

Enhancing Speaking Skills through Student-Centred Approaches: A Constructivist Perspective on English Language Teaching in Bangladeshi Government Colleges

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Abstract

Proficiency in English, particularly in speaking skills, is crucial for academic success and professional growth in Bangladesh. However, students in government colleges affiliated to National University (NU) often struggle with oral communication due to traditional, teacher-centred methods that prioritize reading and writing over speaking. The research highlights the challenges posed by the current educational system, including large class sizes, inadequate infrastructure, and exam-focused assessments. This study investigates the effectiveness of student-centred activities—such as oral presentations, role plays, and interviews—in enhancing the speaking skills of undergraduate English students at a NU-affiliated government college in Dhaka. Grounded in Vygotsky's social constructivism and Piaget's constructive learning theories, the research emphasizes the importance of social interaction, scaffolding, and active participation in language learning. Vygotsky's theory highlights the role of collaborative activities and the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), while Piaget's constructivist approach underlines the need for students to actively construct knowledge through engagement with real-life scenarios. The findings reveal that integrating these interactive methods not only improves students' communicative competence but also fosters critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. This study advocates for a shift from traditional, exam-driven instruction to a more learner-centred, socially interactive pedagogy, enhancing English language proficiency among government college students.

Keywords: Speaking Skills, NU-Affiliated Government Colleges, Constructivism, Social Constructivism, ZPD, Higher Education in BD, Scaffolding

In Bangladesh, English held the status of an official language for nearly two centuries under colonial rule. After the independence, the use of English in Bangladesh has not expanded significantly, despite its status as the unofficial second language due to its global importance in education, trade, and employment (Rahman et al., 2015; Rahman et al., 2019). As a predominantly monolingual country, where 98% of the population speaks Bangla (BBS, 2022; Kirkwood, 2013), opportunities for English language practice, particularly speaking skills, remain limited (Kirkwood, 2013). Effective oral communication is crucial for academic and professional success (Brookhart & Chen, 2014; Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008; Nowshin, 2020; Qobilovna, 2024; Zivkovic, 2014).

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While the curriculum emphasizes communicative competence, its implementation remains ineffective due to inadequate teacher training and continued reliance on traditional teaching methods (Hasan & Akhand, 2009; Imam, 2005; English in Action, 2009f; Kirkwood, 2013; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). NU, which affiliates around 2,000 colleges (Hussain, 2014), offers graduate and postgraduate degrees in English, but students' oral communication skills remain subpar (Kirkwood, 2013; Habib, 2019). Despite governmental initiatives—such as adopting Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), making English compulsory up to higher secondary level (English in Action, 2009e), and policy reforms, a misbalance persists in the teaching of the four core language skills, with a predominant focus on reading and writing (Begum & Farooqui, 2018).

Research highlights speaking as a critical skill for communication, motivation, and job markets (English in Action, 2009c; Habib, 2019; Kirkwood, 2013). It also links speaking to the improvement in reading, writing, and listening (Gass & Varionis, 1994; Hilferty, 2005). However, previous studies primarily focus on public and private universities, primary, secondary and higher secondary level education (Bhanot, 2007; English in Action, 2008; 2009a; 2009d; 2011; Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008; Islam & Islam, 2012; Lammers, & Murphy, 2002; Meloni & Thompson, 1980; Farabi et al., 2017), with little attention to NU-affiliated government colleges (World Bank, 2019) and none to the undergraduate students of English at these institutions. Thus, no studies specifically address the unique challenges and needs of English students in government colleges, where traditional, teacher-centred practices and limited resources prevail (World Bank, 2019). To address this gap, this study integrates Vygotsky's (1978) and Piaget's (1971) theories into a constructivist framework to develop practical, student-centred language learning strategies. This approach encourages meaningful language use through peer collaboration and personal discovery, foundational components of constructivist pedagogy (Alam & Jahan, 2020).

2. Literature Review & Theoretical Underpinning

2.0 Why Training on Speaking Skills

The ability to speak fluently in English is essential for communicative competence, making training in speaking skills a critical component of language learning. Research underscores that speaking is a core skill in language acquisition (Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Chan, 2011; Penny, 2000; Rahman & Khatun, 2018; Rivers, 1981). However, in the Bangladeshi context, English instruction predominantly focuses on reading and writing, with minimal emphasis on oral skills (Begum &

Farooqui, 2018; English in Action, 2009a; Farabi et al., 2017; Hasan, 2004). This imbalance leaves students, particularly in government colleges, unprepared for real-life communication due to resource constraints and limited interactive opportunities (English in Action, 2009g; Kirkwood, 2013; Hossain, 2020).

