

## CHALLENGES FACED BY STUDENTS IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF ORAL SPEECH IN ENGLISH AND THEIR EFFECTIVE SOLUTIONS

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**Abstract.** This article is devoted to examining the core challenges language learners face when developing oral speech skills in English within higher education, specifically focusing on the context of Uzbekistan. While many students exhibit strong grammatical knowledge and reading comprehension, oral communication remains a significant hurdle. Drawing upon the prominent frameworks of Elaine K. Horwitz's "Foreign Language Anxiety" and Scott Thornbury's balance of fluency and accuracy, this paper analyzes the underlying psychological and linguistic barriers. Furthermore, the article proposes practical, innovative pedagogical methods and communicative approaches aimed at reducing anxiety and fostering balanced oral proficiency.

**Key words:** Oral speech, foreign language anxiety, communicative approach, fluency, accuracy, pedagogical methods, English as a foreign language (EFL).

**Annotatsiya.** Mazkur maqola oliy ta'lim muassasalarida, ayniqsa O'zbekiston sharoitida, talabalarning ingliz tilida og'zaki nutq ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirish jarayonida duch keladigan asosiy muammolarni o'rganishga bag'ishlangan. Ko'plab talabalar grammatik bilim va matnni o'qib tushunish bo'yicha yetarli salohiyatga ega bo'lsalar-da, og'zaki muloqot ko'nikmalarini rivojlantirishda jiddiy qiyinchiliklarga duch keladilar. Maqolada Elaine K. Horwitz tomonidan ishlab chiqilgan "Xorijiy til xavotiri" (Foreign Language Anxiety) nazariyasi hamda Scott Thornbury tomonidan ilgari surilgan ravonlik (fluency) va aniqlik (accuracy) muvozanati konsepsiyasiga tayangan holda ushbu muammolarning psixologik va lingvistik omillari tahlil qilinadi. Shuningdek, maqolada til o'rganishdagi xavotirni kamaytirish va muvozanatli og'zaki nutq kompetensiyasini shakllantirishga qaratilgan amaliy, innovatsion pedagogik metodlar hamda kommunikativ yondashuvlar taklif etiladi.

**Kalit so'zlar:** og'zaki nutq, xorijiy til xavotiri, kommunikativ yondashuv, ravonlik, aniqlik, pedagogik metodlar, ingliz tili chet tili sifatida (EFL).

**Аннотация:** В данной статье анализируются основные проблемы, с которыми сталкиваются студенты при развитии навыков устной речи на английском языке в системе высшего образования, в частности, в контексте Узбекистана. В то время как многие студенты демонстрируют глубокие знания грамматики и высокое понимание текста, устная коммуникация остается серьезным препятствием. Опираясь на известные концепции «Языковой тревожности» Элейн К. Хорвиц и баланса беглости и точности Скотта Торнбери, в работе анализируются лежащие в их основе психологические и лингвистические барьеры. Кроме того, в статье предлагаются практические, инновационные педагогические методы и коммуникативные подходы, направленные на снижение уровня тревожности и развитие сбалансированного владения устной речью.

**Ключевые слова:** Устная речь, языковая тревожность, коммуникативный подход, беглость, точность, педагогические методы, английский язык как иностранный (EFL).

**Introduction.** The 21st century is the information age. As a result of their development, the issue of deep mastery of foreign languages, especially English, is becoming one of the most pressing areas for the entire world education system. In particular, in the Republic of Uzbekistan, special attention is paid to improving the process of teaching and learning foreign languages. The concepts and programs adopted by our state are aimed at achieving high-quality results in this area. The process of learning

English consists of four main concepts - listening, reading, writing, and speaking. Undoubtedly, the development of oral speech skills among them remains an important problem for many students, especially in educational environments where real communication opportunities are limited. The main goal of language learning is communication that is, the ability to express one's thoughts freely and without any difficulties. However, many studies show that while most students have high grammatical knowledge and record high levels of writing and reading skills, they are experiencing challenges in speaking skills. Therefore, the introduction of innovative methods and communicative approaches for the effective improvement of oral communicative abilities in English in higher educational institutions is of great importance. This article analyzes the methods that serve to resolve the above-mentioned problems and how effective they are.

**Literature review.** Numerous researchers have examined the difficulties students face in speaking English and have proposed various strategies to overcome these challenges. Elaine K. Horwitz is a prominent researcher in the field of applied linguistics and foreign language teaching. She believes that one of the biggest obstacles to the development of oral speech is the fear of making mistakes and lack of self-confidence. She calls this concept Foreign Language Anxiety. According to her research, students with high levels of anxiety speak less, choose silence out of fear of making mistakes. This negatively affects the development of fluency confidence. In contrast, Scott Thornbury is a well-known British specialist in the field of English language teaching, who emphasizes the importance of linguistic factors in the development of oral speech. In his opinion, students often cannot speak fluently due to a lack of vocabulary and grammatical knowledge. In his 2005 work *How to Teach Speaking*, Thornbury analyzes many effective methods and activities for teaching speaking. These methods include drills, discussions, dramas, dialogues, and conversations. These approaches are aimed at developing fluency, articulation, and register in students. The book also discusses approaches to evaluating and testing oral speech. According to Thornbury, speaking is a spontaneous skill, that is, a process that occurs in real time, in which the student is forced to simultaneously formulate thought, choose words, and manage grammar. Therefore, he believes that a balance between fluency and accuracy is necessary in the development of speaking. If only grammatical correctness and immediate correction of errors are emphasized in the lessons, students, fearing to make mistakes, experience increased anxiety (anxiety) in language learning, which Horwitz emphasized, and they speak little or remain completely silent. According to Thornbury, this condition hinders the natural development of oral speech. Conversely, if only quick speech and freedom are encouraged, speech can be fluent, but grammatically incorrect and incomprehensible, and communicative effectiveness decreases. Therefore, fluency should develop together as a means of expressing thoughts freely, and accuracy - as a means of conveying thoughts correctly and accurately. Based

on this, Thornbury recommends organizing speaking lessons in two stages: the first stage focuses on fluency-focused activities, and the second stage on accuracy-focused activities.

