFL oral assessment context.

A rubric plays an important role in enhancing metacognitive awareness. The metacognitive theory by Flavell (1979) states that awareness of the cognitive process is a key aspect of maximizing academic performance of learners. According to Schraw and Moshman (1995), metacognitive skills, such as planning, monitoring and Measuring learning can be developed by the use of structured reflection and feedback. In this respect, a rubric provides the learners with the clear guidelines of the expected performance, as well as their own performance gap. Conforming with this view, a meta-analysis study undertaken by Fernandez-Castilla et al. (2024) found out that rubric's application plays a significant role in facilitating self-regulated learning by helping learners set their goals, monitor their progress, and reflectively assess their output. Krebs, Rothstein, and Roelle (2022) also found that a rubric-based self-assessment was able to assist in making closer decisions and less mental strain to learners. These results suggest that a rubric presupposes performance expectations and promotes reflective and cognitively efficient learning that can cement their contribution to the development of metacognitive awareness in oral evaluation. Taken together, these lessons reveal the pedagogic richness of a rubric in oral assessment, particularly in nurturing reflective, independent and motivated students in EFL settings.

Using Rubrics in Oral Assessment: International Insights and Practical Implications for Bangladesh

Studies in different educational settings persistently recognize a rubric as a powerful way of strengthening language skills, particularly in the domain of writing. Its beneficial effects on learning outcomes have been proven by a number of studies because of its clarity of expectations, encouragement of self-regulation and performance improvement guidance. Nevertheless, there is a lack of research on the role of rubric in acquisition of oral communication skills. Despite the fact that the perceptions of rubrics by students (e.g., Andrade & Du, 2005; Schafer et al., 2001) and the impact of rubrics on the writing process (e.g., Andrade, 2001; Phuong, Phan, & Le, 2023; Reynolds-Keefer, 2010) are widely studied, very few studies dealt with the particular effect of rubrics on oral performance. This gap suggests the importance of exploring both learner perceptions and actual practices related to rubric use in oral assessment, especially within underrepresented educational contexts.

Rubrics in assessment process are still in the process of development in Bangladesh, especially in the assessment of oral skills. Most of the classrooms in Bangladesh are teacher-centered, and students have negligible involvement in the assessment process. Recent research however indicates that rubric based assessment is becoming more popular. As an example, one study by BRAC University found that students who are guided by rubrics to write their essays did better, and along with the students, teachers in Bangladesh have a positive attitude towards the use of rubrics (Uddin, 2014). In spite of the fact that the study investigated the writing, it is however giving valuable evidence that rubrics can be applied more broadly in the Bangladeshi EFL context, especially in oral performance, when they are carefully adapted and implemented.

Additional research has found a potential high degree of learner preparedness to work independently in Bangladesh, in particular to secondary and tertiary EFL students. In spite of this, educators do not always feel confident, trained, or supported by the institution to assist them into developing classroom autonomy (Akter, 2017; Begum, 2025; Islam & Stapa, 2021). Since a rubric is not only a tool for the evaluation of performance, but also a tool for promoting formative feedback, which triggers the reflection process of the learner, the role of a rubric in aiding the development of oral skills among the Bangladeshi students should be more widely recognized. The effect is more eminent if the students are involved in knowing or co-constructing rubric criteria as it helps increase their engagement, self-awareness, and overall performance. All in all, both international and local literatures show the necessity of a more specific study on the topic of rubric-based oral assessment in Bangladesh, where its educational possibilities are far from being explored.

Methodology

Research Design

This study is a concurrent mixed-methods study, i.e., the quantitative and qualitative data were collected at the same time to investigate the use of rubric-based assessment in the oral English skill development. Quantitative data were obtained from students through a structured questionnaire while qualitative data were obtained from teachers using an open-ended questionnaire. This approach enabled statistical analysis as well as the thematic analysis, which adds validity and depth to the findings.

Participants

The research sample comprised 278 participants: 253 students from eight universities — including State University of Bangladesh, Presidency University, Notre Dame University Bangladesh, BRAC University, and the University of Dhaka — and 25 teachers from 15 universities across Bangladesh. The student participants were enrolled in basic English courses across first to final year levels, while the participating teachers had between one and 12 years of teaching experience. All participants were selected through convenience sampling based on their accessibility and willingness to participate.

