DEVELOPING CONVERSATIONAL CONFIDENCE: UNDERSTANDING AND OVERCOMING THE CAUSES OF SHYNESS IN COMMUNICATION

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Abstract. *This study explores the social factors that influence people feel hesitant to initiate the conversation and investigates the nature of human confidence. The study aims to understand psychological factors such as fear of judgement, low self-esteem and social anxiety that reduce confidence in communication. Using the information from the observed lessons, the research identifies the key causes of conversational shyness and aims to propose effective strategies to overcome it. This scientific paper shows that self-confidence can be developed through self-awareness, positive thinking, and gradual exposure to social situations. The study concludes that communication confidence is a skill that can be learned, at least pretended through consistent practise and supportive environment.*

Keywords. *Confidence, shyness, self-esteem, social anxiety, fear of judgement, glossophobia, phubbing, True Me, interpersonal interaction, exposure therapy, social behaviour, personal development.*

Introduction. Imagine, you are going on a boat trip, and you get on board with your family members and you got your bags. The captain comes out to greet you and says: "Hi. Um… My name is Sarvinoz… Khabibullayeva. Uh, so… I will be your captain for this journey… (exhale) So, uh let's just… have a great trip." Your reaction could possibly be like this: "Nope, get me out of this boat immediately!". At that moment we would like the captain to speak and behave more confidently. The point is, when you are the speaker, you are the captain of that journey and your listener is the passenger on your boat. How you show up really matters, as it provides the listener with the first impression which is advised to be positive in most of the cases to maintain the conversation. Keeping them interacted or bored depends on the way you speak and behave.

The common reasons why people feel shy to talk.

Fear of judgement. First to mention would be fear of judgement. It is the common anxiety about how others will perceive and evaluate you. Of course, feeling concern about the opinion of the others is normal, but when it is extreme, it can be the sign of social anxiety disorder. The fear often stems from childhood experiences, or a deep-seated need for acceptance, especially observed mostly in eldest child, who is expected to

be ideal and are told their mistakes since their childhood. Some dealt with the problems and started to accept their mistakes, however the others who could not, can be struggling with glossophobia. For example, during our classes there are some students who are eager to develop their skills and that's why some feedback is asked from a teacher. On the other hand, there are some students who were not open to get their mistakes or 'slips' to be corrected and thus were shaking while getting feedback. This can even be noticed by their words: "She has no mistakes in her speech! That was perfect!", when the teacher asks to correct the mistakes of the student who spoke or presented a monologue. The point is, when we do not want such things to happen to us, we try to avoid doing it to the others.

Self-esteem. Second cause of insecurity is low self-esteem. It refers to the overall satisfaction individuals feel with their own characteristics. It is a concept that is directly connected with a person's ability to take action or feel confident in their competencies. Individuals with high self-esteem tend to have greater confidence in their abilities and exhibit higher self-insurance when performing tasks. Conversely, individuals with low self-esteem show lower level of self-confidence in their abilities. The causes of the low self-esteem could be related to 'phubbing' and self-isolation. For example, having not talked to none of the groupmates before, a student does care about the impression of the others and denies his or her own abilities which, in turn, leads to the underestimation of one's competencies. The consequences of low self-esteem might be that a 'true me' of a person might vanish and the person will have to pretend to be accepted to a friend's zone.

Social anxiety. Considering social anxiety as a type of shyness is probably a mistake, because it is more than shyness, it is a fear that does not go away and always interferes with the productivity and the life of an individual. Symptoms of social anxiety might be sweating, blushing, shaking, or feeling one's heart race in some social situations or interpersonal communications. Having observed many of the freshmen during the first week, when nobody knew each other well, most of the researchers of this field concluded that instances of trembling while giving a monologue were common, revealing the speakers' vulnerability. These students tended to avoid eye contact with the others and even with the teacher, searching for an angle or a spot to look at while giving a speech. The research has reported that people with social anxiety are more likely to exhibit smartphone, social media or internet addiction because of their unwillingness to engage in the conversation that is taking place. Such behaviour surely does not leave a good opinion as the art of conversation requires both showing an interest to the topic and being a listener.

The effective strategies to overcome conversational shyness.

Self-awareness. It is an ability to understand one's own thoughts, feelings, behaviours, and to see whether these align with their own values and how others perceive

them. Self-awareness can be improved with different methods. The most common used method is asking oneself a question about who a person wants to become and how the person that they want to become would behave. This might seem impractical, however each small taken towards a goal matters. Asking the questions is not enough for experiencing a change or a boost in a person's behaviour and confidence, answering those and following the answer one gave is of significant importance. For example, someone wants to be a sports executive and a person with that profession should be self-confident and organize a lot of interviews related to sports, which means having good communication skills is important. This might be the example of self-analysis and the willingness to work and overcome conversational fear.

