

MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS  
PSYCHOLOGICAL BARRIERS IN SPEAKING: FEAR, ANXIETY AND  
CLASSROOM SILENCE

**Xojaxmedov Muhammad Ali Shoaxmad ugli**

*Student*

*Scientific advisor: Mamadjanova Dildora Ulugbek kizi*

*Department “Philology and*

*Foreign Languages” at Diplomat University in Tashkent*

*+998904803697*

*[malikhozha@gmail.com](mailto:malikhozha@gmail.com)*

**Abstract.** *It is important to understand where these psychological barriers to speaking come from. Because speaking is one of the most important ways for students to develop and grow. Due to this problem, they lose many opportunities to learn. It is important to address topics that students may not know about during lessons. This definitely has a strong negative impact on their studies. Let’s look at several studies in this field, for example FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety), FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale), and the problems that ESL students face. In speaking, a strong influence is exerted by fear of negative evaluation, previous negative experiences, and low self-confidence. All of this is connected and creates a kind of circle: anxiety makes a person stay silent, and the silence makes the anxiety even stronger. Because of this, students often freeze during conversations. Some give very short answers with just one or two words, while others try not to speak at all. All of this leads to students practicing less, which in turn worsens their language progress. Teachers need to make greater efforts, find ways to understand each student, and change the atmosphere in the classroom.*

**Key words:** *Psychological barriers; FLA; FLCAS; ESL students; Negative evaluation; Previous negative experiences; Low self-confidence.*

**Аннотация.** *Важно понять, откуда берутся эти психологические барьеры в говорении. Ведь умение говорить — это один из главных способов для студентов развиваться и расти. Из-за этой проблемы они теряют много возможностей учиться. На уроках важно затрагивать темы, которые могут быть незнакомы ученикам. Всё это сильно и негативно влияет на их учёбу. Давайте посмотрим на несколько исследований в этой области. Например, FLA (Foreign Language Anxiety — тревога при изучении иностранного языка), FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale — шкала тревоги в классе иностранного языка) и проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются студенты ESL. На говорение сильно влияют страх негативной оценки, прошлый негативный опыт и низкая уверенность в себе. Всё это связано между собой и создаёт такой круг: от тревоги человек молчит, а от молчания тревога становится ещё сильнее. Из-за этого ученики часто замирают во время разговора. Кто-то отвечает очень коротко, одним-двумя словами, а кто-то вообще старается ничего не говорить. В итоге студенты меньше*

практикуются, а от этого их прогресс в языке только замедляется. Учителям нужно больше стараться, стараться понять каждого ученика и менять атмосферу на уроках.

**Key words:** Психологические барьеры; FLA; FLCAS; ESL; Страх негативной оценки, Прошлый негативный опыт, Низкая уверенность в себе

**Annotatsiya:** Bu psixologik to'siqlarning gapirishdagi sabablarini tushunish juda muhim. Chunki gapirish talabalar uchun rivojlanish va o'sishning eng asosiy yo'llaridan biri hisoblanadi. Bu muammo tufayli ular ko'plab o'qish imkoniyatlarini yo'qotadilar. Darslarda talabalar bilmaydigan mavzularni ham ko'tarish muhim. Bu ularning o'qishiga kuchli salbiy ta'sir qiladi. Keling, bu sohada olib borilgan bir necha tadqiqotlarni ko'rib chiqaylik. Masalan, FLA (Chet tilini o'rganishdagi tashvish), FLCAS (Chet tili sinfidagi tashvish shkala) va ESL talabalari duch keladigan muammolar. Gapirishga kuchli ta'sir qiladigan omillar — bu salbiy baholanishdan qo'rqish, oldingi salbiy tajribalar va o'ziga bo'lgan ishonchsizlikdir. Bularning barchasi bir-biriga bog'liq va shunday doira hosil qiladi: tashvish odamni jim qiladi, jimlik esa tashvishni yanada kuchaytiradi. Shu sababli talabalar suhbat davomida ko'pincha qotib qolishadi. Kimdir faqat bir-ikki so'z bilan javob beradi, kimdir esa umuman gapirmaslikka harakat qiladi. Buning natijasida talabalar kamroq mashq qilishadi, bu esa o'z navbatida ularning til taraqqiyotini sekinlashtiradi. O'qituvchilar ko'proq harakat qilishlari, har bir talabani tushunish yo'llarini topishlari va sinfdagi muhitni o'zgartirishlari kerak.

