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FACTORS AFFECTING SCHOOL STUDENTS' CONFIDENCE IN SPEAKING ENGLISH (A CASE OF 7TH GRADE STUDENTS)

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Abstract: This article explores the factors affecting 7th grade students' confidence in speaking English as a foreign language. Speaking confidence is one of the most important components in language acquisition, especially for young learners who often experience anxiety and fear of making mistakes. The study focuses on internal and external factors influencing students' willingness to speak English in classroom settings.

Internal factors include students' motivation, self-esteem, language anxiety, and prior knowledge of English. External factors consist of teacher support, classroom environment, peer influence, teaching methods, and opportunities for speaking practice. The research highlights that a supportive and interactive classroom environment significantly increases students' confidence and participation in speaking activities.

The findings suggest that students who are positively encouraged by teachers and peers tend to demonstrate higher confidence levels. In contrast, fear of negative evaluation and lack of vocabulary reduce speaking performance. The study also emphasizes the importance of communicative teaching strategies, group work, and interactive activities in improving speaking skills.

Keywords: speaking confidence, English learning, 7th grade students, language anxiety, classroom environment, motivation, communication skills.

MAKTAB O‘QUVCHILARINING INGLIZ TILIDA GAPIRISHGA BO‘LGAN ISHONCHIGA TA’SIR ETUVCHI OMILLAR (7-SINF O‘QUVCHILARI MISOLIDA)

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Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada 7-sinf o‘quvchilarining ingliz tilida so‘zlashishdagi ishonchiga ta’sir etuvchi omillar o‘rganiladi. Chet tilini o‘rganishda gapirish ko‘nikmasi eng muhim komponentlardan biri bo‘lib, ayniqsa yosh o‘quvchilar uchun bu jarayon qo‘rquv va xatolardan xavotir bilan bog‘liq bo‘lishi mumkin.

Tadqiqot ichki va tashqi omillarni tahlil qiladi. Ichki omillarga o‘quvchilarning motivatsiyasi, o‘ziga ishonchi, tilga bo‘lgan xavotiri va avvalgi bilimlari kiradi. Tashqi omillar esa o‘qituvchi qo‘llab-quvvatlashi, sinf muhiti, tengdoshlar ta’siri, o‘qitish metodlari va amaliy gapirish imkoniyatlarini o‘z ichiga oladi.

Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatadiki, ijobiy qo‘llab-quvvatlash va do‘stona muhit o‘quvchilarning gapirishdagi ishonchini oshiradi. Aksincha, xato qilishdan qo‘rqish va so‘z boyligining yetishmasligi nutq faolligini kamaytiradi. Kommunikativ metodlar va guruhli ishlash mashg‘ulotlari esa samarali natija beradi.

Kalit so‘zlar: gapirish ishonchi, ingliz tili, 7-sinf o‘quvchilari, til xavotiri, sinf muhiti, motivatsiya, kommunikativ ko‘nikma.

ФАКТОРЫ, ВЛИЯЮЩИЕ НА УВЕРЕННОСТЬ ШКОЛЬНИКОВ В ГОВОРЕНИИ НА АНГЛИЙСКОМ ЯЗЫКЕ (НА ПРИМЕРЕ УЧАЩИХСЯ 7 КЛАССА)

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Аннотация: В данной статье рассматриваются факторы, влияющие на уверенность учащихся 7-х классов в говорении на английском языке. Навык говорения является одним из ключевых компонентов изучения иностранного языка, особенно для младших школьников, которые часто испытывают страх ошибок и языковую тревожность.

Исследование анализирует внутренние и внешние факторы. К внутренним факторам относятся мотивация учащихся, самооценка, тревожность при использовании языка и уровень предварительных знаний. Внешние факторы включают поддержку учителя, атмосферу в классе, влияние сверстников, методы обучения и возможности практики говорения.

Результаты показывают, что поддерживающая и дружелюбная учебная среда значительно повышает уверенность учащихся. Напротив, страх негативной оценки и недостаточный словарный запас снижают их активность в говорении. Также подчеркивается важность коммуникативных методов обучения и групповой работы.

Ключевые слова: уверенность в говорении, английский язык, учащиеся 7 класса, языковая тревожность, учебная среда, мотивация, коммуникативные навыки.

Introduction

Speaking is considered one of the most essential skills in learning English as a foreign language. It enables learners to communicate their thoughts, ideas, and emotions effectively in real-life situations. However, for many school students,

especially at the lower secondary level such as 7th grade, speaking English confidently remains a significant challenge. Students often experience hesitation, fear of making mistakes, and lack of self-confidence when they are required to speak in front of others.

