

TEACHERS' PERCEPTIONS ABOUT COLLABORATIVE LEARNING STRATEGIES FOR IMPROVING ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY SKILLS IN HIGHER EDUCATION INSTITUTIONS

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Abstract

This study explores the perceptions of the teachers about collaborative learning strategies (CLS) on enhancing English language proficiency skills among students at the higher education institutions from a pedagogical perspective. Recognizing the global importance of English as a lingua franca, the study investigates how collaborative techniques impact students' reading, writing, and listening skills. Adopting a quantitative survey design, data were collected from 125 teachers across seven public universities. A structured questionnaire based on a five-point Likert scale was used to measure teachers' views regarding the implementation, benefits, and challenges of collaborative learning in university classrooms. Descriptive and inferential statistical analyses were employed to interpret the data. The findings revealed that most teachers hold positive perceptions toward collaborative learning, recognizing its potential to improve students' communication, critical thinking, and problem-solving skills. However, some respondents highlighted challenges such as large class sizes, uneven student participation, and limited institutional support, which hinder the effective application of these strategies. The study concludes that promoting collaborative learning requires professional development, smaller class structures, and supportive institutional policies to maximize its pedagogical benefits in higher education. Recommendations also emphasize the enhancement of digital infrastructure and resource availability to facilitate technology-assisted collaboration.

Keywords: Collaborative Learning, English Language, Teacher's Perceptions, Higher education, Quantitative Survey.

Introduction

A significant part of human growth and development is the interconnected procedure of teaching and learning. This procedure is interrelated and requires sharing of knowledge, skills and abilities between a learner and a teacher (Cagatan & Quirap, 2024). The ability of working together is one of the most desirable behaviors for people in the educational and professional settings of the twenty-first century (Chakyarkandiyil & Prakasha, 2023). When it comes to teaching and learning process at higher education institutions, academicians strongly recommend that teaching and learning procedure should be more innovative and progressive in order to cater to the needs of 21st-century learners (Garcia 2021). In recent years, the use of collaborative learning has been observed on the rise as an instructional method for English language learning and teaching (Mishrah et al., 2023). The use of collaborative learning strategies specifically in improvement of English language skills have gained attention of educators and scholars, viewing its effectiveness of students' listening, speaking, reading and writing skills (Li & Kim, 2020).

Further collaborative learning (CL) is an instructional strategy that engages students in a group with different abilities and proficiencies and mutually involve them in a language acquisition

process. In such a strategy, a number of people work together by respecting, valuing and appreciating the contributions of each member. Telaumbanua, Harefa, & Zega (2023) state that one of the main objectives that underlie collaborative learning strategy is to create a harmony among group members that is achieved through collaboration as opposed to competition. The main focus remains on individuals' performance. This seems not only a shift in the needs of students, but also from the adoption of modern learning trends that aim to democratize the learning process. Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) face a great challenge in engaging their students meaningfully and authentically in various fields and spheres through adoption and advancement of globalized English usage trends (Altun & Ergin, 2021).

Similarly the effectiveness of collaborative learning also influences students and teachers' perceptions of its efficiency in improving English language knowledge. The impact of collaborative learning reveals a positive attitude among students as it fosters speaking skills and students' overall language learning proficiency (Alzubi et al., 2025). According to Tuan's (2021) research, students were able to speak English more fluently in group settings because group-assigned tasks alleviated their usual pressure. Hastuti et al., (2024) illustrated that collaborative learning environment created in an English language classroom resulted in learners' higher engagement and motivation.

Further in the process of collaborative language learning, integrative grouping, peer discussion, pair and group presentations, all play a significant role in advancing the use of target language and intercultural learning (Zarei & Keshavarz, 2021). It is a method that engages group of learners working together to complete a task, solve a problem or make a project (Laal & Ghodsi, 2012). Moreover, these strategies also enrich higher-order thinking and conflict-resolving abilities as students engage themselves in productive discussion to uphold positive relationships and resolve conflict incidences (Li & Kim, 2020). According to Barungi et al. (2024), different learning modes improve these skills by providing learners with multiple options to use and interact in the target language. Applying strategies like group discussions considerably cultivate English language usage by promoting collaborative learning environments (Barungi et al., 2024).

Similarly according to Vidyarthi (2024), collaborative learning strategies provide students the opportunities to take charge of their subject matter and take responsibility of their own learning which lead them to become critical thinkers. In higher education institution classrooms, collaborative mode of teaching indicates a shift from conventional teacher or teacher-centered teaching to learner-centered learning. Teaching methods like lecture, note-taking or listening procedure rarely happen in a group setting. Collaborative learning strategies like Think Pair Share or peer tutoring can improve language mastery through learning tasks like comprehension, vocabulary, or writing activities (Rahimi & Asadi 2022). Sociocultural tools, as pointed by Mustafa & Noor (2022) take a critical place in a group's learning, as they facilitate language use between students while confined both socially and culturally. Similarly, joint writing activities such as group or partner writing, shared composition, peer writing and co-authoring have resulted in learners' better-quality writing. The nature of collaborative tasks enables students to get direct feedback from their peers and thus get comfortable time to reflect and revise. Additionally, students can take greater responsibility for the task, thereby increasing their motivation to complete it (Mustafa & Noor, 2022). These strategies encourage proper interaction among learners and facilitate the development of critical thinking and problem solving skills in a language acquisition environment (Nazeef & Ali, 2024).

