

Exploring Teacher-Student Relationships and Teacher Questioning Strategies in

Tertiary ESOL Classes in Bangladesh

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A thesis submitted to the Department of English and Humanities in partial

fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

Master of Arts in English

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Declaration

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3. The thesis does not contain material which has been accepted, or submitted, for any other degree or diploma at a university or other institution.
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Approval

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Ethics Statement

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Moreover, the study was done in the most ethical considerations before data were collected. The participants had to read and sign the letter of “Consent form” carefully prior to the interview. The teachers chosen were well informed of the study. It was also informed that the interview will be recorded and observed data will be utilized only to serve the purpose of the study and pseudonyms will be applied to ensure confidentiality.

Abstract

Teacher questioning as a means of fostering interaction in second language classrooms is common, but in Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL contexts, hesitation, limited response or non-response are common among students. This paper examines the emotional experiences that students undergo when teachers question them and the factors that affect their responses and how teachers view student reluctance. Semi-structured interviews were carried out with students and teachers employing a qualitative approach to gain a closer insight into classroom practices. The results show that students often feel anxiety, nervousness and fear of being evaluated negatively when responding to questions. These emotional responses normally result in stuttering, speech blockage and silence despite the students being knowledgeable of the answers. The study also identifies the main pedagogical factors that influence participation including the style of questioning, wait-time and teacher student relationships. It was discovered that open-ended questions and wait-time were more effective to elicit more confident answers, whereas supportive and non-judgmental attitudes of teachers lowered anxiety. Even though teachers recognized emotional barriers, they occasionally explained silence by language barriers. In general, the results indicate that silence is a situational reaction that depends on emotional and interactional influences and is not the result of inability. It is suggested that teachers ought to employ positive, open-ended questioning techniques and sufficient wait-time to minimize anxiety and promote active student learning.

Keywords: Silence, ESOL, Tertiary, Participation, Wait Time, Communicative Competence.

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Chapter One

Introduction

1.1 Background of the Study

Classroom interaction is an important aspect of teaching English language especially in ESOL setting, which is essential in helping learners to acquire communicative competence. Teacher questioning is regarded as one of the most important tools in encouraging student participation, engagement, and language production among other teaching strategies. The existing literature has also demonstrated that questioning does not only evaluate the comprehension of the learners, but it also allows the learners to share ideas, negotiate meaning and practice speaking (Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011).

Nevertheless, in spite of its pedagogical significance, students in second language classroom usually answer little or do not say anything when asked. Such situation of the silence of learners has been significantly reported across various Asian EFL contexts such as Japan, China, and other educational institutions (Harumi, 2010; King & Smith, 2017; Lin, 2023; Wu, 2019). Studies indicate that this silence is not only because of the weakness of language, but also largely affected by emotional elements that include anxiety, fear of negative assessment, and feelings about preserving its social image. In most instances, students do not talk because they are too embarrassed or distracted, thus they are not able to interact well in the classroom.

Teacher-centered teaching, exam-based education and teacher-student hierarchy are common classroom practices in the tertiary Bangladesh context (Hamid, 2020; Rahman & Pandian, 2018). Students often have a history of education where verbal

participation is restricted and accuracy is more important than communication. Consequently, despite having sufficient information, students can be reluctant, nervous, or unconfident to answer teacher questions.

Meanwhile, the willingness of students to participate, on the one hand, is greatly determined by teacher-related factors, including questioning style, wait-time, feedback, and classroom rapport. It has been demonstrated that supportive and inclusive classroom settings and the application of open-ended and reflective questions can promote student engagement (Al-shraideh, 2017; Zepke et al., 2009).

Despite such insights, little research has explored emotional experiences of students, their response behaviours and perceptions of teachers in relation to questioning practices in Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL classrooms. This gap brings the need to have a more holistic approach to classroom interaction.

1.2 Statement of the Problem

Questioning is a primary pedagogical practice in tertiary ESOL classes, which is likely to promote interaction, critical thinking, and communicative competence (Harmer, 2007; Richards and Rodgers, 2022). Nevertheless, in the Bangladeshi setting, students tend to be silent, hesitant or offer minimal responses even when they possess the knowledge that is required. This brings out an inconsistency between the desired purpose of questioning and the student participation.

Emotional issues, including anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, embarrassment, and low confidence are the most significant contributors to this gap. Their contextual influences such as teaching focused on exams, accuracy and wait-time are further reinforced

in connection with these factors. Moreover, teacher-student relations also have a significant impact on determining how willing the students will be to respond during questioning.

Regardless of this, the current studies have failed to adequately investigate the role of questioning practices in influencing the emotional experiences of students and teacher student relationship in real classroom situations. Also, when students remain silent, teachers tend to assume that the student is unable or uninterested in learning, without considering the potential effects of silence that could be emotionally motivated or driven by context. Although past research has been conducted on the topic of anxiety and participation, they often do not look at the relationship of emotional responses, questioning styles, and teacher perceptions and how these relate to the other factors.

Consequently, a lack of integrated knowledge of the interaction of emotional, pedagogical, and relational factors in their influence on student responses in classroom questioning persists. Hence, the research is needed to fill these gaps by investigating the interrelationship between teacher questioning, response behaviours, and students' emotional experiences, as well as teacher perceptions. In this way, it will seek to offer a richer and contextualized perspective on classroom interaction and make a contribution to more inclusive, emotionally sensitive and successful ESOL teaching practices in Bangladesh.

1.3 Central Research Objective (CRO)

To investigate how tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh emotionally experience in the context of teacher questioning, to examine the causes of why students respond or remain silent in their patterns, and to examine the teachers' perceptions of factors that lead to students' unwillingness to engage in questioning in the classroom.

1.4 Research Questions

1. How do tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh feel to teacher questioning during classes?
2. What factors shape students' response behaviours to teachers' questioning in tertiary ESOL classrooms?
3. What factors do tertiary ESOL teachers perceive as influencing students' reluctance to respond to teacher questioning in ESOL classrooms?

1.5 Significance of the Study

To the best of the researcher's knowledge, this study points at an under explored area of the ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh: the emotional state of students when being questioned by their teachers and the interpretation of the unwillingness to answer by their teachers. Although recent research on the topic of English language learning in Bangladesh has centered on anxiety, motivation, or communicative competence, little attention has been given to questioning as an emotionally and relationally charged classroom activity. Student unwillingness or silence in questioning is a serious issue to the communicative goals of teaching ESOL since questioning is the foundation of classroom communication.

The study is applicable in theory and practice. Theoretically, it contributes to the body of literature related to classroom interaction and student reluctance by placing both emotional reactions of students to questioning and teacher perception in the framework of Bangladeshi tertiary that remains to be not well studied in the literature. It also expands the information on questioning as a cognitive process as well as relational and emotional practice, predetermined by the power relations in the classroom and ideologies of pedagogy.

Practically, the findings can be directed to the teachers, educators and curriculum developers. The study contributes to the creation of a more balanced view on classroom silence and the absence of responses by incorporating the perspectives of students and teachers. It also means that questioning strategies applied by the teachers and the process of formation of relations should be modified to the emotional requirements of the students and the cultural demands. Through this, the study will help in establishing more accommodating and inclusive ESOL classrooms in which students are free to contribute in the learning process.

1.6 Limitations of the Study

There are a number of limitations in this research. It has been held in a small number of private universities in Bangladesh and the sample of the students and teachers was limited. Thus, the results cannot be made applicable to all tertiary ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh, but they reflect the experiences and perceptions of a certain group of learners and teachers within the specific institutional contexts. The research was majorly based on self-reported information collected through the interviews, which are subject to the influences of memory, personal interpretation, and desire to share their true emotions. It is also possible that the accounts of teachers can be based on their professional beliefs but not classroom behaviour. Regardless of these shortcomings, the study provides useful information on the emotional, relationship and pedagogical aspects of teacher questioning and student reactions in Bangladeshi higher education ESOL classrooms.

1.7 Operational Definition

Rapport

The teacher-student rapport is described as the affectionate and interpersonal association between teachers and learners, which is established on the foundation of trust, empathy, respect, and emotional assistance. It shows the level of safety and appreciation students have in the classroom and determines their motivation to engage in learning activities. Rapport is especially essential in a language classroom since speaking a second or foreign language is an emotionally risky and fearful process. Good rapport lowers anxiety and makes learners have confidence to make an attempt at answers even when they are not so sure of the correctness of their answers (Al-shraideh, 2017; Hagenauer & Volet, 2014; Zepke et al., 2009). The studies also show that teachers who are patient, encouraging, and sensitive to the problems of learners will get their better oral interaction and longer response, which is more likely to continue (Ahmed, 2025; Yakubi & Rokni, 2012).

Display Questions

Display questions are questions introduced by the teacher to which they are already aware of the answer and are primarily designed to determine whether a person has factual knowledge, comprehension or linguistic accuracy. They are usually short with pre-set answers; these questions are the ones that are linked to a teacher-centred and exam-driven classroom. Since display questions are focused on accuracy and assessment, they may intensify fear of error and silence or low participation, particularly when using ESOL classrooms (Harumi, 2010; Lin, 2023; Nunan, 1991). Although display questions can be appropriate in evaluating comprehension,

excessive use of such questions can deprive students of a chance to engage in lengthy talk, critical thinking and personal meaning-making.

Referential Questions

Referential questions are open ended questions. These questions do not demand factual knowledge but encourage a learner to give an opinion, interpretation or a personal experience and thus rather than recalling information they encourage the learner to use the language communicatively. Studies indicate that referential questions produce more comprehensive, elaborate, and meaningful student responses compared to display questions since they alleviate the stress to be correct (Manzoor and Kiani, 2023; Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011). The referential questions used in ESOL classes support the interactional competence by helping the learners to negotiate meaning and express ideas using their own words, thereby making them more willing to contribute.

Wait-time

Wait-time is the intentional pause on the part of a teacher after posing a question before he requires a student to respond. Row (1974) says that wait-time usually means allowing students, at least three or five seconds, to think, process information, and plan their responses. This is an important pause to have in language classes, because students usually require more time to find words, organize their ideas and get rid of the anxiety connected to speaking. Studies indicate that longer wait-time does not only enhance the quality and length of the student response, but also increases participation especially among less confident students. It helps to relieve the immediate answer pressure and provides more supportive interactional environment. Wait-time is particularly significant in ESOL

situations as it gives the learners a chance to balance between cognitive and linguistic loads. Thus, the use of wait-time is regarded as one of the main questioning strategies that increase student confidence and communicative interaction (Row, 1974; Walsh, 2011).

ESOL

English as a Second Language is also known as English to Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and they are academic programs that focus on those whose native language is not English. The phrase is generally applied to the teaching of English where it is not the primary language spoken in the society yet is needed in educational or professional life (Richards & Rodgers, 2022; Roberts & Baynham, 2006). ESOL is a broad field that covers large spectra of learners, all with different linguistic, cultural and even educational backgrounds and can be conducted either on school, college or university levels. In the current study, ESOL is specifically used to connote the teaching of the English language in the tertiary level in non-native English-speaking setting. The research located in the ESOL environment of Bangladesh and specifically in the tertiary classrooms where English is the second language taught and usually opposed in oral communication.

Chapter Two

Literature Review

This chapter consists of four sections. It initially describes learner silence as a multifaceted contextual phenomenon. It then discusses how students react to teacher questioning, both emotionally and in terms of interaction. The third section draws attention to the importance of teacher-student relations as a source of participation. Lastly, it examines the Bangladeshi setting, and the teacher-centered practices and lack of student voice, all contributing to the gap in the research.

Part 1: Learner Silence in Language Classrooms: Concept and Characteristics

2.1.1 Silence as a Classroom Phenomenon

Earlier research on second language acquisition predominately constructed learner silence as a deficit, associating with low linguistic proficiency, lack of motivation, or communicative impairment. Nevertheless, recent empirical researches criticize this reductionist approach by redefining silence as a complex and contextually mediated phenomenon (Harumi, 2010; Lin, 2023; King & Smith, 2017; Wu, 2019). Although these earlier interpretations have focused on the deficiency of an individual, the current research converges on the view that the silence emerges through the interactions between the emotional, social, and pedagogical factors.

This change is especially noticeable when the results are compared in various educational settings. As an example, Harumi (2010), in his Japanese tertiary context, and Lin (2023), in their Chinese undergraduate context, both indicate the same tendency:

students with good receptive and written skills tend to be quiet in oral communication. Although the context and the methodology of these studies vary, there is an overall assumption that silence cannot be easily explained by lack of knowledge. Rather, they point to a commonality of avoidance of verbal participation by learners as a strategy in reaction to classroom conditions, especially in teacher-centered classrooms.

Another area of intersection can be found in research on sociocultural aspects of silence. King and Smith (2017) and Wu (2019), both of which operate in the Asian educational settings, also perceive silence as socially significant, but not necessarily problematic. Whereas King and Smith see silence as a tactic of attentiveness and respect, Wu (2019) positions it as an approach to interactional risk management, and social face. Despite some variation in their lens of analysis, both studies are in agreement in that they place silence as culturally situated behaviour thus defying the Universalist view that silence is disengagement.

At the interactional level, it is possible to notice a pattern that is common in various studies about the role of classroom discourse. The teacher dominated questioning practices are also found to be a major cause of learner reticence by both Harumi (2010) and Lin (2023). Conversely, there is a relatively higher willingness to speak in peer-based or less evaluative situations among the learners. This opposition in the context of interactions shows a pattern: silence is not the attribute of an individual only but is co-created in the context of pedagogic activities, especially, the ones focused on accuracy, speed, and evaluation. A combination of these studies clearly shows that there is a development of literature that has seen the term silence as a deficit and rather as a dynamic, context-sensitive, and socially mediated reaction. This redefinition forms the basis of further analysis of the emotional, social and linguistic aspects that influence learner silence in classroom communication.

