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From Personality to Planning: How Bangladeshi Non-English Majors Reinterpret Speaking Breakdown After Metacognitive Instruction

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Abstract

Responses to Bangladeshi university learners' speaking anxiety have centred on friendlier activities rather than on ways to regulate their own speech. This qualitative study explored how non-English majors at a private university in Chittagong made sense of a ten-week teaching-speaking cycle. Its added metacognitive layer comprised an idea frame for planning, a repair formula for breakdown and a weekly log. Data comprised 18 interviews and seven focus groups across three placement bands that included a contrast group with the same planning time and three groups reconvened eight weeks later. Learners described ordering ideas, often in Bangla, instead of memorising sentences and repairing instead of abandoning turns. Fourteen interviewees, in every band, reattributed breakdown from personality to a lack of thinking time, and fear acquired a cause they could act on. Delayed groups kept the routines more consistently than the new explanation. Reattribution may be one route by which metacognitive instruction reaches speaking anxiety, and oral rubrics should credit recovery.

Keywords: Teaching-Speaking Cycle, Causal Attribution, Speaking Anxiety, Strategic Planning, Reflexive Thematic Analysis, Metacognitive Instruction, Bangladeshi Higher Education

Introduction

Every semester, compulsory foundation English courses in Bangladeshi private universities take in thousands of non-English majors. Most of them have had little practice in sustained speaking. Listening and speaking sit at the margins of secondary textbooks (Ullah, 2023a), while the communicative curriculum has long been delivered through routines shaped by examinations (Ullah, 2016). At university these learners meet English-medium expectations that they experience as both gateway and divide (Hamid et al., 2013).

Even engineering students at private universities struggle to follow lectures and present in English (Islam et al., 2025). Speaking before classmates is the most feared part of this transition (Rahman et al., 2024; Yasmin et al., 2025), and anxiety is consistently associated with lower achievement (Teimouri et al., 2019). In sections of about 35, a nervous student who falls silent forfeits most of a few minutes' weekly practice.

Bangladeshi research has described the causes of this anxiety in detail (Rahman et al., 2024; Yasmin et al., 2025), but the remedies proposed are almost entirely affective. Yasmin et al. (2025) recommend enjoyable, stress-free activities, and Haque et al. (2026) associate lower anxiety with warmth, humour and praise. What learners are not offered is a regulatory resource of their own, a way to plan before speaking and to recover when speech breaks down. Intervention studies that report lower anxiety tend to read it as a by-product of better speech (Alamer et al., 2025), and learners' own explanations of breakdown are seldom collected. Such neglect is curious, as interview studies have long found anxious learners linking their fear to specific nameable moments (Price, 1991; Yan & Horwitz, 2008). Rarer still is research asking whether a changed explanation survives the teaching behind it.

Accounts were gathered from learners as a term of metacognitive instruction ended, and from a returning subset two months later. Learners explained how they had planned and monitored speech and how they made sense of moments when it broke down. Since standard-section peers had the same planning minute, their accounts revealed how that time was used while its availability stayed constant. Viewed through attribution theory (Weiner, 1985), a learner moving from "my personality" to "no time to think" shifts locus, stability and controllability together. Reattribution itself is familiar in psychology; this study adds the route it suggests within a speaking classroom. There, instruction may reach anxiety by changing what breakdown means without first raising learners' English. That change was voiced in every placement band, though the design cannot establish whether it preceded any language gain. The study was guided by three questions.

RQ1. In what ways did programme learners describe using planning time and responding when talk broke down, and how did their accounts compare with those of peers given equal planning time but no metacognitive instruction?

RQ2. What explanations did learners give for speaking breakdown and the fear that came with it, and how did these explanations differ across placement bands?

RQ3. What did learners say they had retained eight weeks after the course, and under what conditions did their routines and explanations hold, or give way?

Speaking Anxiety, Metacognition and Attribution
Does Anxiety Follow Proficiency?