Collaborative Learning and Language Acquisition

Collaborative learning (CL) has been a most effective approach to language acquisition, especially in the enhancement of English language proficiency (ELP). CL fosters interaction, communication, and knowledge co-construction, all key to learning a new language (Vygotsky, 1978). Language acquisition is social in nature, and CL takes advantage by facilitating peer-to-peer interaction that increases learners' exposure to the target language (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). By CL, students are motivated to have meaningful discussions, use language in authentic situations, and provide mutual assistance in learning linguistic structures and vocabulary. Additionally, collaborative learning facilitates the acquisition of both receptive (listening and reading) and productive (speaking and writing) language skills.

Through group work, students are likely to be subjected to various models of language as well as differing outlooks, thereby contributing to their exposure in the usage of language (Li & Kang, 2020). For example, through group discussions or collaborative writing tasks, students have to negotiate meaning, clear confusion, and improve on their language, hence an enriched comprehension and use of the English language (Razak et al., 2019).

English Language Proficiency (ELP) Through CL

CL not only fosters overall language learning but influences the very constituents of ELP directly. It has been suggested that collaborative processes, including group discussion and peer feedback, engage fluency, accuracy, and overall language proficiency (Zhang & Yu, 2021). This especially holds true within higher education institutions, where proficiency in ELP is an academic success skill that is paramount. In collaborative environments, learners are able to use academic vocabulary, get immediate peer feedback, and collaborate in addressing language problems (Li et al., 2021). Moreover, CL fosters higher levels of learner engagement, which is critical in language learning.

When students learn together, they are more motivated and have greater ownership of learning. With this higher motivation, there is greater active engagement and persistence in language acquisition, leading to better ELP (Sharma & Sharma, 2021). The social component of CL also mitigates language anxiety since students feel encouraged by fellow students, which promotes greater confidence in speaking English in both formal and informal situations (Wang et al., 2020).

Constructivist and Social Constructivist Learning Theories

Introduction to Constructivism

The constructivist theory of learning, based on the writings of Jean Piaget, supposes that students construct knowledge actively by interacting with the world instead of absorbing information passively. Constructivism supposes that knowledge is not something that can easily be transferred from the teacher to the learner; rather, students must undergo thought processes like problems, experimenting and reflection to construct their understanding (Piaget, 1954). Constructivism highlights the role of a particular student in the learning activity and concentrates on how he interprets new data on the basis of his prior experience and knowledge.

Key Principles of Constructivist Learning Theory

1. **Active Learning:** Students are active participants in learning. They interact with materials, ideas, and others to construct meaning (Bruner, 1961).
2. **Prior Knowledge:** Constructivist theory places great importance on learners' prior knowledge. Each learner comes into the learning environment with a collection of personal experiences, and learning is made up of connecting new information to these prior cognitive structures (Piaget, 1970).

3. **Discovery Learning:** Learners acquire knowledge by experimenting with principles and finding out about concepts through hands-on manipulation of materials and concepts under teacher guidance. Teachers act as facilitators rather than direct providers of information (Bruner, 1961).
4. **Problem-Solving:** Learning takes place in the form of problem-solving or inquiry-based work where students must experiment, form hypotheses, and adjust their concept as they move along (von Glasersfeld, 1984).

In connection with the acquisition of language constructivist approaches, they emphasize active engagement with the language through communication and interaction. Pupils are encouraged to use the target language in meaningful contexts, experiment with their structure and rules to create their understanding of how it works (Lightbown & Spad, 2013). For example, in language learning class, students could participate in playing roles, discussions and collaboration with writing tasks that allow them to apply their knowledge and improve their language skills through real real -world use

While constructivism focuses on individual cognitive development, the theory of social constructivist teaching, based primarily on the work of the Lev Vygot, expands these ideas by emphasizing the social and cultural context of learning. Social constructivism assumes that knowledge is constructed through social interaction and collaboration and that learning is fundamentally a social process (Vygotsky, 1978). This theory emphasizes the role of language, culture and interpersonal relationships to form how individuals learn and construct significance.

Social Constructivism in Language Learning

When teaching languages, social constructivist approaches emphasize communication and collaboration as central for acquiring language skills. Pupils co -create knowledge by engaging in meaningful conversations, tasks in solving problems and joint activities with peers and teachers. Language learning is perceived as a socially mediated process where students develop linguistic competence through interaction, negotiating the meaning and the use of language in authentic social contexts (Swain, 2000).

For example, the task of collaboration, such as group discussions or sessions of mutual evaluation in the language class, reflects the principles of social constructivism. In these activities, students cooperate in building understanding, providing feedback and together create knowledge. More tax members can provide scaffolding to support less skilled students and help them achieve a higher level of language competence within their ZPD (Swain, 2000).

