Community of Inquiry as an Instructional Framework: How Teaching, Social and Cognitive Presences Impact EFL Speaking in a Blended Setting in Bangladesh

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Abstract
This study investigates the impact of the community of inquiry framework on enhancing English as a foreign language proficiency in a blended learning context in Bangladesh. The primary aims are to examine how integrating teaching, social, and cognitive presences improves EFL speaking skills and to identify teachers' perspectives and recommendations on implementing blended learning and community of inquiry. Semi-structured interviews were conducted using a qualitative case study approach with ten teachers from a private university after a two-day professional development workshop and a subsequent four-week application of CoI principles in their classes. The findings reveal a positive influence on students' speaking skills, notably boosting motivation, confidence, and peer collaboration. However, challenges like better teacher training in technology and pedagogy and insufficient institutional support for online resources were identified. Despite these obstacles, the study emphasizes how the community of inquiry can revolutionize Bangladeshi education by promoting the idea that English should be viewed as a communication tool outside of the classroom. The paper concludes with recommendations for effective community of inquiry and blended learning implementation, stressing the importance of comprehensive training and institutional backing.

Keywords: Bangladesh setting, blended learning, community of inquiry, English as a foreign language, speaking skill

Introduction

The combination of the community of inquiry (CoI) framework and blended learning (BL) strategies has been acknowledged as a revolutionary educational method for improving English as a foreign language (EFL) teaching, specifically in the area of speaking abilities. This study investigates the impact of the CoI framework on EFL speaking proficiency in a BL environment, particularly in Bangladesh. The CoI framework, comprising teaching presence, social presence, and cognitive presence, has been widely acknowledged for enhancing learning experiences in various educational settings, including online and blended learning environments.

Moreover, applying the CoI framework in EFL blended learning has been associated with various pedagogical benefits, including increased student motivation, improved learning outcomes, enhanced problem-solving skills, and a more profound comprehension of the subject matter. These findings suggest that the CoI framework, when implemented effectively, can offer a robust model for interactive and innovative learning in blended environments, fostering a more student-centered approach (Sawan et al., 2024; Yulianti & Maghfiroh, 2022).

In Bangladesh, a study by Ud Duha et al. (2022) specifically explored the Facebook conversation activities informed by the Community of Inquiry approach used to evaluate undergraduate students' speaking performances in a blended EFL class. This study employed a convergent parallel mixed-methods approach to assess the impact of these activities, which were required by the treatment condition but not by the control. Despite no difference in post-test scores between the two conditions, feedback from students and the instructor indicated that Facebook was beneficial for improving their speaking performances, albeit in different ways. This finding is particularly relevant for Bangladesh, where leveraging social media platforms like Facebook within the CoI framework can enhance EFL learning outcomes, especially speaking skills (Ud Duha et al., 2022).

This study underscores the potential of integrating CoI principles with social media tools to boost EFL speaking proficiency in Bangladeshi education. It highlights the effectiveness of blended learning strategies incorporating online social platforms for enhancing language skills, aligning with global trends towards more interactive and student-centered learning environments. Another study pertinent to the Bangladesh context investigated using a mixed learning approach in the content-based EFL curriculum. The evaluation results revealed that students perceived and performed better in this blended learning environment, demonstrating the potential benefits of EFL learning for listening and speaking proficiencies (Yu & Du, 2019).

In another relevant study, Islam and Hashim (2019) conducted empirical research in a private institution in Bangladesh that focused on technology to provide a model that could aid in achieving blended learning's overall objective. This study examined course design in a blended learning setting, strategies adopted by course teachers to maximize students' online interactions collaboratively, and the impact of these strategies on the quality of blended teaching and learning in tertiary education. Findings suggest a model for improved interaction between learners and teachers in synchronous and asynchronous learning methods environments, potentially helpful in promoting innovative and contextual pedagogy in Bangladeshi education (Islam et al., 2022).

Chowdhury and Behak (2022) investigated students' experiences with a blended learning method in a private university in Bangladesh, focusing on English Writing Skills. The study revealed that most respondents had a highly favorable opinion about the blended method, highlighting the benefits such as peer interaction and support, teacher feedback, and improved scores in successive essays. However, they also mentioned several challenges in its
implementation. This study suggests that blended courses could effectively reduce the session backlog cost of higher education and ensure flexibility and quality compared to traditional face-to-face and online education models.

