

## ENHANCING WILLINGNESS TO COMMUNICATE THROUGH SPEAKING ACTIVITIES IN THE EFL CLASSROOM

Speaking is often the most difficult skill for young learners of English as a Foreign Language (EFL), not because of limited language knowledge, but because of their reluctance to speak in class. This reluctance is closely related to learners' Willingness to Communicate (WTC). This study explores how different types of classroom speaking activities influence learners' WTC, self-perceived communicative competence (SPCC) and foreign language classroom anxiety (FLCA).

The study was conducted in a Polish primary school with four focal learners aged 7–12. Over a two-month period, a small set of speaking activities was used repeatedly, including free-topic speaking, information-gap tasks, supported role-plays, planning time and structured turn-taking routines. A mixed-methods design was adopted, combining child-friendly SPCC and FLCA scales with classroom observations of self-initiated speaking behaviour and emotional reactions.

The findings show that speaking activities which offer structure, preparation time and emotional safety are more effective in encouraging participation. The study highlights the importance of task design and classroom atmosphere in supporting young learners' willingness to speak English.

Keywords: Willingness to Communicate (WTC); speaking activities; young EFL learners; SPCC; FLCA

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