Key Differences between Constructivist and Social Constructivist Theories

| Aspect | Constructivism | Social Constructivism |
|---------------------|-----------------------------------|---|
| Focus | Individual cognitive development | Social and cultural influences on learning |
| Role of Interaction | Internal, self-directed processes | Central to learning, with emphasis on collaboration |
| Role of the Teacher | Facilitator of discovery learning | Active participant who guides and scaffolds |

| | | |
|----------------------|---|--|
| Learning Environment | Constructed by the learner through interaction with materials | Constructed through social interactions and cultural tools |
|----------------------|---|--|

Constructivist and social constructivist theories of learning provide useful understanding of how one learns and constructs knowledge. Constructivism, on the one hand, emphasizes the learner's active interaction with material and existing knowledge, whereas social constructivism, on the other hand, brings to the foreground the significance of social interaction, collaboration, and cultural background. Both theories carry deep implications for instruction, particularly in language acquisition, where they stress active involvement, effective communication, and the construction of knowledge.

The objectives of the study were to:

- assess the current level of students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions.
- examine the effects of collaborative learning strategies on students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions
- analyze teachers' practices of collaborative learning strategies in enhancing students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions
- explore the challenges, teachers face while implementing the collaborative learning strategies at higher education institutions
- investigate teachers' recommendations regarding the implementation of collaborative learning strategies to enhance English language learning skills at higher education institutions.

Research Methodology

The present study adopted quantitative approach .According to Creswell & Creswell (2018) quantitative research is beneficial because it allows for statistical analysis, hypothesis testing, and the generalization of results to a larger population. Their point is further augmented by Johnson & Christensen (2020) by stating that quantitative research provides objective measurements and the possibility of replicating studies, thereby increasing reliability. Furthermore, it is seen more methodical and scientific due to its use of standardized instruments and numerical data (Babbie, 2020). This quantitative approach, employed a survey-based study to investigate the effects of Collaborative Learning Strategies (CLS) on students' English language proficiency at higher education institutions.

Survey research was carried out using a sample of 125 teachers from the English departments of the selected universities, also selected via simple random sampling. Information was gathered via a structured questionnaire formulated from current literature, using a five-point Likert scale to measure CLS usage. The questionnaire pertained to the different aspects of CLS, including collaborative tasks, peer work, group problem-solving, and joint responsibility in learning.

The population of the study consisted of 125 teachers from the English departments of public sector universities located in South Punjab, Pakistan. Specifically, it included all BS English students enrolled during the 2022–2025 academic session and all faculty members teaching in English departments. The total population comprised 3,987 students and 192 teachers from the following universities: Emerson University Multan (750 students, 25 teachers), National University of Modern Languages (NUML) (430 students, 19 teachers), Bahauddin Zakariya University (BZU) (400 students, 27 teachers), The Women University Multan (800 students, 42

teachers), Ghazi University Dera Ghazi Khan (432 students, 21 teachers), The Islamia University of Bahawalpur (975 students, 48 teachers), and Khawaja Farid University Rahim Yar Khan (200 students, 10 teachers). All these institutions are recognized by the Higher Education Commission (HEC) of Pakistan. The population of the study comprised of all the teachers and students from English Department of the faculty of Languages at higher education institutions. There were three thousand seven hundred and eighty-seven ($N=3987$) students enrolled in BS programs on a regular basis in English departments in selected universities. Similarly, the target population included all the teachers in English department at public sector universities. There was a total of one hundred and eighty-two ($N=192$) teachers serving at HEIs. The quantitative sample for the study consisted of 125 teachers, selected using simple random sampling from the English departments of public sector universities in South Punjab. , a structured questionnaire was developed to gather information from university teachers about their practices, perceptions, and challenges related to the implementation of Collaborative Learning Strategies (CLS) in English language teaching. The questionnaire was based on a five-point Likert scale (ranging from “Strongly Disagree” to “Strongly Agree”) and was formulated using insights from existing literature on collaborative learning. It covered key aspects such as collaborative tasks, peer interaction, group problem-solving, and shared responsibility in learning. The instrument’s content validity was ensured through expert review, while a pilot study with 20 teachers established its reliability using Cronbach’s Alpha. The research tools employed in this study underwent a rigorous validation process by 20 field experts. These tools included an English proficiency test for students, a questionnaire for teachers, and structured interviews with teachers. Incorporating this expert feedback enhanced the overall robustness, clarity, and usability of the research tools. All suggested revisions were implemented, ensuring that the instruments were not only valid and reliable but also practical and user-friendly. These refinements contributed to the integrity and rigor of the research, ensuring that the tools were well-aligned with both academic standards and the realities of the research context.