The study is motivated by the need to improve EFL speaking skills in Bangladesh in response to the changing educational environment that places greater importance on interactive and student-centered learning. This research aims to investigate the effectiveness of the CoI framework in enhancing language skills, utilizing social media for educational engagement, and addressing teachers' and institutions' pedagogical and technological preparedness. This study is grounded in the overarching objective of providing Bangladeshi students with the English language skills and global literacy required for proficient communication and achievement in an interconnected world. As a result, it offers significant contributions to understanding the implementation and results of innovative teaching frameworks such as CoI within the realm of EFL education.

**Literature Review**

Recent research indicates that employing the CoI framework in blended learning contexts can significantly enhance learners' engagement and speaking skills in EFL settings. For instance, Xiaoxing and Deris (2022) found that teaching practices aligned with the CoI framework, such as grading in online discussion forums, timely teacher responses, and meaningful discussion guidance, could promote active student participation in online discussions in a blended EFL course in China, thereby enhancing students' language use (Kabir, 2023; Tiurean, 2023; Xiaoxing & Deris, 2022). Similarly, a study by Zuo et al. (2022) on an ESP blended course emphasized the correlation between teaching, social, and cognitive presences, highlighting how these elements activated students' motivation towards learning specialized English, demonstrating the CoI's effectiveness in blended learning environments. Ratan et al. (2022) explored the role of deliberate practice in a blended learning setting from the CoI perspective, finding significant correlations between the CoI dimensions, perceived learning, and student engagement. This study underscores the predictive power of teaching and cognitive presence for students' perceived learning, illustrating the practical implications of the CoI framework for fostering sustainable EFL learning competencies.

Integrating the CoI framework in BL environments represents a significant area of exploration within educational research, particularly for enhancing EFL speaking proficiency. This literature review synthesizes findings from recent studies to understand the impact of CoI on EFL learning outcomes, focusing on speaking skills in the context of Bangladesh and similar educational settings. Research by Vaughan and Garrison (2019) underscores the relevance of these elements in fostering an engaging and collaborative learning environment in blended learning contexts, suggesting that the CoI framework can effectively support faculty development and student learning outcomes in diverse disciplines, including language education.

In the context of EFL, Lavee and Itzchakov (2023) have highlighted the critical role of CoI-based teaching practices in promoting student engagement and language use in online discussions within blended learning settings. Their findings demonstrate the direct and indirect impacts of teaching presence on student engagement, emphasizing the importance of timely teacher feedback and meaningful discussion facilitation for enhancing EFL speaking skills. Blended learning is gaining popularity worldwide, significantly raising educational standards and
removing barriers associated with distance learning (Al Masud et al., 2023; Tabassum & Saad, 2024)

Ud Duha et al. (2022) specifically explored the application of CoI-informed Facebook discussion activities in a Bangladeshi university's EFL speaking class. Their study revealed that although no significant difference in post-test scores was observed between treatment and control conditions, qualitative feedback suggested that when integrated with CoI principles, students could improve speaking performances by fostering more significant interaction and engagement.

Moreover, the challenges and opportunities of implementing blended learning models in Bangladesh have been documented, with studies indicating positive student perceptions towards blended learning due to its flexibility, interactive potential, and the ability to enhance peer support and teacher feedback mechanisms (Chowdhury & Behak, 2022; Islam et al., 2022; Sawan et al., 2024). These studies suggest that blended learning, underpinned by the CoI framework, can significantly improve EFL speaking proficiency and language learning experiences.

**A framework to guide effective EFL speaking**

The Community of Inquiry (CoI) framework, developed by Garrison et al. (1999), is widely used to understand online learning. It comprises three elements: cognitive presence, social presence, and teaching presence.

Cognitive presence involves learners constructing meaning through reflection and discourse. Social presence connects learners (Whiteside et al., 2023), and teaching presence involves instructors' design and facilitation. The CoI framework has been applied in studies like (Akyol & Garrison, 2011), showing its usefulness in improving online learning.