**Kalit so'zlar:** Psixologik to'siqlar; FLA; FLCAS; ESL talabalari; Salbiy baholanishdan qo'rqish; Oldingi salbiy tajribalar; O'ziga bo'lgan ishonchsizlik.

### Introduction

In today's world, foreign languages play a big role in education and careers. However, speaking remains one of the most difficult skills for many students, even those with strong grammar and vocabulary (Horwitz et al., 1986).

Psychological barriers are the main problem in Second Language Acquisition (SLA). Students fear making mistakes and getting negative evaluation. This is very common among ESL/EFL learners. Studies show that around two thirds experience moderate or high Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) (Ye, 2021). The FLCAS scale developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) is widely used to measure it.

Fear of negative evaluation, bad past experiences, and low confidence create a vicious circle: anxiety causes silence, and silence increases anxiety. Students often freeze, give short answers, or avoid speaking. This leads to less practice and slower progress.

This paper studies these psychological barriers. Its aim is to analyse the causes of FLA and FLCAS and offer practical recommendations for reducing anxiety in class.

In this study, the psychological hindrances that affect speaking skills of ESL/EFL learners are explored through a qualitative literature review. The research relies on the examination of scholarly papers dealing with Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), FLCAS, and other psychological factors that affect oral communication in a second language.

These findings are consistent with previous research on foreign language anxiety (Horwitz et al., 1986; MacIntyre & Gardner, 1991; Ye, 2021).

They sourced relevant academic sources from peer-reviewed journal articles, books and doctoral dissertations on subjects such as language anxiety, fear of negative feedback, communication fears and learner self-confidence. Research was particularly focused on the reasons and effects of speaking anxiety in language learning contexts.'

The literature that was gathered was assessed through both descriptive and analytical approaches. The research discovered common themes and recurring patterns related to the causes of foreign language anxiety and its impact on learners' ability to speak proficiently. The analysis resulted in practical suggestions for reducing anxiety and encouraging participation in the classroom.

Main Body. Foreign language anxiety (FLA) has been under investigation for a great many years. The study by Horwitz et al. (1986), which defined FLA as "a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, emotions, and behaviors related to classroom language learning," is among the most significant works. (p. 128). Additionally developing the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) still in use today is According to Horwitz et al. (1986), most experts agree that FLA comprises three main parts: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension. Recent research shows this worry is rather widespread. For language students, for instance, between 60 and 70 percent have intermediate or significant levels of FLA.

Many things make students anxious when they talk English. The most significant are these:

- ❖ Students fear negative reviews from teachers or peers who will judge their mistakes.
- ❖ Past unfavourable events cause them anxiety; terrible memories from past teachings create tension.
- ❖ Many students lack confidence; they don't trust their speaking ability.
- ❖ Low language ability and lack of experience are further elements.

These causes are all connected. As said in the Introduction, they generate a terrible loop: anxiety → silence → more anxiety.