Reliability Index

| Sr# | Description | No. of Items | No. of Respondents | Cronbach’s Alpha |
|-----|--|--------------|--------------------|------------------|
| 1 | Section-1(Current Level of Students’ English Language Proficiency) | 4 | 125 | .75 |
| 2 | Section-2(Effects of Collaborative Learning Strategies on English Proficiency) | 6 | 125 | .83 |
| 3 | Section-3(Teachers’ Practices in Collaborative Learning) | 6 | 125 | .81 |
| 4 | Section-4(Challenges in Implementing Collaborative Learning Strategies) | 6 | 125 | .73 |
| 5 | Section-5(Recommendations for Enhancing Collaborative Learning Strategies) | 5 | 125 | .73 |
| | Overall Tool | 27 | 125 | .78 |

The reliability analysis of the questionnaire, conducted using SPSS 26, revealed satisfactory internal consistency across all sections. The Cronbach’s alpha values ranged from 0.73

to 0.83, indicating acceptable to good reliability. Section 2, which assessed the effects of collaborative learning strategies on English proficiency, showed the highest reliability ($\alpha = 0.83$), followed closely by Section 3 on teachers' practices ($\alpha = 0.81$). Section 1, examining students' current English proficiency, had a reliability coefficient of 0.75, while Sections 4 and 5, related to challenges and recommendations for collaborative learning, both reported $\alpha = 0.73$. The overall reliability of the instrument was also found to be strong, with a Cronbach's alpha of 0.78, confirming the consistency and dependability of the tool for data collection.

Demographic Analysis

Table 1 Gender of Respondents

| Sr. | Age | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|--------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Male | 35 | 28.0 |
| 2 | Female | 90 | 72.0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

Demographic analysis of respondents reveals a key insight into the composition of the sample. Most respondents were a woman (72.0%), while men were 28.0%, suggesting a higher representation of women in English language teaching.

Table 2 Department of Respondents

| Sr. | Department | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | English | 125 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

A significant part (100%) of respondents belonged to the English department and confirmed the importance of their perspectives for the study.

Table 3 Qualification of Respondents

| Sr. | Qualification | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | M.Phil. | 92 | 73.6 |
| 2 | PHD | 33 | 26.4 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

In terms of qualifications, most held M.Phil. degree (73.6%), followed by Ph.D. Holders (26.4%).

Table 4 Designation of Respondents

| Sr. | Designation | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Lecturer | 95 | 76.0 |
| 2 | Visiting Lecturer | 12 | 9.6 |
| 3 | Assistant Professor | 18 | 14.4 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

The data shows that most respondents were lecturers (76.0%), with professors (14.4%) and guest lecturers (9.6%) including the rest.

Table 4.5

Teaching Experience of Respondents

| Sr. | Teaching Experience | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | 1-5 years | 77 | 61.6 |
| 2 | 6-10 years | 30 | 24.0 |
| 3 | 11-15 years | 10 | 8.0 |
| 4 | More than 15 years | 8 | 6.4 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

In terms of pedagogical experience, it had a large part (61.6%) between 1 and 5 years of experience, indicating a relatively younger teaching workforce, while 24.0% were 6-10 years and only a small amount of more than 10 years of experience.

Table 6 Type of Institution of Respondents

| Sr. | Type of Institution | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | Public | 125 | 100.0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

All teachers (100%) were from public institutions, reflecting the dominance of the public sector in higher education.

Table 7 Primary Language of Instruction

| Sr. | Primary Language of Instruction | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----|---------------------------------|-----------|------------|
| 1 | English | 125 | 100.0 |
| 2 | Urdu | 0 | 0 |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

Finally, English was the primary language of teaching for all respondents, emphasizing the importance of English language in their teaching context.

Table 8 Universities of Respondents

| Sr. | University Name | Sample Size | Percentage (%) |
|-----|--|-------------|----------------|
| 1 | Emerson University Multan | 17 | 13.6% |
| 2 | National University of Modern Languages (NUML) | 25 | 20.0% |
| 3 | Bahauddin Zakariya University | 25 | 20.0% |
| 4 | Khawaja Fareed University (Rahim Yar Khan) | 14 | 11.2% |
| 5 | Islamia University Bahawalpur | 15 | 12.0% |
| 6 | Ghazi University D.G. Khan | 08 | 6.4% |
| 7 | The Women University Multan | 21 | 16.8% |
| | Total | 125 | 100.0 |

The study utilized a quantitative survey method and selected a sample of 125 university teachers from seven universities in South Punjab through simple random sampling. Among the participants, the highest proportion was drawn equally from the National University of Modern Languages (NUML) and Bahauddin Zakariya University, each contributing 25 teachers, representing 20% of the total sample. This was followed by The Women University Multan with 21 teachers (16.8%) and Emerson University Multan with 17 teachers (13.6%). Islamia University Bahawalpur contributed 15 teachers (12%), while Khawaja Fareed University in Rahim Yar Khan accounted for 14 teachers (11.2%). The smallest representation came from Ghazi University D.G. Khan, with 8 teachers (6.4%). This distribution reflects a balanced approach to capturing diverse perspectives from multiple higher education institutions across the region. In quantitative survey following questions were asked from educators in questionnaire

Section B: Current Level of Students' English Language Proficiency

Objective:1 To assess the current level of students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions

Table 9

Current Level of Students' English Language Proficiency

| Sr. | Statement | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | M | SD |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|-----|------|------|
| 1 | The majority of my students demonstrate a sufficient level of English language proficiency at the start of their higher education programs. | 11 | 36 | 54 | 21 | 3 | 3.24 | 0.92 |
| 2 | My students face significant challenges in English language skills (reading, writing, listening& speaking) which affect their overall academic performance. | 19 | 82 | 14 | 6 | 4 | 3.84 | .85 |
| 3 | My students are generally prepared to participate in collaborative learning activities in English. | 19 | 68 | 28 | 7 | 3 | 3.74 | .86 |
| 4 | There is a noticeable difference in students' English proficiency between those who frequently engage in collaborative activities and those who do not. | 37 | 66 | 14 | 2 | 6 | 4.00 | .95 |

Analysis of section B on the current level of English language knowledge is a significant information on the skills of English skills and the level of preparation for studying collaboration. Instructors' answers indicate that more than half (54.0%) of students show a small English level of knowledge when entering their BS program, illustrated by an average score of 3.24. Teachers also said that students will encounter significant problems with English competences, especially reading, writing, listening and speaking, which has a negative impact on their academic success, as evident in the high average score of 3.84. In addition, although most students (68.0%) are generally ready to participate in collaboration in English, there is still a segment (28.0%) who are less confident in this area, with an average score of 3.74

Teachers have also found a major change in English knowledge among students who often participate in working on collaboration, and those who do not do so with a total high average score of 4.00, suggesting that students of collaboration are likely to have strong English language skills.

Standard deviations between these reactions show a difference of teachers' knowledge of students' knowledge in English and their willingness to cooperate.

The results presented in the table indicate that while a considerable proportion of students begin their higher education with moderate levels of English language proficiency, many still encounter significant challenges in core skills such as reading, writing, listening, and speaking, which directly influence their academic performance. Teachers generally perceive students as being reasonably prepared for collaborative learning, though varying levels of readiness are evident. Importantly, the findings highlight that students who actively engage in collaborative activities demonstrate comparatively stronger English proficiency than those who do not. Overall, the data underscores the value of collaborative learning as a pedagogical strategy for enhancing English language proficiency, while also pointing to the need for targeted support to address the persistent skill gaps faced by students.

Section C: Effects of Collaborative Learning Strategies on English Proficiency

(Objective 2) To examine the effects of collaborative learning strategies on students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions

Table 10

Effects of Collaborative Learning Strategies on English Proficiency

| Sr. | Statement | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | M | SD |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|-----|------|------|
| 5 | Collaborative learning strategies improve students' English-speaking skills | 36 | 63 | 18 | 2 | 6 | 3.96 | .96 |
| 6 | Collaborative strategies are effective in improving students' listening skills in English. | 44 | 67 | 7 | 3 | 4 | 4.15 | .88 |
| 7 | Collaborative learning activities enhance students' confidence in using English in academic settings | 46 | 65 | 11 | 0 | 3 | 4.20 | .79 |
| 8 | Collaborative group projects help improve students' English writing skills. | 37 | 59 | 21 | 1 | 7 | 3.94 | 1.00 |
| 9 | Peer feedback in collaborative environment supports students' language proficiency development effectively. | 34 | 78 | 8 | 2 | 3 | 4.10 | .78 |
| 10 | Collaborative learning makes students more responsible for improving their English language skills. | 47 | 65 | 10 | 1 | 2 | 4.23 | .76 |

Analysis of section C, dealing with the impact of collaborative learning strategies on English knowledge, indicates that teachers have firm belief in the positive influence of collaborative learning on all areas of the English students' abilities. Teachers continuously assessed the strategy of learning collaborative learning as a most effective method of enhancing students' English knowledge in terms of speaking, listening, writing and languages as a whole. For instance, the majority of teachers (63.0% agree and 36.0% strongly agree) indicated that collaborative learning enhances English-speaking students with a mean score of 3.96. Likewise, 44.0% strongly agreed and 67.0% agreed that collaboration strategy significantly enhances listening skills, which yields a mean score of 4.15. Teachers also emphasized that field activities in the area of collaborative education really boost the confidence of students in using English in an academic setting with a high mean score of 4.20.

Furthermore, in collaboration tasks, they were also known to improve English abilities at an average rating of 3.9440. Feedback by peers during collaboration was highly acclaimed with a rating of 4.1040, proving the positive role in language capacity building. Ultimately, teachers put priority on the aspect of collaborative learning in fostering the liability of students to enhance their own language and looked back on the highest rating of 4.2320. Low standard deviations among these responses show a common agreement among teachers that there is a general consensus on effectiveness of collaborative learning approaches to enhance the English language of students.