Two rival explanations of language anxiety have competed for some forty years. Horwitz et al. (1986) saw it as a situation-specific reaction to using a language one has not

yet mastered, with roots in communication apprehension and fear of negative evaluation. MacIntyre and Gardner (1994) then showed anxious learners losing processing capacity at every stage of language use. The rival view reverses the causal arrow. For Sparks and Ganschow (1991), anxiety stemmed largely from linguistic difficulty, and Alamer et al. (2025) found that raising vocabulary achievement lowered anxiety. Within a dynamic system, MacIntyre (2017) accepts either direction as plausible, but for a teacher facing a silent class the choice is hardly academic. Should anxiety merely trail proficiency, weaker learners can only wait for their language to grow; should it not, a non-linguistic route may be open to them. Most of this debate has run on scale scores (Teimouri et al., 2019), which show that two things move together but not what learners believe has changed.

Fluency, Formulation and the Use of Planning Time

Speech production models explain why anxiety tends to surface first in fluency. Kormos (2006) describes speaking as conceptualisation, formulation and articulation, with second language speakers attending consciously to processes that run automatically in a first language. Bielak (2025) linked task anxiety most closely to fluency indices associated with formulation, and Sun and Teng (2021) found speaking strategies a stronger source of speech anxiety than proficiency. Pre-task planning improves fluency more reliably than accuracy (Yuan & Ellis, 2003), yet its length matters less than often assumed (L. Li et al., 2015). What learners do in the minute before speaking therefore matters. A memorised sentence is a fragile script, whereas an ordered set of ideas tolerates lexical gaps. In Bangladesh that plan may well be in Bangla, and recent work treats translanguaging in English classrooms as communicative agency rather than deficit (Ullah & Islam, 2026).

Metacognitive Instruction for Speaking

Flavell (1979) distinguished metacognitive knowledge of person, task and strategy from the regulation of cognition through planning, monitoring and evaluation. Goh and Burns (2012) built this distinction into the teaching-speaking cycle, which moves from attention to speaking, through planning and performance, to language focus, repetition and reflection. For speaking, the evidence remains thin. Sato and Dussuel Lam (2021) found that metacognitive instruction changed young learners' participation and their knowledge of oral communication but not their willingness to communicate. Milliner and Dimoski (2024) found lower-proficiency learners valuing a metacognitive listening intervention without clear gains, and they proposed a proficiency threshold below which strategy instruction cannot take hold. Two questions follow. Can a metacognitive layer reach weaker speakers, and does it touch how they feel about speaking or only what they do?

Attribution as a Lens on Breakdown

Weiner (1985) classified the causes people assign to outcomes by locus, stability and controllability. Internal, stable, uncontrollable causes such as personality predict hopelessness and avoidance, whereas unstable, controllable causes such as strategy predict persistence. Among language learners, students and teachers explain the same failures differently (Alzaanin, 2026). Demotivation among Bangladeshi undergraduates in reading classes has been traced to learners themselves as well as to teachers, materials and context (Ullah & Fatema, 2013), and perceived controllability has predicted engagement on difficult L2 reading tasks (Yamazaki & Hiver, 2024). Control-value theory links low perceived control to anxiety (Pekrun, 2006), and control appraisal was the strongest predictor of anxiety among Chinese university EFL learners (C. Li et al., 2023). Attributional retraining applies that logic through short messages crediting failure to effort or strategy, and such messages have improved persistence among vulnerable college students (Haynes et al., 2009). A learner halting mid-sentence before 35 classmates must explain that stop to herself. Settling on "I am a shy person" leaves her nothing to change, while "I did not plan my second point" renders the cause temporary and controllable. Whether such explanations in speaking can arise from practised routines instead of messages remained unexamined.

