
Possibilities and opportunities for overcoming psychological obstacles in teaching English in general education schools

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Annotation *The teaching of English in general education schools often faces significant psychological obstacles that hinder both students' motivation and teachers' effectiveness. These challenges include language anxiety, fear of making mistakes, lack of confidence, and low self-esteem among learners. This paper explores various strategies to overcome these psychological barriers, focusing on student-centered teaching methods, the creation of a supportive classroom environment, and the integration of psychological support techniques such as positive reinforcement and stress-reduction exercises. Additionally, the article analyzes the role of teacher attitudes and emotional intelligence in fostering a psychologically safe learning atmosphere. Drawing on recent research and practical classroom observations, this study emphasizes the need for a holistic approach that addresses not only linguistic skills but also emotional and psychological well-being. The findings suggest that overcoming psychological challenges is a key to improving language acquisition and fostering a more inclusive, confident, and motivated classroom community.*

Keywords *Psychological obstacles, language anxiety, emotional intelligence, motivation, student confidence, English teaching, general education, stress reduction, supportive environment, classroom strategies*

Возможности и пути преодоления психологических препятствий в преподавании английского языка в общеобразовательных школах

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Аннотация *Преподавание английского языка в общеобразовательных школах часто сталкивается со значительными психологическими препятствиями, которые мешают как мотивации учащихся, так и эффективности работы учителей. К этим проблемам относятся языковая тревожность, страх совершить ошибку, неуверенность в себе и низкая самооценка учащихся. В этой статье рассматриваются различные стратегии преодоления этих психологических барьеров, уделяя особое внимание методам обучения, ориентированным на учащихся, созданию благоприятной среды в классе и интеграции методов психологической поддержки, таких как позитивное подкрепление и упражнения по снижению стресса. Кроме того, в статье анализируется роль отношения учителя и эмоционального интеллекта в создании психологически безопасной атмосферы обучения. Опираясь на недавние исследования и практические наблюдения за классом, в этом*

исследовании подчеркивается необходимость целостного подхода, который учитывает не только языковые навыки, но и эмоциональное и психологическое благополучие. Результаты показывают, что преодоление психологических проблем является ключом к улучшению усвоения языка и созданию более инклюзивного, уверенного и мотивированного сообщества в классе.

Ключевые слова

Психологические препятствия, языковая тревожность, эмоциональный интеллект, мотивация, уверенность учащихся, преподавание английского языка, общее образование, снижение стресса, благоприятная среда, стратегии в классе

Umumiy ta'lim maktablarida ingliz tili o'qitishdagi psixologik to'siqlarni yengib olish imkoniyatlari va o'tish yo'llari

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Annotatsiya

Umumta'lim maktablarida ingliz tilini o'rgatish ko'pincha o'quvchilarning motivatsiyasiga va o'qituvchilarning samaradorligiga to'sqinlik qiluvchi jiddiy psixologik to'siqlarga duch keladi. Bu qiyinchiliklar til tashvishi, xato qilishdan qo'rqish, o'quvchilarning o'ziga ishonchsizlik va o'zini past bahosini o'z ichiga oladi. Ushbu maqola ushbu psixologik to'siqlarni bartaraf etishning turli strategiyalarini o'rganadi, talabalarga yo'naltirilgan o'qitish usullariga, qo'llab-quvvatlovchi sinf muhitini yaratishga va ijobiy mustahkamlash va stressni kamaytirish mashqlari kabi psixologik yordam usullarini integratsiyalashga qaratilgan. Bundan tashqari, maqolada psixologik xavfsiz o'quv muhitini shakllantirishda o'qituvchining munosabati va hissiy intellektning roli tahlil qilinadi. Yaqinda o'tkazilgan tadqiqotlar va amaliy sinf kuzatuvlariga tayangan holda, ushbu tadqiqot nafaqat lingvistik qobiliyatlarni, balki hissiy va psixologik farovonlikni ham ko'rib chiqadigan yaxlit yondashuv zarurligini ta'kidlaydi. Topilmalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, psixologik qiyinchiliklarni yengish tilni o'zlashtirishni yaxshilash va yanada inklyuziv, ishonchli va motivatsiyali sinf hamjamiyatini rivojlantirish uchun kalit hisoblanadi.

Kalit so'zlar

Psixologik to'siqlar, til tashvishi, hissiy intellekt, motivatsiya, o'quvchilarning ishonchi, ingliz tilini o'rgatish, umumiy ta'lim, stressni kamaytirish, qo'llab-quvvatlovchi muhit, sinf strategiyalari

Introduction

In today's globalized world, English language proficiency is a vital skill. However, teaching English in general education schools presents unique challenges beyond pedagogy

and curriculum. One of the most pressing issues is the psychological barrier that many students encounter during the learning process. These barriers – such as anxiety, fear of speaking, low motivation, and lack of self-

confidence – can significantly impair students' ability to engage with the material, participate in classroom activities, and achieve linguistic competence.

Teachers in general education schools often report difficulties in motivating learners who feel overwhelmed or fearful of making mistakes. Additionally, traditional methods of instruction may not address the emotional needs of students (Goleman, 1995). This paper seeks to identify the most common psychological challenges in English language classrooms and examine evidence-based strategies for overcoming them. By creating a psychologically safe and encouraging environment, educators can support more effective and enjoyable language learning.