This study relies on the CoI framework. CoI, emphasizing community through collaborative learning, gained attention in higher education, fostering a sense of community online (Stewart et al., 2021) linked to perceived learning (Homer, 2022). Following is the community of Inquiry framework:

![Community of Inquiry Framework](image)

*Figure. 1. Community of Inquiry Framework (Garrison et al., 1999)*
English Language Teaching in Bangladesh

Enhancing EFL teaching and learning in Bangladesh is critical for sustaining economic growth and developing a skilled workforce. Despite English's global significance and inclusion in the Bangladeshi curriculum from an early age, proficiency in English speaking remains inadequate due to several systemic barriers. These include political influences lowering the status and use of English, inconsistent educational policies, the lack of a communicative language teaching curriculum, inadequate teaching methods and materials, and limited professional development opportunities for English teachers (Ara, 2020; Ud Duha et al., 2022). The legacy of English, dating back to the colonial era and its continued importance in formal domains post-independence, contrasts sharply with the national policy of 'one state, one language,' which has narrowed the use of English in official domains, further exacerbating the challenge of English language proficiency among the populace (Chowdhury & Behak, 2022; Islam & Hashim, 2019). In one study, Khan (2020) mentioned, "Students are usually malnourished and very weak in English in the Bangladeshi EFL context, and no methods seem to improve the situation by deploying any tactic or technique. The approaches have also been proved inappropriate in the last two decades for teaching the English language in Bangladesh (pp. 3734-3741)."

In response to these challenges, BL appears to be a viable strategy for bridging the gap between conventional pedagogies and the requirements of contemporary language instruction. BL, combining traditional classroom activities with online digital media, has been shown to foster an engaging and flexible learning environment that can significantly enhance language learning (Lentz & Foncha, 2021; Phil, 2022).

Bengali or English as Medium of Instruction in Bangladesh

The education system in Bangladesh is delineated by two primary streams: Bengali medium and English medium, each with distinct characteristics and implications for students. The Bengali medium, or Bangla medium, refers to educational institutions where the primary language of instruction is the national language. Conversely, English medium institutions use English as the primary language of instruction. This bifurcation significantly influences the learning environment, educational content, and future student opportunities. A vital feature of the English Medium Education (EME) system in Bangladesh, as highlighted by Kader and Salam (2018), is its emphasis on the quality of teachers, teaching techniques, and the curriculum that caters to acquiring English as a second language. This study investigates the overall quality and satisfaction levels among students, guardians, and teachers regarding EME in Dhaka, Bangladesh. It suggests effective teaching strategies for English learners based on Collier's Conceptual Model. This method emphasizes how crucial it is to comprehend and integrate complex factors students encounter when acquiring a second language, especially English.

Moreover, the medium of instruction within the Bangladeshi higher education sector reflects a divide between public and private universities, with a leaning towards the Bangla language in public institutions to foster national growth. However, Islam et al. (2022) recommend a bilingual approach to curriculum delivery, incorporating both English and Bangla, to enhance knowledge acquisition and address the diverse linguistic needs of students. Islam and Stapa (2021) reported that “Student’s current level of proficiency is around an IELTS (International English Language Testing System) band score of 5. Reasons for low development of spoken English among students include the complex nature of speaking, inappropriate application of instructional
methods, teachers’ low proficiency in spoken English and controlling behavior, students’ psychological factors, sociocultural factors, students’ inadequate linguistic resources, L1 interference, and large class size (pp.1-31)."

An investigation into the teaching of English reveals significant challenges, particularly in implementing the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) model, which aims to improve the quality of English language education. Rahman et al. (2018) identified significant obstacles that have hindered the effectiveness of ELT in Bangladesh, suggesting a need for curriculum reform to serve the learners' needs better. Despite the aspirations and efforts to improve English proficiency, Islam & Stapa (2021) noted a discernible gap in spoken English proficiency among students at private universities despite these institutions adopting English Medium Instruction (EMI). The study pinpoints various factors contributing to this issue, including teaching methods, teachers' proficiency, and sociocultural influences, recommending task-based learning and cooperative teaching-learning approaches as remedies. Karim et al. (2021) said,

"The participants prefer the Bangla language as MOI to produce knowledgeable graduates contributing to the nation's growth. However, implementing a bilingual curriculum in which instruction is delivered in both English and Bangla to impart knowledge to the students (pp. 232-246)".