What the Existing Evidence Leaves Open

Three strands of this evidence remain unresolved. The first concerns how metacognitive instruction reaches affect. Sato and Dussuel Lam (2021) found no change in young learners' willingness to communicate even as their participation and metacognitive knowledge shifted, and Milliner and Dimoski (2024) saw lower-proficiency listeners value instruction without measurable gains. Neither study asked how learners came to read their own breakdown. The second concerns how explanations change, since retraining alters them by message (Haynes et al., 2009) rather than through practised speaking routines. The third is durability. Learners' self-discovered mitigating strategies have been documented but not followed over time (Bárkányi & Brash, 2025), and the Bangladeshi studies stop at sources and affective remedies (Rahman et al., 2024; Yasmin et al., 2025). Unlike this work, the present study compared sections with the same planning time and gathered accounts at two points. Reattribution was thus examined as a candidate mechanism linking metacognitive instruction to speaking anxiety rather than as its by-product.

Method

Design and Approach

The study adopted an interpretive qualitative design with a contrast case and a

delayed follow-up. Programme sections formed the principal case and standard sections a contrast case, compared at the level of themes rather than developed as full cases (Stake, 2006). We set out to understand how learners took up the programme's routines and came to explain breakdown, and what remained once teaching stopped. Estimating whether the programme worked was never the aim. Accounts were accordingly treated as situated interpretations instead of transparent reports (Richards, 2003). The setting, a compulsory foundation English course at a private university in Chittagong, met for three contact hours weekly across a twelve-week semester, and four intact sections participated. Each of two instructors, neither of them among the authors, taught one programme and one standard section, which meant accounts could not simply mirror who had taught them. Across sections, textbook tasks, contact hours and the single planning minute before each speaking task were identical. Programme sections alone received the metacognitive layer, which was offered to standard sections as a workshop after the delayed round.

The Programme

Three additions were made to the teaching-speaking cycle (Goh & Burns, 2012), which each programme class followed from Week 2 to Week 11. First, learners discussed their person, task and strategy knowledge of speaking. For planning they used an idea frame (point, reason, example, close), in Bangla or English, and for breakdown mid-task they practised a repair formula ("What I mean is…"). A weekly log asked what they had planned, where they had stopped, what they had done and what they would change; it was a teaching tool, never data. A trained research assistant, not the instructors or the authors, wrote observation notes on 18 of the 20 programme lessons and 16 standard lessons. The notes recorded the components in every observed programme lesson and their absence from the standard sections. Like the log, they supplied context and were not analysed as data.

Participants and Sampling

The four sections enrolled 138 learners aged 18 to 21 from business, engineering, and arts and social science programmes, schooled in Bangla-medium, English-version or Aliya madrasa streams. Participants were selected purposively from learners who volunteered once grades had been released. Lower, middle and upper bands were formed from tertiles of the university placement test. Band was a sampling criterion, not a measure, used because the threshold debate required accounts from across placement levels, and proficiency change was not assessed. Interviewees were programme volunteers who had not joined a focus group, six per band, chosen to spread faculty and schooling within each band. Sample size was judged by information power rather than saturation (Braun & Clarke, 2021b; Malterud et al., 2016), since the aim was narrow, theory-guided

interpretation and the talk was dense and episode-based. In all, 46 learners took part (Table 1).

Table 1: Data sources and participants

Data source	Code	Participants	Timing
Programme focus groups, by band	FGD-L, FGD-M, FGD-U	7, 8 and 6 learners	Week after the course ended
Contrast focus group, mixed band	C-FGD	7 learners from standard sections	Week after the course ended
Individual interviews	INT-01 to INT-18	18 programme learners, six per band	Two to three weeks after the course
Delayed focus groups	FGD-L-D, FGD-M-D, FGD-U-D	5, 5 and 4 returning members	Eight weeks after the course