Section D: Teachers' Practices in Collaborative Learning

(Objective 3) To analyze teachers' practices of collaborative learning in enhancing students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions

Table 11

Teachers' Practices in Collaborative Learning

| Sr. | Statement | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | M | SD |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|-----|------|-----|
| 11 | I frequently use collaborative learning strategies in my English language instruction | 25 | 70 | 25 | 0 | 5 | 3.88 | .86 |
| 12 | I incorporate group-based activities that require students to communicate in English regularly. | 25 | 81 | 13 | 3 | 3 | 3.97 | .78 |
| 13 | I provide structured guidelines to help students participate effectively in collaborative learning activities. | 34 | 77 | 8 | 4 | 2 | 4.09 | .77 |
| 14 | I find collaborative learning to be an effective approach to enhancing students' language skills. | 36 | 69 | 14 | 4 | 2 | 4.06 | .82 |
| 15 | I often observe improvement in students' English language skills as a result of collaborative learning activities. | 37 | 74 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 4.12 | .77 |
| 16 | I use assessment methods to evaluate students' language proficiency improvements gained from collaborative activities. | 38 | 73 | 9 | 2 | 3 | 4.12 | .80 |

Section D of the analysis that examines teachers' practices in collaboration shows that the significant majority of teachers actively integrate the strategies of collaboration in their English language teaching. Teachers regularly reported with the techniques of collaborative learning, with 70% agreed and 25% strongly agreed that these strategies often use in their teaching, which brings an average score of 3.8800. In addition, the high proportion of teachers (81%) regularly includes group activities that students communicate in English, reflected in an average score of 3.97. Teachers also emphasized their efforts to provide structured instructions for effective participation in collaboration, with 77% agreed to this practice, resulting in an average score of 4.09. Most respondents (69% agree and 36% strongly agree) expressed a strong belief in the effectiveness of collaborative learning to strengthen language skills and brought an average score of 4.06.

In addition, a remarkable 74% of teachers said that as a result of collaborative educational activities, they observed an improvement in skills in English students with a high average score of 4.12. Teachers also said that to evaluate students' progress, they use evaluation methods and further emphasize their determination to measure the impact of collaborative learning on language

skills, as evidenced by the same average score of 4.12. Relatively low standard deviations across these answers indicate a high level of consistency in the procedures and perspectives of teachers about the use of learning strategies in their classrooms.

Section E: Challenges in Implementing Collaborative Learning Strategies

(Objective 4) To explore the challenges teachers face while implementing the collaborative learning strategies at higher education institutions

Table 12

Challenges in Implementing Collaborative Learning Strategies

| Sr. | Statement | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | M | SD |
|-----|--|----|----|----|----|-----|------|-----|
| 17 | Large class sizes make it challenging to implement collaborative learning strategies effectively. | 25 | 68 | 19 | 8 | 5 | 3.80 | .96 |
| 18 | Time constraints limit the use of collaborative learning activities in English instruction. | 29 | 70 | 19 | 7 | 0 | 3.96 | .78 |
| 19 | Students' varying levels of English proficiency make it difficult to conduct collaborative activities. | 15 | 78 | 19 | 9 | 4 | 3.72 | .88 |
| 20 | Students often show reluctance to participate in group-based English language activities. | 32 | 67 | 13 | 10 | 3 | 3.92 | .94 |
| 21 | There is a lack of resources (e.g., materials, digital tools) to facilitate effective collaborative learning activities. | 34 | 69 | 14 | 6 | 2 | 4.01 | .85 |
| 22 | It is challenging to assess individual contributions in collaborative learning activities. | 27 | 78 | 10 | 6 | 4 | 3.94 | .88 |

Section E of the analysis deals with the challenges that teachers face in the implementation of collaborative learning strategies in teaching English. The results emphasize several key obstacles that prevent the effective use of these strategies. The significant challenge of the teachers are large class size, with 68% agreed and 25% strongly agrees that this factor makes it difficult to implement collaboration effectively, reflecting at an average score of 3.80. Time restrictions also appeared as a prominent problem, and 70% of teachers agreed that the deadlines were limiting the use of activities in collaboration, bringing an average score of 3.96.

In addition, different levels of English knowledge of students complicate the tasks of collaboration, with 78% of teachers recognizing these difficulties, resulting in an average score of 3.72. Another challenge is the unwillingness of students to participate in group activities, because 67% of teachers stated this problem, leading to an average score of 3.92. Teachers also quoted lack of resources such as materials and digital tools, with 69% agreed that the lack of sources prevents the efficiency of collaborative learning and creates an average score of 4.01. Finally, the teachers noted that the difficulty of assessing individual contributions in collaboration, with 78% agreed that this challenge affects the evaluation process, as evidenced by an average score of 3.94. Relatively low standard deviations suggest that these challenges are widely recognized in the sample.

