

Linguistic Self-Efficacy in Group-Structured Settings: Analyzing Learner Perceptions of Collaborative Oral Activities

Zarin Zafar Chowdhury

Based on Primary Research Conducted at an International School Dhaka, Bangladesh

ABSTRACT:

This study investigates the psycholinguistic and perceptual dimensions of collaborative oral learning activities among Grade 10 ESL learners at an international school in Dhaka, Bangladesh. Drawing on Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis and Long's Interaction Hypothesis as dual theoretical anchors, the research examines how structured peer-to-peer communicative frameworks influence learners' perceived linguistic self-efficacy, communicative anxiety reduction, and subjective assessment of oral skill development. A descriptive, non-experimental perception survey instrument adapted from Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015) and Qutob (2018) was administered to N = 58 participants following a 10-week collaborative learning intervention. The instrument, comprising 10 Likert-scale items validated by three specialists (M = 4.68, SD = 0.44) and demonstrating strong internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = 0.82), produced a global satisfaction mean of M = 4.3172 (SD = 0.43815), indicating a firm 'Satisfied' baseline. Psycholinguistic vector analysis of individual item profiles reveals that learners reported the highest satisfaction in the domains of metacognitive thought organization (q1: M = 4.5517, SD = 0.50166) and subjective perception of monthly oral skill growth (q3: M = 4.5517, SD = 0.70518). The lowest-scoring item addressed peer-facilitated phonetic precision and fluency improvement (q8: M = 3.8966, SD = 0.58308), suggesting that while collaborative frameworks are effective conduits for affective filter reduction and higher-order communicative skill development, learners continue to look toward qualified instructor input for technical phonological refinement. These findings carry significant implications for pedagogical design in secondary ESL contexts characterized by learner reticence and high foreign language speaking anxiety.

Keywords: linguistic self-efficacy, collaborative learning, English as a Second Language, affective filter, communicative anxiety, oral communication, peer interaction

1. INTRODUCTION AND PROBLEM MATRIX

1.1 The Psychological Context of the Secondary ESL Classroom

The secondary school English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom is far more than a site of grammatical instruction and vocabulary acquisition. It is, at its psychological core, a complex interpersonal setting in which learners continuously negotiate their identities, manage social anxieties, and calibrate their willingness to communicate against the perceived risks of public failure. For the adolescent learner managing the competing pressures of academic performance, peer acceptance, and linguistic competence development, the act of speaking in a foreign language represents a uniquely high-stakes enterprise in which the cognitive demands of language production are compounded by the affective burden of self-presentation before an evaluative

audience (Devi & Rao, 2018). This multidimensional psychological reality, rarely fully visible to the observing instructor, constitutes both the greatest challenge and the most promising opportunity for effective pedagogical intervention.

In Bangladesh, the sociolinguistic context introduces additional layers of complexity. English occupies an uneasy dual position as a symbol of upward social mobility and as a source of deep communicative insecurity for the vast majority of learners whose mother tongue is Bangla and whose primary educational experiences have been mediated through grammar-translation and audiolingual methodologies (Islam et al., 2021). The consequences are well-documented: nationwide, students demonstrate functional comprehension of English grammar rules while simultaneously exhibiting pronounced reticence and communicative paralysis when asked to deploy language in real-time oral interaction. Research has consistently identified fear of English and pervasive student silence as defining features of Bangladeshi ESL classrooms, even in English-medium international schools where the curriculum nominally demands communicative proficiency (Amin & Greenwood, 2022). The gap between receptive grammatical knowledge and productive oral deployment represents one of the most persistent and psychologically charged problems in contemporary ELT practice in South Asia.

1.2 The Problem Matrix: Teacher-Centricity, Anxiety, and Learner Reticence

Conventional teacher-centric pedagogical models, which position the instructor as the sole authority and primary interlocutor in classroom discourse, have long been identified as significant contributors to foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA). In these architectures, the student's oral performance is perpetually subject to immediate expert evaluation, a condition that activates what Krashen (1982) famously theorized as the affective filter: an internal psychological barrier that rises in direct proportion to the learner's level of anxiety, lack of self-confidence, or low motivation, effectively blocking comprehensible input from reaching the language acquisition device. When a learner anticipates negative evaluation from a teacher-figure, the affective filter rises, metacognitive resources become occupied by threat-monitoring rather than language processing, and the productive output necessary for communicative development is suppressed or eliminated entirely.

The resulting communicative anxiety manifests in multiple observable forms: avoidance of voluntary oral participation, reliance on formulaic, minimally risky utterances, physical withdrawal behaviors such as avoiding eye contact with the instructor, and in more severe cases, the complete adoption of a reticent learner identity that resists disruption even when opportunities for communicative engagement are provided (Alsaif, 2022). These patterns are further entrenched by examination systems that reward rote memorization and written reproduction over spoken interaction, effectively signaling to learners that oral communication is peripheral to academic success. The instructional dominance of guidebooks and exam-preparation coaching, extensively documented in Bangladesh, serves to reinforce this message and erect structural barriers against the communicative approaches mandated at the policy level (Amin & Greenwood, 2022).

Perhaps most consequentially for long-term language development, teacher-centric models tend to suppress the development of perceived linguistic self-efficacy, the learner's subjective belief in their capacity to successfully deploy English in communicative contexts. Bandura's (1997) foundational work on self-efficacy established that outcome expectations and performance competence are mediated not solely by objective skill level but by the learner's own belief in that skill. A student who has internalized a self-concept of communicative inadequacy will consistently under-perform relative to their actual capacity, and will fail to engage in the risk-taking behaviours (attempted complex utterances, reformulations, self-corrections) through which genuine language acquisition proceeds. The cultivation of perceived linguistic self-efficacy thus emerges as a core pedagogical objective with implications extending far beyond immediate classroom performance into the domain of long-term language retention and lifelong communicative development (Asakereh & Dehghannezhad, 2015).