2.1.2 Emotional, Social, and Linguistic Dimensions of Learner Silence

In several studies, affective factors become the most significant determinants of learner silence, and anxiety and fear of negative evaluation are always found as the key ones. In their study with ESL learners in Canadian universities, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) found that speaking anxiety negatively affects cognitive processing and language retrieval. This result is echoed in the study of Japanese college EFL students by Kitano (2001, as cited in Kim & Choi, 2023) where the fear of negative evaluation emerged as a stronger predictor of the oral reticence than language proficiency did. Both studies agree on one important point that emotional vulnerability can be more important than linguistic skills when it comes to classroom participation.

A longitudinal pattern also emerges when examining the cyclical nature of silence. Harumi (2010) documents the impact of earlier silences and their consequences of reinforcing negative self-views which leads to increased anxiety and the removal of speaking opportunities. Similarly, Pham (2025) states that learners with emotional disturbances do not engage in classroom dialogues despite having the knowledge of the topic. All these studies contribute to the fact that silence is not only a first reaction to anxiety but also a self-perpetuating effect which results in the creation of a vicious circle of non-participation. It is a pattern that is reinforced at a social level, in classrooms. King and Smith (2017) report that Japanese teachers view silence as disengagement, implying limited teacher contact, which encourages students' shyness. Teacher responses like these are also observed by Lin (2023) in their analysis of Chinese undergraduate responses, which showed silent students have fewer speaking turns. This is similar in Asian contexts, and suggests that teacher interpretation of silence has systemic outcomes on communication and represents a cycle of relationality when

silence leads to further exclusion. (Harumi, 2010; King & Smith, 2017; Lin, 2023; Pedrera & Lovitos, 2025). There is additional complexity with peer dynamics. Both Wu (2019) and Zacharias (2012) focus on face-saving as a social reason behind silence, in particular, when answering interpretive questions. Though they overlap on the notion that students have strategic decisions when they prefer to stay silent in the face of a perceived risk that exceeds the benefits. As Wu (2019) focuses on the harmony of a Chinese classroom, Zacharias (2012) focuses on the assessment of risk by the learners but they intersect on the notion that the learners undertake a strategic choice to remain silent in the face of a perceived risk that outweighs benefits. This continual focus on face-threatening behaviors highlights the socially integrated aspect of classroom silence. The way these themes intersect can be seen to have resulted in a phenomenon which is a mixture of emotional vulnerability, social pressure and teacher practice.

Rather than being a sign of linguistic inadequacy, silence proves to be a survival tool in classroom ecology, conditioned by inner affective conditions, as well as outer interactional demands. This integrated understanding will, of course, lead to the research of how some practices within the classroom, particularly asking questions by the teacher, elicit such responses.

Part 2: Student Responses to Teacher Questioning in ESOL Contexts

2.2.1 Emotional Responses to Teacher Questioning

Though the teacher questioning is an important aspect to be taken into consideration in the process of teaching the ESOL, it always emerges as an emotionally charged interactional stimulus. In varying settings, the literature consistently records an increase in

anxiety during whole-class questioning as compared to the interaction between peers. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) show that evaluative questioning situations are associated with both cognitive and emotional load, which negatively affects language processing. Kitano (2001, as cited in Kim & Choi 2023) builds on this insight by showing that fear of negative evaluation plays a more significant role in predicting silence than language ability. This observation is reinforced by Lin (2023) who show students are more reluctant to respond to their teachers' questions than to other students. All these studies has one common finding that teacher-initiated questioning reinforces language production into a high-stakes emotional performance.

These emotional responses are systematically modulated by interactional features. According to Harumi (2010), the factors of fast pace, short wait time and accuracy-oriented feedback are the inducers of anxiety that result in silence or delayed responses. On the other hand, perceived threat is reduced by long wait time and tentative responses, which encourage participation. This is a paradox between evaluative and supportive questioning styles that is evident in many studies, which suggests the emotional responses are not learner-specific, but rather interactive and co-constructed.

These findings are further explained by cultural expectations. The collective analysis of King and Smith (2017), Wu (2019), and Zafarina (2022) indicate that the teacher questioning is more risk-prone in the Asian ESOL classroom, where the act of making mistakes publicly threatens group harmony. The argument is further supported by Zacharias (2012), who documents students' silence in emotional risk situations. There is a line of argument in these studies in common: the questioning is not a neutral prompt but a cultural and emotional event and silence is a risk-minimising rather than a knowledge-absent situation.

2.2.2 Types of Questions and Student Participation

The types of questions has a proven effect on participation responses. The distinction of display (convergent, predetermined answers) and referential (divergent, multiple valid responses) questions introduced by Nunan (1991) is consistently supported empirically. In a quantitative study of Pakistani undergraduate ESL classrooms, Manzoor and Kiani (2023) show that, on average, more and more detailed responses are given to referential question types compared to display questions. This is in line with the interactional analysis by Walsh (2011) which reveals that dialogic questioning (including paraphrasing and scaffolding) encourages continued participation of the learner by alleviating fear of judgment.

Wait time proves to be an important interactional variable in the literature. The pioneering study by Row (1974) confirms that a post-question silence of 3 to 5 seconds greatly improves the quality and the length of response. This observation is repeated in the EFL context by contributing the fact that the positive feedback in connection with long wait time shifts learners between minimal and substantive responses. Several studies support the claim that wait time is a low-cost, high-impact intervention to improve participation. (Kamdideh & Barjesteh, 2019; Mekonnen, 2019; Yakubi & Rokni, 2012)

In contrast, accuracy-focused, quick questioning is always associated with reticence. Harumi (2010) and Dillon (2026) record the effects of speed- and correctness-oriented questioning as placing teachers in evaluator roles, as opposed to constructing meaning together. Davies and Regalla (2020) also discover that formal teacher-based questioning diminishes communicative interactions since learners see such questioning as an examination and not a learning experience. This is a repeated pattern when applied to global

situations and it highlights the pedagogical paradox: questioning that aims at facilitating learning is the suppressor of learning when it is done without considering the issue of emotional safety.

The evidence demonstrates questioning as relational pedagogy. Instead of a neutral information elicitation, questioning both forms and expresses the teacher-student emotional dynamic. This insight inevitably leads to the study of the effects of relational practices more generally on willingness to communicate in ESOL.

Part 3: Teacher–Student Relationships and Willingness to Respond in ESOL Context

2.3.1 Rapport and Emotional Safety in Language Learning

The teacher student rapport is a key factor in determining the willingness of learners to respond in oral classes. Rapport, which is described as a trustful, empathetic and mutually respectful, builds emotional safety that would provoke the learners to take risks in their second language use. According to Zepke et al., (2009) it is important to note that in tertiary education, positive teacher-student relationships form the core of student engagement especially when the learners have either academic or linguistic insecurity. Learners tend to make communicative risks when they do not see a judgmental teacher but a teacher who supports them.

Al-shraideh (2017) prove that academic engagement and emotional well-being rely on strong relationships of a teacher and a student. The article of Yakubi and Rokni (2012) demonstrates that the relational support prompts Asian ESL learners to prolong their

response and be more active in the process of questioning activities. Rewards that are supportive like praise due to effort or self-correction help in decreasing fear and make participation acceptable. Corrective or evaluative responses, on the contrary, that are not delivered in an emotionally sensitive manner, may strengthen silence or make learner to respond less. Similar results were obtained by Abid (2025) who discovered that learners were more willing to speak when teachers had provided a non-threatening environment and unwilling when teachers focused on accuracy and correcting them publicly. In line with that, findings on larger Asian ESL/EFL settings show that relational teaching behaviors go a long way in boosting interaction in the classroom. Students who feel warm, empathetic, and interested in the teacher will be more ready to participate and give longer and more meaningful responses orally (Ahmed, 2025; Al-shraideh, 2017; Dai, 2024).

Hagenauer and Volet (2014) also conclude that care, patience, and emotional attention help teachers to engage more actively with university students. These results indicate that the relational presence is not just an interpersonal trait, it is a pedagogical state which influences the way learners make interaction in the classroom. When emotional safety is established, learners would be more open to the transition between silences to the tentative participation.

2.3.2 Relational Practices and Classroom Interaction

The patterns of interaction in classrooms are directly related to relational teaching practices. Encouragement, patience, and non-judgmental feedback are some behaviors that reduce the anxiety of the learners and enhance engagement (Ellis and Barkhuizen,

2005; Pervin et al., 2021; Yakubi & Rokni, 2012; Zhai, 2023). Positive feedbacks, such as the comment of good work or self-correction can indicate that errors are a part of learning but not the sign of failure (Bahar et al., 2024). These practices allow making participation socially acceptable and eliminate the fear of negative assessment.

On the contrary, in the case that teachers assume silence means no motivation, or no readiness, the chance of participation can be reduced (Yusri & Sulaiman, 2024). The problem of misinterpreting silence is a challenge to the teacher-student relationships. Scholars such as King and Smith (2017) note that the teachers usually associate silence with the absence of motivation or preparation and do not take into account its emotional and cultural aspects. These misunderstandings might make teachers decrease the silence learners' opportunity to contribute, thus deteriorating the rapport and creating a stronger disengagement. Wu (2019) also states that this misinterpretation may cause emotional alienation of learners and deteriorate the teacher-student relationship. In the long run, these misconceptions support silence and form a loop of withdrawal, where learners speak less and teachers provide less speaking opportunities. In these studies, a pattern of relational interaction can be observed: teacher interpretations of silence have a direct impact on the interactional opportunities accessible to learners, silencing or breaking cycles of silence.

2.3.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Limited Responses during Questioning

EFL teachers always understand the student silence phenomenon as more of an emotional than a linguistic phenomenon in various settings. Kandilla et al. (2025) discovered that Kurdish teachers blame student reluctance on lack of confidence and motivation, which prompts them to employ learning strategies that include game-based learning and role-play. Likewise, Lin (2025),

Nurfadhilah et al. (2022), and Zafarina (2022) also report that Asian teachers also interpret silence by anxiety and use similar strategies. This consistency in contexts emphasizes a particular propensity of the teachers to be more concerned with affective explanation.

In addition to the emotional factors, the explanations of the teachers are also convergent to instructional practices. Scholars point out some of the contributing factors to silence such as questioning style, pace, limited wait-time, and classroom organization (Debbouza, 2025; Kandilla et al., 2025; Manzoor & Kiani, 2023; Pham & Hoang, 2025; Yusri & Sulaiman, 2024). Although previous research has focused on the emotional problems, the findings are an addition to the debate, indicating that silence is also informed by the organization of instruction. Manzoor and Kiani (2023) and Alrahman and Qasim (2024) also show that teachers themselves understand the influence of feedback, instructional clarity, and rapidness to respond to it on participation. This way, the concept of silence as being student-only has been clearly replaced by the concept of silence as co-constructed in classroom practices. Furthermore, the social and cultural meanings also coincide with these meanings. That peer pressure, fear of being judged and face-saving concerns are crucial factors influencing student silence are cited by Lin (2023), Nyamekye et al. (2025), and Pham and Hoang (2025). On the other hand, Debbouza (2025) shows Moroccan teachers are less sensitive to silence as they view it as a thinking process rather than avoidance. This analogy indicates that whereas other teachers can take the silence as inaction, other teachers have more developed and culturally sensitized interpretations. Altogether, these studies show what is common and distinct: emotional and instructional are accepted factors to be considered in various situations, however, the perception and reaction of teachers to silence are

different. This emphasizes the necessity of more context-appropriate and generative pedagogical strategies that combine emotional, instructional and sociocultural aspects of classroom interaction.

Part 4: The Barriers and Realities in Bangladeshi Education

2.4.1 Traditional Teacher-Centered Practices in Bangladeshi Tertiary ESOL Classrooms

In Bangladesh, teacher-centered, exam-based and authority-based pedagogical practices largely define tertiary ESOL classrooms. Teaching tends to be standardized, syllabus-driven and assessment-driven instead of communicative and interactional (Hamid, 2020; Khaled, 2018). The classroom discourse is normally dominated by teachers, and students take the roles of listeners and note-takers, not having many chances to actively engage in the discussion (Rahman and Pandian, 2018).

The practices are well embedded in the Bangladeshi education system, especially the Bangla- medium stream, in which English is conventionally taught as a subject that concentrates on grammar rules, translation, and performance on the exams, instead of communicative application (Hamid & Honan, 2012, Monem & Baniamin, 2018). Consequently, a great number of students come to tertiary classrooms with little or no experience in oral interaction, which upholds the roles of passive learning and enhances resistance to speaking (Ehsan, 2021; Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

The questioning practice used in these types of classrooms is mostly factual, display-oriented, and high-speed, which provide little wait-time to students to reflect or process (Hamid & Sultana, 2024; Islam & Umam, 2024). The questioning, therefore, is more of an evaluative method rather than a learning or interactional one, which limits in-depth thinking and responses by learners.

Moreover, because exam-oriented questioning is dominant, the students will not be encouraged to respond by exploration or interpretation, so they focus on accuracy rather than meaning-making. This further isolates the already unconfident learners in spoken English, a factor that enforces reluctance instead of helping students develop communication skills (Hamid, 2020; Rahman & Pandian, 2018).

2.4.2 Constraints on Student Voice

Fear of authority, obedience, and avoidance of errors are some of the cultural norms that are very influential in influencing student responses in Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL classrooms. In this regard, teacher questions are not seen as a means of interaction but as a means of evaluation, in which wrong responses can result in humiliation or loss of face (Hamid, 2010; Islam & Umam, 2024). As in other Asian settings, this perception enhances the propensity of students to keep quiet or give little feedback as opposed to taking chances.

Meanwhile, this tendency is supported by the previous school experiences of students. A large number of learners have backgrounds in Bangla medium in which there is a lack of interaction in the classroom and teacher-centered questioning (Hamid, 2020). This absence of previous speaking practice, compared to more communicative learning settings, makes students less sure about expressing opinions on the spot, which further adds to reluctance in ESOL classrooms.