Data Generation

Data collection began after grades were released, so participation could not affect assessment. Programme groups were formed by band to ease peer judgement, whereas the contrast group was mixed, so band and composition cannot be separated there. The first-round group protocol did not ask why speech broke down, yet the task explanation arose unprompted in FGD-L and FGD-M and the personal one in C-FGD, while FGD-U did not raise attribution. In interviews two to three weeks later, each learner recalled a recent speaking task, the planning minute and the moment speech broke down, and said why. Asking for concrete episodes was meant to limit echoing of course wording. Eight weeks after the course the programme groups reconvened, with a protocol on where the routines had been used and what happened when they could not be. It closed with a prompt absent from the first round: “When your speaking stops now, what do you think the reason is?” Interviewees were not reconvened. Sessions ran in Bangla, English or both (interviews 30 to 45 minutes, focus groups 45 to 75) and together produced about 18 hours of audio.

Analysis

All 25 transcripts were analysed through reflexive thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006, 2019, 2022). With translation treated as interpretation (Temple & Young, 2004), Bangla wording was retained where it carried meaning, and a bilingual colleague checked sample translations against the audio. Coding operated at semantic and latent levels. Since interaction in groups is itself data (Kitzinger, 1994), focus group coding also noted whether talk was taken up by agreement, challenge or silence. Codes were tagged by method, band, case and time point and then clustered into candidate themes. Only at that

point did we read the breakdown themes for Weiner's (1985) locus, stability and controllability. A further code marked whether each reattribution borrowed course wording or used the learner's own terms. To trace what had continued, stopped or changed, delayed transcripts were compared with the first wave (Saldaña, 2003). A critical friend's reading of four interviews and two focus groups against the candidate themes split one theme in two. Inter-rater agreement was not computed, since reflexive thematic analysis does not treat coder consensus as a quality marker (Braun & Clarke, 2021a; Ullah et al., 2026). Counts show how widespread a pattern was, not its validity.

Ethics, Positionality and Quality

Ethical approval was granted by the Ethics Approval Committee of Global Aid for Sustainable Development (approval no. GASD.IRB.8639.23.01.2026). Consent, obtained separately for observation, interviews and focus groups and renewed verbally at the delayed round, carried no course credit. Focus groups opened with ground rules, learners could pass on any question, and questions about personal failure were kept for interviews. Extracts carry codes rather than dates, since learners in sections of 35 are easily recognised. We designed the programme and work as teacher educators in this system, which brings classroom knowledge that policy seldom hears (Mariyam & Ullah, 2015b) but also a stake in the programme's success. Reflexivity was therefore practised throughout rather than stated once (Olmos-Vega et al., 2023). An outside colleague ran every interview and focus group, with a note-taker present, so learners never spoke to the designers. Disconfirming accounts were sought deliberately, such as programme learners who ignored the routines and contrast learners who reached similar ones unaided. These moves serve credibility and confirmability (Alam et al., 2025; Lincoln & Guba, 1985) rather than coder agreement.

Findings

The analysis generated five themes (Table 2), two on routines and one each on explanation, non-uptake and durability.

Table 2: Overview of themes

Theme	Central organising concept	Where it was most visible
a From storing sentences to ordering ideas	Planning time used to sequence ideas, often in Bangla	All programme groups; absent from most contrast accounts
b Repairing mid-talk without stopping	Repair formula replacing silence as the exit move	All bands; rescue for weaker learners, a pause-filler for stronger ones
c Fear renamed as a task problem	Breakdown moved from personality to thinking time	Fourteen interviewees (5 lower, 4 middle, 5 upper)
d Planning as paperwork	Log seen as redundant by learners with prior routines	Mainly upper band
e What lasted	Routines travelled; the new explanation was conditional	Delayed groups

From Storing Sentences to Ordering Ideas

Fifteen of the eighteen interviewees described abandoning the habit of composing full sentences in planning time. In every programme group, learners demonstrated their planning on the task card as a short list of ideas, often in Bangla.