1.3 The Case for Collaborative Restructuring

The present study argues that structured collaborative oral activities represent a theoretically grounded and empirically supported mechanism for disrupting the anxiety-reticence-low self-efficacy cycle that characterizes

conventional secondary ESL pedagogy. By redistributing communicative authority from the teacher-dominated whole-class format to peer-centered small-group configurations, collaborative frameworks create the conditions under which the affective filter can be lowered, metacognitive thought organization can proceed without threat-induced interference, and the volume and quality of learner oral output can increase substantially. The study examines how 58 Grade 10 learners at an international school in Dhaka, Bangladesh perceived these psycholinguistic shifts across a 10-week collaborative learning intervention, with specific attention to the internal variables of metacognitive organization, self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety mitigation, and peer-facilitated linguistic development.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

2.1 Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis: The Central Anchor

The foundational theoretical architecture of this study rests upon Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis (1982), which posits that affective variables (anxiety, motivation, and self-confidence) function as a permeable psychological filter governing the degree to which comprehensible linguistic input is converted into acquired competence. Krashen's model holds that when the affective filter is 'up', that is, when a learner is anxious, demotivated, or lacks self-confidence, the linguistic input available in the environment cannot penetrate the barrier and reach the hypothesized Language Acquisition Device (LAD). Conversely, when the filter is 'down,' the psychological conditions are optimized for acquisition: input flows freely, attention can be directed toward meaning rather than threat-management, and the cognitive processing pathways required for active language internalization are fully accessible.

The implications for classroom design are significant and direct. Any pedagogical intervention that systematically lowers the affective filter, whether by reducing anxiety, building communicative confidence, or increasing intrinsic motivation, creates an environment qualitatively more conducive to genuine language acquisition than one in which the filter remains high. Collaborative learning activities, by virtue of their structural features, represent precisely such an intervention. The small-group format reduces the scale of the evaluative audience; the peer relationship distributes power more equitably than the teacher-student dyad; the task-focus of group activities redirects attention from self-presentation to collaborative problem-solving; and the shared vulnerability of participants engaged in a common communicative challenge normalizes imperfect language production and thereby reduces the fear of negative evaluation that is among the most potent activators of the affective filter (Bahruddina & Febriani, 2020).

Critically, the Affective Filter Hypothesis does not simply describe the removal of a negative condition; it describes the creation of a positive psychological state that actively facilitates acquisition. When learners feel safe, engaged, and supported, the affective filter drops and what Krashen terms 'i + 1' input, language that is comprehensible but marginally beyond the learner's current competence, can be successfully processed. The collaborative classroom, structured around meaningful communicative tasks with real interactional purposes, provides precisely this 'comprehensible input plus one' environment, particularly when activities are scaffolded to ensure that the linguistic challenge is calibrated to fall within Vygotsky's Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD).

2.2 Long's Interaction Hypothesis and Meaning Negotiation in Peer Spaces

Complementing Krashen's affective perspective, Michael Long's Interaction Hypothesis (1981) provides a theoretical account of the specific interactional mechanisms through which collaborative peer spaces promote language development. Long's model holds that language acquisition is facilitated not merely by exposure to comprehensible input in passive contexts, but specifically through the process of negotiation for meaning that occurs when communication breaks down and interlocutors collaboratively work to repair understanding. These negotiation sequences, characterized by confirmation checks, clarification requests, and comprehension checks, serve the critical function of making input more comprehensible by drawing learner attention to specific linguistic features at the precise moment of communicative need, thereby creating optimal conditions for form-meaning connections to be established in long-term memory.

The significance of Long's framework for understanding collaborative learning lies in its specification of the conditions under which negotiation for meaning is most likely to occur. In teacher-fronted whole-class instruction, the communicative asymmetry between expert instructor and novice learner tends to suppress negotiation: the student who fails to understand typically either feigns comprehension or passively opts out rather than risking the social exposure of publicly requesting clarification from an authority figure. In small-group peer interactions, by contrast, the reduced social stakes and the equality of the communicative relationship create conditions that are far more conducive to genuine negotiation. Participants are more likely to signal non-comprehension, more willing to attempt reformulations, and more able to sustain the iterative dialogue through which negotiated comprehension is achieved (Thu, 2009).

The peer space, as theorized through Long's framework, thus functions as a protected interactional zone in which the learner is simultaneously shielded from the evaluative pressure of the instructor and exposed to the communicative challenges that drive acquisition-facilitating negotiation. This dual function (protection and activation) is central to understanding the psycholinguistic efficacy of collaborative frameworks. The present study's perceptual data, particularly the high scores reported on items addressing motivational enhancement in small-group versus whole-class settings (q6: $M = 4.4483$) and the provision of a relaxed communicative environment (q7: $M = 4.0172$), can be read as direct learner endorsements of precisely this dynamic.

2.3 The Peer Space as Affective Shield and Cognitive Activator

The synthesis of Krashen's and Long's theoretical contributions yields a coherent account of the peer communicative space as serving two simultaneously operating psycholinguistic functions: as an affective shield and as a cognitive activator. As an affective shield, the small-group collaborative context reduces the magnitude of evaluative threat experienced by the learner: the potential consequences of linguistic imperfection are attenuated when the evaluating audience consists of peers engaged in the same communicative struggle rather than an expert instructor whose assessment carries formal academic weight. This reduction in perceived threat corresponds directly to a lowering of the affective filter and the consequent unblocking of cognitive processing pathways that teacher-fronted instruction tends to obstruct.