Demographic Profile

The student participants represented various academic levels, with the majority being first-year students (53%) and fourth-year students comprising 15.4% of the sample. In terms of English proficiency, most students were at the intermediate level (51%), followed by beginners (33.6%), advanced learners (9.9%), and fluent speakers (5.5%).

Regarding prior exposure to oral assessment, 74.3% of students reported no previous experience with formal oral evaluation, while only 25.7% had some prior exposure.

Table 1. Demographic Profile of Student Participants (n = 253)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	170	67.2
	Male	83	32.8
Proficiency Level	Beginner	85	33.6
	Intermediate	129	51.0
	Advanced	25	9.9
	Fluent	14	5.5
Academic Year	First Year	151	59.7
	Second Year	52	20.6
	Third Year	27	10.7
	Fourth Year	23	9.1

Table 2. Demographic Profile of Teacher Participants (n = 25)

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Female	16	64.0
	Male	9	36.0
Teaching Experience	1–3 years	13	52.0
	5–10 years	6	24.0
	More than 12 years	6	24.0

Instruments

Two instruments were created for this study. The student questionnaire consisted of Section A (multiple choice and short answer questions for background information) and Section B (12 Likert Scale items relating perceptions of rubric-based assessment, 1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire itself was self-developed, expert-reviewed and pre-tested for clearness. The teacher questionnaire included open-ended questions regarding teaching experience, rubric design and criteria, motivational impact on students, effectiveness in identifying strengths and weaknesses, challenges in implementation, institutional support, and observed improvements in students' speaking skills. Together, these instruments helped to supply complementary quantitative and qualitative data.

Data Collection

Data were collected online from May to August 2025 via messaging apps, emails, and Google Classroom. Students received a brief explanation of “rubric” in live sessions before completing the questionnaire. Informed consent was obtained electronically, and participants were assured of confidentiality and voluntary participation.

Data Analysis

Student responses were exported to Google Sheets, assigned numerical values, and analyzed using descriptive statistics (frequencies and percentages). Data cleaning ensured completeness and consistency. Teacher responses were manually coded, and thematically analyzed to identify key themes, illustrated with representative quotes. Quantitative and qualitative findings were integrated to triangulate results, providing a comprehensive understanding of rubric-based assessment.

Ethical Issues and Validity

The study adhered to ethical guidelines, ensuring informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation. The student questionnaire was pre-tested with a small group to ensure clarity and comprehension, and the teacher questionnaire was reviewed by senior colleagues to strengthen its validity. Teacher responses were then analyzed systematically.

Results

Perceived Value of Oral Proficiency and Rubric Based Assessment

The results show that oral proficiency has a high significance in the minds of students. A large proportion (80.2%) considered English proficiency to be of great importance and 91.7% agreed that formal speaking tests could improve their speaking skills. These quantitative findings are substantiated by the perspectives of the teachers which reflect the significance of rubrics as a structured form of assessing key elements of spoken performance such as fluency, pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary and coherence. Elaborating on how rubric criteria directly influence the speaking proficiency of students, one teacher said, "I follow an analytic rubric, and include criteria like content, delivery, organization, preparedness, time management, and sometimes other elements specific to that speaking task" (Teacher 7).

Students emphasized on how a rubric can offer explicit instruction for improvement, 94.1% confirming the use of a rubric to improve skills development and 92.5% recognizing the ability of a rubric to define the evaluation criteria. Teachers reinforced this perspective and explained that a rubric helps learners to focus on specific aspects of performance rather than engage in unsystematic practice. One teacher noted, "I think rubrics actually make the standard of speaking higher for Bangladeshi students. For instance, if the students are being familiarized with a rubric during the class and before sitting for speaking tests, they can meaningfully improve their speaking style" (Teacher 11). Overall, these findings suggest a positive match between student perceptions and teacher observations about the instructional value of rubrics in the process of targeted skill development.

Fairness, Transparency and Motivation

A large majority of the students stated that they had positive attitudes towards rubric-based assessment in terms of fairness and objectivity. As shown in Figure 1, 69.2% and 21.3% of the answers indicated that 69.2% agreed and 21.3% strongly agreed that using rubrics makes the assessment process fairer and more objective. Only 8.7% were neutral and negligible proportions disagreed or strongly disagreed. This suggests that students tend to view rubrics as useful tools to ensure transparency and consistency of spoken English performance evaluation.