Moreover, face-saving issues have a strong correlation with these cultural and educational factors. Research by Ahmed (2025) and Ellis and Barkhuizen (2005) indicates that fear of peer judgment and negative appraisal dishearten students to respond. Hamid and Honan (2012) also emphasize that silence in such situations is rather a protective or defensive tactic as opposed to a withdrawal. This

goes along with the previous arguments in which silence is considered as a tactical and socially conditioned reaction, rather than a failure to act.

Additionally, the teacher questioning practices are interrelated with these factors and may enhance the student hesitation. Display questioning (based on the display of questions), accuracy based, and fast questioning with a short wait period places pressure and lowers voluntary response (Hamid & Honan, 2012; Islam & Umam, 2024). This, in line with the larger studies on classroom interaction, demonstrates that silence is a culturally and emotionally motivated phenomenon as well as being influenced by instructional practices.

All these interrelated aspects prove that the poor response of students in Bangladeshi ESOL classes is not a personal weakness but a complex of the influence of sociocultural norms, previous learning experiences, and classroom questioning techniques.

2.4.3 Emotional Safety and Willingness to Communicate

Emotional safety is a key factor in the willingness of students to respond in ESOL classrooms. Studies indicate that positive teacher student relationships minimize anxiety and boost confidence, interest and desire to communicate (Ahmed, 2025; Hamid, 2020). Consistent with the general research results on classroom interaction, a positive classroom atmosphere helps students to risk when speaking. Nevertheless, hierarchies and power distance in the classroom setting of Bangladesh tend to pose an emotional obstacle preventing such risk-taking.

Students' prior educational experiences are additional reinforcement of these barriers. Rahman and Pandian (2018) observe that students are not ready to engage in interactive participation in higher education due to limited practice in oral communication and

strict grading mechanisms. Therefore, just like in the previous cases, of cultural and educational impacts, emotional insecurity is not a vacuum, rather it is a result of previous learning situations.

Meanwhile, this psychological distance can be minimized by classroom practices. Islam and Umam (2022) demonstrate that students feel more comfortable when they take part in non-threatening questioning strategies. Similarly, Ahmed (2025) stresses the importance of teacher behaviour that is emotionally supportive in providing a safe environment where students feel more responsive even in those cases when they are not sure. This is consistent with the earlier results that teaching practices and support through relationship are the direct predictors of participation.

Nevertheless, in spite of these insights, there is still a definite gap. Current literature recognizes the role of emotional safety, yet it seldom investigates the role of emotional safety in influencing the quality and depth of student responses in questioning or how teachers consider the lack of response in students in this emotional environment.

2.5 Research Gap

In Bangladesh, there is a limited of research on the experiences of tertiary ESOL students to teacher questioning. This paper discusses the emotional reactions of students, reasons for participation or silence, and how teachers interpret such behaviours. Previous studies have concentrated on silence and anxiety but little attention has been given on classroom questioning practices and relational dynamics in ESOL settings. This research paper fills these gaps by examining these in tertiary ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh.

Chapter Three

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework used in this study describes how the emotional and cultural experiences that students undergo when questioned by a teacher influence their responses and also teachers beliefs on what factors influences it in tertiary ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh. The framework is split into three phases. The first phase deals with what students feel when teachers ask them questions and the second phase explain causes of their response in class. The third phase shows the beliefs of the teachers regarding the factors that make or keep students unwilling or reluctant to respond. These stages when combined give a holistic insight into the student and teacher views of classroom questioning.

The first phase of the framework answers Research Question 1, which examines the emotional and cultural experiences of students when they were questioned by their teachers in tertiary ESOL classes. The following theoretical concepts are used to explain these experiences. First, Horwitz et al., (1986) propose the Foreign Language Anxiety Theory, which shows that communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation enhance anxiety in foreign language classes. In Bangladeshi tertiary context, where English is a high-stakes academic language and mistakes are commonly judged publicly, the tertiary students are specifically sensitive to making errors during questioning, which increases anxiety and hesitation. Second, the Cognitive Model of Social Anxiety by Clark and Wells (1995) is an explanation of the internal psychological responses that students undergo when they are in evaluative situations. As it is described in this model, students can develop excessive self-consciousness, anxious thoughts, they may stutter, or think that their mind is so empty that they cannot say anything when someone asks. These cognitive responses may have a powerful

influence on the ability of students to answer questions confidently in ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh where teacher questioning is usually direct and public. Collectively, the theories can be used to explain the reason why Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL students are prone to hesitation and silence when asked a question by their teacher.

The second phase of the framework deals with Research Question 2 which is concerned with the reasons why students react in certain ways to teacher questioning. The causes of the responses among the students are explained using three theories. The third theoretical concept is, Face Theory (Goffman, 1967) which attempts to describe how individuals strive to defend their social image when interacting with others. In Bangladeshi classrooms, where students are frequently asked to explain themselves to others, and where making errors in front of peers might be linked to being looked down upon, students can choose to stay silent or give limited response as a face-saving strategy to avoid being embarrassed or judged negatively during questioning.

The fourth theoretical concept is the role of teacher questioning in classroom interaction suggested by Manzoor and Kiani (2019) which explains how the type of questions that are posed by teachers affect student participation within ESL classrooms. They have found the questioning strategies that include open-ended questions is able to influence students to be more confident when sharing their ideas. Questioning strategies can be used in the Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL setting where learners tend to be reluctant to speak because they are afraid of making mistakes or facing judgment. The questioning strategies can be used to bring into play a learning environment that is conducive to the student in order to encourage them to answer and contribute to classroom discussions.

Fifth, Wait-Time Theory (Row, 1974) states that when students are given time to think after asking a question, then the quality and confidence of their answer is enhanced. Conversely, fast questioning puts a strain and can result in silence. Wait-time in

Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL classes is a factor that may increase stress, whereas silent pauses and reflective questioning can assist students in organizing their thoughts and responding with greater ease. Therefore, the style of questioning connects emotions with the responses of the students in the classroom.

Moreover, according to the results of Dai (2024), teacher-student relationships have a significant impact on the emotional regulation of students, their motivation, and academic confidence. In case of a weak relationship, students can feel anxious, emotionally unstable, lack of motivation and confidence. This applies to tertiary ESOL classes in Bangladesh, where the teacher can influence the students to respond to questioning based on the level of language skills, but also depending on the extent to which students feel secure and encouraged. Anxiety and silence in exam-oriented Bangladeshi ESOL classrooms may be enhanced by a poor teacher student relationship. Nevertheless, an environment of support and reflection in classrooms can lessen emotional instability and develop motivation and confidence in the students to respond.

The third step of the framework involves the beliefs of teachers regarding the factors that affect the students in terms of their responses to questioning and it addresses Research Question 3. The phase defines how teachers can understand the unwillingness or willingness of students to respond to questions in the ESOL classrooms. The findings of Nufadhilah et al. (2022) inform this stage because the authors have found that there are numerous factors that determine the classroom reactions of students. They are low self-confidence, lack of motivation, attitude of students to the lesson, and deficiency in vocabulary as well as low interest. As a teacher, these aspects can be used to justify why certain students are reluctant or silent in responding to some questions posed. Instructors can make the assumption that students are not responding due to their lack of understanding of English, their lack of interest in the lesson

or they simply have no words to convey their thoughts. These aspects are typical of the Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL setting since students lack speaking practice opportunities, fear of errors and study in exam-oriented classrooms. Thus, educators can explain low response rate or silence by low confidence, poor vocabulary and low motivation instead of inability.

The three stages of the framework are interrelated since the emotional and cultural experiences of the students in the context of being questioned (Phase 1) directly determine the causes of their answers or silence (Phase 2). These answers are then put in perspective, based on teachers' beliefs regarding confidence, motivation, language ability, and classroom behavior (Phase 3) to form a comprehensive view, of how emotions, culture, questioning practices, and teacher perceptions interact to determine participation in tertiary ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh.

Together, this framework demonstrates that the reactions of students to teacher questioning in tertiary ESOL classrooms can be affected by emotions, cultural norms, questioning practices, and teacher beliefs. The framework is given below:

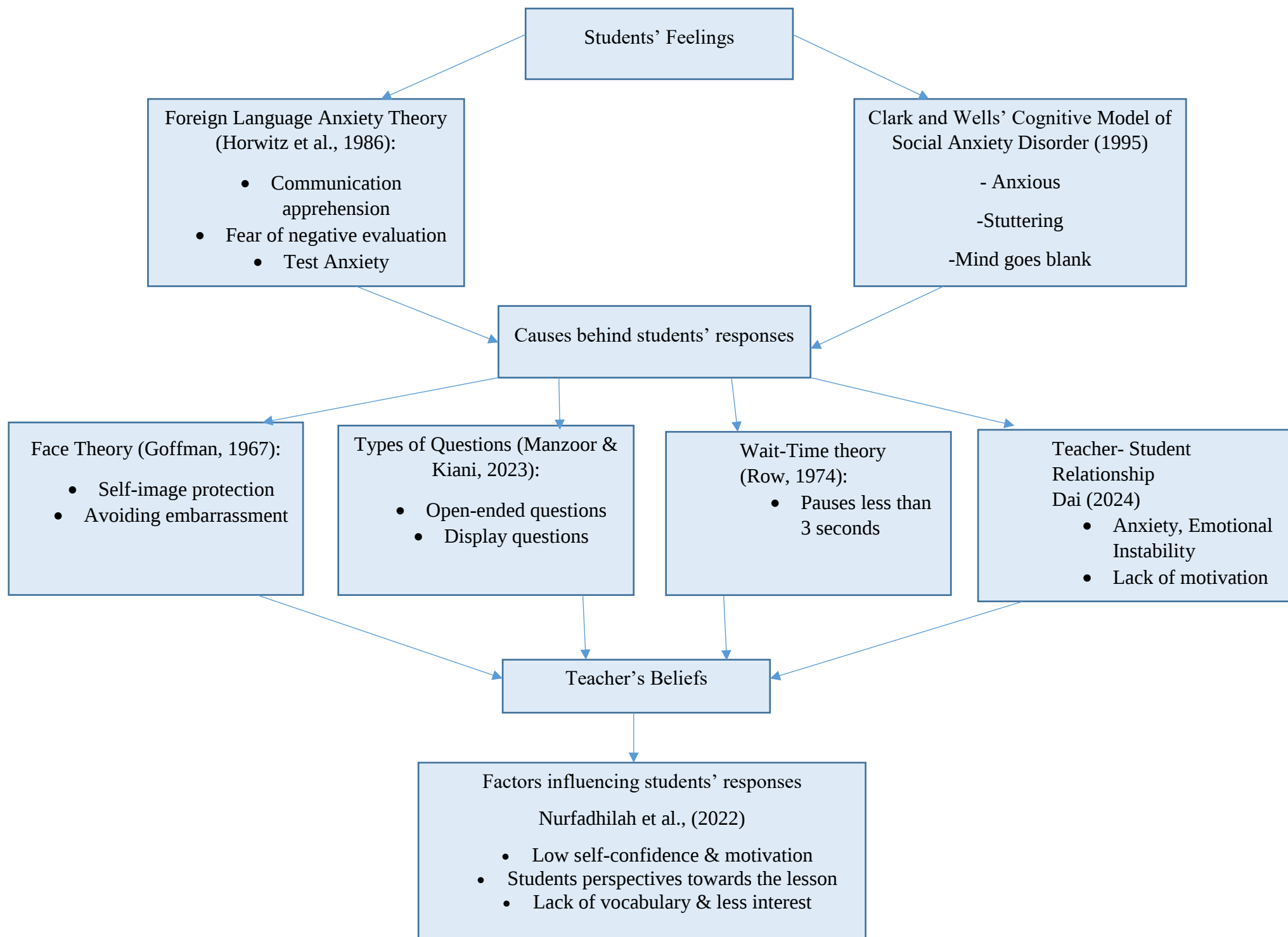


Figure 1: Conceptual Framework

3.2 Chapter Summary

This chapter has focused on teacher–student relationships and teacher questioning strategies in tertiary ESOL classrooms in Bangladesh, which have emotional, cultural, and pedagogical dimensions. According to research, silence and hesitation of students are commonly associated with anxiety, fear of negative assessment, and low confidence, but can also be viewed as a manifestation of strategic and reflective behaviour. Thus, the silence cannot be taken as merely a disengagement, but as a context-related classroom act.

Nevertheless, student shyness might curtail the classroom experience and language acquisition opportunities, reinforcing low-confidence and low-participation cycles. Student silence is further enhanced in Bangladesh through exam-based teaching, teacher-centered, and cultural expectations. Nevertheless, there is little research on the emotional experiences of students in these situations. This gap is filled by this chapter, as it develops a conceptual framework that combines various theories to explain the emotional, social and instructional influences on student responses in tertiary ESOL classrooms.

Chapter 4

Methodology

4.1 Researcher's Role

The researcher is a private university ELT student in Bangladesh, who has no native-English background. During undergraduate studies, the researcher has witnessed a lot of learners faced with the problem of speaking at, especially in the formal classroom context in English. These experiences helped the researcher be sensitive to the role of relational presence, emotional safety, and questioning styles in developing willingness and ability to respond among students in ESOL classrooms. Instead of seeing silence as a deficit of a learner only, the researcher got interested in the way teacher behaviors (including empathy, patience, and mindful questioning) can affect student reactions.

Despite prior knowledge in terms of background informing the interest in this study; the researcher was conscious of her positionality. As a part of a study, the researcher played the role of a facilitator and observer and collector of information, instead of creating interpretations of her own experiences. This research concentrated only on the voices of participants so that the findings were realistic and related to the realities of the participants rather than her personal assumptions. To do so, the researcher made the participants feel comfortable when talking, so that the researcher could convince them to express their feelings and views openly and honestly, through interviews. Although the use of I in the paper might occur in parts of it when explaining the research process and

research findings, this does not mean that her own bias has been involved. The researcher was to facilitate the process in a fair manner, document the experiences of the participants, and present them clearly. In order to establish the credibility of the study I have adopted certain procedures such as member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and electronic audit trail (Pandey & Patnaik, 2024).