Community of Inquiry Instructional Framework and Students' Motivation

The interplay between the CoI framework and students' motivation in EFL learning, particularly speaking skills, is profound. The comprehensive application of teaching, social, and cognitive presences creates an engaging and supportive learning environment that naturally enhances students' motivation. Islam et al. (2022) illustrated how a student-centered approach, underpinned by the CoI framework, promotes higher levels of student engagement and motivation by leveraging synchronous and asynchronous modes of interaction. This is further evidenced by Chowdhury and Behak (2022), who noted the motivational boost students experienced through enhanced peer interaction and feedback facilitated by blended learning strategies. Thus, the CoI framework, when effectively implemented, serves not only as a pedagogical structure but also as a motivational driver, encouraging EFL learners to participate more actively and improve their speaking skills.

The study reveals a growing recognition of the CoI framework's potential in enhancing EFL speaking skills through blended learning environments, supported mainly by Shi et al. (2023). Studies conducted in Bangladesh and other contexts demonstrate the framework's efficacy in fostering engaging, interactive, and supportive learning experiences that can address the unique challenges of EFL education. However, successful implementation requires careful consideration of pedagogical strategies, technological infrastructure, and the readiness of institutions and educators to adopt innovative teaching approaches (Garone et al., 2022; Peels & Bouter, 2023).

Current Study

This article aims to understand the level of English-speaking skills among students in Bangladesh, where English's role is debated between being a foreign or a second language. It aims to see how teaching, social, and cognitive presences help to enhance EFL speaking skills and what the teachers’ perspectives and recommendations are to integrate BL and CoI. Based on what is learned, the article will suggest ways to design English language courses and teaching methods in Bangladesh and other places facing similar challenges. This is to help students improve their
English. By answering the research questions below, we hope to achieve all of our objectives comprehensively:

1. How do teaching, social, and cognitive presences help to enhance EFL speaking skills?
2. What are the teachers’ perspectives and recommendations for integrating BL and CoI?

Methods

Design and Participants

This qualitative case study explores how BL approaches combined with the CoI framework can enhance EFL speaking abilities in Bangladesh. Ten EFL teachers from a private university were the subject of the study; they were selected based on their experience teaching EFL speaking and their willingness to try new teaching methods. These teachers' different experiences and perspectives enhanced the study's findings by offering a comprehensive viewpoint on the instructional problems and opportunities in the EFL speaking skill development domain.

Instruments and Procedures

A two-day professional development workshop was included to familiarize the EFL instructors with the principles of CoI and BL and how they might be applied to improve speaking abilities. Following the event, these educators used the skills covered to teach their classes for four weeks. After the implementation phase, semi-structured interviews were carried out with the instructors to fully capture the scope and depth of the impact of these integrated approaches. Through these interviews, the instructors' opinions on student motivation, the efficacy of their teaching strategies, and any difficulties they encountered with the application process were to be ascertained.

Data Analysis

We employed thematic analysis to analyze our data, which allowed the study to find patterns and themes regarding the effectiveness of combining CoI and BL in developing EFL speaking skills. This analytical approach made it easier to comprehend the instructional dynamics and how various techniques can improve EFL speaking skills.

Results

Social, Teaching, Cognitive Presences and EFL Speaking (RQ1)

