HOW TEACHER CAN ENGAGE SHY L2 LEARNERS TO SPEAK CONFIDENTLY IN ENGLISH CLASSES

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Abstract: This article investigates effective ways teachers can encourage shy second language (L2) learners to speak confidently in English classes. Many language learners experience anxiety, fear of mistakes, and low self-confidence during speaking activities, which negatively affects their communicative competence. The study explores psychological, pedagogical, and classroom-related factors that influence students' willingness to speak in English lessons.

The research is based on classroom observation and an experimental pre-test and post-test design involving two groups of learners. One group participated in traditional speaking lessons, while the other group was taught through supportive interactive techniques such as pair work, role plays, positive feedback, and low-anxiety communication activities. The findings indicate that shy learners become more confident when teachers create a supportive classroom environment and use communicative strategies that reduce speaking anxiety. The results also show that motivation, teacher attitude, and peer cooperation play significant roles in improving oral participation.

Key words: speaking confidence, L2 learners, classroom interaction, communicative competence, speaking anxiety.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqola o‘qituvchilar ingliz tili darslarida uyatchan ikkinchi til (L2) o‘quvchilarini qanday qilib erkin va ishonch bilan gapirishga jalb qilishi mumkinligini o‘rganadi. Ko‘plab til o‘rganuvchilar gapirish faoliyatlari davomida xavotir, xato qilishdan qo‘rqish va o‘ziga ishonchsizlikni boshdan kechiradi, bu esa ularning kommunikativ kompetensiyasiga salbiy ta’sir ko‘rsatadi. Tadqiqot o‘quvchilarning ingliz tilida gapirishga bo‘lgan tayyorligiga ta’sir qiluvchi psixologik, pedagogik va sinf muhitiga oid omillarni tahlil qiladi.

Tadqiqot sinf kuzatuvlari hamda oldindan va yakuniy testlarga asoslangan tajribaviy usul orqali amalga oshirildi. Bir guruh an’anaviy gapirish darslarida qatnashgan bo‘lsa, ikkinchi guruh juftlikdagi ishlar, rolli o‘yinlar, ijobiy fikr bildirish va past stressli muloqot faoliyatlari orqali o‘qitildi. Natijalar shuni ko‘rsatdiki, o‘qituvchi qo‘llab-quvvatlovchi sinf muhitini yaratsa va kommunikativ metodlardan foydalansa, uyatchan o‘quvchilar ancha faol va ishonchli gapira boshlaydi. Shuningdek, motivatsiya, o‘qituvchi munosabati va tengdoshlar bilan hamkorlik og‘zaki ishtirokni rivojlantirishda muhim omil ekanligi aniqlandi.

Kalit so‘zlar: gapirishga ishonch, L2 o‘quvchilar, sinfdagi interaksiya, kommunikativ kompetensiya, gapirish xavotiri.

Аннотация: Данная статья исследует эффективные способы вовлечения застенчивых учащихся второго языка (L2) в уверенное говорение на уроках английского языка. Многие изучающие язык испытывают тревожность, страх ошибок и низкую уверенность в себе во время устных заданий, что отрицательно влияет на их коммуникативную компетенцию. В исследовании рассматриваются

психологические, педагогические и учебные факторы, влияющие на готовность учащихся говорить на английском языке.

Исследование основано на наблюдении в классе и экспериментальном подходе с использованием предтеста и посттеста, в котором участвовали две группы учащихся. Одна группа обучалась традиционным способом, тогда как в другой группе использовались интерактивные методы, включая работу в парах, ролевые игры, положительную обратную связь и коммуникативные задания с низким уровнем тревожности. Результаты показали, что застенчивые учащиеся становятся более уверенными, когда учителя создают поддерживающую атмосферу и используют коммуникативные стратегии, уменьшающие страх общения.

Ключевые слова: уверенность в речи, учащиеся L2, взаимодействие в классе, коммуникативная компетенция, речевая тревожность.

Introduction. Speaking is considered one of the most important skills in second language learning because it allows learners to communicate ideas, emotions, and opinions in real-life situations. However, many students in English classrooms remain silent even when they know the answer or understand the topic. This problem is especially common among shy learners who often avoid participation due to fear and anxiety.

Shyness in language learning can negatively influence students' communicative development. Learners may hesitate to answer questions, participate in discussions, or perform oral tasks. As a result, they receive fewer opportunities to practice speaking skills and improve fluency. According to Brown, emotional barriers such as anxiety and lack of confidence directly affect language performance [1, 74].

One major reason for speaking avoidance is fear of making grammatical or pronunciation mistakes. Many learners worry that classmates will laugh at them or criticize their language use. This fear creates psychological pressure and reduces classroom participation. Harmer explains that supportive classroom interaction is essential for increasing learner confidence and motivation [2, 81].

Another important factor is teacher behavior. If teachers focus mainly on correcting errors, shy students may become even more nervous. In contrast, positive feedback and encouragement help learners feel more comfortable during communication activities.

Classroom atmosphere also influences speaking confidence. Competitive or stressful environments may discourage shy learners from speaking, while collaborative and friendly classrooms increase participation. Pair work and small group activities are often more effective for shy students because they reduce public pressure.

The aim of this study is to analyze how teachers can engage shy L2 learners to speak confidently in English classes and to identify effective classroom strategies that reduce speaking anxiety and improve oral participation.

Literature review. The issue of speaking anxiety among L2 learners has been widely discussed in language teaching methodology. Researchers emphasize that emotional factors strongly influence communicative performance in foreign language classrooms.