4.2 Selecting Participants

In qualitative research, snowball sampling is a non-probability sampling technique that is used frequently, particularly when working with specific or challenging-to-reach populations (Creswell & Poth, 2025). Using this method, the researcher first selects a small number of participants, usually individuals who have particular expertise or understanding of the subject. The participants then recommend other participants, and the researcher continues snowballing with more participants. In this study, the researcher can interview a few students who are silent in the classroom and then refer to other relevant participants, and the process goes on and on. (Biernacki & Waldorf, 1981).

The criteria of selecting the participants were: (1) who are willing to participate, (2) learners who are experiencing hesitation and silence to classroom questioning (3) tertiary teachers & learners of Bangladesh. Though finding out students with the knowledge may be difficult to locate initially. Snowball sampling allows the researcher to tap into networks of students. As snowball sampling relies on recommendations from trusted sources, it can help build rapport and trust between the researcher and participants, especially in an educational context where participants might initially be aware of researchers. Moreover, the research involved 11 participants, which was enough to achieve the data saturation and was also sufficient for in-depth exploration of the research topic. The number of

participants was also determined by the accessibility and availability of participants who fulfilled the selection criteria within the study period.

4.3 Participants Profile

No	Name	Age & Gender	Academic Qualification	University
1	Mohammed Nur	25(M)	Masters	Brac University
2	Zarin Sultana	24(F)	Masters	East West University
3	Ferdous Fariha	25(F)	Masters	Brac University
4	Hasib Ahmed	22(M)	Bachelors	East West University
5	Sanjida Tasnim	25(F)	Masters	Brac University

6	Rafi Imtiaz	23(M)	Bachelors	East West University
7	Labiba Rahman	26(F)	Masters	Brac University
8	Rejwan Karim	49(M)	Teacher	East West University
9	Abu Nasir	41(M)	Teacher	East West University
10	Aushi Rahman	29(F)	Teacher	Brac University
11	Rim Chowdhury	28(F)	Teacher	Brac University

4.4 Research Setting

The research is conducted in the ESOL scenario of Bangladesh including institutions of tertiary level in which English is being taught as a second or as a secondary language. The study is conducted in the selected universities, whether public or private, that provide English medium courses and make students attend classes on English as part of their curriculum. The institutions are the right setting of the study since they have been established to develop communicative competence using speaking and reading activities.

The chosen settings are especially important since, even though interactive learning has institutional objectives, most students are still reluctant to answer the teacher. The sample covered undergraduate and postgraduate students who should be fluent English speakers yet they tended to remain silent during questioning moments.

4.5 Scope of the Study

The current research follows a qualitative research design because it aims at exploring the emotional experiences of tertiary ESOL students when they are questioned by the teacher as well as to determine why they behave in a specific manner in Bangladeshi ESOL classrooms. Besides this, the study evaluates teacher perceptions about factors that determine unwillingness of students to answer during questioning. The practice of questioning students is influenced by emotions, classroom relationships, and pedagogical practices. As a result, these phenomena can no longer be investigated using quantitative methods exclusively. Qualitative approach enables the researcher to get the subjective attitudes, interpretations as well as classroom experiences of both the learner and the teacher which are usually not evident in the classroom interaction.

The research was carried out in the chosen universities in Bangladesh within two of the academic semesters of Fall 2025 & Spring 2026 among seven tertiary-level ESOL students and four ESOL teachers. The context was considered appropriate as questioning is a primary pedagogical activity in tertiary ESOL classes, in which the interaction process is anticipated to build communicative competence, although many students are reluctant to respond or remain silent to teacher questions even though taking advanced courses in ESOL context.

The research will not be focused on determining the overall language proficiency of students, their reading or writing abilities, or their general academic performance. Rather, it pays attention to the emotional responses of students to teacher questioning, response behaviours, and teachers' perceptions regarding factors that hinder students to respond. The limited focus on practices and teacher-student relationships fills a gap in the Bangladeshi setting as prior studies have primarily focused on language anxiety or engagement in general terms instead of the actual experience of questioning by both the student and teacher. The findings are expected to inform the teachers, curriculum developers, and policymakers with information regarding the necessity of emotionally-supportive and relationally-sensitive questioning practices in tertiary ESOL classrooms.

4.6 An Overview of the Data Collection Procedure

Various tools can be used by qualitative researchers to obtain evidence, including interviews, observations, focus groups, and document or artifact analysis and offer a different perspective on the phenomenon of interest (Patton & Schwandt, 2015). These are tools used to create a holistic image and enhance validity of findings. Interviews can be considered one of the most beneficial approaches to the study of the lived experiences and opinions of the participants in qualitative research (Creswell & Poth, 2025).

Since this research is a study of how students perceive relational presence and questioning strategies, semi-structured interviews were used as the only form of data collection. The interviews are especially suitable to study emotional, relational, and experiential aspects that can hardly be detected during classroom interactions (Creswell & Poth, 2025).

4.6.1 Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi structured interviews are especially appropriate since they are both structured and flexible. Although the researcher adheres to a series of guiding questions, the participants are invited to elaborate on their answers, and unforeseen themes can be discovered (Brinkmann & Kvale, 2023). This approach helped students to consider the effects of teacher questioning behaviors, emotional support, and thoughtful pauses on their willingness and quality of responses. Also, this approach helped the teachers to give a detailed response.

The conversationality of the interviews led to them talking about sensitive topics like fear of being negatively evaluated, emotional discomfort or time to process during questioning. The open-ended format allows the interviewees to describe their experiences using their own words so that their views are well reflected (Ryan et al., 2009).

In order to enhance credibility, the interview guide was well-developed and revised to meet the research questions. Although the interviewer has some pre-definite questions, she never attempts to make the interviewees believe her own biasness. This informal and non-intrusive dialogue makes members more relaxed and less focused on thinking about their position and emotions about an issue (Leong & Said, 2024).

4.7 Interview Protocol

Leong and Said (2024) have adopted a set of interview protocols in one of their study. They modified the steps by another researcher named Castillo- Montoya; the Interview Protocol Refinement (IPR) framework, by introducing an additional step to it. In this paper, the researcher followed the interview protocols of a study conducted by Leong and Said (2024). The interview protocols are mentioned below:

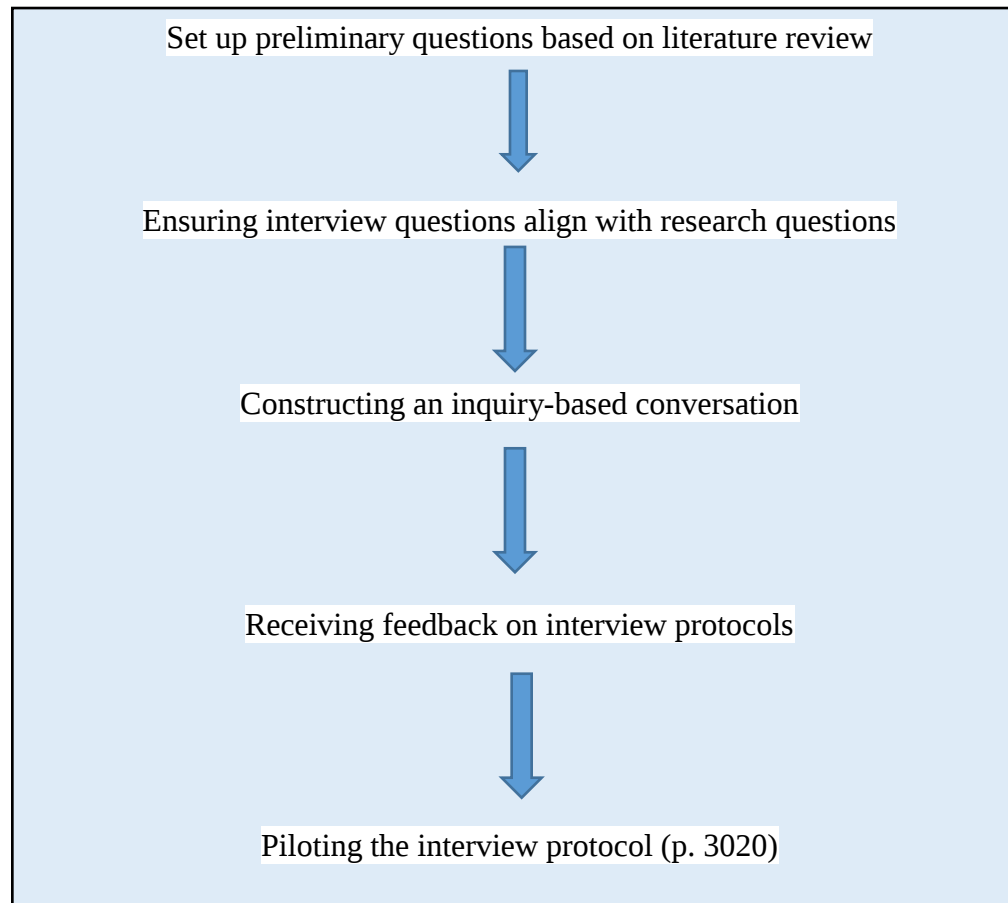


Figure 2: Interview Protocol

These five phases were followed by the researcher of this study prior to the administration of the interviews.

4.8 Data Analysis Framework

The researcher used qualitative thematic analysis in data analysis. It allows identifying the pattern that repeats in the data (Vaismoradi & Snelgrove, 2019). Data were gathered in the form of interviews, and the researcher followed a step-by-step methodology of thematic analysis outlined by Naeem et al. (2023). These are the steps the researcher took to conduct data analysis: transcription and getting acquainted with the data, coding, theming, and interpretation.

The interviews of the students were recorded and the audio recordings were transcribed verbatim by the researcher. As the sole researcher, the researcher was aware of the potential for bias. As a result, the researcher took conscious steps to ensure the objectivity in data collection and analysis. The researcher, respectively, applied a seven column coding template (Ahmad, 2017) and used open coding, in vivo coding techniques.

4.9 Trustworthiness & Credibility

It is essential for a researcher to make their study trustworthy and credible. In order to establish the credibility of this study, the researcher has adopted certain procedures. Member checking and electronic audit trail are three of the steps that have been followed by the researcher to increase the trustworthiness of this study. For member checking (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), the researcher has emailed participants transcriptions of their own interview session in order to let them see how their opinions are presented in the

findings. Also, the researcher has maintained an electronic audit trail. Pandey and Patnaik (2024) mentions that the audit trail is of establishing confirmability and establishing the rigor of the study.

4.10 Ethical Considerations

The ethical concerns related to the current study were thoroughly considered prior to the start of the interview. Before the interviews were conducted, the participants received an informed consent form and requested to read it carefully and sign the form (Appendix H). The use of consent form clearly defined the objective of the study, the process of the interviews, and the roles of the participants. It also made the participants aware that the interviews would be recorded on audio to further research. Each participant was provided with a pseudonym, and all the data were worked with in accordance with the highest ethical standards to guarantee their confidentiality and preserve their privacy.

4.11 Chapter Summary

This chapter outlined the research methodology used to conduct the research. The study was based on a qualitative paradigm and sought to investigate the emotional experiences and response behaviours of tertiary ESOL students, as well as the perceptions of the teachers in the Bangladeshi context. Snowball sampling was used to sample 11 participants, both students and teachers of tertiary institutions who had relevant experiences with classroom questioning and silence. The only method of data collection was the semi-structured interviews which were backed by well-designed interview protocol to ensure both depth and flexibility of answers.

Data were also examined with the help of the thematic analysis to define the recurrent patterns and meanings. Positionality of the researcher was recognised, and attempts were made to eliminate bias by concentrating on the voices of participants. Member checking and keeping an audit trail are some of the strategies that were employed in ensuring trustworthiness. Informed consent, confidentiality, and the use of pseudonyms were ethically considered throughout the research process.

Chapter Five

Findings and Discussion

5.1 Students' Emotional Experiences during Teacher Questioning

This part explains how the students explained their emotional response when answering the teacher questions in the classroom. It answers the first research question of the study. The results indicate that a lot of students are nervous, anxious, or fear to be judged when asked a question. Other students even keep quiet not to embarrass or make mistakes in front of people. In general, the findings indicate that whether students answer questions posed by a teacher are highly dependent on emotional aspects and classroom dynamics of interaction.

5.1.1 Speaking Blocks during Teacher Questioning

To begin with, the results show that students often have speech blocks when teachers ask questions during classes. These speaking blocks are in the form of nervousness, stammering, hesitation, and blanking of the mind. In other words, although students can be sure of the right answer, the stress of speaking in the presence of other students and teacher might interfere with their thought process.

As an example, DU SAN 10 described,

“Umm... I usually feel a bit nervous sometimes, even if I know the answer. My mind goes empty because I feel anxious... And also, I know that all the all eyes are on me in the classroom. That's why I get a bit nervous sometimes. Yeah.”

Similarly, DU HAS 10 has explained the pressure and hesitation generated through the sudden questioning.

“Being called on suddenly makes me nervous and I start stammering, even if I studied. I hesitate even if I know the answer.”

Such responses have indicated that teacher questioning has the potential to develop a performance-based atmosphere, which may psychologically compel students to answer right. Consequently, students can have problems with retrieving information and expressing their thoughts effectively.

This observation is in line with Foreign Language Anxiety Theory by Horwitz et al. (1986) which states that learners usually develop communication apprehensions when they are expected to speak in a second language. Additionally, MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) believed that anxiety disrupts the way of thinking and it becomes hard to recall the information that one knows when doing speaking activities.

Moreover, the results indicate that the anxiety of the students is increased by the presence of the classmates. Participants confirmed that they were nervous knowing that all their classmates were watching them when they were answering. As a result, the students can be more self-conscious regarding their performance. This has been observed by Tsui (1996) who observed that in cases of public speaking in classrooms, psychological pressure is usually imposed on learners, especially in the second language learning environment.

5.1.2 Fear of Teacher Judgment and Negative Evaluation

Besides speaking blocks, the findings indicate that students feel fear of being judged and negatively evaluated by the teachers during questioning. Most of the participants also raised concerns that the wrong answers could bring adverse consequences in the perception of teachers towards them.