As a cognitive activator, the collaborative setting creates the interactional conditions that most efficiently drive language development: the negotiation for meaning sequences theorized by Long, the scaffolded co-construction of complex utterances enabled by Vygotsky's ZPD, and the think-preparation-share sequences that allow metacognitive organization to precede productive output. When learners are given structured time within collaborative frameworks to organize their thoughts before speaking, a feature explicitly designed into the intervention studied here, the metacognitive demands of language production are distributed across a preparation phase and a performance phase, dramatically reducing the cognitive load of real-time oral communication and creating space for more elaborated, accurate, and semantically complex utterances than would typically be possible under the time pressure of teacher-directed whole-class interaction. This mechanism provides the most plausible theoretical explanation for the study's finding that metacognitive thought organization (q1) and subjective perception of skill growth (q3) emerged as the highest-scoring satisfaction constructs.

3. METHODOLOGY AND EXPERT VALIDATION

3.1 Research Design Classification

The present study employs a descriptive, non-experimental perception survey design, complemented by a qualitative inductive commentary component derived from open-ended questionnaire responses. This methodological classification reflects the study's primary objective: to capture and analyze the subjective perceptual states (the psychological and psycholinguistic experiences) of learners who participated in a structured collaborative learning intervention, rather than to establish causal relationships through experimental manipulation. The descriptive survey approach is particularly well-suited to the study of internal affective and self-efficacy variables, which by their nature are not directly observable but must be accessed through learner self-report instruments. The qualitative commentary component provides the interpretive depth and phenomenological texture that purely quantitative Likert-scale data cannot capture, allowing

learner voices to illuminate the specific mechanisms through which collaborative activities produced their reported effects.

3.2 Participants and Setting

Participants comprised N = 58 Grade 10 students enrolled in the bilingual program of an international school in Dhaka, Bangladesh during the 2024 academic year. The sample was selected through purposive sampling, as the entire Grade 10 cohort of the bilingual program constituted the target population. This purposive selection strategy is epistemologically appropriate given the study's aim of understanding the perceptions of learners within a specific educational context characterized by particular sociolinguistic, institutional, and pedagogical features. The international school setting provided an especially significant context for investigation: students came predominantly from Bangladeshi backgrounds with Bangla as their mother tongue, yet operated within an English-medium instructional environment that placed substantial communicative demands upon them, creating precisely the affective and self-efficacy tensions that the collaborative intervention was designed to address.

The intervention consisted of a 10-week program of structured collaborative oral activities organized around 10 lesson plans, each employing a distinct collaborative learning technique. These techniques included Role Play, Think-Pair-Share, Critical Debates, Jigsaw, Thinking Aloud Pair Problem Solving (TAPPS), Three-Step Interview, Concept Mapping, Round Table, Talking Points, and Fishbowl, providing a pedagogically diverse repertoire of collaborative interaction structures that addressed different dimensions of oral communicative competence.

3.3 Instrument Design and Structural Architecture

The perceptual measurement instrument comprised a 10-item Likert-scale questionnaire adapted from the validated instruments of Asakereh and Dehghannezhad (2015), whose work examined the relationship between EFL speaking self-efficacy and learner satisfaction, and Qutob (2018), whose research investigated classroom environment satisfaction and speaking skill development. The adaptation process was guided by the specific psycholinguistic constructs most relevant to the collaborative oral learning context of the present study, resulting in an instrument organized around two internally coherent thematic clusters.

Items 1 through 5 constitute the Linguistic Self-Efficacy cluster, targeting the internal psychological variables most directly associated with learners' subjective beliefs about their communicative capacities. Within this cluster, Item 1 addresses metacognitive thought organization prior to speaking, the capacity to mentally prepare and structure communicative content before oral deployment. Item 2 examines non-verbal literacy, specifically the learner's confidence in deploying paralinguistic communicative resources. Item 3 probes subjective skill growth perception, the learner's evaluation of their own oral development across the intervention period. Item 4 assesses perceived capacity for expressing complexity, targeting the higher-order communicative challenge of articulating subtle or abstract ideas in the second language. Item 5 measures peer-driven lexical expansion, capturing the extent to which collaborative interaction with classmates was perceived as a productive mechanism for vocabulary and syntactic development.

Items 6 through 10 constitute the Collaborative Environment cluster, addressing the psychological and motivational dimensions of the collaborative learning context itself. Item 6 targets small-group task motivation relative to whole-class settings, a direct psycholinguistic comparison that speaks to the affective filter implications of different instructional formats. Item 7 examines anxiety and ambient comfort, measuring the extent to which collaborative activities provided a relaxed and non-threatening communicative environment. Item 8 addresses phonetic precision and fluency perception, capturing learners' views on the effectiveness of peer collaboration as a mechanism for phonological development. Item 9 assesses the perceived real-world curricular link, measuring the extent to which collaborative tasks were seen as relevant to genuine communicative purposes beyond the classroom. Item 10 addresses output frequency, measuring the degree to which group work increased learners' willingness to produce English oral output.

Responses were recorded on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (Strongly Disagree) to 5 (Strongly Agree), with interpretive thresholds established as follows: scores between 4.50 and 5.00 corresponding to 'Very Satisfied'; scores between 3.50 and 4.49 corresponding to 'Satisfied'; scores between 2.50 and 3.49

corresponding to 'Neutral'; scores below 2.50 corresponding to 'Dissatisfied.' The instrument also included an open-ended commentary section in which participants could articulate qualitative perceptions not captured by the structured items.

3.4 Validation and Reliability

The instrument underwent a rigorous expert validation process prior to deployment. Three specialists in the fields of ELT, educational measurement, and second language acquisition independently evaluated the appropriateness, clarity, and construct relevance of each item using a five-point evaluation scale. The resulting expert validity score of $M = 4.68$ ($SD = 0.44$) places the instrument firmly within the 'Good' quality range, confirming that it adequately operationalizes the psycholinguistic constructs under investigation. Following the pilot study phase, internal consistency analysis using Cronbach's alpha coefficient yielded a reliability value of 0.82, exceeding the conventional threshold of 0.70 and confirming that the 10 items demonstrate sufficient inter-item coherence to function as a psychometrically reliable composite measure of learner perception and satisfaction.