Recent studies (Al-Ahdal, 2020; Mondal & Halder, 2022) highlight that learners' communicative competence can be significantly improved through structured speaking interventions that align with learner needs and socio-cultural contexts. These findings reinforce the urgent need to prioritize speaking skills in Bangladeshi educational institutions, particularly at the tertiary level.

2.1 Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1 Vygotsky's ZPD

Rooted in social constructivism, Vygotsky's (1978) ZPD highlights the importance of structured, guided practice within collaborative environments, aiding language acquisition and communicative development. This theory emphasizes the role of social interaction in learning, with support from more knowledgeable peers or teachers enabling learners to progress beyond their current abilities (Vygotsky, 1986).

2.1.2 Piaget's Active Learning Approach

Complementing the above, Piaget's (1971, 1973, 1977) theory advocates active learning, where students construct knowledge through experience. Speaking activities provide opportunities for learners to actively engage with language, enhancing confidence and competence in real-world scenarios.

2.2 Student-Centered Approaches: Oral Presentations, Role Play, and Interviews

2.2.1 Overview of Student-Centered Methods

Student-centered approaches such as cooperative learning (Johnson et al., 1991; Slavin, 1995) and task-based language teaching (Torpy, 2006) employ group work, oral presentations, role-playing, and interviews to foster active engagement. These methods align with Vygotsky's emphasis on interaction and Piaget's advocacy for experiential learning.

2.2.2 Oral Presentations

Oral presentations involve public speaking with visual aids, helping students articulate ideas while building critical thinking and language skills (Chen, 2009; Hoai, 2021). Research shows these activities foster confidence and audience engagement (Chikh & Dich, 2016; Girard et al., 2011; Mallette & Clare, 2001; Živković, 2014).

2.2.3 Role-Playing

Role-playing simulates real-world scenarios, allowing students to develop communicative competence and explore different perspectives (Ments, 1999). While this method enhances problem-solving and social awareness (García-Carbonell et al., 2014; Kusnierek, 2015; Harmer, 2007), it may also present challenges, such as group conflict or being perceived as more entertaining than educational (Ments, 1999).

2.2.4 Interviews

Interviews in academic settings replicate real-life interactions like job interviews or viva voce exams, providing students with formal communication practice (Harmer, 2007). They develop leadership, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills by encouraging realistic exchanges and supporting communicative competence (Whetten & Cameron, 2002; Reardon, 2016). Despite requiring thorough preparation, interviews promote deep learning and language application (Dakowska, 2005).

These activities align with Vygotsky's concept of peer collaboration within the ZPD, where learners benefit from the guidance of more knowledgeable peers or instructors. Piaget's advocacy for experience-based learning also supports these practices, as students actively participate in real-life, task-oriented scenarios requiring critical thinking and personal adaptation (Apple, 2006; Chickering & Gamson, 1987; Farabi et al., 2017; Rahman & Khatun, 2018).

2.3 Context and Current Practices in Government Colleges

2.3.1 Challenges in English Education

As mentioned earlier, English is crucial for global communication and economic opportunities (Kachru, 1996; Tripathi, 1998; Rahman et al., 2015). Despite this, students in government colleges face significant barriers to developing speaking skills. Teacher-centered methods, large class sizes, and an exam-centric curriculum limit oral practice, leaving students underprepared for employment (Kirkwood, 2013; Habib, 2019).

2.3.2 Institutional Limitations

With 1.8 million students and a teacher-student ratio of 1:116, NU-affiliated colleges are plagued by overcrowded classrooms and lecture-based teaching (World Bank, 2019; Hussain, 2014). ICT facilities remain underutilized, and speaking activities are rarely incorporated into traditional methods (Kirkwood, 2013).

2.4 Institutional and Instructional Context

This study was conducted at a college situated in Dhaka, where the English department contends with a high teacher-student ratio of 1:150 and constrained resources. Pedagogical practices are largely traditional and lecture-centred, providing limited scope for speaking practice. Evaluation relies solely on summative assessments, which prioritize rote memorization at the expense of fostering communicative competence and critical thinking skills (Dickinson & Adams, 2017).