Research question one explores how social, teaching, and cognitive presences influence EFL speaking. Social presence within the CoI framework is pivotal in enhancing EFL speaking skills in blended learning environments. Studies indicate that the sense of being part of a community and the ability to express oneself openly and genuinely in an online setting significantly contribute to language learning outcomes. Xiaoxing and Deris (2022) found that active engagement in online discussions, facilitated by a strong social presence, directly impacts students' language use and speaking proficiency. This is corroborated by Ud Duha et al. (2022), whose work in Bangladesh highlighted how CoI-informed activities on social platforms like Facebook encourage students to practice speaking, improving their performance. The implication is clear: fostering a robust social presence within blended learning environments is crucial for encouraging EFL learners to participate more actively and confidently in speaking activities.
As another core element of the CoI framework, teaching presence is instrumental in advancing EFL speaking skills. Effective course design, organization, facilitation, and direct instruction by educators influence learners' speaking abilities. Garrison and Vaughan's (2012) research underscores the significance of structured guidance and instructor feedback in establishing a nurturing environment for learning that promotes language acquisition. Furthermore, the integration of deliberate practice and targeted instructional strategies within the blended learning model, as demonstrated by Chen (2022), suggests that teaching presence can significantly predict and enhance students' speaking proficiency by providing a clear structure, timely feedback, and ample practice opportunities.

Cognitive presence within the CoI framework is crucial for deepening EFL learners' speaking skills, especially in BL settings. This dimension emphasizes constructing meaning through sustained communication and critical thinking. One teacher mentioned that:

"I have observed that my students have gained confidence and realized they can discuss various topics. The flexibility blended learning offers encourages them to engage in discussions beyond traditional classroom materials."

Previous research indicates that cognitive presence fosters a deeper understanding and application of language concepts, essential for developing speaking proficiency. For instance, Mutezo and Maré (2023) highlighted that cognitive presence enables learners to engage in reflective and integrative thinking, enhancing their ability to use language in diverse contexts. This is further supported by Zuo et al. (2022), who noted that a high level of cognitive presence in blended learning courses encourages students to explore and question linguistic structures, leading to improved speaking skills. These findings suggest that cognitive presence, through its focus on critical thinking and problem-solving, is fundamental in advancing EFL learners' ability to communicate effectively in their target language.

**Teachers’ Perspective on integrating blended learning and Community of Inquiry (RQ2)**

Research question two explores the experiences and perceptions of using the CoI and BL framework in EFL instruction in Bangladesh. Integrating the CoI and BL in EFL instruction offers insights into enhancing speaking competency in Bangladeshi education. This analysis highlights the perspectives of teachers and students towards this integration, emphasizing its potential to create more engaging and effective learning environments, drawing from both recent and previous studies. Adopting the CoI and BL frameworks fosters a conducive learning atmosphere, enhancing students' speaking abilities. For instance, an instructor noted,

"I would describe my teaching approach when using the CoI and BL theoretical framework as relaxed and student-engaged."

This indicates a change towards a more participatory and student-focused approach to teaching practices, aligning with Chen's (2022) findings, highlighting the correlation between CoI dimensions and enhanced learning engagement in a blended learning context.

Furthermore, the impact of CoI and BL on student confidence and speaking proficiency is notable. One teacher observed,

"My students have gained confidence and realized they can discuss various topics."
This improvement is consistent with Xiaoxing and Deris's (2022) observation that the CoI framework significantly influences student engagement in online discussions, thereby potentially enhancing language use and speaking skills. Challenges, particularly in assessment alignment, were acknowledged by another instructor:

"Challenges were encountered in aligning with traditional assessment methods."

This challenge mirrors Stewart's examination of blended first-year writing courses, which found a correlation between online activities promoting student-student interactions and improved learning outcomes. The integration of CoI and BL frameworks in EFL instruction is viewed positively by educators and students alike, contributing to improved speaking competencies and student confidence. However, it also presents challenges, especially in traditional assessment methods, necessitating further exploration and adaptation in curriculum design and evaluation strategies to fully harness the potential of these educational frameworks, which aligned with Caulfield and Aycock's study.

**Discussion**

The findings from this study provide compelling evidence of the efficacy of CoI and BL in enhancing EFL speaking skills in Bangladesh. Integrating social, teaching, and cognitive presences has significantly impacted students' speaking proficiency, motivation, confidence, and collaborative skills. This section will analyze these findings within the framework of current literature and provide practical recommendations for implementing CoI and BL frameworks effectively in similar educational settings.