Section F: Recommendations for Enhancing Collaborative Learning Strategies (Objective 5)

To investigate teachers' recommendations regarding the implementation of collaborative learning strategies to enhance English language learning skills at higher education institutions

Table 13

Recommendations for Enhancing Collaborative Learning Strategies

| Sr. | Statement | SA | A | N | DA | SDA | M | SD |
|-----|---|----|----|----|----|-----|------|-----|
| 23 | Providing professional development training on collaborative learning techniques would help teachers implement them more effectively. | 33 | 61 | 25 | 1 | 5 | 3.92 | .92 |
| 24 | Institutions should offer more resources and materials to support collaborative learning in English language instruction. | 45 | 60 | 9 | 6 | 5 | 4.07 | .99 |
| 25 | Smaller class sizes would make it easier to implement collaborative learning strategies. | 39 | 67 | 13 | 2 | 4 | 4.08 | .87 |
| 26 | More structured guidelines for collaborative activities could enhance their effectiveness in language instruction. | 31 | 73 | 14 | 1 | 6 | 3.97 | .91 |
| 27 | Digital tools (e.g., online collaboration platforms) would improve the quality and accessibility of collaborative learning in English language education. | 53 | 52 | 15 | 2 | 3 | 4.20 | .88 |

The results of the recommendations for strengthening strategies of collaboration suggest that teachers strongly support the provision of training on the professional development of collaboration techniques with an average score of 3.92, emphasizing the importance of equipment of teachers with the necessary skills. There is also a significant need for multiple resources and materials that are reflected according to an average score of 4.07 to facilitate effective learning of collaboration. Teachers have expressed that smaller classes would improve the implementation of these strategies with an average score of 4.08 and recommended more structured collaboration instructions and provided an average score of 3.97.

In addition, the use of digital tools such as online platforms, with an average score of 4.20, emphasized their potential to improve collaboration in English language. These findings suggest that teachers believe that improvement of training, resources, classroom, instructions and technologies are crucial for increasing the effectiveness of learning collaboration in English language teaching.

The findings related to research objective 1 of the study revealed that students at higher education institutions possessed a moderate level of English language proficiency (mean = 3.24) and faced considerable challenges in language skills (mean = 3.84), although they demonstrated a positive readiness for collaborative learning (mean = 3.74). Moreover, teachers observed a notable difference in students' proficiency between collaborative and non-collaborative learning environments (mean = 4.00), indicating the potential effectiveness of collaborative strategies in enhancing language performance. These results are consistent with recent studies (Alzubi, 2024; Alnajjar, 2024; Santos & Serpa, 2023), which found that collaborative learning promotes communication and problem-solving skills but its impact depends on structured facilitation and teacher support.

The findings of the study under Objective 2 indicate that collaborative learning strategies had a significant positive effect on students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions. Students reported notable improvement in their speaking (mean = 3.96), listening (mean = 4.15), and writing (mean = 3.94) abilities, demonstrating that interactive, peer-based engagement fosters both receptive and productive language development. The results further revealed that peer feedback (mean = 4.10) played a vital role in refining linguistic accuracy and promoting reflective learning, while students' confidence in using English in academic settings (mean = 4.20) substantially increased, indicating that collaboration creates a supportive learning environment that reduces anxiety and enhances self-expression. Moreover, students developed a heightened sense of accountability for improving their language proficiency (mean = 4.23), reflecting the self-directed nature of collaborative approaches. These findings align with recent research (Alzubi, 2024; Ghafoor & Abiodullah, 2024; Saleem & Alvi, 2025), which confirmed that collaborative learning encourages learner autonomy, motivation, and communicative competence by engaging students in authentic interaction and shared responsibility. Therefore, the current study supports the growing body of evidence that collaborative learning is an effective pedagogical approach for improving English proficiency in higher education by integrating social interaction, mutual accountability, and active language use into the learning process.

The findings related to Objective 3 reveal that teachers actively and consistently implemented collaborative learning strategies to enhance students' English language proficiency skills at higher education institutions. A large majority of teachers (95%) frequently incorporated collaborative methods, with group activities (81%) being a central component of their instructional practice. The provision of structured guidelines (mean = 4.09) facilitated organized participation and ensured that students remained engaged and goal-oriented during collaborative tasks. Teachers also observed significant improvements in students' language proficiency (mean = 4.12) and regularly assessed progress through collaborative activities (mean = 4.12), highlighting the pedagogical effectiveness and accountability of this approach. These results align with recent research (Saleem & Alvi, 2025; Ghafoor & Abiodullah, 2024; Alnajjar, 2024), which emphasized that well-structured collaborative learning enhances communicative competence, motivation, and active learning when teachers provide clear instructions, monitor group dynamics, and offer constructive feedback. Similarly, studies by Santos and Serpa (2023) and Alzubi (2024) confirmed that teacher facilitation and structured collaboration foster students' linguistic development and autonomy. Hence, the present findings affirm that teachers' active role, instructional planning, and assessment within collaborative learning contexts are essential factors in improving English language proficiency. Effective teacher practices especially the integration of guided group work and systematic evaluation ensure that collaboration translates into meaningful linguistic and academic gains.