2.5 Critical Reflection on Current Classroom Practices

Undergraduate English students at NU-affiliated colleges often struggle with oral communication due to systemic, psychological, and pedagogical challenges. Speaking skills are neglected due to exam-focused curricula, limited practice opportunities, and lecture-based instruction (Skehan, 1998; Thornbury, 2007). While efficient for syllabus completion (Wood et al., 2006), lecture-driven methods hinder critical thinking and exacerbate passivity, anxiety, and low self-esteem (Krashen, 1982, 1991). Large class sizes—often exceeding 90 students—impede interaction, personalized feedback, and active learning (Mulryan-Kyne, 2010; Biggs, 1999). The absence of extracurricular platforms like English language clubs limits practical speaking opportunities (Pollard, 2008).

To address these challenges in current classroom practices, it becomes essential to explore alternative, student-centered pedagogies that can better support the development of oral communication skills. Recognizing the limitations of lecture-based teaching, the absence of practical speaking opportunities, and the psychological barriers faced by students, this study proposes an intervention grounded in constructivist principles. By incorporating interactive strategies such as role plays, interviews, and oral presentations, it aims to foster active learning, peer collaboration, and increased learner autonomy (Slavin, 1995; Harmer, 2000).—thereby equipping students with the communication skills needed for academic success and professional readiness (World Bank, 2019).

Research Objective

This study investigates how student-centred, constructivist approaches—role plays, interviews, and oral presentations—enhance English-speaking skills in government college students in Bangladesh. Drawing on Vygotsky's (1978) social learning theory and Piaget's (1971) active learning framework, it examines how interactive activities promote communicative competence through collaboration, active participation and engagement.

Research Questions

1. How do oral presentations, role plays and interviews influence students' language proficiency and self-confidence in English?
2. In what ways do oral presentations, role plays and interviews influence cooperation among students and enhance collective knowledge?
3. How do students perceive the impact of oral presentations, role plays, and interviews on their engagement, participation, and real-life use of English-speaking skills?

These questions are grounded in Vygotsky's (1978; 1986) emphasis on social learning and Piaget's (1971, 1973, 1977) theories of active learning. The first question focuses on the development of individual skills and confidence, reflecting both interactive and self-directed learning. The second one explores the role of collaborative tasks in building collective knowledge within the ZPD, and the third one examines learner engagement and the real-world relevance of these activities, highlighting how constructivist practices can foster deeper motivation and understanding.

4. Research Methodology

4.1 Research Design

This study adopted a mixed-methods approach to evaluate the impact of a structured intervention using student-centered speaking activities—namely, oral presentations, role plays, and interviews—on students' academic and personal development. Drawing on constructivist learning theories by Vygotsky (1978) and Piaget (1971), the study explored how interactive practices enhance language proficiency, self-confidence, collaboration, and engagement.

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were employed to ensure a comprehensive understanding of the intervention's effects. A structured survey was used to gather students' perceptions, while Focus Group Discussions (FGDs) offered deeper insights into learner experiences. This methodological triangulation enhanced the validity and reliability of findings by combining measurable outcomes with contextual understanding (Creswell, 2013).

4.2 Intervention Design and Implementation

The intervention was embedded within the regular English curriculum and introduced 15 structured speaking-focused activities over a semester. These activities— oral presentations, interviews, and role plays— were designed to gradually transition students from group-based to individual tasks. Initially, group work was emphasized to reduce speaking anxiety, enhance peer support, and build

students' confidence (Kerby & Romine, 2009; Slavin, 1995). As students became more comfortable, the intervention shifted towards individual tasks, encouraging autonomy, time management, and self-assessment. All activities were grounded in real-life contexts, such as job interviews and viva examinations, to enhance their relevance and practical application. To ease students into the process, simple and accessible content like poetry was initially used to build confidence before introducing more complex topics (Kusnierek, 2015). Rubric-based evaluations were consistently employed to track students' development in communication skills and ensure objective assessment (Jonsson, 2014). Overall, the intervention aimed to foster a more interactive, learner-centred classroom environment, promoting cognitive growth, communicative competence, and critical thinking – skills vital for both academic achievement and future professional success.

4.3 Research Context and Sampling

The study took place at a NU affiliated government college in Dhaka, where traditional, lecture-heavy pedagogies dominate, and class sizes are large.

A purposive sample of 12 first-year English Honours students was selected, based on their direct engagement with the English language curriculum and convenient accessibility. Participants were divided into three groups of four, each engaging in the 15 speaking activities described above. Topics were drawn from the existing curriculum and included poetry, prose, and literary criticism.

This sampling strategy ensured both relevance to the research aims and feasibility within institutional and time constraints.