**Research methodology.** This study employs a qualitative and descriptive literature-based research design. To identify and evaluate effective solutions for oral speech development, a systematic review of theoretical frameworks in applied linguistics was conducted. Specifically, the qualitative analysis synthesizes Elaine K. Horwitz's empirical studies on foreign language anxiety and Scott Thornbury's methodological guides on teaching speaking. Additionally, classroom observation insights and existing curriculum structures in higher education institutions in Uzbekistan were reviewed to assess the practical applicability of dual-stage speaking lessons (fluency-focused and accuracy-focused activities).

**Analysis and Results.** The qualitative and descriptive analysis of the linguistic and psychological frameworks reveals critical insights into the dynamics of oral speech development among EFL students in Uzbekistan's higher education system. The primary finding indicates that the impediment to effective verbal communication is not a lack of theoretical linguistic competence, but rather a profound psychological barrier. The Interplay of Foreign Language Anxiety and Silence: In alignment with Elaine K. Horwitz's Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) framework, the study identifies that a significant majority of local students experience high levels of situational anxiety specific to spoken performance. The fear of negative evaluation from peers and instructors triggers a defense mechanism—predominantly manifested as selective mutism or absolute silence during communicative tasks. This demonstrates a clear inverse relationship: as anxiety levels rise, the cognitive capacity required for real-time speech production decreases, causing students to fail in retrieving previously learned lexical items.

The Impact of Corrective Feedback on Speech Production: The evaluation of traditional pedagogical models in Uzbekistan reveals that the common practice of immediate, error-driven corrective feedback severely stifles speech flow. When instructors interrupt a student mid-sentence to correct a grammatical slip, the student's cognitive processing of the message is shattered. Rather than improving accuracy, immediate correction reinforces internal insecurity and directly amplifies Foreign Language Anxiety. Efficacy of Thornbury's Two-Stage Lesson Framework: By analyzing curriculum structures that implement Scott Thornbury's methodological insights, the study found that splitting speaking lessons into distinct, sequential stages yields substantially better pedagogical outcomes:

Stage 1 (Fluency-Focused): Emphasizes message conveyance and psychological safety through unstructured discussions, role-plays, and free conversations. Observed outcomes show increased student confidence and lower affective filters.

Stage 2 (Accuracy-Focused): Targets linguistic precision and formal correctness through structured drills and constructive, delayed feedback without causing communication apprehension.

The findings of this study open a broader academic dialogue regarding the systemic challenges of EFL instruction within the higher education landscape of Uzbekistan. The results highlight a critical mismatch between the state-mandated objectives of communicative language proficiency and the entrenched, traditional pedagogical practices observed in local classrooms. Historically, the Uzbek educational paradigm has heavily relied on the Grammar-Translation method. While these methods are highly effective at building strong passive linguistic knowledge (reading and explicit grammar), they fail completely at developing spontaneous, real-time oral production. This explains the paradox where students who score exceptionally well on written exams frequently freeze or become completely incoherent during a basic conversation. They treat English as an abstract academic subject to be memorized, rather than a living tool for communication. The core theoretical contribution of this paper lies in the deliberate harmonization of Horwitz's affective theories with Thornbury's cognitive-linguistic methodologies. Language acquisition cannot be viewed purely through a cognitive lens; the emotional state of the learner dictates the success of cognitive processing. Thornbury's argument that speaking is a spontaneous, real-time cognitive act means that the brain is simultaneously executing multiple complex tasks: conceptualizing thought, formulating linguistic structures, and retrieving lexical items. When an instructor overlays this complex cognitive load with an anxious classroom environment characterized by immediate error correction, the student's affective filter shoots up, causing cognitive overload. Therefore, implementing Thornbury's dual-stage approach serves as a practical antidote to Foreign Language Anxiety. By deliberately delaying error correction to the second stage, educators create a "low-anxiety zone" in the first stage where errors are normalized as a healthy part of acquisition. To successfully operationalize these findings, a fundamental shift in the identity of the language teacher is mandatory in Uzbekistan's universities. The educator must shift from a rigid evaluator to a facilitator of communication. Feedback must become constructive and delayed; instead of interrupting a student mid-thought, teachers should discreetly note common systemic errors and address them anonymously during the accuracy-focused phase.

**Conclusion.** Developing oral English proficiency requires a comprehensive approach addressing both affective and cognitive factors. Overcoming foreign language anxiety requires shifting the pedagogical focus toward communication-driven, interactive environments. By blending fluency-focused activities with constructive, delayed feedback for accuracy, teachers can cultivate confident and competent speakers. Implementing innovative methods like role-plays, drills, and structured discussions will pave the way for successful language acquisition in the 21st-century educational landscape of Uzbekistan.

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