4. PERCEPTUAL RESULTS AND VECTOR ANALYSIS

4.1 Global Satisfaction Profile

The aggregate mean satisfaction score across all 10 perception items yielded a global satisfaction index of $M = 4.3172$ ($SD = 0.43815$), placing the overall learner response profile firmly within the 'Satisfied' interpretive band and approaching the threshold of 'Very Satisfied.' The standard deviation value of 0.43815 indicates a moderately tight distribution around the mean, suggesting that learner perceptions were relatively homogeneous and that the collaborative intervention produced consistent positive responses across the sample rather than generating a wide spread of highly divergent reactions. This global satisfaction baseline establishes, at the outset of item-level analysis, that the structured collaborative framework was perceived by the learner cohort as a broadly effective and psychologically supportive approach to oral English development.

Table 1. Survey Item Mean/SD Profiles and Psycholinguistic Construct Labels

No	Survey Item	Construct Label	Mean	SD	Level
1	I can organize my thoughts logically before speaking.	Metacognitive Thought Organization	4.5517	0.50	Very Satisfied
2	I use appropriate non-verbal cues (eye contact, gestures).	Non-Verbal Literacy	4.3448	0.66	Satisfied
3	I feel that my oral communication skills have improved this month.	Subjective Skill Growth	4.5517	0.71	Very Satisfied
4	I can now express complex ideas in English more effectively.	Expression of Complexity	4.2931	0.68	Satisfied
5	Learning from my classmates helped me expand my vocabulary and use better sentence structures.	Peer-Driven Lexical Expansion	4.4483	0.50	Satisfied
6	I feel more motivated to speak in English when working in small groups than in whole-class settings.	Small-Group Task Motivation	4.4483	0.50	Satisfied
7	Collaborative activities allowed me to practice English in a relaxed and comfortable environment.	Anxiety/Ambient Comfort	4.0172	0.69	Satisfied

No	Survey Item	Construct Label	Mean	SD	Level
8	Working with my peers helped me improve my English pronunciation and fluency.	Phonetic Precision/Fluency Perception	3.8966	0.58	Satisfied
9	The group activities were relevant to real-world communication.	Real-World Curricular Link	4.2241	0.65	Satisfied
10	Working in groups encouraged me to speak more English.	Output Frequency	4.3966	0.70	Satisfied
Overall Mean (Global Satisfaction Score)			4.3172	0.44	Satisfied

Note. Scale 1–5. *Very Satisfied* = 4.50–5.00; *Satisfied* = 3.50–4.49. *N* = 58.

4.2 Peak Vectors: Metacognitive Thought Organization and Subjective Skill Growth

The two items that generated the highest mean satisfaction scores were q1, measuring metacognitive thought organization ($M = 4.5517$, $SD = 0.50166$), and q3, measuring subjective perception of monthly oral skill growth ($M = 4.5517$, $SD = 0.70518$). Both items scored within the 'Very Satisfied' interpretive range, making them the only items in the instrument to reach this upper threshold and thereby marking them as the most psychologically significant outcome vectors of the collaborative intervention.

The peak score on q1 is particularly revealing from a psycholinguistic standpoint. The item, 'I can organize my thoughts logically before speaking', targets a metacognitive process that is frequently overlooked in discussions of oral communicative competence, which tend to privilege fluency and phonological accuracy as primary indicators of spoken language development. Yet the capacity for metacognitive thought organization prior to speaking represents a foundational prerequisite for all other communicative achievements: a learner who cannot mentally assemble and sequence their communicative intentions before attempting production will inevitably default to simpler, more cognitively manageable utterances that fall below the ceiling of their actual linguistic competence. The collaborative formats employed in the intervention, particularly those featuring explicit pre-production preparation phases such as Think-Pair-Share and Thinking Aloud Pair Problem Solving, created structural space for this metacognitive organization to occur, effectively removing the time pressure that in teacher-fronted interaction suppresses this essential preparatory cognitive process. This response of 4.5517 on a five-point scale represents a near-ceiling endorsement of this metacognitive benefit.

The equally high score on q3, 'I feel that my oral communication skills have improved this month', speaks to a different but equally significant psycholinguistic phenomenon: the transformation of the learner's self-concept as an oral communicator. This item measures not objective skill development but the learner's subjective perception of that development, what the satisfaction literature designates as perceived linguistic self-efficacy. The near-equivalence of the q1 and q3 scores (both $M = 4.5517$) suggests a meaningful psycholinguistic connection: the metacognitive organization facilitated by collaborative preparation structures may function as one of the primary experiential mechanisms through which learners update their self-efficacy beliefs, because the subjective experience of successfully organizing and deploying complex communicative content in a low-threat peer environment provides the mastery experiences that Bandura (1997) identified as the most powerful source of self-efficacy enhancement. The high SD of q3 (0.70518, compared to q1's 0.50166) indicates somewhat greater variability in subjective skill growth perceptions, likely reflecting genuine individual differences in learners' baseline communicative competence and the degree of personal development experienced across the intervention period.