DU SAN 14 highlighted,

“My main concern is being judged, to be honest. I fear, I don't want to be known as a weak student in my class. So, it actually bothers me that teacher will judge me if I make mistakes. He uh will judge me for my poor performance. He will think low of me and get disappointed in me.

Similarly, DU HAS 16 explained the same thoughts regarding being anxious about teacher reactions:

“Okay, being judged by teacher. I feel anxious. I start hesitating like what if the teacher does not like my answer. What if he scolds me for that”

These reactions show that questioning situations can be viewed as events that are evaluative in the mind of students. Thus, learners might be concerned about what happens when they provide a wrong response. Consequently, there are those students who will opt not to speak up, since they will be automatically assessed negatively. This observation helps justify the notion of fear of

negative evaluation as defined by Horwitz et al. (1986) that defines it as one of the primary causes of anxiety in foreign language classes.

Further, one can explain these findings based on Face Theory (Goffman, 1967). This theory suggests that people, in the process of interaction, seek to defend their social image, or face. When it comes to classroom questioning situations, an incorrect answer can pose a risk to the social image of a student in the presence of the teacher and other students. Students might therefore resort to keeping silence as face-saving mechanism so as to escape shame or judgment.

On the same note, the past study on learner silence indicates that students might not answer teacher questions due to their perception of questioning as an assessment which is public (Dai, 2024; Harumi, 2010; Zafarina 2022). Therefore, the current results support the hypothesis that the arguments against silence in students are based not on knowledge deficit but on emotional issues.

5.2 Factors Influencing Students' Response

In this section, the factors that determine how students answer when a teacher poses a question are discussed. It answers the second study research question. The results indicate that the presence of students is influenced by the nature of questions posed, wait-time offered and classroom environment. Specifically, opinion questions, adequate time to think and a positive classroom environment can make students feel more confident in their responses.

5.2.1 Influence of Direct vs Opinion-Based Question on Participation

To begin with, the results indicate that the nature of question posed by the teacher is a key factor to the willingness of students to answer. Participants indicated that a significant number of teachers ask direct textbook-related questions that they want answered promptly and correctly. Consequently, students are likely to be under pressure to memorise certain details instead of sharing their thoughts.

DU RAF 22 mentioned.

“Some teachers ask open questions, but most ask direct questions from text. They often want quick answers.”

Similarly, DU HAS 24 explained the way that direct questions through memorization may generate anxiety.

“Umm there are some faculty who asks directly from the book like memorization. For me it is very hard. It makes me anxious so much.”

These reactions indicate that direct questioning can be a test-like situation whereby learners are pressured to perform correctly and not to give ideas. Students are therefore likely not to reply because they might be too scared to provide wrong answers.

Nevertheless, the results also demonstrate that opinion-based questions are able to lower this pressure and make people participate. DU HAS 24 stated:

“Then there are faculties like I uh am doing one course that faculty asks for our opinion. I feel comfortable in that case. I can answer the question now.”

This observation suggests that open-ended questions and referential questions can give students more liberty to share their ideas and not be concerned about the need to give one correct answer. Thus, they can help alleviate anxiety by asking such questions and make students more willing to engage. This finding reflects the past studies of questioning techniques in language classes. Manzoor and Kiani (2023) notes that open-ended questions facilitate a deeper interaction since they serve to stimulate the students to express their own interpretation as opposed to memorizing information. Likewise, Dillon (2026) discovered that display questions with fixed answers tend to restrict the participation of students compared to referential questions which broaden and generate meaningful answers.

5.2.2 Lack of Wait-Time and Face Concerns

Second, the results indicate that wait-time plays an important role in developing student reaction to teacher questioning. Participants stated that when teachers pose a question, they expect to get answers immediately. Students, however, were clarifying that they require time to arrange their thoughts and then answer.

DU LAB 26 highlighted,

“When the teacher is allowing me to have a little bit time before responding, it helps me being calm and come up with a more well-organized answer. And if the teacher does not give me time I keep quiet to save my image in front of umm everyone”

DU FAR 24 also stressed that nervousness and confusion are also caused by the lack of wait-time:

“Usually, teachers do not give much time to think. If they did, it would help me organize my ideas and structure my answers better. Without time, I panic and forget what I want to say. I believe giving time would reduce like umm my nervousness and improve answer quality.”

Such reactions imply that lack of wait-time can elevate anxiety levels in students, and they cannot give properly structured answers. In such a way, students can choose to be quiet in order not to provide an incomplete or wrong response.

This is in line with the Wait-Time Theory by Row (1974), which states that when students are allowed a few seconds to think after posing a question, it greatly enhances the quality and quantity of student responses. Row showed that wait-time gives the learners time to think more attentively and answer in a more considered manner.

Moreover, the results also demonstrate the anxiety students have regarding their social image in front of their peers. One participant highlights that they could easily be quiet in order to preserve their image due to lack of enough thinking time. In this meaning, the results can once again be explained using Face Theory (Goffman, 1967). In cases where students are not ready to respond at that moment, giving an incorrect response could jeopardize their social face. Thus, it is better to be silent as a means of not being humiliated or judged.

5.2.3 Role of Supportive and Non-Judgmental Classroom Environment

Lastly, the results suggest that the classroom climate characterized by a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere is important in motivating students to give an answer when questioned by the teacher. Respondents stressed that the teacher with their positive feedback and encouraging attitudes can help to decrease the level of anxiety and encourage students to join.

As an example, DU NUR 30 claimed,

“Yeah yeah of course. If teachers are encouraging like, yeah, this might be right, but we are looking at a different perspective. As a result, you know it lowers my anxiety level and made me feel motivated. So, this kind of attitude actually influences the overall understanding of the topic and also allows a student like me to respond even better in the future classes as well.”

Likewise, DU HAS 32 described the effect of the friendliness of the teacher. He said,

“Definitely. It's very much like when teacher is a friendly and says it's OK, try in the class. I answered more. If he is like not friendly I never raise my hand on there because I know if I make mistakes I will get embarrassed in front of the class. It will impact my image “

According to these responses, the attitude of the teacher is a strong determinant of the emotional comfort of the students in the classroom. When a teacher gives feedback to the student responses in a positive and constructive manner, students feel more assured to give out their ideas. On the contrary, in situations where teachers seem to be critical or unfriendly, students might not participate because they are scared to be embarrassed.

The result is supported by the prior study on the teacher-student relationships and classroom interactions. Al-shraideh (2017) claim that the positive teacher-student relationships have a great impact on motivating and engaging students in learning activities. On the same note, Ahmed (2025) points out that a low-anxiety learning environment in classroom where the teacher supports the student in speaking can be achieved through supportive classroom interaction.

In addition, the findings are also consistent with the studies on the learner silence in second language classes. Abid (2025) discovered that students will volunteer more to talk when they see the teacher to show patience, encouraging and acceptance of errors as learning process. The results, consequently, indicate that it is necessary to establish a friendly classroom atmosphere, which can minimize anxiety and stimulate student involvement in the process of teacher questioning.

5.3 Teachers' Perceptions of Students' Reluctance to Respond

This part highlights the data of the interview of teachers. Overall, the analysis of the discourses of demonstrates that the unwillingness of students to answer can be conditioned by emotional, linguistic, and pedagogical factors that interrelate.

5.3.1 Emotional Factors, Confidence, and Fear of Evaluation

The findings in this indicates that the unwillingness of students to respond is significantly affected by the emotional, linguistic, and psychological factors that are closely interconnected. To begin with, classroom questioning was repeatedly mentioned by teachers

as an experience that is emotionally demanding to students. They reported that students normally get anxious, nervous and afraid when they are asked. In DU ABU 12 stated, “Yeah so, when they come to the university level and when the teacher asks them a question, they become nervous. They get afraid that if they make mistakes the teacher will scold them”

On the same note, DU REJ 10 said, “Umm, they feel anxious and nervous. If they are prepared for the class then they look confident but you know otherwise you can see nervousness in their face and they dodge the question.”

These responses suggest that questioning is seen as a stakes-based activity in which students are afraid of being negatively rated. Consequently, the silence becomes coping mechanism to prevent embarrassment or criticism. This result is in line with the previous studies that indicated that fear of negative assessment and anxiety when speaking are the most significant factors that decrease the willingness to communicate (Kitano, 2001, as cited in Kim and Choi, 2023; MacIntyre and Gardner, 1994). Similarly, Debbouza (2025) claims that silence is sometimes an expression of emotional pressure, but not ignorance.

Meanwhile, educators pointed out that the answers of students differ in terms of confidence, preparation, and emotional state. According to DU REJ 8, “When I ask questions to the students, they respond differently. There are those who respond very fast and with a lot of confidence and those who remain silent because of nervousness need time to reply. This is normally based on their confidence, preparation, and language capacity.”

Also, DU AUS 10 mentioned, “There is variation in the responses of students. Although some students will answer fast and with confidence, a higher percentage of students will be silent at first and may need to be encouraged to answer. We also usually can see the nervousness signs, uh, in the form of hesitation, not looking at one another, or unwillingness.”

Such differences indicate that participation is not static, but dynamic and capable of remaining silent because of anxiety, which supports the argument made by Harumi (2010) that silence can be a situational aspect and Lin (2023) that even high-performing students may be silent because of the anxiety experienced. Moreover, educators pointed out fear of making a mistake, vocabulary, and confidence gaps as the main factors contributing to silence.

DU REJ 36 highlighted, “Fear is always there I think. Anxiety might be there and sense of embarrassment of course in some cases. Especially if they come up with something wrong or some wrong answers. In that case they might feel embarrassed. And also lack of vocabulary limits their ability to express idea and it ultimately leads to hesitation.”

Whereas DU AUS 22 highlighted “In my opinion, the fear of making a mistake is a significant factor in the participation of students. A lot of students do not want to give an incorrect answer and therefore they would rather keep quiet than take a chance and give the wrong answer... where accuracy is a priority. This anxiety about errors can stop them to proceed to respond in partial or yeah in tentative ways.”

These results confirm that despite the presence of linguistic constraints, emotional constraints, including fear and embarrassment have a more direct impact on determining response of students. In such a way, silence appears not only as a linguistic deficit but also as an emotional and psychological response.

5.3.2 Supportive Teaching, Emotional Safety and Rapport

The other significant theme which occurs by analyzing the data the importance of supportive teaching practices, emotional safety, and teacher-student relationships in influencing student participation. The teachers always stressed that once the classroom atmosphere is non-judgmental and empathetic, students will feel more confident and willing to answer. To illustrate, DU ABU 18 said “Umm yeah students feel free and are ready to answer when the teachers are motivating and emphatic. Students are more confident and encouraged to be involved when errors are addressed as a process of learning and not as a form of judging.”

Also, DU AUS 20 said, “Yes, umm in my case, students are much more relaxed and ready to answer, in case teachers are more supportive and understanding. Students will participate more when they feel that their answer is appreciated and that any mistakes made are considered as part of the learning process and not a failure. This supportive is effective in decreasing anxiety and creating a sense of psychological safety.”

These results demonstrate the key role of emotional safety to participate, as it decreases anxiety and promotes risk-taking in communication. Students will be more inclined to respond when they feel that the classroom environment is a safe place and not a place of judgment. This is consistent with past research that indicated that positive expressions of teacher behavior boost confidence and engagement (Ahmed, 2025; Zepke et al., 2009).

Moreover, teachers emphasized the role of the relational dynamics and power distance in developing classroom interaction. DU ABU 30 stated, “Umm, I think the teacher–student relationship strongly affects students’ responses. When students feel the teacher is friendly and supportive, they feel more confident to answer. Also, their answer quality improves. But if the teacher seems judgmental, students may feel anxious and remain silent.”

Then, DU AUS 26 also highlighted,

“In the case of teachers who are seen as very authoritative, students feel scared and might be reluctant to speak. In my case, I try to act, as a facilitator and not as an authoritative figure. As a facilitator, you know my goal is to make... the environment more friendly.”

The insights are based on the sociocultural views on the possible inhibition of student participation by the presence of hierarchical relationships and face-saving concerns (King and Smith, 2017; Wu, 2019). Thus, according to the findings, emotional

safety is built not merely in the context of feedback, but also in the context of the overall classroom climate and the teacher-student relationship. The environment that is less hierarchical and supportive can be crucial in alleviating anxiety and encouraging active interaction in ESOL classrooms.

5.3.3 Questioning Practices and Wait-Time in Shaping Participation

The last theme relates to pedagogical aspects, especially questioning strategies and wait-time and their influence on the response of students. Teachers admitted that the participation is affected by different types of questions differently. As an example, DU ABU 20 said “I mostly go for opinion-based and open-ended questioning. So, the students have to share their own opinion, rather than just yes or no question.”

In the same way, DU AUS 36 stated, “According to my experience, open-ended questions are also more effective since they enable students to think about ideas, instead of merely memorising information.”

Nevertheless, educators also observed that sometimes direct or display questions are required to clarify the understanding. Moreover, DU REJ 24 highlighted, “Sometimes I need to ask direct questions, sometimes open-ended, sometimes reflective. Sometimes direct questioning is needed to ensure students read attentively.”

Although this flexibility is useful, it also demonstrates that accuracy-oriented questioning can cause pressure, which can restrict student responses. These remarks are consistent with the existing literature that indicates that referential questions facilitate meaningful interaction, whereas display questions tend to encourage limited responses (Harumi, 2010; Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011).

Along with the type of question, wait-time turned out to be an essential factor. Teachers have always emphasized that students should be given time to think and this will enhance the quality and confidence of their answers. DU AUS 24 highlighted, “Wait-time is very important. Whenever I allow the students to take several seconds to think, their responses tend to be more organized and precise. Lack of time makes them nervous and provide very short answers or even no response at all.”

Also, DU RIM 24 mentioned “So if we do not give them enough wait time, then I mean, that's not possible for them to cognitively relate to all the issues that they will be coming up with... So I think wait time is very important to organize their thoughts and give a better answer.”