The findings of Objective 4 indicate that teachers encounter multiple challenges in implementing collaborative learning strategies for English language instruction at higher education institutions. The most prominent issue identified was large class sizes (mean = 3.80), with a significant majority of teachers (68% agreeing and 25% strongly agreeing) reporting that overcrowded classrooms hinder effective monitoring, equitable participation, and meaningful interaction among students. Another major concern was time constraints (mean = 3.96), as collaborative tasks often require extended class periods for group discussions, presentations, and peer evaluations. Teachers also highlighted students' varied proficiency levels, reluctance to participate, limited resources, and difficulty in assessing individual performance as additional barriers, with mean scores ranging from 3.72 to 4.01. These findings align with recent studies (Ghafoor & Abiodullah, 2024; Saleem

& Alvi, 2025; Santos & Serpa, 2023), which similarly identified classroom overcrowding, limited instructional time, and unequal student participation as critical challenges in adopting collaborative pedagogies. Moreover, Alnajjar (2024) and Alzubi (2024) observed that insufficient institutional support, lack of training, and large student-teacher ratios reduce the effectiveness of collaborative strategies in EFL contexts. Therefore, the current study reinforces that while collaborative learning is pedagogically effective, its successful implementation requires manageable class sizes, adequate time allocation, sufficient resources, and continuous teacher training to ensure equitable participation and sustainable improvements in English language proficiency.

The findings for Objective 5 reveal that teachers proposed several practical recommendations to strengthen the implementation of collaborative learning strategies aimed at enhancing English language proficiency at higher education institutions. The most prominent suggestion was to reduce class sizes (mean = 4.08) to allow for more effective monitoring, personalized feedback, and meaningful student interaction an issue widely echoed in the literature (Ghafoor & Abiodullah, 2024; Saleem & Alvi, 2025). Teachers also emphasized the importance of providing additional instructional resources and materials (mean = 4.07) to support diverse learning needs and sustain engagement during collaborative activities. Furthermore, professional development and teacher training (mean = 3.92) were recommended to equip educators with the pedagogical and technological skills necessary for facilitating collaboration effectively. The integration of digital tools and online collaboration platforms (mean = 4.20) emerged as a key strategy for enhancing participation and extending learning beyond classroom boundaries, aligning with recent studies (Alzubi, 2024; Alnajjar, 2024; Santos & Serpa, 2023), which found that technology-supported collaboration improves communication, feedback, and learner autonomy. Teachers also advocated for clearer and more structured guidelines for group tasks (mean = 3.97) to ensure accountability and equal contribution among students. These findings confirm that successful implementation of collaborative learning requires a comprehensive institutional approach combining smaller class sizes, adequate resources, continuous professional training, and digital integration to create a supportive environment that maximizes students' linguistic and academic outcomes.

Conclusion

In light of these results, it can be concluded that substantial pedagogical and institutional reforms are necessary to enhance English language proficiency at the tertiary level. The adoption of skill-integrated curricula, multimodal assessment strategies, and communicative language teaching approaches should be prioritized. Moreover, teacher professional development, reduction of class sizes, and encouragement of extracurricular language activities are crucial for promoting authentic language use. These measures, supported by institutional commitment and technological integration, can collectively bridge the proficiency gap and better prepare students to meet academic and professional communication demands. The results revealed that students generally hold positive perceptions towards the use of collaborative learning strategies in enhancing their English language proficiency skills. Teachers face persistent challenges related to insufficient classroom facilities, technological barriers, and overcrowded environments that constrain active engagement. Additionally, student-related factors such as unequal participation, low confidence, and limited motivation further reduce the effectiveness of group-based learning. Institutional and curriculum rigidities, coupled with heavy workloads and time constraints, exacerbate these difficulties, highlighting a pressing need for comprehensive educational reform.

However, the findings also reveal teachers' determination and adaptability in navigating these obstacles. Through flexible lesson design, continuous motivation, and creative use of technology, educators demonstrate resilience and innovation in promoting collaboration despite contextual

limitations. For collaborative learning to realize its full potential in enhancing English language proficiency and critical thinking skills, institutional policymakers must invest in infrastructure, professional development, and curriculum flexibility. Such systemic support will not only empower teachers but also transform classrooms into truly interactive, equitable, and learner-centered environments

Teachers recognize the value of collaboration in enhancing English language proficiency, yet they emphasize the need for systematic capacity building through continuous professional training, digital literacy programs, and AI-integrated pedagogical enhancement. Institutional support in the form of flexible policies, reformed evaluation systems, and improved infrastructure is equally critical for fostering a sustainable collaborative culture.

Recommendations

- Teachers should establish clear group roles and accountability mechanisms to ensure balanced participation among students. Structured roles such as facilitator, recorder, and presenter, along with peer evaluation systems, can reduce the dominance of certain members and foster cooperative engagement.
- Teachers should incorporate structured peer feedback and reflection sessions as a regular part of collaborative learning activities. Guided peer reviews, self-assessment checklists, and reflection journals can enhance students' linguistic accuracy, confidence, and self-regulated learning. By providing opportunities for constructive feedback and critical reflection, learners become more autonomous, motivated, and responsible for their own language development.
- Future scholars could research the long-term effect of collaborative learning methods on English language skill among students. Even though this research has shown short-term improvement in language skills, examining the long-term effect of such methods over a period would be useful in terms of understanding their long-term effectiveness. Longitudinal studies would be in a position to follow up on students' progress past the short-term posttest period, and hence, better comprehend the way collaborative learning influences the development of language skills over the long term.

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