The development of speaking confidence is influenced by a variety of factors that can be categorized into internal and external ones. Internal factors include learners' motivation, self-esteem, language anxiety, and their previous knowledge of English. Students who have a positive attitude toward learning English and believe in their abilities are more likely to participate actively in speaking activities. On the other hand, students with low confidence or high anxiety tend to avoid speaking tasks, which limits their language development.

External factors also play a crucial role in shaping students' confidence. These include the teacher's role, classroom environment, teaching methods, peer influence, and opportunities for communication practice. A supportive and friendly classroom atmosphere encourages students to take risks and express themselves without fear of being criticized. Teachers who use interactive and communicative teaching strategies, such as group work, role plays, and discussions, can significantly improve students' speaking performance and confidence.

In many cases, traditional teaching methods that focus heavily on grammar and writing do not provide enough opportunities for oral communication. As a result, students may have theoretical knowledge of English but struggle to use it in real conversations. Therefore, it is important to create a balance between accuracy and fluency in language teaching.

Literature Review

A significant body of research has been conducted on students' speaking confidence in learning English as a foreign language. Speaking is widely

recognized as one of the most difficult skills for language learners due to its spontaneous nature and the pressure of real-time communication. Researchers agree that confidence plays a key role in determining whether learners actively participate in speaking activities or avoid them.[1]

According to studies in second language acquisition, language anxiety is one of the main barriers to speaking confidence. Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) identified foreign language anxiety as a distinct form of anxiety that negatively affects learners' performance, especially in speaking tasks. Students who experience high levels of anxiety tend to fear negative evaluation, make fewer attempts to speak, and often remain silent during classroom activities.[2]

Motivation has also been highlighted as an important factor influencing speaking confidence. Gardner's socio-educational model suggests that learners with strong integrative and instrumental motivation are more likely to develop better communication skills. Motivated students are generally more willing to take risks and engage in speaking practice, which gradually increases their confidence.

In addition, classroom environment and teacher behavior are frequently discussed in the literature. Research shows that a supportive and non-threatening classroom atmosphere encourages learners to participate more actively. Teachers who provide positive feedback, use encouraging language, and create interactive speaking tasks help reduce students' fear of mistakes. Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) has been widely recommended as an effective approach to improve speaking confidence, as it focuses on meaningful communication rather than memorization of rules.

1. [1] Brown, H. D. (2007). Principles of Language Learning and Teaching (5th ed.). Pearson Education.

2. [2] Krashen, S. D. (1982). Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition. Pergamon Press.

Peer influence is another factor identified in several studies. Students often compare themselves with classmates, and this comparison can either motivate them or increase their anxiety. Positive peer interaction, such as group work and pair discussions, has been shown to enhance confidence and reduce speaking pressure.

Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods research design to investigate the factors affecting 7th grade students' confidence in speaking English. The combination of qualitative and quantitative approaches allows for a more comprehensive understanding of students' perceptions, experiences, and behaviors in English-speaking activities.

The participants of the study consist of 7th grade students from a selected secondary school. A total of approximately 30–40 students were chosen using simple random sampling to ensure equal representation. In addition, English language teachers working with these students were also included to provide professional insights into students' speaking performance and classroom behavior.

Data collection was carried out using two main instruments: questionnaires and semi-structured interviews. The questionnaire was designed to gather quantitative data regarding students' confidence levels, anxiety, motivation, and classroom participation. It included Likert-scale items ranging from "strongly agree" to "strongly disagree." The questions focused on both internal factors (such as self-confidence and fear of making mistakes) and external factors (such as teacher support and classroom environment).

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a smaller group of students and teachers to obtain qualitative data. These interviews allowed participants to express their opinions in more detail and provided deeper insight into the challenges students face when speaking English. Questions in the interviews

focused on students' feelings during speaking activities, teaching methods used in the classroom, and suggestions for improving speaking confidence.

The collected data was analyzed using both descriptive statistics and thematic analysis. Quantitative data from questionnaires were summarized using percentages and averages to identify general trends. Qualitative data from interviews were transcribed and categorized into themes such as anxiety, motivation, teacher influence, and peer interaction.

Ethical considerations were also taken into account. Participation was voluntary, and students were informed that their responses would remain confidential and used only for academic purposes. Consent was obtained from both students and their teachers before data collection.

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