These findings are a great support to Wait-Time Theory (Row, 1974), which states that the increase in wait-time improves the length and quality of student responses. Equally, Kamdideh and Barjesteh (2019) have discovered that when questions are rapid, it causes anxiety and discourages participation. However, teachers also pointed out practical constraints, such as limited class time, which often restrict the use of adequate wait-time.

In general, this theme shows that practices of questioning are not neutral but contribute actively to both the emotional experience and engagement. Pressure can be alleviated by using effective questioning strategies and providing adequate wait-time to support cognitive processing and provide a more interactive and inclusive classroom setting.

5.4 Integration of Students' and Teachers' Perspectives on Classroom Questioning

This concluding part summarizes the opinion of students and teachers to offer a more detailed account of why students do not respond or gives limited answers in tertiary ESOL classrooms. Comparing the two sets of results, it is evident that the silence of students does not arise as a result of one factor but occurs as a result of emotional, pedagogical, and relational aspects of classroom interactions.

First, there exists a high consistency in opinion between the students and teachers on whether classroom questioning is emotional. Students reported anxiety, nervousness, fear of being judged, which in most cases resulted in hesitation, stammering, or total silence. Likewise, teachers noted that students experience anxiety and nervousness and are scared that in case they do something wrong the teacher will punish them. This resemblance indicates that the two groups understand questioning as an emotionally charged exercise and not a neutral teaching exercise.

Theoretically, this mutual understanding justifies the presence of affective factors in second language learning. Anxiety and fear of negative assessment, as MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) and Kitano (2001) suggest, is a major cause of a lack of willingness to communicate on the part of students. Students and teachers in this research affirm that emotional vulnerability is the main factor in determining participation. Thus, silence may be discussed as a kind of emotional reaction to perceived risk and not only ignorance.

Also, students and teachers stressed the influence of fear of mistake and face-saving issues. Students described reasons such as not wanting to embarrass their image in front of their peers and teachers particularly when they are not certain of their response. Similar remarks were made by teachers that students tend to keep silent instead of giving a wrong answer. It means that silence is frequently used as a tactic to not to be embarrassed.

This result is consistent with the Face Theory proposed by Goffman (1967) and other studies of learner silence (Harumi, 2010; Wu, 2019), which also refer to social as essential factor of classroom behaviour. Such concerns to face are even greater in the context of Bangladesh where avoidance of making mistakes in front of others are highly valued. In this way, students and teachers indirectly accept the sociocultural aspects of silence.

Moreover, the results indicate that there is a mutual perception of the significance of questioning strategies. Students claimed that those questions that were direct and based on a textbook cause the anxiety and make the test-like kind of atmosphere, and those questions that are based on opinion make them feel comfortable and ready to answer. This view was echoed by teachers who stressed on the importance of using opinion-based questioning and open-ended questions that enable students to discover ideas instead of memorizing information. However, one teacher described the need for direct questions so that students read everything attentively and memorize even though he admitted that it limits the responses of students.

This illustrates the pedagogical value of the type of questions in creating participation. Referential or open-ended questions promoted more significant interaction and less pressure related to correctness (Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011). Thus, the experience of students and the practice of teachers are inclined to the effectiveness of more flexible and student-oriented questioning.

Another important area is the role of wait-time. Students reported that a lack of time to think not only escalates the panic but also results in silence, whereas teachers admitted that time offers the possibility to students to process the information and generate better and more detailed answers. This student-teacher comprehension supports the significance of the interactional pacing in classroom conversation. This result directly justifies the Wait-Time Theory by Row (1974) which proves that even a brief pause can be of great help in terms of the quality and quantity of student responses. It also echoes the fact that rapid questioning, as put forth by Harumi (2010), is a contributor to the reticence of the learner.

But one of the teachers replied that it is not always possible to give time to think due to the time limit of the classes. This demonstrates the truth of classroom. Although teacher considers wait time as important in enhancing response but in practical classroom setting it is not possible because of the time constraint. Thus, wait-time is revealed as a very important mediator linking cognitive processing and emotional comfort in classroom interaction.

In addition, students and teachers emphasized the significance of teacher-student relationships in the formation of participation. Students indicated that they are more likely to respond when teachers are friendly, supportive, and non-judgmental. In the same manner, teachers confirmed that students felt more confident to respond when their teacher takes an empathetic and facilitative stance, but not when they are judgmental.

This common view emphasizes the interpersonal aspect of classroom interaction. Positive teacher-student relationships, as Al-shraideh (2017) and Zepke et al. (2009) confirm, lead to emotional safety and engagement among students. Both groups in this study explicitly note that emotional safety is a pre-condition to participate, especially in second language situations where students are already linguistically insecure.

Nevertheless, even in these points of agreement, the slight difference can be observed. Although emotional and interactional obstacles were the main focus of students, both students and teachers explained the silence by language barriers. However, the teachers also highlighted lack of interest in the lesson and lack of motivation that results in the silence or limited response of students during questioning.

This inconsistency is indicative of larger literature results, in which silence is typically captured as a lack of engagement and not a context-specific, multidimensional action (Liu and Jackson, 2011; King and Smith, 2017). Hence, it is necessary to bridge this gap in knowledge to create more efficient pedagogical practices.

Altogether, the combination of the student and teacher viewpoints demonstrates that the classroom participation is a co-constructed process created through interaction. Emotional elements (including anxiety and fear), pedagogical elements (including questioning techniques and wait-time), and relational elements (including teacher support and classroom environment) interact to produce the willingness to respond in students.

In conclusion, this combined discussion demonstrates that the improvement of the student involvement must be holistic. Instead of concentrating exclusively on the capabilities of students, classroom practices and relationships have to be considered in relation to the emotional experiences. A more inclusive and responsive ESOL classroom environment can be established by teachers through supportive interaction, open-ended questioning, and sufficient wait-time, which enable them to align their teaching strategies with the needs of the students to make them feel safe and motivated to talk.

Chapter 6

Conclusion

The paper has examined the response of students towards teacher questioning in Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL classrooms, one of the issues that has not been well explored. Despite the idea of questioning that is meant to result into interaction, the findings indicate that questioning can as well result in anxiety, fear and unwillingness among learners. Silence in students, then, is not just a sign of ignorance but a complex phenomenon, which is determined by emotional and linguistic and pedagogical contexts.

The findings show that the students tend to be anxious, nervous and afraid of being negatively evaluated during questioning, which leads to hesitation, blocks in speaking in spite of knowing the answers. Simultaneously, factors associated with teachers (questioning style, wait-time and classroom attitude) play an important role in determining the willingness of students to respond. Open-ended and opinion-based questions, adequate wait-time and conducive classroom conditions were identified to facilitate participation.

Even though teachers understand the importance of emotional aspects, they occasionally explain silence by the language barrier, lack of interest and lack of motivation. The study however reveals that silence is not a meaningless reaction to classroom dynamics. In general, the engagement is not only determined by the ability to use the language but also by the emotional safety,

questioning strategies, and teacher-student relationships.

Contributions to the Study

1. Implication for Teaching Strategies

The results indicate that in tertiary ESOL classrooms, the involvement of the classroom can be enhanced considerably by more learner-focused instruction. Among the implications is the necessity to change the direct, accuracy-oriented questions to the open-ended and opinion-based questions. These types of questions also lessen the burden of having one right answer and also helps the students to exchange their ideas, thereby promoting meaningful interaction (Nunan, 1991; Walsh, 2011). Conversely, display questions tend to make people anxious and restrictive (Harumi, 2010).

The other significant implication is the employment of adequate wait-time. This paper has revealed that students tend to be silent when they are supposed to answer instantly, but when they are given time the anxiety is minimized and the response is better. This is in line with the Wait-Time Theory by Row (1974) and the findings made by Lin (2023) who attribute that processing time improves confidence and participation.

Also, teachers should establish a non-judgmental and supportive atmosphere in classrooms. Students feel safe when teachers are supportive and consider errors as learning. This corresponds with the idea of fear of negative assessment (Horwitz et al., 1986) and studies that found out that positive teacher-student interaction enhances engagement (Al-shraideh, 2017; Zepke et al., 2009). It is also

possible to reduce power distance and play a facilitative role to make students feel free to share their ideas (Harumi, 2010; King & Smith, 2017).

2. Implications for Theories

The research has a contribution to theoretical knowledge of language learning and classroom interaction through the reinforcement and expansion of current frameworks. The results are highly in line with the Foreign Language Anxiety Theory (Horwitz et al., 1986) and the works of MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) that emphasize the influence of anxiety on the capacity of learners to process and produce language. The research proves that the fear of negative evaluation and error is one of the leading factors in the student participation.

Nevertheless, the research goes beyond these theories to demonstrate that anxiety is not a singular psychological element but is very much affected by classroom activities like questioning style, wait-time and teacher behavior. This promotes interactional views that highlight how context influences the behavior of learners (Harumi, 2010).

Moreover, the results are consistent with sociocultural theories, which consider silence as a context-specific and meaningful reaction instead of inability to act (Lin, 2023; Wu, 2019). The silence of students may be a way of saving face to prevent embarrassment (Goffman, 1967). Accordingly, the paper questions the deficit conceptualizations of silence and emphasizes the necessity to conceptualize the participation as constructed by emotional, social, and pedagogical variables.

3. Implications for Knowledge

This research is significant as it gives context-specific understanding of the Bangladeshi tertiary ESOL classrooms, which is a field that has not been extensively researched. Although past research on student silence predominantly has been on other parts of the world like East Asia (Harumi, 2010; Wu, 2019), the study sheds light on the common occurrence of the same situation in Bangladesh with the impact of local educational practices.

The results indicate that exam-based learning, teacher-centered classrooms, and minimal focus on speaking skills predetermine student reaction to teacher questioning. This can be traced back to previous studies that point to the impact of institutional and cultural settings on the interaction in classrooms (Islam and Stapa, 2021; Rahman and Pandian, 2018).

In addition, the study is more comprehensive as both the students and the teacher are included in the perspective, which brings a deeper understanding of participation. It shows a disparity between teacher views and student experiences, especially in the attributing silence to language constraints at times, lack of interest and motivation and not emotional or interactional. It brings out the necessity of increased awareness and professional growth in the teachers.

Comprehensively, the research creates knowledge by showing silence as not a deficiency but a multifaceted and context-driven phenomenon, influenced by a combination of interacting factors in the ESOL classroom.

Recommendations

- To promote meaningful engagement, teachers are supposed to use more open-ended and opinion-based questions.
- Wait-time should be given after posing questions to minimize the anxiety and enhance the quality of responses.
- The classroom environment should be supportive and non-judgmental where an error is viewed as a learning experience.
- Teachers ought to create positive and friendly interactions with students to diminish fear and increase confidence.
- To provide safer spaces where students can practice speaking, pair and small-group activities are to be employed.
- Strategies on classroom anxiety management and participation encouragement should be taught during teacher training programs.
- The curriculum should consist of increased speaking and oral assessment over written assessment.
- Teachers need to be made aware of the fact that not all silence is an indication that someone is not knowledgeable but it can also be a question of emotion or situation.
- Learner-centered instruction methods should be encouraged in institutions to minimize high levels of teacher control.
- Future studies are encouraged to examine longitudinal variations in student participation and incorporate classroom observation as a form of further analysis.

To sum up, this study provides an idea of the complex character of student responses to teacher questions in the ESOL classes in Bangladesh. It shows that not only the problems of ability but also the issues of silence and participation are connected with the

emotional experiences, teaching practice and classroom relationships. Knowing and addressing these factors, teachers can make learning more inclusive and engaging to ensure that students feel comfortable to participate.

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Appendix A

Student Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Background Information	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3
Please include your name, age and educational background	X			
What language(s) was the medium of instruction in your school and college?	X			
How many years have you been studying English at tertiary level?	X			
What is your level of confidence in speaking English in the classroom? (Very confident/ somewhat confident / not confident)	X			
When a teacher asks a question to you during an English class, how do you normally feel?		X		
Are there any nervousness, fear, hesitation you experience when responding to questions? Please explain.		X		
What is the main concern to you when answering questions in front of the class?		X		
What usually makes you decide to answer or not answer a question?		X		

How do teachers ask questions in your English classes?			X	
How do you feel when teachers allow you time to think before responding?			X	
Does the supportive attitude of a teacher (e.g. encouragement or patience) have an influence on your willingness to respond? How?			X	
Have you ever experienced a teacher making quiet pauses like giving time before answering or who is patient and understanding when you answer? In case yes, what impact did it have on your responses? What happened then? Did it help you finish your answer?			X	
Which type of teacher questions make you feel comfortable and confident enough to use English in the classroom?			X	
What do you think teachers tend to believe when a student remains silent after a question?				X
What reasons do you think teachers give for students reluctant or slow to respond in the classroom?				X
Do you think that teachers are addressing the correct causes of why students are silent or giving short responses? Give an example of how this should be.				X
What would you have changed in questioning practices to contribute more to classes?				X

Appendix B

Teacher Interview Questions

Interview Questions	Background Information	RQ1	RQ2	RQ3
Please include your name, age and academic qualification	X			
For how long have you been teaching English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?	X			
Which kind of students do you primarily teach (first year undergraduates, final-year students, mixed level), etc.	X			
How do students react when you ask questions in class?		X		
What do you think students tend to feel when you pose questions to them in class?		X		

Have you observed anxiety, hesitation or silence of the students during questioning? Please explain.		X		
What do you believe are the primary emotional constraints that students' face when asking questions in English?		X		
What role does classroom atmosphere play in making students feel comfortable when answering questions?		X		
Are students more comfortable and willing to respond when teachers are encouraging and understanding in your case? Why or why not?		X		
What do you typically do when ask questions in your classes (e.g. direct, open-ended, and reflective)?			X	
Do you think your questioning style has to do with the willingness of the students to speak? Why or why not?			X	
What is the effect of wait-time (to give students time to think) on the quality of student responses?			X	
Do you feel open-ended or reflective questions influence student confidence and participation?			X	

What is the contribution of the teacher student relationship to the response of the students?			X	
What do you consider to be the primary reasons students do not answer questions in your classes?				X
How far do you believe fear of error influences willingness of students to answer?				X
Any emotional or psychological issues (e.g., stress, embarrassment, anxiety) that you think are a strong impact on student unwillingness to speak? Please explain.				X
Have you applied mindful or reflective questioning? In case yes, what difference did you see in response by the students?				X
What are some of the difficulties you experience when attempting to employ either supportive or contemplative questioning in classes?				X
How do you think questioning practices might be changed to enable students to give more confident and thoughtful responses?				X

Appendix C

Notational Conventions of the Interview Transcripts

DU	Discourse Unit
I	Interviewer
[]	For showing action [Laughs]
,	Small pause
...	Long pause (if in the middle of the sentence) Incomplete sentence (if at the end of sentence)
Umm/uh	Hedging in speech
DU Hasib 34	DU <space> student name's first three alphabets <space> DU number DU HAS 59 refers to Hasib DU number 34

Appendix D

Sample Transcription of Interview (Student)

No	Part	Interview Questions
1	I	Please include your name, age and educational background
2	HASIB	My name is Hasib Ahmed. I am 22 years old. Now I am studying bachelors at East West university in the English department.
3	I	What language(s) was the medium of instruction in your school and college?
4	HASIB	In my school and college, Bangla was the medium for our study language.
5	I	How many years have you been studying English at tertiary level?
6	HASIB	I am studying in English last two years in tertiary level.
7	I	What is your level of confidence in speaking English in the classroom? (Very confident/ somewhat confident / not confident)
8	HASIB	To be honest, I am not that much confident. When I first came to the university, I thought I knew English. But when the teacher asked me to speak, I feel my English is very poor. I understand the lectures, but I can't speak fluently.

