Communication anxiety and oral participation in English as a foreign language: a proposal for understanding the university classroom experience of pre-service English teachers

Valeria Peña Perez, Deimer Jesus Dominguez Ojeda, Nellys Esther Montenegro De La Hoz, Wilman José Calderon Escobar

Licenciatura En Español E Inglés-Departamento De Lenguas Modernas Universidad Popular Del Cesar

Abstract

Speaking a foreign language in front of peers is, for many learners, one of the most emotionally demanding tasks of the language classroom. This article presents a research proposal designed to examine how communication anxiety shapes the oral participation of undergraduate students enrolled in an English as a Foreign Language (EFL) teacher-education program. Although these students are simultaneously learners and future teachers of English, informal classroom observation suggests that a considerable number of them still avoid spontaneous speaking tasks, hesitate before answering questions, or restrict their contributions to short, low-risk utterances. Grounded in the theoretical models of foreign language anxiety proposed by Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) and in the willingness-to-communicate framework developed by MacIntyre, Clément, Dörnyei and Noels (1998), the study proposes a quantitative, descriptive-correlational design that will combine a communication anxiety questionnaire, a classroom observation checklist, and a short perception survey applied to approximately thirty students of the Licenciatura en Español e Inglés. The proposal outlines the problem, the theoretical foundations, the specific objectives, and the methodological route that will allow the research team to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between anxiety and voluntary oral participation, as well as to identify pedagogical strategies that pre-service teachers themselves perceive as anxiety-reducing. The expected findings are intended to inform teacher-education practices that make oral skill development more inclusive and psychologically sustainable.

Keywords: communication anxiety, foreign language classroom anxiety, oral participation, willingness to communicate, pre-service English teachers

Correspondence: vpenap@unicesar.edu.co, djdominguez@unicesar.edu.co, nellysemontenegro@unicesar.edu.co, wjcalderon@unicesar.edu.co