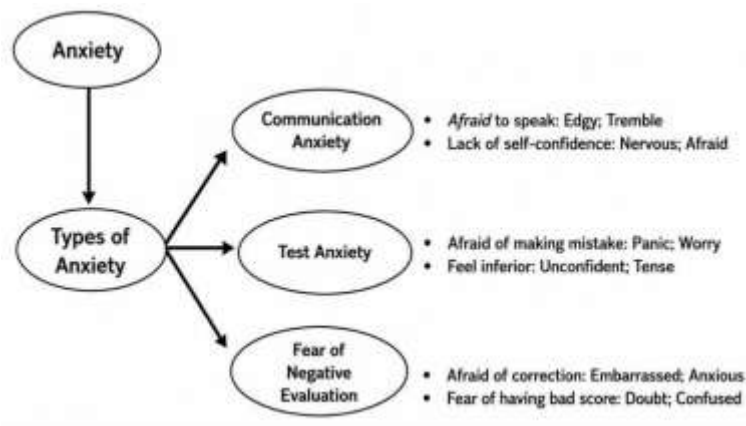
This circle causes students to frequently freeze during speaking exercises, provide very short answers, or completely avoid speaking. Consequently, their language development suffers and they practise less. This issue lowers not just their academic performance and general motivation but also their speaking ability.

The literature and data analysis revealed three primary categories of foreign language anxiety. A review of the literature was conducted to explore these causes. The first to propose and describe these types was Horwitz et al. (1986). The classification of anxiety types is illustrated in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1. The types of apprehension that accompany foreign language acquisition (adapted from Horwitz, E.). K, Horwitz, M. B, & Cope, J, 1986)



Figure 1



As shown in Figure 1, foreign language anxiety encompasses:

Lack of communication (distraction and lack self-esteem);

Fear of failing and feeling inferior; anxiety to test;

The fear of negative feedback (apprehension about being corrected and anxiety about receiving ill treatment).

The three types of anxiety are closely linked and have a direct impact on students' speaking ability. These results support the vicious circle described in the Introduction.

**Discussion.** The findings of this study indicate that Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA) remains one of the most significant psychological barriers affecting ESL/EFL learners' speaking performance. The literature reviewed shows that communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation are closely interconnected and often discourage learners from participating in classroom communication.

The analysis also suggests that psychological factors may be as important as linguistic competence in language learning. Even students with adequate grammar and vocabulary knowledge may avoid speaking because of anxiety and low self-confidence. As a result, learners receive fewer opportunities to practice, which may negatively affect their language development.

Therefore, teachers should create a supportive classroom environment, encourage active participation, and provide constructive feedback. Such strategies can help learners reduce anxiety and develop greater confidence in speaking a foreign language.

**Conclusion.** Psychological barriers significantly affect speaking performance among ESL/EFL learners. The literature reviewed in this study demonstrates that Foreign Language Anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence can reduce learners' willingness to communicate. These factors often create a cycle of anxiety and classroom silence. Therefore, creating a positive and supportive learning environment is essential for helping students improve their speaking skills and confidence.

## REFERENCES

1. Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign language classroom anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2), 125–132. <https://doi.org/10.2307/327317>

MODERN EDUCATIONAL SYSTEM AND INNOVATIVE TEACHING SOLUTIONS

2. Ye, Y. (2021). Post-secondary ESL learners' foreign language anxiety and management strategies in an intensive English program [Doctoral dissertation, University of Iowa]. Iowa Research Online.
3. Liu, M. (2006). Anxiety in Chinese EFL students at different proficiency levels. *System*, 34(3), 301–316.
4. MacIntyre, P. D., & Gardner, R. C. (1991). Methods and results in the study of anxiety and language learning: A review of the literature. *Language Learning*, 41(1), 85–117.
5. Lou, N. M., & Noels, K. A. (2020). Breaking the vicious cycle of language anxiety: Growth language mindsets improve outcomes. *Journal of Language and Social Psychology*, 39(3), 1–25.
6. Şimşek, E., & Dörnyei, Z. (2017). Anxiety and L2 self and identity. In *New insights into language anxiety* (pp. 51–72). *Multilingual Matters*.
7. Woodrow, L. (2006). A model of adaptive language learning. *The Modern Language Journal*, 90(3), 297–319.

