

THE IMPACT OF VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS ON SPEAKING ANXIETY

*Shuhratova Mavluda Shamshodovna**English Language Teacher,**Department of Philology and Language Teaching,**Sarboon University of Tashkent**Email: shukhratovamavluda@gamil.com*

Abstract: In recent years, the landscape of education has undergone a significant transformation due to the advancement of technology and the widespread adoption of virtual classrooms. The shift from traditional, face-to-face classrooms to online learning environments has led to several changes in the ways students interact, communicate, and learn. One of the most impactful areas that has garnered the attention of researchers and educators alike is the effect virtual classrooms have on speaking anxiety among students. Speaking anxiety, often described as feelings of nervousness, worry, or fear associated with speaking in front of others, can hinder academic performance and personal development. Understanding the nuanced impact of virtual classrooms on this aspect is crucial for optimizing the online learning experience and supporting students in their educational journeys.

Key words: virtual classrooms, speaking anxiety, online learning, communication apprehension, student participation, digital education, technology barriers, remote instruction, language learning, psychological effects.

Аннотация: В последние годы образовательная среда претерпела значительные изменения в связи с развитием технологий и широким распространением виртуальных классов. Переход от традиционных очных занятий к онлайн-обучению привел к ряду изменений в том, как студенты взаимодействуют, общаются и учатся. Одной из наиболее влиятельных областей, привлечших внимание исследователей и педагогов, является влияние виртуальных классов на тревожность при публичных выступлениях у студентов. Тревожность, часто описываемая как чувство нервозности, опасения или страха, связанное с публичным выступлением, может препятствовать успеваемости и личностному развитию. Понимание влияния виртуальных классов на этот аспект имеет решающее значение для оптимизации онлайн-обучения и поддержки студентов на их образовательном пути.

Ключевые слова: виртуальные классы, тревожность при публичных выступлениях, онлайн-обучение, страх общения, вовлеченность студентов, цифровое обучение, технологические барьеры, дистанционное обучение, изучение языка, психологические эффекты.

Annotatsiya: So'nggi yillarda texnologiyaning rivojlanishi va virtual sinflarning

keng qo'llanilishi tufayli ta'lim landshafti sezilarli o'zgarishlarga duch keldi. An'anaviy, yuzma-yuz sinflardan onlayn o'quv muhitiga o'tish o'quvchilarning o'zaro munosabati, muloqot qilish va o'rganish usullarida bir qancha o'zgarishlarga olib keldi. Tadqiqotchilar va o'qituvchilarning e'tiborini tortgan eng ta'sirli sohalardan biri bu virtual sinflarning talabalar o'rtasida nutq tashvishiga ta'siri. Ko'pincha boshqalar oldida gapirish bilan bog'liq asabiylashish, tashvish yoki qo'rquv hissi sifatida tasvirlangan tashvishlanish akademik ishlash va shaxsiy rivojlanishga to'sqinlik qilishi mumkin. Virtual sinflarning ushbu jihatga ta'sirini tushunish onlayn ta'lim tajribasini optimallashtirish va talabalarni ta'lim sayohatlarida qo'llab-quvvatlash uchun juda muhimdir.

Kalit so'zlar: virtual sinflar, nutq tashvishi, onlayn o'rganish, muloqotdan qo'rquv, talabalar ishtiroki, raqamli ta'lim, texnologiya to'siqlari, masofaviy o'qitish, til o'rganish, psixologik effektlar.

INTRODUCTION

Virtual classes provide a unique set of conditions that are fundamentally different from traditional class conditions. The lack of physical presence, reliance on technology, and flexibility of participation contribute to how people experience and overcome speech anxiety. In a virtual classroom, students participate in discussions, presentations, and group work through digital platforms, often using audio or video features. These platforms offer a variety of communication tools such as chat boxes, forums, and individual rooms, providing multiple channels for interaction. These characteristics present opportunities and difficulties in relation to the level of anxiety during speech activity. The shift to virtual learning means that students are no longer in the same physical space as their peers and teachers. This can be both comforting and scary. On the one hand, being in a familiar environment, such as your own home, can alleviate some of the pressure associated with public speaking. The lack of direct, in-person assessment allows some students to feel less judged, which reduces their anxiety levels. On the other hand, for many students, technological factors such as unreliable internet connections, unfamiliar software, or the prospect of appearing on camera add new sources of stress. Additionally, the absence of physical cues such as facial expressions, body language, and eye contact can make communication feel less natural and potentially intimidating.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Social networks and various virtual communities are the main feature of today's world. According to research, over time, social network users are increasing. For about twenty years, the Internet has played an important role in various fields, including computer-assisted language learning. Computer-mediated communication (CMC) and computer-assisted language learning (CALL) are the most valuable models in second