"Before, I made the full sentence in my head and tried to keep it. If one word went, everything went. Now I keep three things, *ki bolbo, keno, ekta example* [what I will say, why, one example], and the English comes when I speak." (INT-04, lower band, F)

Her account makes the stored sentence brittle ("if one word went, everything went"), whereas a list of ideas leaves formulation to the moment of speaking. She names the idea frame's categories in Bangla, so the first language carries the structure and English is left for delivery. With the same minute of planning, however, five of the seven contrast members described spending it translating and memorising an opening line.

"I used the minute to translate my first line properly. Then after that line I was lost." (C-FGD, S2, middle band, M)

What separated the two groups' accounts, on this evidence, was not whether planning time was available but how it was used.

Repairing Mid-Talk without Stopping

S5: *Ami ager moto chup kore jaini* [I didn't go silent like before]. I said "what I mean is" and took another road.

S2: Same. Even if it's the wrong road. [laughter]

S6: The teacher cannot cut marks for silence if there is no silence. (FGD-L)

The repair formula has taken over from silence as the way out of a stalled turn. Uptake shows too, as S2 extends S5's road metaphor and S6, rather shrewdly, recasts repair as a way of protecting marks. Upper-band learners used the formula differently. "I don't use it to rescue," one explained. "I use it to buy two seconds when I want a better word" (INT-16, upper band, M). For weaker learners repair was rescue, whereas for stronger learners it served the flow of speech.

Fear Renamed as a Task Problem

The most consequential change concerned how learners explained breakdown. Fourteen interviewees, five in the lower band, four in the middle and five in the upper, described a shift from a personal cause to a task cause.

"In the first class I thought my problem was my personality. I am a shy person, so English will not come. Now I think the problem was I had no time to think, and nobody told me what to think first." (INT-02, lower band, F)

Read through Weiner's (1985) dimensions, the earlier explanation is internal, stable and uncontrollable, while the later one places the cause in the task, makes it temporary and implies a remedy ("what to think first"). The same movement appeared in the middle band ("It's not that I am weak. I didn't plan the second point", INT-09, M) and the upper band ("I was never scared of grammar. I was scared of the blank. The blank has a reason now", INT-17, F). Lower-band learners voiced it as readily as upper-band learners, so these accounts show no sign of a proficiency threshold, though they cannot show what came first. Four interviewees (one lower, two middle, one upper) did not shift. "Plan or no plan, I am the same person in front of thirty-five people," said INT-11 (middle band, M), who located fear in an audience that planning cannot remove.

For the most part, contrast learners held on to the personal explanation:

"When I stop, I think, this is my nature. Ami nervous type [I am the nervous type]. One minute is not going to change nature." (C-FGD, S5, lower band)

The same minute was available to this learner, and yet the explanation stayed internal and stable; that fits the reading that the minute by itself did not alter what breakdown meant. The comparison cannot bear much weight, however, since these explanations arose unprompted in group talk, where questions on personal failure were deliberately withheld.

The most visible change lay in what fear meant, more than in fear itself. Learners' accounts still featured the blank, at times vividly. Once its cause was something they could act on, though, they approached it as a problem to plan around instead of a verdict on who they were. Among the fourteen, six connected the new explanation with less dread before speaking.

"Before, from the night before speaking class my stomach was bad. Now the fear

still comes, but I know what the blank is. If it comes, I say ‘what I mean is’ and go to my second point. *Bhoy ta ache, kintu ager moto na* [The fear is there, but not like before].” (INT-13, middle band, F)

Neither the fear nor the blank has left her account. The night-before dread has eased, however, and she credits that to knowing “what the blank is” and having a move ready. What the Bangla coda registers is a change of degree. These accounts raise, without settling, whether such reframing lowers anxiety over a longer stretch.

Planning as Paperwork

Uptake was uneven, but not randomly so: five of the six upper-band interviewees described the weekly log as administrative, against only one lower-band interviewee.

S4: For me the log was homework about homework. I already did this in my head.