Brown states that affective factors such as self-confidence, motivation, and anxiety significantly influence language acquisition [1, 78]. Learners who feel relaxed and supported usually demonstrate better speaking performance than students who experience fear or stress.

Harmer highlights the importance of communicative teaching methods in increasing learner participation. According to him, pair work, role plays, and interactive discussions create natural speaking opportunities and reduce psychological barriers [2, 84].

Krashen's affective filter hypothesis explains that anxiety and negative emotions block language acquisition. When learners feel nervous or embarrassed, their ability to process and produce language decreases [3, 45]. This means that teachers should create low-anxiety learning environments.

Ur emphasizes that shy learners often need additional preparation time before speaking tasks. She suggests using guided speaking activities and cooperative learning techniques to help students feel more secure during oral communication [4, 92].

Recent studies also show that positive teacher feedback increases speaking confidence. Encouraging students instead of focusing heavily on mistakes motivates learners to participate more actively in classroom interaction.

Methodology. This study used an experimental approach involving 26 intermediate-level English learners. The participants were divided into two groups.

Group A studied through traditional speaking activities with limited interactive support.

Group B participated in speaking lessons designed to reduce anxiety through pair work, role plays, supportive feedback, and collaborative tasks. A pre-test was conducted to evaluate the students' initial speaking confidence and oral participation. After four weeks of classroom practice, a post-test was administered. Classroom observations and speaking performance recordings were also analyzed to compare

learner participation and confidence levels in both groups.

Results. The findings demonstrate that shy learners in both groups initially showed low participation during speaking activities. However, after interactive communicative techniques were introduced, Group B showed a significant improvement in speaking confidence and classroom participation. Students became more willing to answer questions and participate in discussions when they felt supported by teachers and classmates.

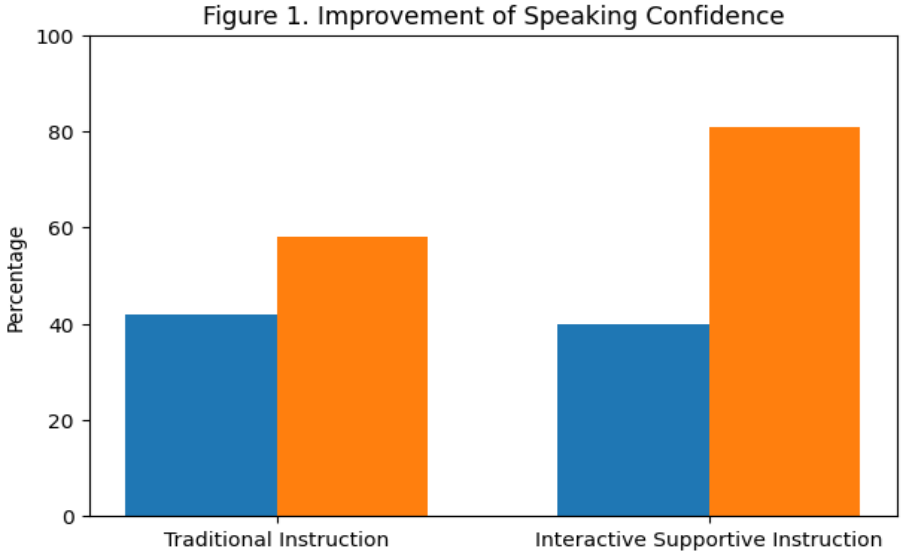
The results also indicate that low-anxiety speaking activities helped learners reduce fear of mistakes and communicate more naturally in English classes.

Table 1. Development of speaking confidence in English classes

Group	Speaking Participation (Pre)	Speaking Participation (Post)	Confidence Growth
Traditional Instruction	42%	58%	16%
Interactive Supportive Instruction	40%	81%	41%

Figure 1. Improvement of speaking confidence

Figure 1. Improvement of Speaking Confidence



Discussion. The findings confirm that shy learners require emotional support and communicative practice to develop speaking confidence. Psychological barriers such as fear of mistakes and embarrassment significantly reduce oral participation in English classrooms.

Another important factor is teaching strategy. Traditional teacher-centered lessons provide fewer opportunities for shy students to communicate. In contrast, interactive techniques encourage learners to express ideas in smaller and safer communication settings.

Teacher attitude also plays a major role in learner confidence. Positive feedback and supportive correction methods help students overcome anxiety and participate more actively in speaking tasks.

The study additionally demonstrates that peer cooperation improves motivation and reduces classroom stress. Students feel more comfortable speaking with classmates before participating in larger discussions.

Conclusion. This study demonstrates that shy L2 learners can become confident speakers when teachers create supportive and interactive classroom environments. Fear of mistakes, low self-confidence, and anxiety are the main factors that prevent learners from participating actively in English speaking activities.

The findings show that communicative teaching methods such as pair work, role plays, collaborative discussions, and positive feedback significantly improve speaking confidence. These activities reduce psychological pressure and provide learners with safe opportunities to practice oral communication.

Another important conclusion is that teacher behavior strongly influences learner participation. Encouraging students and focusing on communication rather than constant correction helps shy learners feel more relaxed and motivated.

The study also confirms that classroom atmosphere affects speaking performance. Friendly and cooperative environments increase students' willingness to communicate in English. Teachers should therefore organize activities that support interaction and reduce stress.

In general, engaging shy learners requires patience, motivation, and effective communicative strategies. By creating low-anxiety learning conditions and encouraging active participation, teachers can help students become more confident and successful English speakers.

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