4.4 Research Instruments

Two instruments were used to collect data on students' experiences and the impact of the intervention:

- A structured survey questionnaire, comprising both Likert-scale and open-ended items, measured changes in four key areas: language proficiency, self-confidence, group cooperation, and engagement.
- A Focus Group Discussion (FGD) protocol explored students' reflections and perceptions in greater depth. FGDs were conducted online, audio-recorded with informed consent, and guided by thematic prompts.

4.5 Data Collection Procedures and Research Ethics

Quantitative data were collected via the survey at the end of the intervention, while qualitative data were gathered through FGDs held shortly thereafter. Each FGD lasted approximately 40–60 minutes.

All participants were briefed on the purpose of the study, ensured confidentiality, and informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Informed consent was obtained for both participation and recording. Member checking was conducted during data analysis to validate interpretations and confirm the authenticity of qualitative findings.

4.6 Research Validity and Reliability

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research instruments, several rigorous steps were undertaken. Face validity was established by piloting the questionnaire with a sample of potential respondents, whose feedback helped refine the clarity, wording, and relevance of the items. Content and construct validity were further strengthened through expert review by three experienced educators, who assessed the alignment of the survey and FGD tools with the research objectives and provided constructive feedback for improvement. For reliability, the survey incorporated established scales and consistent wording across items. To ensure the trustworthiness of the qualitative data, the FGD prompts were reviewed and validated by experts, while member checking was employed to confirm the accuracy of interpretations. Additionally, thematic coding was used to systematically analyse the qualitative data, reinforcing transparency and analytical consistency (Cronbach & Meehl, 1955; Krosnick, 2018; Moule & Goodman, 2014).

5. Findings and Discussion

5.1 Findings

This section presents the study's findings on students' engagement with oral presentations, role plays and interviews, their perceived benefits, and willingness to continue these practices. Data from surveys and FGDs with English Honours students reveal key outcomes, including attendance rates, improvements in self-confidence and language proficiency, and enhanced group cooperation.

Students highlighted the value of learner-centred activities in making learning interactive and engaging, with qualitative reflections underscoring their positive impact on academic experiences. Tables and responses provide detailed insights into how these activities improved speaking skills and fostered collaborative learning. The results demonstrate the effectiveness of oral presentations, role plays and interviews in enhancing engagement and overall learning outcomes.

5.1.1 Findings from Survey

Table 1: Participants’ Attendance in Oral Presentation Activities

Question		F	%
Have you attended all the oral presentations?	Yes	8	67%
	No	4	33%

Table 2: Distribution of Missed Activities by Participants

Number of Activities Missed	F	%
One	2	16.5%
Two	2	16.5%
Three or more	0	0%

67% of participants attended all activities, while 33% missed 1–2 sessions, indicating a high level of overall engagement.

Table 3: Students’ Perceived Benefits and Impact of Oral Presentations, Role Play and Interview

Students’ Perceived Benefits	F	%
Enhanced language proficiency	9	75
Enhanced self-confidence	12	100
Increased cooperation among group members	11	92
Enhanced Subjective knowledge	9	75
Made learning interesting	9	75
Total Number of participants	12	100

All participants (100%) reported enhanced self-confidence. A significant majority (92%) noted improved cooperation, while 75% reported gains in language skills, subjective knowledge, and engagement. A small proportion (25%) did not experience all the benefits, highlighting individual variation.

Table 4: Students' willingness for the continuation of Oral presentation, Role Play and Interview

Frequency	yes		No	
	F	%	F	%
Should the Oral presentation, Role Play, and interview be continued on a regular basis?	12	100	00	00
Total Number of participants	12	100		

Table 4 presents unanimous agreement (100%) among students on continuing these activities, underscoring their perceived value. Despite some

variation in individual benefits, the overall positive feedback suggests that oral presentations, role plays and interviews are a valuable tool for enhancing various aspects of learning.

In summary, Tables 1 to 4 collectively show that oral presentations, role plays, and interviews significantly contributed to students' engagement, skill development, and satisfaction by boosting self-confidence, with all participants attributing their growth to opportunities for public speaking in a supportive environment. Enhanced group cooperation (92%) reflects the value of teamwork in academic and professional contexts. The unanimous support for continuing these practices indicates their alignment with students' preferences and recognition of their benefits. Future strategies should sustain or increase these activities, addressing varying individual impacts to ensure inclusivity and maximize effectiveness.

5.1.2 Findings From FGD

The FGD provided key insights into how students perceived the impact of oral presentations, role plays, and interviews on their academic journey and learning experiences.