S1: Yes, but my head did it slowly. (FGD-U)

S4 already had routines, so the log added little, yet S1, from the same band, qualifies the claim, and the upper band was not of one mind. Lower-band learners told a different story, in which the log first let them see their own pattern of breakdown.

“Every week I wrote where I stopped. After five weeks I saw it was always the same place, the second point. First point I say, then *ekdom blank* [completely blank]. Before the log I only felt, I am bad at speaking. I never saw that it had a place.” (INT-05, lower band, M)

Once the log made the pattern visible (“always the same place”), a general feeling became a locatable event, and that shift prepared the ground for the reattribution in theme c. Weaker learners, by their own accounts, had further to travel but fewer routines to displace.

What Lasted: Routines More Than the Explanation

Eight weeks after the course, all three delayed groups reported still using the idea frame and the repair formula, and not only in English, for they described taking both into presentations and vivas in other courses.

S3: Last month I had a viva in Business Communication. I wrote point, reason, example on my palm, like a small map. *Pura sentence ar ready kori nai* [I did not prepare whole sentences].

S1: Same in my physics presentation. The teacher asked why I was so calm. I did not tell him it was a frame. [laughter] (FGD-M-D)

S3 takes the frame into an assessed viva, and S1’s remark shows that to an observer the frame read as calm rather than technique. Accounts of the new explanation proved less consistent. Because the delayed protocol asked about explanation directly, while first-round FGD-L and FGD-M had raised it unprompted and FGD-U never had, only a partial

baseline supports this comparison. Without planning time, as with a sudden question in a subject class, several learners described fear returning with the older explanation.

"The 'what I mean' I still use, every presentation. But when a teacher asks suddenly in another class, no planning, then the old fear comes. Then I again think, maybe I'm just like this." (FGD-L-D, S5)

The routine is portable, but the new explanation depends on the condition that made it true. Upper-band learners kept the routines and dropped the log at once ("I keep the three points. I stopped the log on the first day", FGD-U-D, S2). Only 14 of 21 members returned, perhaps the more engaged. As focus group members rather than the interviewees of theme c, they show an asymmetry within the delayed groups, not change within the same learners.

Discussion

Two Routes from Instruction to Anxiety

On the achievement-first account, relief from anxiety comes as a by-product of better speech (Alamer et al., 2025; Sparks & Ganschow, 1991). Any change in how learners felt about speaking should then be credited to better English. These learners instead recast breakdown as a temporary, controllable task condition. Weiner (1985) links such a shift to weaker hopelessness, and control-value theory reads it as a gain in appraised control (Pekrun, 2006). Not one of the fourteen attributed the change to better English, although the interviews included no question on language gain. Lower-band learners voiced the shift as readily as upper-band learners, which leads us to think it is unlikely to hinge on a proficiency threshold. Since language gain was never tracked, however, what came first remains unknown. The achievement-first account may well hold over longer periods. Alongside it, these accounts point to a second route that passes through what learners believe about breakdown. Attributional retraining delivers explanations as messages (Haynes et al., 2009), whereas this route, as learners told it, grew out of practised routines and a log that revealed where their speech failed.

This reading needs two qualifications. The first concerns echo, as "no time to think" lies close to the course's rationale for planning, and borrowed talk does not amount to changed belief. Of the 14 reattributions, nine used course wording such as "no time to think" or "plan the second point", and five were phrased in learners' own terms, INT-17's "the blank has a reason now" among them. Even so, concrete episodes anchored the shifts. INT-05, for instance, placed breakdown at "the second point" after five weeks of logging, and four interviewees resisted the shift on grounds of their own. Conditionality is the second qualification. Some returning members reported the older explanation coming back when planning time was removed, which accounts of anxiety as fluctuating would anticipate (MacIntyre, 2017). These members were not the interviewees whose shift theme c traced, so the pattern flags a limit to follow up instead of a measured decline. The

mechanism appears genuine, if fragile.