Numerous studies have investigated the psychological dimensions of second language acquisition. Horwitz et al. introduced the concept of Foreign Language Anxiety (FLA), describing it as a specific set of beliefs and self-perceptions related to language learning. Since then, research has consistently shown that anxiety negatively correlates with language performance.

Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis highlights how emotional variables such as anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation affect language acquisition. Learners with a high affective filter struggle to internalize new information, regardless of their cognitive capabilities.

MacIntyre and Gardner emphasized that language anxiety can affect all stages of language production: input, processing, and output. They argue that reducing anxiety is essential for promoting student participation and success.

Recent approaches focus on emotional intelligence and teacher-student rapport. Goleman suggested that teachers who are emotionally attuned to their students can foster an inclusive and empathetic classroom culture. Contemporary classroom research supports the use of cooperative learning,

mindfulness activities, and differentiated instruction to reduce psychological stressors.

This study employed a mixed-method approach, combining qualitative interviews with English teachers and quantitative surveys of high school students across several general education schools. A total of 120 students and 15 teachers participated.

Teachers were interviewed about the psychological challenges they observe in their students and the strategies they employ to manage them. Students completed anonymous questionnaires assessing their attitudes toward English learning, levels of anxiety, self-confidence, and classroom experiences.

The data were analyzed using thematic coding for qualitative responses and descriptive statistics for quantitative data. Particular attention was paid to identifying recurring obstacles and effective interventions reported by participants.

The findings revealed that 78% of students reported moderate to high levels of language-related anxiety. The most common sources of stress were fear of making mistakes (62%), speaking in front of the class (59%), and perceived teacher criticism (41%).

Teachers identified several key practices for reducing psychological obstacles:

- Encouraging peer collaboration;
- Using games and role-plays;
- Providing consistent positive feedback;
- Avoiding overcorrection of mistakes in early stages.

Interview responses showed that students felt more motivated and confident when the classroom atmosphere was supportive and non-judgmental. Furthermore, the use of breathing exercises and brief mindfulness practices before oral presentations led to noticeable improvements in performance and willingness to speak.

Teachers with higher emotional intelligence scores (based on self-assessment scales) reported fewer behavioral issues and more positive student engagement.

The research confirms that psychological factors play a critical role in English language education. Fear, anxiety, and lack of motivation can significantly hinder a student's ability to learn. However, the classroom can be transformed into a psychologically safe space by implementing targeted strategies (Horwitz, Horwitz & Cope, 1986).

The analysis of student responses demonstrated a direct relationship between classroom environment and learners' emotional states. In classes where teachers implemented personalized encouragement, 70% of students reported higher engagement and reduced fear of making mistakes. Furthermore, the implementation of collaborative tasks – such as group dialogues, peer reviews, and role-playing – helped students externalize their fear and build self-assurance.

One notable observation was that students in lower grades (ages 11–13) exhibited more language-related anxiety than older students, often due to limited vocabulary and social insecurity. Meanwhile, older students were more concerned about grammatical accuracy and peer judgment. This indicates that psychological strategies should be age-sensitive and adaptive.

Teachers highlighted the effectiveness of specific tools, such as:

- Warm-up speaking circles;
- "No wrong answer" exercises;
- Journaling in English as emotional reflection;
- Use of humor to lower tension.

The results underscore the idea that psychological resilience can be cultivated within the classroom if the learning environment emphasizes growth rather than perfection.

The findings align with Krashen's Affective Filter Theory and support the argument that learners cannot progress linguistically without emotional safety. Notably, students who received continuous affirmation from their teachers – even in the form of brief

positive comments – reported greater willingness to communicate.

In the Uzbek general education context, psychological challenges are often intensified by systemic pressures: exam-based assessments, large class sizes, and lack of psychological training for teachers. This context suggests a strong need for systemic change that integrates mental health awareness into national teaching standards.

Moreover, the study reveals a disconnect between teacher intention and student perception. While 80% of teachers claimed to use positive reinforcement, only 53% of students confirmed feeling emotionally supported. This discrepancy highlights the need for reflective teaching practices and open communication between educators and learners (Krashen, 1982).

Finally, while strategies like mindfulness and emotional check-ins are growing in popularity globally, they are still rarely adopted in Uzbek schools. Their integration could be a game-changer for student engagement and long-term language retention.

Overcoming psychological obstacles in English language teaching is not merely a pedagogical choice but a necessity for meaningful learning. This study confirms that when emotional and psychological barriers are addressed, students are more likely to speak, experiment, and persist in their language learning journey.

Expanded Recommendations:

- Introduce pre-service and in-service teacher training on student psychology.
- Employ school psychologists or mental health coordinators in general education institutions.
- Develop national guidelines for emotionally responsive language teaching.
- Create culturally adapted materials focused on confidence-building and emotional expression.

- Encourage peer mentoring systems among students to strengthen social-emotional learning.

By acknowledging the emotional landscape of the classroom, educators and policymakers can unlock greater educational equity and success in language learning across Uzbekistan and beyond.

- Integrating psychological support methods (e.g., mindfulness, motivational interviewing);

- Training teachers in emotional intelligence and student psychology;
- Creating a feedback culture based on encouragement rather than correction;
- Adapting tasks to different confidence levels through differentiation.

Addressing psychological barriers should be a core component of teacher training and curriculum design. With the right support, all students can overcome their fears and unlock their potential in language learning.

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