Improved Speaking Skills and Confidence:

In FGDs, participants described notable improvements in their speaking skills and confidence after engaging in oral presentations and interviews. "Student A" highlighted how regular presentations enhanced both their language abilities and self-assurance: "Participating in the presentations and interviews helped me improve my speaking abilities and gave me more confidence in expressing my ideas." Echoing this, "Student B" remarked on the development of vocabulary and argumentation: "My vocabulary and ability to construct clear arguments have notably improved. Regular presentations have made me more precise in my speech."

Several participants emphasized the impact of repeated public speaking on overcoming nervousness. "Student C" reflected on their initial hesitation, noting, "Initially, I was nervous about speaking in front of others, but now I feel much more confident. The presentations provided a practice ground for my self-assurance." Similarly, "Student D" stated, "I've overcome my fear of public speaking through these presentations. It has built my confidence significantly both academically and personally."

Enhanced Collaboration and Teamwork:

In addition to personal development, participants shared that oral presentations, role plays, and interviews fostered stronger cooperation among

peers. Students appreciated the collaborative nature of these tasks, which contributed to better teamwork and mutual respect. "Student E" remarked: "Working on presentations and role plays as a group has improved our coordination and teamwork skills. We had to collaborate and support each other to succeed." "Student F" added: "Working in groups during activities has enhanced our mutual respect and collaboration."

Deeper Engagement with Course Content:

The process of preparing and delivering the activities also deepened students' engagement with the course material. Participants reported that researching and presenting topics led to better understanding and retention. "Student B" noted: "Preparing for presentations and role plays forced me to understand the material more thoroughly. It was more engaging than just reading from a textbook." Similarly, "Student G" shared: "The process of researching and presenting the content deepened my understanding of the topics."

Interactive and Enjoyable Learning Experience:

Moreover, Students recognized the activities for making learning more interactive and enjoyable. Many viewed these methods as a refreshing departure from traditional lectures. "Student H" observed: "Presentations, role plays, and interviews make learning more interactive and enjoyable, breaking the monotony of [traditional] lectures." "Student D" echoed this sentiment, stating: "They make studying more engaging and participatory, which helps in grasping complex concepts better."

Support for Assessment Integration:

Participants strongly supported including these activities in formal assessments. They felt these activities effectively evaluate both knowledge and communication skills, offering a holistic measure of student abilities. FGDs reflected a shared perception that oral presentations, role plays, and interviews positively impacted language proficiency, confidence, collaboration, and academic engagement – underscoring their value as both pedagogical and evaluative tools.

5.2 Discussion

The combined findings from the surveys and FGDs underscore the transformative potential of interactive activities such as oral presentations, role-playing, and interviews in higher education settings, particularly within resource-constrained environments. These activities not only foster language proficiency, self-confidence, and collaboration but also align closely with key educational theories, including Vygotsky's social constructivism and Piaget's cognitive development theory, which emphasize the importance of active, peer-supported learning experiences in fostering cognitive and social growth.

Enhancement of Self-Confidence and Language Proficiency

The survey results revealed that 100% of participants experienced a notable boost in self-confidence, a finding corroborated by FGD comments emphasizing the supportive environment in which students practiced public speaking. This mirrors Vygotsky's (1978) notion of scaffolding, where social interaction with peers and guidance from instructors enabled learners to progress beyond their initial capabilities. The structured yet supportive environment fostered gradual risk-taking in speaking activities, thereby reducing communication apprehension and enhancing public speaking skills. Besides, students engaged in peer-supported learning (scaffolding) that fostered independence and self-assurance. This aligns with Piaget's cognitive development theory, which stresses the importance of active participation in hands-on learning activities, such as oral presentations.

Language proficiency gains were also notable, with 75% of students reporting improvements in vocabulary, sentence construction, and fluency. Preparing for and participating in oral tasks required active cognitive engagement, supporting Piaget's (1971) emphasis on experiential learning. These findings are consistent with earlier studies (Ur, 1996; Pollard, 2008) that advocate for interactive, communicative language practices over passive, lecture-driven approaches.

Development of Cooperative and Collaborative Skills

Another key finding was the enhancement of group cooperation and teamwork skills, with 87% FGDs echoed this sentiment, with students highlighting how Group activities such as role-playing and interviews facilitated peer learning, encouraging students to support and learn from one another. This supports Johnson et al.'s (1991) and Slavin's (1995) research on cooperative learning, where group-based tasks foster social skills, empathy, and collective problem-solving abilities. These interactions are crucial within Vygotsky's social constructivist framework, where knowledge is co-constructed through collaboration.