Ideas, Not Sentences

Production models accommodate learners' descriptions readily. Planning ideas rather than sentences moved conceptual work out of the moment of speaking and freed attention for formulation (Kormos, 2006), where anxiety seems to interfere most (Bielak, 2025). Given identical time, most contrast learners translated an opening line, so the cases differed in the grain of planning rather than its length, much as L. Li et al. (2015) found that planning time alone changes little. Plans were often made in Bangla, and this translanguaging, far from being a lapse in English practice, let learners separate conceptualisation from formulation (Ullah & Islam, 2026). The accounts also qualify Milliner and Dimoski's (2024) threshold reading for speaking. Lower-band learners voiced the reattribution as often as others and found in the log a first record of their breakdown, perhaps because planning ideas in the first language asks little of second language proficiency. Bangladeshi writing research likewise finds scope for developing critical thinking among low-proficient undergraduates (Ullah et al., 2022). Whether this holds once language gain is tracked remains open.

What the Study Adds

Theoretically, the study offers a learner-voiced account of reattribution as a route by which metacognitive instruction may reach speaking anxiety. Metacognitive speaking interventions have tracked participation and willingness to communicate (Sato & Dussuel Lam, 2021). Attribution studies have described or tried to shift learners' explanations (Alzaanin, 2026; Yamazaki & Hiver, 2024), but the two literatures have rarely met. Where retraining hands learners an explanation (Haynes et al., 2009), these learners described reaching one through routines, across placement bands. A second contribution is a design move, in which a contrast case with identical planning time shows how that time was used, and a delayed round shows which parts of a routine leave the classroom. Unlike the self-discovered strategies Bárkányi and Brash (2025) documented, the idea frame and repair formula were taught, and they travelled into assessed work elsewhere. With large classes, test-oriented schooling and scarce speaking practice combined, such portability suggests anxious speakers can be given tools as well as comfort.

Implications for Teaching and Assessment

For practice, the encouraging point is that none of the programme's three tools needs extra contact hours, and all of them work in sections of 35, where teacher-centred routines still persist (Mariyam et al., 2015). Should reattribution really depend on planning

time, learners will need practice in compressing planning into a few seconds, so the new explanation survives a question that arrives without warning. Oral rubrics, in turn, ought to credit recovery and idea sequencing if these are now what learners do. A scale rewarding accuracy alone will overlook this change and may even teach learners that silence is safer than repair. The case for explicit rating scales has been made in Bangladeshi work on tertiary writing assessment (Mariyam & Ullah, 2015a). That logic could be carried into speaking through criteria for repair and organisation, without lengthening tasks.

Limitations and Future Research

Because every account was gathered after the programme ended, change was reported by learners instead of observed, and proficiency gains were never measured. Recruiting volunteers after grades were released may have favoured learners who liked the programme, and focus group consensus may have been partly social. Learners may also have echoed programme vocabulary, and the designers' stake, though buffered by an outside interviewer, may have shaped what they said. The contrast case rests on one mixed-band focus group. The delayed round followed focus group members only, 14 of 21 of whom returned, and asked about explanation where the first round had not, so reattribution was not traced in the interviewees who voiced it. Reconvening interviewees with the same prompts, and interviewing standard-section learners, would close both gaps, as would work in public universities and madrasa streams. Most open of all is whether the new explanation survives unplanned questions.

Conclusion

The usual answer to Bangladeshi learners' fear of speaking has been friendlier activities. This study asked what learners made of a different resource. Given an idea frame, a repair formula and a vocabulary for breakdown, they described ordering ideas instead of storing sentences and repairing instead of falling silent. They stopped blaming their personality and blamed a lack of thinking time, which can be changed, and fear acquired a cause they could act on. That shift was voiced in every placement band; it was also fragile, for returning learners reported the routines more consistently than the new explanation, which slipped when planning time disappeared. Anxious speakers may need both an actionable explanation and a routine compact enough to survive outside the classroom. Assessment that credits recovery and idea sequencing would let the course reward the change it seeks.

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