

OVERCOMING SHYNESS IN ENGLISH SPEAKING CLASSES AT UNIVERSITY LEVELAuthor: **Quroqova Maxsuda Dagar kizi**

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Abstract: This article discusses the problem of shyness among university students in English speaking classes. Many students have sufficient language knowledge and good academic potential, but they experience fear, nervousness, and lack of confidence when speaking in front of teachers and classmates. The article explains the main causes of speaking anxiety, including fear of making mistakes, low self-confidence, classroom pressure, and limited speaking practice. In addition, the article describes the negative effects of shyness on students' academic performance, communication skills, and future professional development. Several practical and communicative teaching strategies are suggested to help students become more active, confident, and motivated speakers in university classrooms.

Keywords: shyness, speaking anxiety, communicative language teaching, university students, speaking skills, self-confidence, classroom communication.

Annotatsiya: Ushbu maqolada universitet talabalari orasida ingliz tilida gapirish jarayonidagi tortinchoqlik va qo'rquv muammosi yoritilgan. Ko'plab talabalar yaxshi bilim va salohiyatga ega bo'lishiga qaramay, auditoriya yoki o'qituvchi oldida gapirishda ishtirok etishdan qo'rqadi. Maqolada nutqiy qo'rquvning asosiy sabablari, jumladan xato qilishdan qo'rqish, o'ziga ishonchsizlik, darsdagi bosim va amaliyotning yetishmasligi tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, tortinchoqlikning talabalarining akademik rivojlanishi, muloqot qobiliyati va kelajakdagi kasbiy faoliyatiga salbiy ta'siri ko'rib chiqiladi. Maqolada talabalarni erkin va faol gapirishga undovchi samarali kommunikativ usullar ham tavsiya etiladi.

Kalit so'zlar: tortinchoqlik, nutqiy qo'rquv, kommunikativ ta'lim, universitet talabalari, gapirish ko'nikmasi, o'ziga ishonch, muloqot.

Аннотация: В данной статье рассматривается проблема застенчивости студентов университетов на занятиях по английскому языку. Многие студенты обладают хорошими знаниями и высоким потенциалом, однако испытывают страх и неуверенность при выступлении перед преподавателем и аудиторией. В статье анализируются основные причины речевой тревожности, такие как страх совершить ошибку, недостаток уверенности в себе, давление в аудитории и недостаток разговорной практики. Также рассматривается отрицательное влияние застенчивости на академическое развитие

студентов, коммуникативные навыки и будущую профессиональную деятельность. В статье предлагаются эффективные коммуникативные методы обучения, которые помогают студентам стать более активными и уверенными в разговорной речи.

Ключевые слова: застенчивость, речевая тревожность, коммуникативное обучение, студенты университета, разговорные навыки, уверенность в себе, коммуникация.

Introduction

In modern higher education, English has become one of the most important international languages for communication, education, science, and professional development. University students are expected not only to understand grammar and vocabulary but also to communicate confidently in English during lessons, presentations, discussions, and academic projects. Speaking skill is especially important because it allows students to express their ideas, share opinions, and participate actively in the educational process. However, many students experience serious difficulties when they are asked to speak English in front of classmates or teachers. Even students who have strong academic knowledge and good language understanding sometimes remain silent during speaking activities. They may know the correct answers, understand the lesson well, and have valuable ideas, but fear and shyness prevent them from participating actively in communication.

This issue can be observed in many university classrooms. Some students avoid presentations, hesitate to answer questions, or speak very quietly because they are afraid of making mistakes. Others worry that their classmates may laugh at their pronunciation or grammar errors. As a result, students lose important opportunities to improve their speaking skills and demonstrate their real abilities. The problem of shyness in language classrooms is not only connected with language knowledge. In many situations, emotional and psychological factors play a more important role than grammar or vocabulary. Therefore, understanding students' fears and creating supportive learning environments are necessary for successful language teaching. This article discusses the major reasons for shyness in English speaking classes, its negative effects on university students, and effective communicative methods that can help learners become more confident and active speakers.

Reasons for Shyness in English Speaking Classes

There are several important reasons why university students feel shy during English speaking activities. One of the most common reasons is the fear of making mistakes. Many students believe that every grammatical or pronunciation error will be judged by others. Because of this fear, students prefer silence instead of communication. They often think too much before speaking and lose confidence even when they know the correct answer.

Another major reason is low self-confidence. Some students compare themselves with more fluent classmates and feel that their English level is weaker. This comparison creates insecurity and prevents students from participating actively in classroom communication. In reality, many of these students have enough knowledge to speak successfully, but negative thinking limits their performance. Classroom atmosphere also has a strong influence on students' confidence. In traditional teacher-centered lessons, students sometimes feel pressure

because the teacher speaks most of the time while students only answer formal questions. Such environments may increase nervousness and reduce students' willingness to communicate freely.