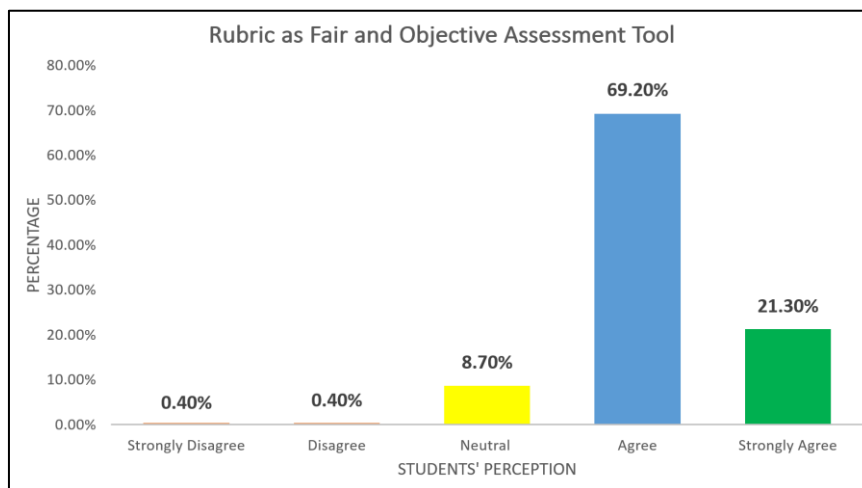


Fig. 1. Students' perceptions of rubric-based assessment as a fair and objective evaluation tool

Teachers supported these perceptions, stressing that rubrics have a place in justification for grading and building trust in grading processes. Several teachers emphasized that the use of rubrics not only makes the evaluation fair but also helps students to be more confident with the evaluation system. One teacher said "It shows them the justification of their accumulated marks" (Teacher 2).

Motivation was another major theme of the findings. A total of 93.1% of the students agreed that rubric can motivate them in terms of providing clear pathways to higher marks. Teachers confirmed this motivational effect, explaining that

a rubric allows learners to focus on specific aspects of performance rather than engaging in unsystematic practice. One teacher identified the motivational value of analytical rubrics saying that "from my experience, clearly defined analytical rubrics motivate the learners greatly. I always use rubrics and give the students the copy of it. I found that learners get very happy to get something concrete. They put better effort when they get a specific and clear guideline through rubric" (Teacher 5). Overall, the effect of rubric use on student motivation was perceived as highly effective and positive.

Preparation, Reflection, and Stress Management

The findings further show that rubric-based assessment works as a guiding framework by promoting active participation of students in the oral activities. As shown in Figure 2, 70.8% of the respondents agreed and 16.2% strongly agreed that the use of rubrics motivated them to participate more actively in oral assessments. In comparison, 10.7% of respondents were neutral, and a very small number disagreed or strongly disagreed. This strong positive trend indicates that a rubric is not only able to increase perceptions of fairness and transparency but also can build confidence and encourage participation in speaking tasks by the learner.

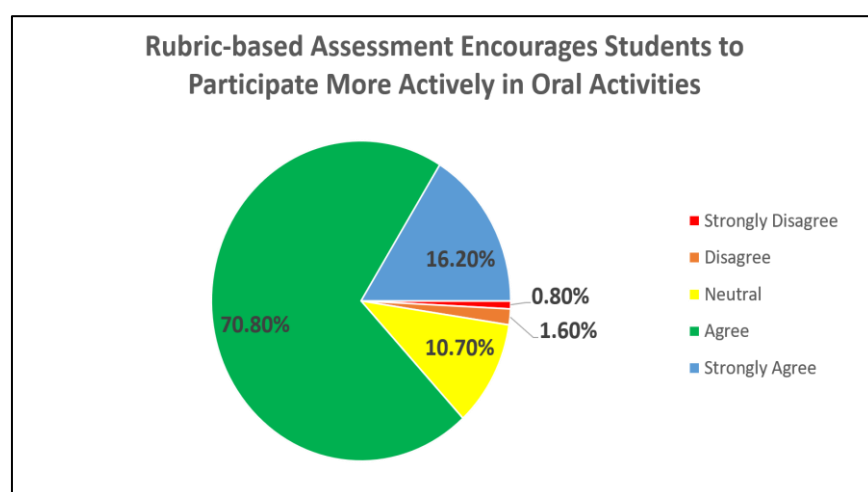


Fig. 2. Students' perceptions of the influence of rubric-based assessment on oral participation

Teachers' responses also supported these results by highlighting the role played by rubrics in encouraging learner autonomy and reflective learning. One teacher claimed, "rubrics help to create autonomous learners. Through a rubric, learners are given chance to work independently. They can monitor and evaluate their own performance being guided by a rubric without direct help from the instructor" (Teacher 6).