4.3 Secondary Vectors: Peer-Driven Lexical Expansion and Small-Group Motivation

Items q5 (Peer-Driven Lexical Expansion: $M = 4.4483$, $SD = 0.50166$) and q6 (Small-Group Task Motivation: $M = 4.4483$, $SD = 0.50166$) emerged as the second-highest scoring constructs, both falling in the upper range of the

'Satisfied' band and sharing identical mean and standard deviation profiles, a statistical symmetry that suggests they may be tapping into closely related psycholinguistic processes. The parallel score profiles of q5 and q6 suggest that the motivational enhancement experienced in small-group settings and the lexical expansion perceived through peer interaction may be functionally interrelated: when learners are more motivated to engage in oral interaction (q6), they are more likely to attend to and adopt the lexical and syntactic models provided by their peers (q5). This motivation-acquisition linkage is theoretically consistent with Krashen's (1982) model, in which motivational variables function as components of the affective filter, and with Long's (1981) Interaction Hypothesis, in which the negotiation of meaning during peer interaction provides the focused, task-embedded vocabulary exposure that promotes lexical acquisition.

Item q10 (Output Frequency: $M = 4.3966$, $SD = 0.69936$) emerged as the third highest individual item score, providing direct evidence for one of the most fundamental expected benefits of collaborative oral pedagogy. Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis posits that productive language output, the act of attempting to express meaning in the target language, serves specific acquisition-facilitating functions that input exposure alone cannot fulfill: specifically, output forces learners to notice gaps between their current competence and the communicative targets they are attempting to achieve, triggering the metalinguistic reflection that drives form-function mapping. The learner endorsement of collaborative formats as drivers of increased English oral output thus connects directly to Swain's acquisition theory: by increasing output frequency, collaborative activities create more opportunities for the kind of effortful, meaning-focused language production through which acquisition-driving noticing occurs.

4.4 The Floor Vector: Phonetic Precision and the Limits of Peer Mediation

The most psycholinguistically instructive finding in the item-level vector analysis is the score on q8 (Phonetic Precision/Fluency Perception: $M = 3.8966$, $SD = 0.58308$), which not only represents the lowest individual item mean in the entire instrument but is also the only item that falls below the 4.00 midpoint of the 'Satisfied' range. While this score remains comfortably within the 'Satisfied' interpretive band and does not indicate dissatisfaction with collaborative activities as vehicles for phonological development, its relative position at the floor of the satisfaction vector profile constitutes a meaningful psycholinguistic signal that demands careful interpretive attention.

The gap between the q8 floor ($M = 3.8966$) and the q1/q3 ceiling ($M = 4.5517$) represents a satisfaction differential of approximately 0.65 scale points, a substantive difference that traces the boundary between the domains of oral competence where collaborative peer interaction is perceived as highly effective and the domains where its effectiveness is perceived as more limited. This boundary, the data suggest, falls between metacognitive and self-efficacy dimensions on one side, and the technical phonological dimension on the other. Learners clearly perceived their collaborative activities as highly effective vehicles for organizing their thoughts, expanding their vocabulary, increasing their motivation, and generating the subjective sense of overall communicative growth. They were considerably less persuaded that peer interaction provided the technical phonological correction and fluency modeling necessary for genuine pronunciation improvement.

This finding is theoretically coherent and practically significant. Phonological development (the acquisition of new sound patterns, the correction of fossilized pronunciation errors, the development of prosodic awareness) requires access to expert models and technically informed corrective feedback that peers who share similar phonological systems (as co-learners from the same L1 background inevitably do) are structurally limited in their ability to provide. While peer interaction can expose learners to more comprehensible input and more opportunities for meaning negotiation, it typically cannot provide the kind of contrastive phonetic analysis, minimal pair discrimination training, or pronunciation-focused metalinguistic instruction that constitutes effective phonological pedagogy. The learner perception data in this study reflect a sophisticated, if intuitive, understanding of this distinction: collaborative activities are valuable, but they are not a complete substitute for expert-mediated phonological instruction in the development of phonetic precision.

5. PSYCHOLINGUISTIC DISCUSSION

5.1 From High-Stakes Public Speaking to Low-Stakes Group Work: The Architecture of Anxiety Reduction

The interpretive framework provided by Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis enables us to understand the consistent pattern of positive learner perceptions documented in this study as the measurable psychological consequence of a systematic reduction in communicative anxiety achieved through the structural transformation of the oral learning environment. The movement from whole-class teacher-fronted oral performance (with its inherently high-stakes character, its public visibility, and its direct connection to formal assessment) to small-group collaborative interaction represents not merely a change in group size but a fundamental restructuring of the psychological relationship between the learner and the communicative act. In the collaborative peer space, the consequences of imperfect language production are attenuated across multiple dimensions simultaneously: the evaluating audience is smaller and less authoritative; the communicative purpose is collaborative rather than demonstrative; and the shared vulnerability of all group members engaged in a common linguistic task normalizes imperfection and dissolves the isolating shame that individual public error in teacher-fronted settings can produce.

Al-Alahdal (2019) documented precisely this anxiety reduction dynamic in his investigation of collaborative learning in EFL contexts at Saudi tertiary institutions, where both learners and instructors perceived collaborative approaches as substantially more anxiety-reducing than conventional teacher-fronted instruction and as significantly more effective in creating the psychological safety conditions conducive to communicative risk-taking. The present study's q7 score (Anxiety/Ambient Comfort: $M = 4.0172$), while representing the second-lowest item mean in the instrument, nonetheless confirms that the collaborative activities were perceived as providing meaningfully more relaxed communicative conditions than the whole-class alternatives they implicitly reference. The minor relative depression of q7 compared to other items may reflect the fact that even within collaborative peer groups, some residual anxiety persists, particularly in the early weeks of the intervention before group cohesion and interpersonal trust have been established.

Mailu and Odeny (2023), in their assessment of learner satisfaction in Kenyan secondary schools, found that satisfaction was highest when teachers structured activities that actively promoted learner-to-learner interaction, and that this interaction-driven satisfaction correlated significantly with academic achievement. Their finding that learner satisfaction with peer interaction formats serves as a predictor of academic outcomes adds a consequential dimension to the present study's satisfaction data: the consistently high perceptual endorsements documented here may not merely reflect learners' subjective comfort with collaborative activities but may index a genuine facilitation of the conditions under which meaningful oral language acquisition occurs.