Positive thinking. The power of positive thinking is often widely neglected, considering it as a good luck. It is a mental attitude that involves focusing on any situation, expecting a positive outcome, or approaching challenges with a constructive mindset. Unlike self-awareness, setting a positive attitude is a lot simpler. It encourages an outlook where you can anticipate good things, such as health, happiness and success. Positive mindset owners are often referred to as 'avoiders' of the problems, but the case is they just face the problem with a smile and do not ignore but tend to think deeply about the situation, and try to evaluate it correctly. A perfect instance can be an observed lesson in UZSWLU, when the presentation the group was given for the second reading and writing class went badly that the students got a 'satisfactory' mark. But, instead of giving up and feeling anxious about the feedback they got, they tried to correct the mistakes and just let that go by saying: "The presentation went badly, but at least we learnt what to do differently next time". They applied the feedback they got to make a better performance for the speaking class presentation which, surely, was successful. Giving up and pondering over something that has already passed is not always a good option. That might help where the pessimism is in use, but facing the problem then expecting a better outcome next time will surely increase one's confidence in themselves. It is called as 'The actions and the experience matter, not the marks' mindset.

Exposure therapy. Gradual exposure to social situations is a therapeutic technique that helps individuals gradually confront feared social situations to reduce anxiety and build confidence. There is a question of the way it functions. The first step would probably be identifying fears. For example, in our case we opt for lack of confidence while holding a conversation. The next vital step includes creating a fear hierarchy. It is a list of social events, which are to be ordered from least to most anxiety-provoking. The individuals start by confronting the easiest situations on the list, gradually moving up the hierarchy as their comfort increases. Exposure therapy often incorporates cognitive techniques to challenge and alter negative thoughts about social interactions.

How to pretend that YOU are a confident speaker even if you are not?

Have you ever wondered whether most of the speakers, "TEDX" talkers actually pretend to be confident in most of their videos? The belief in oneself is what keeps the conversation going or what captivates the attention of a listener making them see the originality and authenticity of a speech. While studying carefully about human confidence nature, the researchers noticed some 'tricks' influencers, video-makers use to show off their self-assurance while socializing or posting some either opinion or information about the particular topic.

The first and most common one is *taking a seat on the chair*. When Emily Jaenson saw a woman, who was trembling and showing worries about the job interview she has, and when that woman had entered the room, she sat on the chair, the trembling and all the sweat coming down vanished afterwards. Another perfect explicitness of the case would be the debate role-play, UZSWLU first-year-students were given as a home task. The students were divided into 2 groups and each group was given two different debate topics to cover. The first group were discussing pros and cons of installing the wind power energy station, whereas the second was explaining those of nuclear power stations (NPS). The latter group members were presenting their ideas while sitting freely on the chair which was a real game-changer in their role-play. By this, the second group was able to convince that NPS is safe and effective to be installed.

The second method that helps to feel boldness while giving a speech is talking with a louder tone. The observations suggest that grabbing the attention of audience is crucial, as conversation is a cooperative process. During the group presentation, in the introduction part, to keep the others engaged in the topic which was being explained, a student asked a quick question with a loud and a rising intonation which forced everybody to pay attention to the monitor. That was a redundant question and a suitable volume helped the student draw others' attention to himself. The intriguing fact was the effect that this loud tone affected all the members of his team. The very one question with the correct tone and intonation heled others focus on the presentation and the other speakers felt the responsibility to keep the 15-minute explanation engaging. Moreover, all the worries and a psychological nervousness have passed which optimized the process.

Likewise, the underestimated and rarely seen method of pausing with composure, aka pausing 'like a boss, proves useful to draw attention of the audience. Here is how it works out, making strategic pauses help to avoid filler words (like/ kind of) or mumbling (um.../ erm...) maintains fluent, filler-free speech. For example, talking at a fast pace and pausing for a bit of time makes the quality of the speech lower, on the other hand, speaking at a slow pace might well exhaust or seem monotonous for the listener. The competence to pause where it is needed (to emphasis some sentences or declaration) offers not only a mumble-free experience, but also a good time management.

The importance of opting for a right topic for the dialogues and conversations.

Have you ever asked yourself a question, why do we have friends circle at school, university or even work?! How do we choose the right friends' group and the people to interact with? Perhaps, the other people surrounding you are also normal! Imagine, you got accepted to a university. You are freshman, and surely, do not know anybody around. The person needs some time to find a companion. How? By exchanging ideas, of course! For instance, Uzbekistan State World Languages University allows its freshmen to have an O-week (Orientation week) not only to get to know about higher education or learn what rooms are located in which building, but simply to have some picnic with them! The point is, two people cannot talk and maintain a long-lasting friendship if the views and the interests differ. That is what causes some small friend circles to appear in many social places. The evidence for this particular point of view could be the way we start the conversation: we simply ask about the age, nationality and the 'likes and dislikes' of our interlocutor, having seen matches in the interest those people tend to initiate topic-related dialogues that guarantee a sustained bond.

Hence, it might be inferred that a right topic for interaction is vital for feeling assertive during the process.

Conclusion. This study highlights that conversational confidence is not an inborn trait but a skill that can be developed through conscious effort and practice. The findings emphasize the importance of addressing social and psychological barriers such as fear of judgment, low self-esteem, and social anxiety, which often prevent individuals from initiating communication. By adopting strategies like positive thinking, gradual exposure to social settings, and confident body language, individuals can significantly enhance their self-assurance in interactions. Even the act of "pretending" to be confident— through tone, posture, and presence—can gradually lead to genuine confidence. Ultimately, the research confirms that effective communication and self-confidence are achievable when supported by self-awareness, consistent practice, and a positive, encouraging environment.

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