9	I	When a teacher asks a question to you during an English class, how do you normally feel?
10	HASIB	Being called on suddenly makes me nervous and I start stammering, even if I studied. I hesitate even if I know the answer.
11	I	Are there any nervousness, fear, hesitation you experience when responding to questions? Please explain.
12	HASIB	Yes, because of past experience. In my first semester, a teacher asked me to explain a short story. I started to speak, but I mixed with Bangla and English. My mind went blank. Teacher stopped me and corrected my grammar in front of the class. The students smiled and after I felt very small from that day, I hesitated before answering.
13	I	What is the main concern to you when answering questions in front of the class?
14	HASIB	Okay, being judged by teacher. I feel anxious. I start hesitating like what if the teacher does not like my answer. What if he scolds me for that.
15	I	What usually makes you decide to answer or not answer a question?
16	HASIB	Yeah, first is the teacher's tone. If the teacher sounds friendly, I tried. If the teacher sounds strict, I avoid to eye contact. And second is I feel comfortable when teacher lets us talk in the peers first. For example, one teacher gives me, give us one minute to discuss, then ask the answers. That time I feel prepared and not alone because already we discussed about the topic and I feel a little bit confident to answer the questions.
17	I	How do teachers ask questions in your English classes?
18	HASIB	Umm there are some faculty who asks directly from the book like memorization. For me it is very hard. It makes me anxious so much. Then there are faculties like I uh am doing one course that faculty asks for our opinion. I feel comfortable in that case. I can answer the question now.
19	I	How do you feel when teachers allow you time to think before responding?

20	HASIB	I feel like it's going to be like preparing time for me to giving the answer to the questions... So I feel confident and I feel good when they give us the time for preparing the answer. I feel less anxious.
21	I	Does the supportive attitude of a teacher (e.g. encouragement or patience) have an influence on your willingness to respond? How?
22	HASIB	Definitely. It's very much like when teacher is a friendly and says it's OK, try in the class. I answered more. If he is like not friendly I never raise my hand on there because I know it I make make mistakes I will get embarrassed in front of the class. It will impact my image.
23	I	Have you ever experienced a teacher making quiet pauses like giving time before answering or who is patient and understanding when you answer? In case yes, what impact did it have on your responses?
24	HASIB	Yeah, there was a teacher who, yes, there was one teacher who was outstanding and does not rush. Like when I was answering, he waited and nod. And because of that, I finished my sentence and I feel proud after speaking.
25	I	What happened then? Did it help you finish your answer?
26	HASIB	Yeah uh, and because of that, I finished my sentence and I feel proud after speaking.
27	I	Which type of teacher questions make you feel comfortable and confident enough to use English in the classroom?
28	HASIB	Yeah, easy questions, opinion and questions where like I feel confidence when they're asking about the easy questions, like what's your opinion? The question where the teachers is like very friendly and they are giving me confidence like, OK, it's OK, you can try. I feel more confident on that type of questions.

29	I	What do you think teachers tend to believe when a student remains silent after a question?
30	HASIB	I think they think students don't know or didn't study or does not know the answer. They don't think about the fear or pressure. They think it as Mostly ignorance and lack of practice They think we are careless.
31	I	What reasons do you think teachers give for students reluctant or slow to respond in the classroom?
32	HASIB	They say weak vocabulary and lack of motivation. OK, so you don't know enough vocabulary to give an appropriate answer or you lack motivation to give answer.
33	I	Do you think that teachers are addressing the correct causes of why students are silent or giving short responses? Give an example of how this should be.
34	HASIB	Like from my experience, not always they focus on language mistakes, not in fear. They don't understand the anxiety of a student.
35	I	What would you have changed in questioning practices to contribute more to classes?
36	HASIB	Yeah, like I will give, I would give time to think and start with the questions and say mistakes is okay. And I would also allow the discuss before the answering.

37	I	Thank you for your response.
38	HASIB	Anytime.

Appendix E

Sample Transcription of Interview (Teacher)

No	Part	Interview Questions
1	I	Please include your name, age and academic qualification
2	AUSHI	My name is Aushi Rahman, and I am currently twenty-nine. I have completed both my Honours in Linguistics and Master's degrees in English Language Teaching (ELT) from University of Dhaka.
3	I	For how long have you been teaching English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh?
4	AUSHI	Since 2023, I have been teaching English at the tertiary level in Bangladesh. I have also worked in various universities during this period and this has enabled me to see different types of students, levels of their proficiency and classroom dynamics especially when it comes to participation and questioning practices.
5	I	Which kind of students do you primarily teach (first year undergraduates, final-year students, mixed level), etc.
6	AUSHI	Umm...I mainly teach first-year undergraduate students.

7	I	How do students react when you ask questions in class?
8	AUSHI	There is variation in the responses of students. Although some students will answer fast and with confidence, a higher percentage of students will be silent at first and may need to be encouraged to answer. We also usually can see the nervousness signs, uh, in the form of hesitation, not looking at one another, or unwillingness.
9	I	What do you think students tend to feel when you pose questions to them in class?
10	AUSHI	Yes, the students, at least in my experience, feel much more at ease and willing to answer when teachers are supportive and empathetic. Students I believe like to participate more when they feel that their answer is appreciated and that, similar to the errors, it is part of the learning process and not a failure. It occurred with us as well in our earlier stages as well you know? Such a supportive emotion contributes to the decrease of anxiety and the feeling of psychological safety.
11	I	Have you observed anxiety, hesitation or silence of the students during questioning? Please explain.
12	AUSHI	Anxiety, hesitation, are some of the usual aspects of classroom interaction, yes. These are usually expressed in delayed reactions, avoiding eye contact or even total non-engagement. This type of reactions is commonly linked to the fear of negative evaluation, doubts about the rightness, and the feeling of incompetence in using language. And yeah all these lead to decreased the desire to participate.
13	I	What do you believe are the primary emotional constraints that students' face when asking questions in English?

14	AUSHI	Fear of making mistakes, embarrassment, stress, and an overall lack of confidence are the major emotional restraints. Students are especially worried about accuracy and pronunciation. Even in when we were in universities we were also concerned umm with our accuracy in speaking. This really really stops their willingness to initiate participate actively.
15	I	What role does classroom atmosphere play in making students feel comfortable when answering questions?
16	AUSHI	The role of classroom atmosphere is extremely important. A non-judgmental and supportive environment reduces anxiety among students and promotes involvement. On the other hand, a strict environment may cause more fear and even discouragement of interaction among students. On my part, I ensure that in my very first lesson, I inform them that this is their heaven of learning, where errors are accepted as part of the learning process, and I uphold this rule throughout the course. This really umm, makes students feel safer.
17	I	Are students more comfortable and willing to respond when teachers are encouraging and understanding in your case? Why or why not?
18	AUSHI	Yes, umm in my case, students are much more relaxed and ready to answer, in case teachers are more supportive and understanding. Students will participate more when they feel that their answer is appreciated and that any mistakes made are considered as part of the learning process and not a failure. This supportive is effective in decreasing anxiety and creating a sense of psychological safety.
19	I	What do you typically do when asking questions in your classes (e.g. direct, open-ended, and reflective)?
20	AUSHI	I mostly prefer open-ended and opinion-based questions in my classes. I do not want students to provide a fixed answer but to form their own ideas, experiences, and interpretations. This can help in generating more dialogue and the students feel more calm speak out.

21	I	Do you think your questioning style has to do with the willingness of the students to speak? Why or why not?
22	AUSHI	Yes, I believe that, questioning style does influence the willingness of students to talk. When the questions are too straightforward or based on a single correct answer, it becomes a stressing factor and students might remain silent. However, open-ended questions make them feel more at ease since there is no one correct answer.
23	I	What is the effect of wait-time (to give students time to think) on the quality of student responses?
24	AUSHI	Wait-time is very important. Whenever I allow the students to take several seconds to think, their responses tend to be more organized and precise. Lack of time makes them nervous and provide very short answers or even no response at all.
25	I	Do you feel open-ended or reflective questions influence student confidence and participation?
26	AUSHI	Yes, reflective and open-ended questions will certainly make students more confident and engaged. They give students a chance to share their personal views and beliefs, which helps to eliminate fear and motivates students to talk more.
27	I	What is the contribution of the teacher student relationship to the response of the students?
28	AUSHI	In the case of teachers who are seen as very authoritative, students feel scared and might be reluctant to speak. In my case, I try to act, as a facilitator and not as an authoritative figure. As a facilitator, you know my goal is to

		make the power distance less visible or umm felt, make the environment more friendly, and motivate students to share their ideas openly.
29	I	What do you consider to be the primary reasons students do not answer questions in your classes?
30	AUSHI	The main factors that make students not respond in the classroom are not having confidence, fear of making mistakes. The reason why many students do not want to talk is because they are anxious of giving grammatically correct or completely accurate answers. Moreover, there are also students who need more time to process the question and develop a response.
31	I	How far do you believe fear of error influences willingness of students to answer?
32	AUSHI	In my opinion, the fear of making a mistake is a significant factor in the participation of students. A lot of students do not want to give an incorrect answer and therefore they would rather keep quiet than take a chance and give the wrong answer especially in skill-based tasks where accuracy is a priority. This anxiety about errors can stop them to proceed to respond in partial or tentative ways.
33	I	Any emotional or psychological issues (e.g., stress, embarrassment, anxiety) that you think are a strong impact on student unwillingness to speak? Please explain.
34	AUSHI	Emotions such as anxiety and embarrassment fear largely influence the willingness of students to speak. I even had a student who was a good speaker when in a one-on-one setting, but would become silent when asked in the entire classroom due to pressure. He was offered low-pressure opportunities and a positive environment to assist

		him in becoming more confident and start participating step-by-step. This is where the issue of addressing you know emotional barriers comes in.
35	I	Have you applied mindful or reflective questioning? In case yes, what difference did you see in response by the students?
36	AUSHI	Yes, I use mindful and reflective questioning by giving the students enough wait-time and asking them to think before they speak. Umm... I attempt to pose questions in a manner that allows exploration rather than find the solution. I have noted that silent students, especially those who speak Bengali as their first language also go to school when they do not have to rush. My other tricks are just simple prompts like take your time and other occasions I give materials beforehand so that they feel prepared. This helps in building confidence and enhances more interaction in the class.
37	I	What are some of the difficulties you experience when attempting to employ either supportive or contemplative questioning in classes?
38	AUSHI	Time constraints and syllabus requirements are one of the key challenges that I struggle with. The wait time and deeper reflection can be hard to introduce when a lot of material has to be covered. Moreover, most students are really used to rapid-answer questions and instant replies, therefore, at first, several of them struggle to adapt to a more deliberate, slow-paced method.
39	I	How do you think questioning practices might be changed to enable students to give more confident and thoughtful responses?
40	AUSHI	According to my experience, open-ended questions are also more effective since they enable students to think about ideas, instead of merely memorising information. Confidence can be built by providing adequate wait time and normalizing errors as learning experience. In the long term, such strategies help to establish a positive and interactive classroom atmosphere in which students will be more comfortable to think critically and share their opinions.