5.2 Metacognitive Organization and the Preparation-Production Architecture

The finding that metacognitive thought organization (q1: $M = 4.5517$) emerged as the joint highest-scoring construct in the satisfaction profile invites a theoretical explanation that goes beyond the general affective benefits of collaborative learning to examine the specific cognitive mechanisms through which structured peer activities enable higher-quality oral output. In teacher-fronted whole-class interaction, the temporal architecture of oral communication is fundamentally compressed: the learner is expected to produce spoken output in real time, without extended preparation opportunities, in response to instructor prompts that may arrive with little warning. Under these conditions, the cognitive demands of language production (lexical retrieval, syntactic assembly, phonological encoding, and prosodic organization) must be executed simultaneously and under significant time pressure, consuming the totality of available working memory resources and leaving little cognitive space for the metacognitive monitoring and self-regulation that contribute to communicative quality and accuracy.

The structural architecture of the collaborative learning activities employed in this intervention (particularly those organized around preparatory phases such as Think-Pair-Share's individual thinking component, the preparation stages of Critical Debates, and the partner discussion phases of Three-Step Interview) fundamentally reorganizes this temporal architecture. By inserting a dedicated metacognitive preparation phase between the communicative prompt and the expected oral response, these collaborative formats allow

learners to engage in pre-production planning: assembling and sequencing ideas, selecting appropriate vocabulary, mentally rehearsing key phrases, and constructing a mental representation of the communicative content they intend to deploy before the pressure of real-time production is applied. This think-before-speak structure corresponds to what Ellis (2009) identifies as 'planned communication,' which reliably produces oral output of greater syntactic complexity and communicative elaboration than unplanned spontaneous speech, particularly in second language contexts.

The exceptionally high learner endorsement of q1 in the present study can thus be read as direct evidence that collaborative activities successfully operationalized this preparation-production architecture at the level of subjective learner experience: participants not only perceived themselves as better able to organize their thoughts before speaking, but attributed this metacognitive facilitation specifically to the collaborative learning framework. This interpretation is further supported by the parallel finding of high q3 scores (Subjective Skill Growth: $M = 4.5517$), which may reflect learners' perception that the improved metacognitive organization enabled by collaborative preparation phases translates into observable improvements in the quality and elaboration of their actual oral output, improvements that they can experientially feel as skill growth even without external assessment data to confirm them.

Silaban et al. (2025), whose investigation of collaborative speaking programs in Indonesian contexts documented high student enthusiasm and significant improvements in vocabulary mastery and speaking fluency following collaborative intervention, reported that learners described feeling 'more confident and motivated to speak English' as a direct consequence of collaborative participation, a finding that resonates closely with the present study's q6 and q3 data and suggests that the metacognitive and motivational benefits of collaborative frameworks operate across diverse Southeast and South Asian ESL contexts.

5.3 The Reticence Mitigation Loop: From Peer Trust to Self-Efficacy

One of the most theoretically generative insights to emerge from the integrated analysis of the present study's satisfaction vector profiles is the identification of what may be termed a reticence mitigation loop, a positive feedback cycle through which the structural features of collaborative learning activities interact with the learner's internal psychological variables to produce cumulative self-efficacy enhancement over time. The loop operates approximately as follows: the small-group format reduces the perceived risk of oral participation, enabling the reticent learner to attempt communicative acts they would suppress in high-stakes whole-class settings. The collaborative task structure provides scaffolded preparation time, enabling better-organized output than the learner typically produces under real-time pressure. The better-organized output generates more successful communicative interactions, which are perceived by the learner as evidence of their own growing competence. These mastery experiences update the learner's self-efficacy beliefs upward, further reducing the anxiety that was the original source of reticence, and increasing the willingness to attempt more complex and risky communicative acts in subsequent interactions. Over 10 weeks of iterated engagement with this loop, the cumulative effect is a measurable upward shift in perceived linguistic self-efficacy, precisely what the q1 and q3 data appear to document.

This theoretical account of the reticence mitigation loop helps explain why collaborative learning's benefits appear to be somewhat front-loaded in the satisfaction profiles: the items most closely connected to internal self-efficacy beliefs (q1, q3, q5, q6) score significantly higher than items addressing the more technically specialized domain of phonological development (q8). The reticence mitigation loop operates most powerfully in the domains of communicative confidence, metacognitive organization, and motivational engagement, precisely the domains where the affective filter exerts its most direct influence. It operates more weakly in the domain of phonological precision, where expert corrective feedback from a qualified instructor, rather than peer interaction, appears to remain the perceived mechanism of choice for learners who have developed sufficient metacognitive awareness to distinguish between different types of communicative skill and their associated optimal learning conditions.

5.4 The Phonological Gap and Expert-Mediated Correction

The consistent appearance of q8 (Phonetic Precision/Fluency Perception: $M = 3.8966$) at the floor of the satisfaction vector profile across the study's perceptual data has been identified as one of the most

theoretically significant findings of the investigation. This result invites a more granular examination of the specific conditions under which peer interaction is and is not perceived as a sufficient vehicle for oral language development.

The sociolinguistic profile of the learner cohort is directly relevant here. As students from predominantly Bangla-speaking backgrounds attending an English-medium school, the participants share a common L1 phonological system characterized by specific sound patterns, phonemic distinctions, and prosodic features that differ substantially from standard varieties of English. When peers who share this phonological background interact in collaborative activities, the phonological input they provide to one another inevitably reflects these shared L1-influenced patterns. In the absence of a native or near-native English-speaking interlocutor to model target phonological forms and provide explicit corrective feedback on pronunciation errors, the peer collaborative space offers comparatively weak affordances for phonological development, a limitation that the learners themselves appear to have intuitively recognized and encoded in their relatively depressed q8 responses.