The overall responses suggest overwhelmingly positive perceptions of rubric-based oral assessment among students. As demonstrated in Figure 3, there were very high levels of agreement on several different dimensions, such as using rubrics as a guide to improve proficiency (score 94.1%), providing feedback and opportunities for improvement (score 94.0%), clarifying evaluation criteria (score 92.5%), supporting preparation for speaking tests (score 92.1%), motivation (score 93.1%), fairness and objectivity (score 90.5%) or self-assessment (score 83.8%). In contrast, a somewhat lower level of agreement was found in teacher explanation of rubrics during class (65.6%), indicating a possible gap in the teaching practice. Overall, these results show that a rubric significantly increases transparency, performance, confidence, preparation and motivation in oral English assessment, although it is important to give students explicit guidelines on how to use the rubrics.

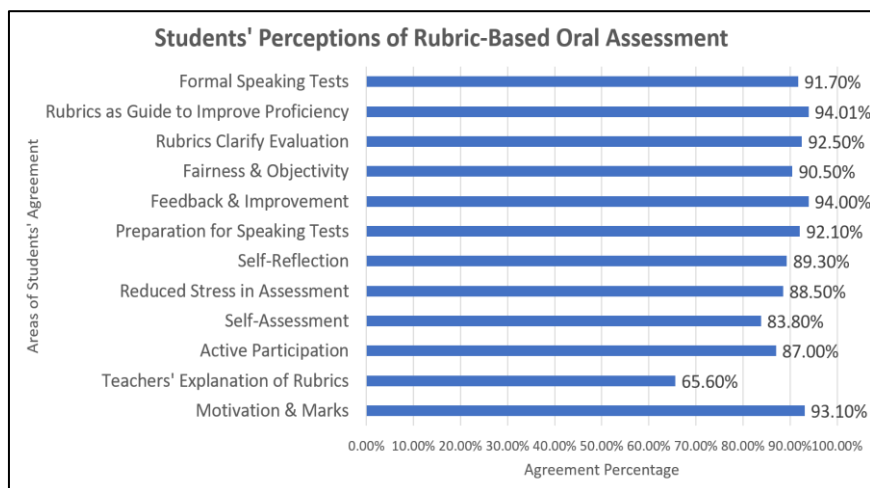


Fig. 3. Overall student perceptions of rubric-based oral assessment across various dimensions.

Teachers emphasized the predictability and constructive nature of rubric-based feedback as creating a supportive learning environment in which students feel guided rather than judged. One teacher said, "Students do get better. They become more conscious of the expected performance and attempt to be better in those elements that are mentioned in the rubric. They also receive specific feedback with regard to the different areas and show improvement in future speaking tasks" (Teacher 12). This view demonstrates how rubric-based feedback can help decrease the anxiety of learners, and also facilitate confidence through the clarification of expectations and focused guidance to the learner which results in increased engagement and better oral performance.

Challenges and Institutional Support

Despite the multiple advantages of rubric-based assessment, both students and teachers expressed a number of difficulties in putting it into practice. Teachers often commented on the time-consuming nature of analytic rubrics, particularly when it is used in large classes, in which the assessment process demands considerable time and effort to assess multiple criteria for individual students. As one teacher explained, "being able to give specific individual feedback based on the rubric can be time consuming" (Teacher 4). Maintaining objectivity was also a challenge as the differences in the students' accents, levels of confidence and the way that they speak often affected assessment. In addition, some of the teachers shared that too much focus on rubric criteria may constrain spontaneous communication at times. One teacher observed, "when students work on oral tasks by strictly focusing on the rubrics, the expression gets restricted. When we present them with some ideas fixed, they do not seek alternative opportunities" (Teacher 22). These insights suggest that as helpful as rubrics are in providing structure and clarity, careful implementation of the rubrics is needed to provide balance between guidance and creativity.

