

REDUCING FOREIGN LANGUAGE ANXIETY THROUGH SELF-ASSESSMENT AND REFLECTION

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Abstract: Foreign language anxiety is one of the most important psychological barriers in accuiring foreign language. It causes university students passive participating in oral communication, even when they have enough linguistic knowledge in a language.. This thesis analysis how reflection and self-assessment help develop students' communicating skills, reduce anxiety and strengthen their self-motivations, as implemented in Khakimov's model for developing communicative competence. The research examines that structured self-monitoring and correction, combined with equal, collaborative teacher–student interaction, offer a psychologically sustainable alternative to purely corrective, teacher-centred feedback practices.

Keywords: foreign language anxiety, self-assessment, reflection, communicative competence, learner-centred instruction, self-confidence.

Foreign language anxiety defined that a distinct form of situation-specific anxiety arising from the uniqueness of the language-learning process, is widely recognised as one of the most persistent obstacles to active oral participation in the classroom [1]. Learners experiencing this anxiety often avoid active speaking not because they lack linguistic knowledge, but because they fear making mistakes, feel self-conscious in front of their peers, or lack confidence in their own ability to express themselves without any hesitation.[2]. While many pedagogical interventions target linguistic accuracy directly, a growing body of research suggests that psychologically oriented interventions – particularly reflection and self-assessment – may be equally important in addressing the affective dimension of oral communicating difficulties [3].

Khakimov's model for improving students' communicative competence is based on the principles of cognitive engagement, learner-centred instruction, reflection, self-assessment, and correction [3]. Within this model, students are highly encouraged to reflect on their own communicative performance, identify their own errors, and engage in self-correction rather than relying only on external, teacher's feedback. The model highlightes that teacher–student interaction should be organised on the basis of equality and collaboration, rather than a one-directional, authority-based relationship, which the author argues is crucial for creating a free psychologically safe environment for oral practice among the students[3].

A central finding of this model is that incorporating psychologically encouraging tasks into the instructional process. Through this process students can trengthen their inner confidence in communication practice [3]. This finding supports students' reflection and self-assessment not only improve metacognitive awareness of language form, but also function as an affective intervention that reduces the fear of evaluation associated with foreign language anxiety [1], [3]. By allowing students to evaluate their own communicative performance in a low-stakes, non-judgemental format, self-assessment increases the focus of evaluation away from an external authority figure, which is a documented source of anxiety-inducing pressure [2].

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The practical value of this approach is supported by findings from related research on speaking-skill development, which similarly identifies students' lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes in front of an audience, and fear of criticism as principal obstacles to active oral participation [2]. According to the researches, reflection-based, self-assessment-oriented instruction addresses a barrier that is common across different pedagogical models, rather than being specific to a single instructional context [2], [3].

The reflective component of Khakimov's model is implemented through techniques such as portfolio-based assessment, in which students document and track their own development over time and engage in self-assessment as a basis for reflection, and structured peer-feedback stages, in which students comment on each other's performance before the teacher provides additional feedback [3]. By positioning peer and self-evaluation before teacher evaluation, this sequencing reduces the perceived a lack of equality between teacher and learner and allows students to engage with corrective feedback in a lower-stakes, more collaborative format – a structural feature that directly addresses the fear of negative evaluation associated with foreign language anxiety [1], [3]. The experiment was carried out in three stages (initial, formative, and control), and outcomes were measured using accuracy, coherence, and pronunciation and intonation criteria [3]. According to the dissertation's conclusions, incorporating psychologically encouraging tasks that take students' emotional state into account into the instructional process proved to be an effective means of strengthening students' inner confidence in communication, and the model's emphasis on organising teacher–student interaction on the basis of equality and collaboration was associated with improved outcomes across the measured criteria [3]. This finding is consistent with complementary evidence from Prenova's research on speaking-skill development, which identifies psychological discomfort – including students' lack of self-confidence, fear of making mistakes in front of an audience, and fear of criticism – as a principal obstacle to active oral participation, and which further shows that structured communicative points (supportive prompts, models, and scaffolding techniques) serve a specific psychological function: they allow learners to participate in communication without fear, increase their psychological confidence, and reduce their sense of a 'language barrier' [2]. Taken together, these findings suggest that the reduction of foreign language anxiety through reflection, self-assessment, and structured psychological support is a pattern observed across more than one independent pedagogical model, rather than being unique to a single institutional context [2], [3].

An important practical implication of these findings is that reflection-based interventions do not require expensive technological infrastructure to be effective: portfolio assessment, structured peer feedback, and communicative anchors can all be implemented with conventional classroom resources, which makes this approach particularly suitable for institutions such as regional pedagogical institutes, where access to advanced digital tools may be more limited than in best-financed public universities [3].

In conclusion, reducing foreign language anxiety requires more than linguistic instruction; it requires an intentional pedagogical change toward learner-centred reflection and self-assessment, supported by an equal and collaborative teacher–student relationship. This model demonstrates that such an approach can measurably strengthen students' confidence in oral communication [3]. Further empirical research is recommended to measure anxiety levels directly, using validated instruments such as the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale [1], before and after the implementation of reflection-based interventions, in order to quantify their psychological impact more precisely.

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