41	I	Thank you for your response.
42	AUSHI	You're welcome.

Appendix F
The Coding Template for RQ 1, 2 & 3 (Students)

Interview Questions (1)	Subordinate key word of question (2)	Subordinate main point from the conversation (3)	Elaborated example from verbal evidence to support the subordinate main point (4)	Occurrence of main idea transferred into the form as key word(s) (5)	Frequency of occurrence (6)	Ordering of discourse unit (7)
RQ 1: How do tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh feel when teachers pose questions to them during classes?						
When a teacher asks a question to you during an English class, how do you normally feel?	*teacher *question *feelings	*nervous *anxious * mind goes blank	Umm... I usually feel a bit nervous sometimes, even if I know the answer. My mind goes empty because I feel anxious... And also, I know that all the all eyes are on me in the classroom. That's why I get a bit nervous sometimes. Yeah.	*Nervousness *Anxiety *Mind goes blank	1 1 1	DU SAN 10
What is the main concern to you when answering questions in front of the class?	*main concern *answering questing	*judged *bothers me *judging other students *poor performance *low of me *disappointed	My main concern is being judged, to be honest. I fear don't want to be known as a weak student in my class. So, it actually bothers me that teacher will judge me if I make mistakes. He uh will judge me for my poor performance. He will think	*Teacher judgement *Fear	1 1	DU SAN 14

			low of me and get disappointed in me.			
RQ 2: Why do students respond the way they do to teachers' questions in tertiary ESOL classrooms?						
How do teachers ask questions in your English classes?	*ask questions	*directly from book *memorization *anxious *opinion *comfortable	Umm there are some faculty who asks directly from the book like memorization. For me it is very hard. It makes me anxious so much. Then there are faculties like I uh am doing one course that faculty asks for our opinion. I feel comfortable in that case. I can answer the question now.	*Memorization *Anxiety *Opinion based *Comfort	1 1 1 1	DU HAS 20
How do you feel when teachers allow you time to think before responding?	*feelings *allowing time	*preparing time *giving time *confident *anxiety	I feel like it's going to be like preparing time for me to giving the answer to the questions... So I feel confident and I feel good when they give us the time for preparing the answer. I feel less anxious.	*Wait time * Confidence	1 1	DU HAS 24

Does the supportive attitude of a teacher have an influence on your willingness to respond? How?	*supportive attitude of teacher *willingness to respond	*friendly * answered more *make mistakes *embarrassed	Yeah, definitely. It's very much like when teacher is a friendly and says it's OK, try in the class. I answered more. Is not friendly I never raise my hand on there becuase I know it I make make mistakes I will get embarrassed in front of the class.	*Friendly approach *Increased participation *Mistakes *Embarrassment	1 1 1 1	DU HAS 26
RQ 3: What factors do tertiary ESOL teachers believe influence students' reluctance to respond to teacher questioning in ESOL classrooms?						
What do you think teachers tend to believe when a student remains silent after a question?	*teachers' belief *students silence	*Not prepared for the lesson * does not know the answer *fear *struggling	I think most teachers believe that the student did not prepare the lesson or does not know the answer. Uh, they do not think that the student may fear to speak or struggling to make sentences in English. In their mind, silence mainly means no knowledge.	*Lack of study *Lack of knowledge *Fear *Difficulty	1 1 1 1	DU RAF 36

What reasons do you think teachers give for students reluctant or slow to respond in the classroom?	*reasons *students reluctance *slow to respond	*low vocabulary *poor speaking skill *not serious	Teachers usually say that students are not answering to the questions umm that much because they have low vocabulary and poor speaking skills. Sometimes they also say students are not serious about learning English.	*Poor vocabulary *Speaking skills *Lack of interest	1 1	DU RAF 42
What would you change in questioning practices to help you participate more?	*change *questioning practices *participation	*time to think *organize ideas *encourage *correcting them	Umm, first I would give students more time to think before answering, so they can organize their ideas. I would also encourage students when they try to answer instead of correcting them immediately.	*Wait time *Organizing ideas *Encouragement *Delayed correction	1 1 1 1	DU RAF 44

Sample Theme Generation Template

RQ 1: How do tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh feel when teachers pose questions to them during classes?

Interview question: When a teacher asks a question to you during an English class, how do you normally feel?				
SANJIDA	HASIB	RAFI	Subthemes	Themes
Umm... I usually feel a bit nervous sometimes, even if I know the answer. My mind goes empty because I feel anxious... And also I know that all the all eyes are on me in the classroom. That's why I get a bit nervous sometimes. Yeah. (10)	Being called on suddenly makes me nervous and I start stammering, even if I studied. I hesitate even if I know the answer (10)	I feel alert suddenly, like I must answer now. My heart starts beating fast and my body becomes tense. Sometimes my head feels empty... I feel really anxious (10)		Speaking Blocks: Freezes, Nervousness, Stuttering, Mind Blanks and Processing Time
RQ 2: Why do students respond the way they do to teachers' questions in tertiary ESOL classrooms?				
Interview question: Does the supportive attitude of a teacher (e.g. encouragement or patience) have an influence on your willingness to respond? How?				
A supportive attitude is very important and vital and a patient teacher makes me want to try harder. For example, my current professor often nods while I speak which encourages me to	Yeah, definitely. It's very much like when teacher is a friendly and says it's OK, try in the class. I	Umm... Yes, it changes everything. In one class, teacher praises effort, so I try more. In		Supportive and Patient Teacher Attitude as a Catalyst for Student Confidence and Classroom Participation

finish my thought. It reduces my anxiety and makes me feel motivated to answer. (26)	answered more. If he is not friendly I never raise my hand on there beacuse I know it I make make mistakes I will get embarrassed in front of the class. (26)	another class, teacher corrects every sentence, so I remain silent there. (28)		
RQ 3: What factors do tertiary ESOL teachers believe influence students' reluctance to respond to teacher questioning in ESOL classrooms?				
Interview Question: What reasons do you think teachers give for students reluctant or slow to respond in the classroom?				
Teachers often blame weak vocabs or vocabulary or lack of practice...I think many teachers miss the root cause instead of just correcting grammar. (40)	They say weak vocabulary and lack of motivation. OK, so you don't know enough vocabulary to give an appropriate answer or you lack motivation to give answer. (40)	Teachers usually say that students are not answering to the questions umm that much because they have low vocabulary and poor speaking skills. Sometimes they also say students are not serious about learning English. (42)		Attributing Student Silence to Linguistic Weakness and Low Motivation

Appendix G
The Coding Template for RQ 1, 2 & 3 (Teachers)

Interview Questions (1)	Subordinate key word of question (2)	Subordinate main point from the conversation (3)	Elaborated examples from verbal evidence to support the subordinate main point (4)	Occurrence of main idea transferred into the form as key word(s) (5)	Frequency of occurrence (6)	Ordering of discourse unit (7)
RQ 1: How do tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh feel when teachers pose questions to them during classes?						
How do students react when you ask questions in class?	*students' reaction	*confident *fast reply *silent *need time to reply *preparation *language capacity	When I ask questions to the students, they respond differently. There are those who respond very fast and with a lot of confidence and those who remain silent because of nervousness need time to reply. This is normally based on their confidence, preparation, and language capacity.	Confidence *Quick responses *Silence *Delayed response *Level of preparation *Language proficiency	1 1 1 1 1 1	DU REJ 8
What do you think students tend to feel when you pose questions to them in class?	*feelings *ask questions	*anxious *nervous *prepared *not confident *dodge *silent	Umm, they feel anxious and nervous. If they are prepared for the class then they look confident but you know otherwise you can see nervousness in their face and they dodge the question. Umm, they feel anxious and nervous. If they are prepared for the class then they look confident but you know otherwise you can see	*Anxiety *Nervousness *Preparation *Confidence *Avoidance	1 1 1 1 1	DU REJ 10

			nervousness in their face and they dodge the question			
RQ 2: Why do students respond the way they do to teachers' questions in tertiary ESOL classrooms?						
What do you typically do when asking questions in your classes (e.g. direct, open-ended, and reflective)?	*direct *open-ended *reflected	*opinion *reflection	I mostly go for opinion based questioning. So the students have to share their own opinion, rather than just yes or no question.	*Opinion based *Student reflection	1 1	DU ABU 20
What is the effect of wait-time (to give students time to think) on the quality of student responses?	*wait time	*comment *enough time	It's really important because if you want them to make a comment on a particular text, you have to give them the enough time to formulate their answer. So wait time is important.	*Wait time *Organization of answers	1 1	DU ABU 24
What is the contribution of the teacher student relationship to	*teacher-student relationship	*teacher-student relationship *Friendly & supportive teacher *confident	Umm, I think the teacher-student relationship strongly affects students' responses. When students feel the teacher is friendly and supportive, they feel	*Supportive teacher *Confidence *Teacher judgment *Anxious	1 1 1 1	DU ABU 28

the response of the students?		*judgmental *afraid	more confident to answer. Also, their answer quality improves. But if the teacher seems judgmental, students may feel anxious and remain silent.			
RQ 3: What factors do tertiary ESOL teachers believe influence students' reluctance to respond to teacher questioning in ESOL classrooms?						
What do you consider to be the primary reasons students do not answer questions in your classes?	*primary emotional constraints	*lack of confidence *fear of making errors *Anxiety *Focus on accuracy *Additional processing time	The primary reasons students do not respond in class include a lack of confidence, fear of making errors, Many students hesitate to speak because they are anxious about producing grammatically correct or fully accurate answers. Furthermore, some students require additional processing time to understand the question and create a response.	*Lack of confidence *Fear of errors *Anxiety *Accuracy *Processing time	1 1 1 1 1	DU AUS 20
How far do you believe fear of error influences willingness of students to answer?	*fear of error *willingness to answer	*fear of error *avoiding risk *incorrect answer *emphasizing accuracy *limit responses	Fear of error has a strong influence on students' participation. Many students prefer to remain silent rather than risk providing an incorrect answer, particularly in skill-based tasks where accuracy is emphasized. This fear of making mistakes can limit their	*Fear of error *Risk avoidance *Incorrect answer *Accuracy *Limit responses	1 1 1 1 1	DU AUS 22

			willingness to attempt even partial or tentative responses.			
How do you think questioning practices might be changed to enable students to give more confident and thoughtful responses?	*questioning practices	*open ended *explore ideas *sufficient wait-time *normalizing mistakes *build confidence *supportive classroom environment *express & engage openly	In my experience, questioning practices become more effective when they are open-ended, allowing students to explore ideas rather than simply recall information. Giving sufficient wait time and normalizing mistakes as part of the learning process all help build confidence. Over time, these strategies create a supportive and interactive classroom environment where students are more willing to engage thoughtfully and express themselves openly.	*Open ended *Idea exploration *Wait time *Normalizing mistakes *Confidence building *Supportive environment *Willingness to engage and express	1 1 1 1 1 1	DU AUS 36

Sample Theme Generation Template

RQ 1: How do tertiary ESOL students in Bangladesh feel when teachers pose questions to them during classes?

Interview question: What do you think students tend to feel when you pose questions to them in class?				
REJWAN	ABU	AUSHI	Subthemes	Themes
Umm, they feel anxious and nervous. If they are prepared for the class then they look confident but you know otherwise you can see nervousness in their face and they dodge the question. (10)	Yeah so, when they come to the university level and when the teacher asks them a question, they become nervous and hesitate. They get afraid that if they make mistakes the teacher will scold them (12)	Students appear to experience a range of emotional responses when questions are posed. Although some students feel confident and relatively relaxed, especially when they are unfamiliar with the topic, many others experience anxiety. (10)		Anxiety, Nervousness, Fear of Teacher Reaction & Error
RQ 2: Why do students respond the way they do to teachers' questions in tertiary ESOL classrooms?				
Interview question: What is the contribution of the teacher student relationship to the response of the students?				
When teachers are supportive students give better responses but if the teacher is authoritative it can make them quiet or hesitate while they umm speak (28)	Umm, I think the teacher-student relationship strongly affects students' responses. When	When teachers are perceived as highly authoritative, students often feel intimidated and may hesitate to speak.		Impact of Teacher-Student Relationship and Teacher Role on Student Participation

	students feel the teacher is friendly and supportive, they feel more confident to answer. Also, their answer quality improves. But if the teacher seems judgmental, students may feel anxious and remain silent. (30)	In my practice, I consciously adopt the role of a facilitator rather than an authoritative figure. By positioning myself as a guide and supporter, I aim to reduce the perceived power distance, create a more approachable environment, and encourage students to express their ideas freely. This approach helps students feel more confident and fosters a greater sense of ownership over their learning. (26)		
RQ 3: What factors do tertiary ESOL teachers believe influence students' reluctance to respond to teacher questioning in ESOL classrooms?				
Interview Question: What do you consider to be the primary reasons students do not answer questions in your classes?				
Fear is always there I think. Anxiety might be there and sense of embarrassment of course in some cases. Especially	Umm I would say fear and lack of confidence. The lack of	The primary reasons students do not respond in class		Affective and Linguistic Factors Behind Student Silence

if they come up with something wrong or some wrong answers. In that case they might feel embarrassed. And also lack of vocabulary limits their ability to express idea and it ultimately leads to hesitation. (36)	confidence makes them less interested in the class and as a result when the teacher asks questions they go silent or give very little answer (34)	include a lack of confidence, fear of making errors, Many students hesitate to speak because they are anxious about producing grammatically correct or fully accurate answers. Furthermore, some students require additional processing time to understand the question and formulate a coherent response. In fast-paced classroom settings, this need is often not accommodated, resulting in silence or delayed participation. (36)		
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Appendix H

Consent paper for the participants

- I have agreed to be involved in this research study.
- I understand that, although I may grant permission to take part in it now, I still reserve the right to withdraw any time I think it appropriate or to refuse to answer any question without repercussions.
- I know that I may withdraw the right to use the information of my interview within 14 days after the interview, which will result in the destruction of the content.
- I have been provided with written descriptions regarding the aim and nature of the study, and I was given an opportunity to pose questions about the study.
- I know that I will not get direct benefits out of this research.
- I agree to the audio recording of my interview on Zoom App.
- I would recognize that any information that I will offer concerning this study would be confidential.
- I realize that my identity would be disclosed in the paper to be studied and I am free to consent.
- I realize that I can be quoted with disguised identities in academic Papers, by the excerpts of my Interview.
- I understand that in case I reveal the information concerning any harm to myself or others, then the researcher is thus entitled to report it to the appropriate authorities, after consultation with me.

- I realize that signed consent forms and original audio recordings will be stored in the collection of the researcher until the exam board approves the findings of the thesis paper.
- I am aware that the transcript of my interview, but with all identifying information taken out, will be stored during 1 year.
- I know that in the freedom of information law, I will be entitled to the information that I have submitted at any time when it is in the storage mentioned above.
- I also understand that I may also approach any of the people participating in the research to seek additional clarification and information.

Signature of Research Participant

Signature of Participant

I believe the participant is giving informed consent to participate in this study

Signature of researcher

Date