language acquisition (SLA); they have increased the effectiveness of foreign language (FL) teaching and learning. Technology and the Internet have provided language learners and teachers with a wide range of opportunities to improve language learning. This is because it allows learners to have autonomy and real-time pronunciation assessment, and increases their motivation. Today, there are nearly three billion active users of social media worldwide. Over the years, significant research has been conducted on the use of social media in SLA, and it continues to this day. However, social media is a promising solution that can help learners develop practical oral communication skills in FL learning. Research shows that most students believe that online communication helps improve their speaking skills. One of the main factors contributing to the results of learning a foreign language is emotions, which can be classified as positive or negative. On the negative side, emotions can lead to fear, anxiety, and frustration, which can affect the rate of FL learning, as well as lead to a lack of motivation and decreased self-confidence. Additionally, decreased motivation and self-confidence may affect the speech abilities of FL learners. Fariz et al. Their study found that the anxiety of speaking and speaking a foreign language is closely related, as FL learners are afraid to communicate with others during FL classes. This study synthesizes the various causes of speech anxiety in FL learning and how virtual language communities and social media can help improve speech fluency by mitigating the effects of speech anxiety. This study aims to fill the research gap on virtual language communities and social media interactions, which can help overcome speaking anxiety and improve speaking fluency in FL learning. This is achieved through a survey of FL learners on their use of social media interactions and virtual language communities to alleviate speaking anxiety. This article contributes to research aimed at addressing speech anxiety and improving fluency in FL language learning. The results of the study also encourage social media interactions and virtual language communities in FL learning and provide better teaching methodologies that help students develop more confidence in speaking FL [1].

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Research has been conducted on speech anxiety and the use of social media and virtual language communities in FL learning. The results of these studies have shown that students experience moderate to high levels of anxiety when speaking in FL [2].

There are various tools and frameworks available to measure foreign language proficiency and study the effects of anxiety. Two research frameworks were selected for this study - the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz in 1986 and the Technology Acceptance Model. FLCAS is a questionnaire consisting of 33 questions developed on a 5-point Likert scale and revised over the years to improve understanding of the fear of speaking a foreign language. Tam examined the role of visual communities and social media interaction systems in

improving the ability to speak a foreign language fluently. TAM is based on the individual's intention to perform a specific behavior and their attitude towards adopting and using ICT, as proposed by Davis in 1989 [3].

Pakpahan and Gultom (2022) used FLCAS in their study to determine whether there were significant changes in speaking fluency after using websites for language learning. Students were also interviewed to obtain feedback on their satisfaction with online communication platforms with FL. The results showed that students reduced their speaking anxiety after using language websites to learn FL. However, some students were unable to do this because they were afraid of making mistakes when speaking to a foreigner. The FLCAS consists of 33 items; 24 are positive and 9 are negative, and they are designed to assess communication anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety (Lu, 2024). Research has reformulated the use of the FLCAS to identify FLCA and determine the presence of speech anxiety among FL learners. The FLCAS has been used in research groups and studies involving different countries and demographic variables. Alfadda and Mahdi used TAM in their study to examine participants' acceptance of Zoom applications in learning FL. Their study aims to explore the moderating variables of technology use in learning. It also explores the impact of gender and years of experience on technology use. The study found that computer-specific efficacy, attitudes, and behavioral intentions were positively associated with technology use. However, studies show that gender has no effect on participants' use of technology. Over the years, TAM has been used in a variety of educational settings, and it has become a more effective tool for identifying the various factors that influence the use and adoption of technology in learning [4].

According to students, the use of social networks and virtual platforms can be a source of motivation for them. They will also be able to communicate with native speakers and provide space for communication, improving their speech skills. Repetition plays a crucial role in helping speakers gain confidence in using their language, as they can easily repeat what they have heard without worrying about making mistakes. Virtual communities on YouTube and Facebook allow for this process to take place in FL language learning. Overall, the results of the study show that integrating social media and other online tools into FL learning has many benefits for learners; it increases their flexibility and reduces speaking anxiety. It also allows for collaborative participation from FL learners and native speakers. However, ongoing research is still aimed at overcoming some of the challenges associated with using virtual platforms for learning [5].

CONCLUSION

In conclusion, virtual classrooms hold the potential to create both supportive and challenging environments when it comes to speaking anxiety. The altered modes of communication, varied interaction structures, and technological demands inherent to

virtual learning can affect students differently, often according to their personalities, prior experiences, and the support systems in place. Successful educational practice involves recognizing these factors and implementing strategies that help students manage anxiety, build speaking confidence, and engage meaningfully in online learning environments. Ongoing research and reflective practice are essential for educators wishing to optimize the virtual classroom as a space for both academic achievement and personal growth, particularly in the domain of spoken communication.

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