From the student's point of view lack of instructional support and lack of clear communication of assessment criteria were key issues. While the majority of the students, 65.6%, agreed or strongly agreed that teachers clearly explained the criteria on rubrics, 30.8% of them were of a neutral or disagreeing disposition, suggesting that a significant proportion of learners felt that they were not properly guided on understanding expectations on rubrics. Teachers identified these lapses and attributed them to heavy workloads, inadequate professional training, and lack of consistent institutional resources. In order to compensate for this lack of formal support, some teachers depended on peer collaboration as seen in this teacher's note, "I frequently consult senior colleagues when official guidance is unavailable in order to develop a rubric" (Teacher 23). Although there were a few instances of institutions where workshops were held, sample rubrics were handed, and departmental facilities were available, such initiatives were few and erratic. All in all, both teachers and students emphasized the need to have rubric-based assessment with clear explanations, structural guidance and institutional support.

Summary of Synthesis of Findings

The overall analysis indicates that there are great affinities between student's perception and teacher's experience on rubric-based oral assessment. Both groups consistently stressed the importance of rubrics because of its clarity, fairness and structured guidelines throughout the learning process. Students reported increased readiness, enhanced confidence and facilitated participation in oral tasks. Similarly, teachers noticed increased reflection, autonomous learning traits, and decreased anxiety among learners. However, both students and teachers recognized practical problems, such as lack of institutional support, a considerable amount of workload associated with the assessment process and limitations on spontaneity and creativity of tasks. Collectively these findings suggest that rubric-based assessment is not simply an evaluative tool for diagnosis, but rather a pedagogical tool which fosters student autonomy, purposeful practice, and continuous skill development. The results also acknowledged the importance of teacher training and institutional guidance for the effective use of rubrics, as the rubrics may preserve opportunities for creative and independent oral expression.

Discussion

The results of this study suggest that students and teachers have a high appreciation of rubric-based assessment in promoting fairness and transparency of oral English assessment. A substantial number of students accepted that the rubric provided objectivity and justification for grading and teachers agreed that the defined and observable criteria enhanced its credibility and uniformity in evaluation. These findings are in line with other studies that point out the role that the rubric plays in mitigating subjectivity and bias (Brookhart, 2013; Holmes & Smith, 2003; Wolf & Stevens, 2007). Unlike research in the past, which has focused mainly on writing assessment and evaluation, the present research contributes to the current understanding by discussing rubric-based evaluation in the area of oral performance in the Bangladeshi tertiary context and consequently contributes towards the local and global discourses on language assessment practices.

Another major contribution of the study is the evidence of the usefulness of rubrics in offering feedback that is useful for learners in monitoring progress, reflecting on their work, and enhancing preparation for oral tasks. Consistent with the findings of Dang and Le (2023), Fernández Castilla et al. (2024), and Miyazoe (2025), the majority of students perceived that a rubric provides meaningful feedback, encourages self-reflection, promotes greater participation in oral activities, and supports learner motivation and self-regulated learning. Moreover, teachers encourage students to give feedback according to rubric criteria, which helps increase the learner's awareness of their strengths and shortcomings. While past studies have been limited in their investigation of the formative potential in rubrics in the context of oral assessment, this study together with existing literature helps to fill the gap by demonstrating the effectiveness of rubrics in offering feedback, fostering reflection, supporting learner engagement, and enhancing learners' oral development.

The study also showed that a rubric can foster learner motivation and autonomy by clarifying performance expectations and learning strategy. Students overwhelmingly agreed that the rubric can push them to do better and teachers noticed increased confidence and self-directed learning among the students. These findings supported the concept of the rubric as a scaffolding tool that supports learning in the Zone of Proximal Development (Abdul Ghaffar, 2021; Nadolski et al., 2021; Vygotsky, 1978) and identifies that it supports metacognitive awareness as students reflect on their performance using explicit criteria. Collectively, these results suggest that a rubric promotes a transparent, scaffolded, and motivational learning atmosphere where expectations are clear which encourages cognitive involvement of a learner in the assessment process.