This finding does not constitute evidence against collaborative learning as a pedagogical approach; rather, it specifies the limits of peer mediation and thereby clarifies the complementary role that teacher-directed phonological instruction must continue to play in the overall development of oral communicative competence. The most pedagogically effective design would integrate the affective filter-lowering, metacognitive organization-facilitating, and self-efficacy-building benefits of collaborative peer activities with explicit, expert-mediated phonological instruction in teacher-directed segments, creating a hybrid instructional architecture that draws on the comparative advantages of each format for the specific dimensions of oral competence to which each is most conducive.

The implications of this finding resonate with Mailu and Odeny's (2023) observation that even in highly satisfaction-positive collaborative learning contexts, learners retained specific expectations about the role of the teacher in providing technically specialized instructional content, a finding that challenges simplistic binary framings of collaborative versus teacher-directed pedagogy and calls for more carefully differentiated, empirically grounded models of complementary instructional design.

5.5 Implications for ESL Pedagogy in South Asian Contexts

The perceptual findings of this study, situated within the specific sociolinguistic and pedagogical context of an international school in Bangladesh, carry implications that extend beyond the immediate institutional setting to inform broader conversations about ESL pedagogy in South Asian educational environments. Bangladesh represents a particularly instructive case study: a country where English proficiency is widely recognized as a critical determinant of educational and economic opportunity, yet where the dominant pedagogical traditions (grammar-translation, audiolingual drilling, rote memorization for examination preparation) have systematically neglected the communicative oral competencies that represent English's most practically consequential application for most graduates (Islam et al., 2021; Amin & Greenwood, 2022).

The consistent positive learner perceptions documented in this study across the dimensions of metacognitive organization, self-efficacy, peer-facilitated lexical development, small-group motivation, and output frequency provide empirically grounded support for the systematic integration of collaborative oral activities into secondary ESL curricula in this context. Particularly significant is the study's implicit demonstration that learners themselves recognize and value the psychological benefits of collaborative formats, a finding that addresses one potential concern about collaborative pedagogy in contexts where learners have been socialized into passive, receptive roles: that they may resist or fail to engage meaningfully with more active, learner-centered approaches. The data suggest that when collaborative activities are well-designed, appropriately scaffolded, and implemented with sufficient consistency to allow group cohesion and trust to develop, learners in South Asian ESL contexts are not only willing to engage but report high levels of psychological and educational satisfaction with the experience.

Al-Alahdal's (2019) findings in Saudi tertiary EFL contexts echo this conclusion, suggesting that the psychological dynamics identified in the present Bangladeshi secondary school context may represent a broader pattern operating across diverse majority-Muslim South and Southwest Asian educational

environments where traditional authority-centered pedagogical models have historically dominated and where the communicative anxiety produced by these models constitutes a shared structural challenge to oral language development.

6. CONCLUSION AND PEDAGOGICAL RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 Summary of Key Findings

This investigation into the psycholinguistic and perceptual dimensions of collaborative oral learning activities among Grade 10 ESL learners in Bangladesh has generated a coherent and theoretically interpretable set of findings that collectively advance the empirical case for the systematic integration of structured peer-interaction frameworks into secondary ESL pedagogical design.

The global satisfaction profile ($M = 4.3172$, $SD = 0.43815$) establishes that learners experienced the collaborative 10-week intervention as broadly positive and psychologically affirming. Item-level vector analysis reveals that the highest learner endorsements clustered in the domains of metacognitive thought organization (q1: $M = 4.5517$) and subjective oral skill growth perception (q3: $M = 4.5517$), both reaching the 'Very Satisfied' threshold. This indicates that structured collaborative activities, by creating preparation-production temporal architectures that support pre-speech cognitive organization, enable learners to experience both improved quality of oral output and enhanced perceived linguistic self-efficacy. Secondary peak vectors in peer-driven lexical expansion (q5: $M = 4.4483$) and small-group motivational enhancement (q6: $M = 4.4483$) further demonstrate that collaborative peer environments provide productive conditions for vocabulary development through interaction and for sustaining the motivational engagement that the Affective Filter Hypothesis identifies as a prerequisite for optimal language acquisition.

The floor vector at q8 (Phonetic Precision/Fluency Perception: $M = 3.8966$) constitutes the study's most theoretically subtle finding, identifying the specific boundaries of peer mediation's effectiveness in oral communicative development and confirming that phonological refinement continues to be perceived as a domain requiring expert-instructor input beyond what peer collaborative interaction alone can provide. This finding does not undermine the case for collaborative pedagogy but refines it, specifying the complementary roles of peer-facilitated and teacher-directed instruction in an integrated approach to oral communicative competence development.

6.2 Pedagogical Recommendations

Based on the perceptual data analyzed in this study, several specific pedagogical recommendations are offered for educators operating in secondary ESL contexts characterized by high communicative anxiety and learner reticence.

First, collaborative oral activities should be systematically incorporated into ESL curricula not merely as supplementary enrichment activities but as a primary pedagogical architecture for oral language development. The satisfaction data indicate that learners experience collaborative frameworks as psychologically safer, more motivating, and more conducive to metacognitive preparation than conventional whole-class formats, conditions that are theoretically associated with optimal affective filter reduction and enhanced language acquisition.

Second, collaborative activity design should deliberately build in explicit pre-production preparation phases (individual thinking time, partner planning discussions, note-taking opportunities) that allow metacognitive organization to precede oral performance. The high q1 score suggests that this preparation architecture is perceived as one of the most valuable psychological benefits of collaborative learning, and it should therefore be treated as a non-negotiable structural feature rather than a dispensable time-saver.