**Impact of Social, Teaching, and Cognitive Presences on EFL Speaking Skills**

The research demonstrates that the social presence within the CoI framework significantly enhances EFL speaking skills by creating a sense of community and enabling open, genuine expression in an online setting. This finding aligns with Xiaoxing and Deris (2022), who emphasized that active engagement in online discussions facilitated by a robust social presence improves language use and speaking proficiency. Similarly, Duha found that social platform activities, such as those on Facebook, encourage students to practice speaking, enhancing their performance. These findings highlight the need for a robust social presence to promote active and confident participation in speaking activities.

As another core component of the CoI framework, teaching presence is instrumental in advancing EFL speaking skills. Effective course design, organization, facilitation, and direct instruction by educators significantly influence learners' speaking abilities. Garrison and Vaughn highlighted the importance of structured guidance and instructor feedback in creating a supportive learning environment that fosters language development. Chen also demonstrated that deliberate practice and targeted instructional strategies within a blended learning model can significantly predict and enhance students' speaking proficiency by providing a clear structure, timely feedback, and ample practice opportunities.

Cognitive presence, which focuses on constructing meaning through sustained communication and critical thinking, is crucial for deepening EFL learners' speaking skills, especially in BL settings. The study's findings align with those of Mutezo and Maré, who noted that cognitive presence enables learners to engage in reflective and integrative thinking, enhancing their ability to use language in diverse contexts. Zuo further supported this by showing that a high
level of cognitive presence encourages students to explore and question linguistic structures, leading to improved speaking skills. These insights suggest that cognitive presence, emphasizing critical thinking and problem-solving, is fundamental in advancing EFL learners' communicative abilities.

**Teachers' Perspectives on Integrating Community of Inquiry and Blended Learning**

The study also explored the experiences and perceptions of teachers using the CoI and BL frameworks in EFL instruction. Teachers reported that these frameworks foster a more engaging and effective learning environment, enhancing students' speaking competencies. This finding is consistent with Chen's findings, who found that integrating CoI dimensions with BL promotes learning engagement and improves speaking skills.

Teachers observed significant improvements in students' confidence and speaking proficiency, reflecting a shift towards more interactive and student-centered teaching practices. This shift is critical in Bangladesh, where traditional teaching methods often dominate. However, challenges such as aligning with traditional assessment methods and managing asynchronous discussions were also noted. These challenges highlight the need for comprehensive teacher training in technology and pedagogy and institutional support for online resources, as emphasized by Stewart. One teacher stressed the importance of technology for pronunciation and listening practice, stating,

"Utilizing technology like recorded native speaker audio and video is crucial for pronunciation and listening practice. It helps bridge the gap for English learners". This aligns with the findings of Kusuma, who observed that preservice teachers frequently implemented WhatsApp, YouTube, and Google Forms to manage and teach speaking skills online, underscoring the role of technology in supporting language learning during emergency remote teaching. Another educator highlighted the relaxed and student-engaged atmosphere promoted by the CoI and BL frameworks, saying,

"I would describe my teaching approach when using the CoI and BL theoretical framework as relaxed and student-engaged. It's essential to promote physical and mental presence in the classroom".

This reflection mirrors the research by Zou, which investigated artificial intelligence speech evaluation programs with automatic feedback for developing EFL learners' speaking skills. The study found significant improvements in learners' speaking abilities, suggesting that feedback from technology can be a crucial component in language learning.

These perspectives, supported by recent literature, underscore the critical role of technology integration and the CoI and BL frameworks in enhancing EFL speaking skills.

**Recommendation for Integrating Community of Inquiry and Blended Learning**

This study offers a comprehensive suite of recommendations for bolstering English as a Foreign Language (EFL) instruction, focusing on Bangladesh and comparable settings. At the heart of these proposals is integrating inquiry-based and collaborative learning activities within the EFL curriculum, which has been identified as key to enhancing student engagement, promoting effective communication, and facilitating interaction in an inquiry-focused context. Such strategies are poised to significantly improve students' speaking capabilities by providing ample
opportunities for collaborative language practice. A study by Qu supports this, indicating the following.

"Inquiry-based learning significantly impacts EFL students' speaking skills, encouraging deeper engagement and practical application of language (p. 14)". Furthermore, the deliberate use of technology emerges as a vital factor in fostering communication and interaction. This report echoes the positive experiences of educators implementing the CoI and BL frameworks, recommending using video/audio calls, online conferences, and collaborative platforms to enhance the virtual learning space and support speaking skill development. One instructor noted:

"Using video calls and collaborative platforms, they are learning to speak English confidently and communicate outside the class."

