THE ROLE OF MIND MAPPING IN OVERCOMING SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG EFL LEARNERS

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Abstract: This thesis explores the role and significance of the mind mapping method in reducing speaking anxiety among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. It highlights mechanisms such as visual information processing, structuring thoughts, and activating memory to boost learners' self-confidence and overcome psychological barriers. The research findings indicate that utilizing mind mapping techniques is an effective tool in stimulating students' oral activity and fluency.

Keywords: mind mapping, speaking anxiety, EFL learners, oral communication, psychological barrier, visual aids, confidence, language learning, cognitive approach, fluency.

Introduction

In the process of learning a foreign language, many learners encounter various psychological difficulties, particularly speaking anxiety. This condition hinders students from freely expressing their thoughts and fully demonstrating their grammatical and lexical capabilities. Traditional classroom settings often fail to provide sufficient conditions to overcome this issue. Therefore, it is relevant to apply modern visual technologies that reduce students' internal anxiety and support their cognitive abilities.

The mind mapping method is an effective pedagogical tool that helps organize thoughts in a networked and visual manner. Structuring thoughts schematically in the form of a mind map prior to oral speech allows the learner to plan what to say in advance. As a

result, retrieving information from memory becomes easier, and hesitations and nervousness during speaking are significantly reduced.

Main Body

Mind mapping is a method of connecting keywords, concepts, and images around a central idea in a networked format. The human brain accepts information better through networked associations rather than linear text. During the mind map creation process, the learner arranges their thoughts in a logical sequence, which reduces the fear of searching for words or forgetting sentences during speech.

Anxiety in speaking a foreign language is often associated with the fear of making mistakes, losing face in front of listeners, and a lack of vocabulary. This condition leads to physiological changes, such as an increased heart rate and nervousness, alongside psychological instability. Even if a learner possesses sufficient linguistic knowledge, anxiety prevents them from verbally expressing their thoughts smoothly.

Creating a brief mind map before oral communication activities provides learners with stable anchor points. Instead of memorizing a full text, the learner speaks by relying only on key conceptual words. This reduces the cognitive load on memory, increases self-confidence, and ensures a more natural and fluid communication process.

Integrating mind mapping into daily lesson plans requires a structured pedagogical approach. Teachers can introduce collaborative mind mapping sessions where students brainstorm vocabulary, key phrases, and structural ideas in small groups before engaging in dialogues or presentations. Furthermore, modern digital tools (such as XMind, MindMeister, or Miro) allow learners to create interactive and visually appealing maps digitally, bridging modern technology integration with language acquisition and teamwork.

The educator plays a vital role in fostering a supportive and low-affective-filter classroom atmosphere. When students present or speak based on their personal mind maps, the focus should shift from immediate error correction to communicative fluency and meaningful expression. Formative feedback that values content organization and logical

flow over strict structural perfection helps students build intrinsic motivation, reducing fear of negative evaluation and communication apprehension.

Conclusion

In conclusion, utilizing the mind mapping method in foreign language classes plays an important role in overcoming EFL learners' speaking anxiety and developing their communication skills. Organizing thoughts visually provides students with self-confidence and stimulates active verbal participation.

Systematically introducing this technique into the educational process helps eliminate psychological barriers in language learning and serves to improve students' overall academic and practical proficiency.

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