Despite these favorable results, a number of problems occurred in terms of implementing rubric based oral assessment. Teachers reported that the rubric is often time-consuming, especially in large classes and they have encountered problems, such as being objective in evaluating different accents and styles of speaking. Similar comments were made by students regarding the lack of communication of rubric criteria as one-third of the students sensed the communication gap between students and teachers in terms of rubric instructions. Many students, especially the freshers, were not aware of the term "rubric" which indicates that they do not have any prior exposure of this concept in the past. Another challenge also arises as several teachers noted that excessive focus on rubric criteria may also limit the natural communications as students tend to prioritize the rubric over natural expression to obtain higher score in their exams. These insights are indicative of wider issues in Bangladeshi context including excessive teaching workload, lack of professional training and lack of support from institutions (Akter, 2017; Begum, 2025). Consistent with these findings, Panadero and Jonsson (2020) point out that rubrics, if rigidly applied, can reduce the complex nature of a task and limit evaluative judgement which can limit both authentic learner expression and the pedagogical potential of the assessment. Collectively, these barriers highlight

the need for clear guidance, appropriate training and sufficient institutional resources in order to implement rubric-based assessment successfully.

Cumulatively, these findings pave the way further to fill an important research gap for providing systematic evidence on rubric based oral assessment in Bangladesh. Whereas much of the prior studies have focused on writing, this study shows that the rubric not only promotes fairness, constructive feedback, motivation, and reflection but also fosters learner autonomy and confidence in oral performance. At the same time, the results suggest that there is a need for institutional support and teacher training to overcome persistent challenges in the implementation. By analyzing the views of both the teachers and the students, the research shows that the rubric can not only be used as an evaluator, but also as the pedagogical instrument that can ensure improvement of oral English proficiency if used carefully in supportive educational environments.

Limitations

Although this study has given useful information about the position of rubric based assessment in improving oral English skills, several limitations should be noted. First of all, the research has been conducted within the context of tertiary-level institutions in Bangladesh that might restrict the generalizability of the results which may not be accurate for other educational settings, such as secondary education, vocational programs, or international context. The cultural and institutional dynamics of Bangladeshi higher education may have shaped both students' and teachers' perceptions, which may lead to variation of the applicability of results in different context.

Secondly, the study was mostly based on the self-reported data which were collected by surveys and the qualitative responses. While these perspectives provided rich observations about lived experiences, they have possibilities for potential bias such as social desirability or subjective recollections. Importantly, the study did not include direct measures of oral performance or longitudinal tracking of improvement, which would have provided more compelling evidence on the efficacy of rubric based assessment in improving speaking proficiency.

Thirdly, the sample of the survey though relatively strong, could not adequately represent the diversity of all the tertiary level students and teachers in Bangladesh. Variables such as institutional type particularly, public vs. private, class size and the prior training of the teachers in assessment were not investigated in detail which may have a considerable impact on the perceptions and practices. Furthermore, despite the numerical trends being pointed out with the help of the qualitative responses, the absence of longer interviews and classroom observations restricted the scope of qualitative analysis.

Finally, this study focused exclusively on rubric-based assessment without a systematic comparison with other approaches to assessment such as; peer assessment, self-assessment, or technology assisted assessment. As a result, it is not possible to know whether the use of a rubric is uniquely beneficial or if the effective use of a rubric depends on the integration of complementary assessment practices. These limitations represent the need for more thorough, mixed method, and comparative research in future studies.

Conclusion

This study revealed that rubric-based assessment is highly appreciated by the students and teachers in improving oral English skills in Bangladeshi tertiary context. Students expressed that a rubric can improve clarity, fairness, motivation and self-awareness and teachers acknowledged the role of rubrics in ensuring appropriate structure, consistent evaluation, and strengthening learner confidence. These findings suggest that the use of rubrics stimulates active engagement, purposeful practice, and reflective learning which contributes positively to the overall communicative competence of learners.

In spite of all these advantages, the study also raises some practical issues. Teachers indicated that using rubrics in oral assessment can be time consuming and differences in students' accents, confidence, and speaking styles may influence objectivity. Limited institutional support and inadequate teacher training are the additional barriers. These challenges suggest that, with more explicit supervision, contextually relevant criteria, and professional application, rubrics can be implemented more effectively which may balance structured evaluation with flexibility to encourage both accuracy and creativity in oral performance.

Future research in Bangladesh should extend on these outcomes to strengthen rubric-based assessment practices in oral English skills. An essential direction might be the investigation of how rubric-based assessment impacts students' oral proficiency over time. Another key area is to explore best practices for designing rubrics for different types of oral tasks and to find effective ways to use them more consistently and competently across the curriculum. Such studies would provide deeper understanding into how rubrics can be streamlined to enhance oral English skills and inform policy and classroom practices in the local context.

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