Third, phonological development should be addressed through dedicated teacher-directed instruction that complements rather than competes with collaborative oral activities. The q8 floor finding suggests that learners recognize the limits of peer-mediated phonological learning and continue to value expert instructional input in this specialized domain. A hybrid instructional model that integrates collaborative sessions for metacognitive, self-efficacy, motivational, and lexical development with teacher-directed sessions for

phonological refinement would address the full range of oral communicative competence development needs identified by the perceptual data.

Fourth, collaborative activities should be sustained over sufficient time periods to allow group cohesion and interpersonal trust to develop. The reticence mitigation loop identified in the theoretical analysis of this study's data operates as a cumulative process that builds in momentum over time: the earlier sessions in a collaborative intervention may produce more modest effects as learners negotiate the unfamiliar peer-interaction format, while later sessions benefit from the accumulated trust, familiarity, and group dynamics that enable more authentic and risk-tolerant communicative engagement.

6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

Several limitations of the present study merit acknowledgment. The single-site, purposive sample design (N = 58 learners at one international school in Dhaka) appropriately serves the descriptive, context-specific objectives of the investigation but limits the generalizability of findings to other educational settings, particularly government schools in rural areas, where the sociolinguistic context, resource availability, and pedagogical culture may differ substantially from those of the international school environment studied here. Future research should extend this perceptual investigation to a wider range of school types, grade levels, and geographic contexts within Bangladesh and the broader South Asian region to establish the ecological validity of the findings across diverse ESL environments.

Additionally, the non-experimental descriptive design employed in this study captures learner perceptions at a single post-intervention measurement point and cannot establish causal relationships between specific collaborative activity types and specific psycholinguistic outcomes. Future research employing longitudinal designs with repeated perceptual measurement points across the intervention period would enable investigation of how learner self-efficacy beliefs, anxiety levels, and metacognitive organization capacities evolve over time in response to sustained collaborative engagement, yielding a richer understanding of the developmental trajectory of the reticence mitigation loop theorized in this study.

Finally, the perceptual instrument employed here, while validated and reliable, captures only learners' subjective assessments of their experiences and development. Future research incorporating triangulated data collection (combining learner perception surveys with classroom observation protocols, instructor ratings, and objective oral performance assessments) would provide a fuller and ecologically valid account of the relationship between subjective self-efficacy beliefs and objective communicative competence outcomes.

7. REFERENCES

1. Al-Alahdal, A. M. (2019). Collaborative learning in EFL classrooms: Effectiveness and perceptions in Saudi tertiary education. *English Language Teaching*, 12(3), 44–52.
2. Alsaif, S. A. S. (2022). English as a foreign language speaking anxiety: Exploring the perspectives of Saudi female EFL students and teachers. [Unpublished doctoral dissertation].
3. Amin, M. A., & Greenwood, J. (2022). Communicative English in Bangladesh: Where are the communicative elements? *MEXTESOL Journal*, 46(4), 1–12.
4. Asakereh, A., & Dehghannezhad, M. (2015). Student satisfaction with EFL speaking classes: Relating speaking self-efficacy and skills achievement. *Issues in Educational Research*, 25(4), 345–363.
5. Bahrudina, U., & Febriani, S. R. (2020). Implementation of Stephen Krashen's theory in foreign language acquisition. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 13(8), 821–831.
6. Bandura, A. (1997). *Self-efficacy: The exercise of control*. W. H. Freeman.
7. Bouzenoune, H., & Chelgoum, S. (2025). The role of teacher's scaffolding in collaborative learning to enhance students' speaking skills. *Institute of Letters and Languages, Abdelhafid Boussouf University Centre*.
8. Brown, H. D. (2001). *Teaching by principles: An interactive approach to language pedagogy*. Longman.
9. Devi, G. K., & Rao, V. V. (2018). Integrated approach: A tool to enhance English-speaking skills. *Journal on English Language Teaching*, 8(3), 1–6.

10. Ellis, R. (2009). The differential effects of three types of task planning on the fluency, complexity, and accuracy in L2 oral production. *Applied Linguistics*, 30(4), 474–509.
11. Islam, M. S., Hasan, M. K., Sultana, S., Karim, A., & Rahman, M. M. (2021). English language assessment in Bangladesh today: Principles, practices, and problems. *Language Testing in Asia*, 11, 1–21.
12. Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and practice in second language acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
13. Long, M. H. (1981). Input, interaction, and second language acquisition. *Annals of the New York Academy of Sciences*, 379, 259–278.
14. Mailu, J. K., & Odeny, M. L. (2023). Assessment of learner satisfaction in secondary school education. *Qeios*, July 25, 1–15.
15. Qutob, M. M. (2018). The relationship between EFL learners' satisfaction within the classroom environment and their speaking skills. *English Language Teaching*, 11(7), 90–103.
16. Silaban, R., Sihombing, F., Panjaitan, T. J. T., Silaban, L., Ginting, M. O., & Tafonao, A. S. (2025). Improving students' English-speaking skills through collaborative learning at Anastasya School Medan. *Jurnal Pengabdian Masyarakat*, 5(1). <https://doi.org/10.47709/dst.v5i1.6366>
17. Swain, M. (1985). Communicative competence: Some roles of comprehensible input and comprehensible output in its development. In S. Gass & C. Madden (Eds.), *Input in second language acquisition* (pp. 235–253). Newbury House.
18. Thu, T. H. (2009). *The interaction hypothesis: A literature review*. Alliant International University.
19. Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in society: The development of higher psychological processes*. Harvard University Press.

INFO

Corresponding Author: Zarin Zafar Chowdhury, Gulshan 2, Dhaka, Bangladesh.

How to cite/reference this article: Zarin Zafar Chowdhury, *Linguistic Self-Efficacy in Group-Structured Settings: Analyzing Learner Perceptions of Collaborative Oral Activities*, *Asian. Jour. Social. Scie. Mgmt. Tech.* 2026; 8(4): 154-167.