This sentiment aligns with findings from Whiteside, who observed, "digital platforms offer unique affordances for EFL learning, particularly in enhancing communicative competence and motivation (p.7)". An imperative recommendation from the study is to establish a nurturing educational setting, which is crucial for enhancing student motivation and involvement. This involves educators fostering a setting that encourages active participation, collaboration, and open communication, which is vital for improving EFL speaking skills. An instructor reflected:

"Seeing their motivation and participation in such a supportive environment is remarkable. These approaches—Community of Inquiry and Blended Learning—are not just methods but bridges connecting our students to the wider world."

Such insights by Mielikäinen emphasized "the transformative role of supportive educational contexts in enhancing language learning outcomes (p.19)". Moreover, this investigation strongly advocates adopting CoI and BL frameworks in EFL teaching. The observed benefits from instructors highlight the effectiveness of these models as educational tools poised to elevate the caliber of language instruction. By adopting these guidelines, stakeholders in Bangladesh and alike can harness the benefits of technological and collaborative learning to overcome traditional EFL teaching challenges, thereby boosting speaking proficiency and preparing learners for successful global communication engagements.

Based on the provided model (See Figure Two) for improving students' EFL speaking skills through the integration of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) and Blended Learning (BL), the proposed framework emphasizes a multi-faceted approach to address the challenges and requirements associated with enhancing English language proficiency in non-native speakers. This model underscores the significance of institutional support, including online platforms like Google Classroom, FB Group, WhatsApp Group, and institutional LMS systems, as fundamental to facilitating blended learning experiences. It recognizes the potential obstacles such as students' resistance, the need for technology integration, and ensuring technical backup, suggesting that these can be mitigated through institutional flexibility, professional development training for instructors, and arranging technology training.

At the model's core is the dynamic role of instructors and the community of Inquiry framework, which emphasizes teaching presence, cognitive presence, and social presence. Instructors are tasked with tailoring lessons to real-life use, managing time efficiently, establishing a collaborative community, and adapting assessments to align with the blended learning
environment. This approach fosters learning engagement, support, and continuous feedback, enhancing learners' motivation, self-confidence, and speaking proficiency. The model advocates for an engaging learning environment where students actively participate in peer feedback, critical thinking, and community-building, culminating in improved EFL speaking proficiency.

This comprehensive model (Refer to Figure Two) represents a holistic approach to EFL speaking skill enhancement, advocating for a blend of institutional support, technological integration, and pedagogical innovation. Through its implementation, learners are expected to experience a transformative journey towards achieving greater confidence and competence in their speaking abilities, underscored by an engaging, supportive, and technologically enriched learning environment.

*Figure. 2. Proposed Integrated CoI and BL Instructional Model in Improving EFL Students' Speaking Proficiency*
Conclusion

This article delves into the enhancement of English-speaking skills among Bangladeshi students, scrutinizing the role of English within the academic and social spheres of Bangladesh and examining the impact of teaching, social, and cognitive presences facilitated through the integration of the Community of Inquiry (CoI) and Blended Learning (BL) frameworks. Drawing upon the experiences and insights of ten EFL professors, this study utilizes qualitative case study methodology to offer a panoramic view of the challenges and opportunities in augmenting EFL speaking competencies. Incorporating CoI and BL fosters an engaging learning environment and bolsters students' confidence and proficiency in English by leveraging technology for pronunciation and listening practice. Given the findings, it is recommended to design English language courses and teaching methodologies that prioritize inquiry-based and collaborative learning, supported by strategic technology integration. Such an approach encourages active student engagement, practical language application, and the development of a supportive learning atmosphere, essential for elevating students' speaking skills. By embracing these recommendations, educators in Bangladesh and similar contexts can navigate the complexities of EFL instruction, harnessing the potential of CoI and BL to enrich the educational experience and provide the necessary skills for effective communication to learners in a globalized world.

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Community of Inquiry as an Instructional Framework

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