Engagement and Interest in Learning

The shift from traditional lecture-based methods to dynamic, student-centred activities like role-playing and oral presentations resulted in 75% of participants expressing greater engagement and interest in learning. FGD discussions confirmed this finding, with students describing how preparing and presenting topics made the material more meaningful and interactive.

This aligns with Piaget's emphasis on active learning and Biggs' (1999) theory of constructive alignment, which ties learning activities directly to outcomes. By engaging deeply with the content, students reported better retention and understanding, and 100% of participants expressed a preference for continuing such activities, citing their effectiveness in making learning enjoyable and participatory.

Reduction of Speaking Anxiety and Promotion of Autonomy

Qualitative data from FGDs indicated that starting with group activities before moving to individual performances effectively reduced speaking anxiety. Peer support during initial stages allowed students to build confidence, while the gradual shift towards individual tasks promoted autonomy and self-regulation. This transition aligns with Kerby and Romine's (2009) findings that scaffolded group work can serve as a steppingstone toward independent language use.

Real-Life Relevance and Cognitive Engagement

Integrating real-life contexts, such as job interviews and viva-voce style assessments, made speaking activities more meaningful and relevant to students' future academic and professional experiences. This real-world applicability encouraged deeper cognitive engagement, consistent with Piaget's (1973) emphasis on meaningful learning through experience. Students reported feeling more prepared for authentic communication scenarios, reflecting enhanced critical thinking, adaptability, and problem-solving skills.

While self-reported gains in confidence were substantial, further research is needed to assess the long-term retention of oral proficiency skills. Focus group discussions revealed that variations in outcomes were influenced by factors such as prior experience, individual learning styles, and comfort with public speaking. These findings underscore the importance of differentiated instruction to accommodate diverse learner needs. Providing tailored support, such as additional practice opportunities or targeted guidance, could enhance the effectiveness of such interventions for a broader range of students.

Implications for Future Teaching Practices

The results highlight the need to integrate oral presentations, role-playing, and interviews into curricula traditionally dominated by lecture-based methods. These activities not only improve language proficiency and self-confidence but also develop essential skills like teamwork, critical thinking, and communication. FGDs indicated that students found these activities more holistic and reflective of their capabilities, suggesting their potential for inclusion in formal assessments. Integrating these interactive methods could provide a more comprehensive evaluation of student learning (Joughin, 2020), better preparing students for academic and professional challenges. Moreover, the enthusiasm expressed by students in FGDs suggests that such approaches could enhance overall satisfaction and motivation.

Contextual Reflection:

The findings demonstrate that even in contexts with systemic

challenges—such as large classes, traditional practices, and limited resources—low-cost, student-centred activities can significantly enhance educational outcomes. Oral presentations, role plays, and interviews thus represent practical, contextually appropriate strategies for promoting active learning, particularly within under-resourced higher education systems like Bangladesh’s public colleges.

6. Conclusion

In conclusion, this study confirms that integrating real-life speaking activities—such as oral presentations, role-plays, and interviews—into language instruction is a highly effective strategy for enhancing students’ language proficiency, confidence, critical thinking, and engagement, particularly in large, lecture-dominated classes. Grounded in Vygotsky’s social constructivism and Piaget’s cognitive development theories, these student-centred, interactive approaches foster both cognitive and social development, better preparing learners for academic and professional challenges. The unanimous support for the continuation of these practices and the overwhelmingly positive student feedback highlights the potential of such interactive activities to cultivate essential communication, collaboration, and problem-solving skills, serving as powerful pedagogical tools, particularly in resource-constrained settings where student motivation and participation are often limited. The implications of these findings advocate for a paradigm shift from traditional lecture-based approaches to more learner-centred, communicative methods aligned with constructivist theories of learning. However, variations in student outcomes, influenced by prior experiences and individual learning styles, suggest the need for differentiated support to ensure broader and more equitable benefits. To this end, the study recommends integrating structured speaking tasks more formally into the curriculum, not only as teaching tools but also as part of continuous and formative assessment practices. Professional development programs should be designed to equip educators with the skills needed to facilitate and assess these activities effectively. Furthermore, institutions should create classroom environments that nurture participation, reduce speaking anxiety through scaffolded support, and promote autonomy. These strategies are essential to cultivating inclusive and engaging learning experiences that prepare students for real-world communication challenges. Future research may explore the long-term retention of skills gained through such methods and examine their effectiveness across different academic disciplines and students’ academic success and demographics.

7. References

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