Lack of speaking practice is another important factor. In some educational contexts, students focus mainly on grammar exercises, reading tasks, and written tests. Although these activities are useful, they do not always prepare learners for real communication. Students who rarely practice speaking naturally become less confident during oral activities. Cultural and personal characteristics may also contribute to shyness. Some students are naturally introverted and uncomfortable with public speaking. Others may come from school systems where students are not encouraged to express independent opinions. These experiences continue to influence their behavior at university level.

Negative Effects of Shyness on Students

Shyness has several negative effects on students' academic and personal development. First, it reduces participation in classroom communication. Students who avoid speaking lose valuable opportunities to practice English in real situations. Since speaking skill develops through regular communication, limited participation slows language improvement. Another serious effect is reduced self-confidence. When students remain silent repeatedly, they may begin to believe that they are incapable of speaking English successfully. Over time, this creates emotional barriers and decreases motivation for learning foreign languages.

Shyness can also affect students' academic performance. Many university courses require presentations, discussions, seminars, and teamwork. Students who cannot express their ideas clearly may receive lower academic results despite having strong knowledge of the subject. In addition, communication skills are essential for future careers. Modern employers often expect graduates to communicate confidently, participate in meetings, and cooperate with colleagues internationally. Students who cannot overcome speaking anxiety may face difficulties in professional environments later in life.

Furthermore, shy students sometimes become socially isolated in classrooms. Lack of communication can prevent them from building strong relationships with classmates and teachers. As a result, they may feel less connected to the learning process and classroom community.

The Role of Teachers in Reducing Shyness

Teachers have a central role in helping students overcome speaking anxiety. A supportive teacher can create an atmosphere where students feel safe, respected, and motivated to communicate. One of the most effective methods is encouraging students without focusing excessively on mistakes. Students should understand that making errors is a natural part of language learning. Positive feedback is especially important for shy learners. Simple encouragement such as praising effort, participation, and improvement can significantly increase students' confidence. When students feel appreciated, they become more willing to speak in future activities.

Teachers should also organize communicative and interactive classroom tasks. Activities such as discussions, role plays, interviews, storytelling, and problem-solving tasks allow students to use English naturally. These activities reduce formal pressure and help learners focus on communication rather than perfection. Another effective strategy is giving students preparation time before speaking activities. Many students become nervous when they must answer immediately. If they are allowed to organize their ideas first, they can speak more confidently and clearly.

Teachers should also avoid creating competitive classroom environments where students feel constantly compared with others. Every learner develops speaking ability at a different speed. Supportive and patient teaching helps students progress gradually and comfortably. In addition, teachers can share motivational stories and personal experiences related to language learning difficulties. When students realize that successful speakers also made mistakes during learning, they often feel less afraid of communication.

Effective Classroom Activities for Building Confidence

Certain classroom activities are especially useful for reducing shyness and improving students' speaking confidence.

Group Discussions

Small group discussions help students express ideas in a more relaxed environment. Many shy students feel less pressure in groups than during individual presentations. Group communication also develops cooperation, critical thinking, and active listening skills.

Role Plays

Role-play activities allow students to communicate through real-life situations such as shopping, traveling, job interviews, or classroom conversations. Since students speak as characters, they often feel less nervous and more creative during communication.

Storytelling Activities

Storytelling is another useful method for improving speaking confidence. Students can describe personal experiences, retell stories, or create short narratives. This activity improves fluency and encourages students to speak more naturally.

Presentations with Gradual Difficulty

Presentations are necessary for academic development, but shy students may need gradual preparation. Teachers can begin with short presentations in front of small groups before asking students to present to the whole class. This gradual process helps reduce anxiety step by step.

Everyday Classroom Communication

Encouraging students to use simple English expressions during daily classroom interaction can also improve confidence. Greeting classmates, asking questions, expressing opinions, and participating in short conversations help students develop speaking habits naturally.

Conclusion

Shyness in English speaking classes is a common but serious challenge for many university students. Although students may possess strong academic knowledge and language potential, fear and lack of confidence often prevent them from participating actively in communication. As a result, students lose opportunities for academic improvement, social interaction, and professional growth. However, shyness can be reduced through supportive teaching methods and communicative classroom environments. Teachers who encourage students positively, provide interactive speaking opportunities, and reduce fear of mistakes can help learners become more confident communicators. Developing speaking confidence is not only important for language learning but also for students' future academic and professional success. Therefore, universities should pay greater attention to students' emotional comfort and communication development in English classrooms. When students overcome shyness, they are able to demonstrate their real abilities, participate actively in learning, and achieve their full potential.

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