

Using ICT to Reduce Speaking Anxiety in an Adolescent Vocational EFL Learner: An Action Research Study

Foreign language speaking anxiety remains a significant obstacle for EFL learners, where communicative competence is directly linked to future job success. This action research aims to investigate the effectiveness of Information and Communication Technology tools in reducing the anxiety of public speaking and enhancing the willingness to communicate (WTC) of a 16-year-old female culinary learner in Vietnam.

The research employed a qualitative action research method over a specific intervention period. The data was collected and triangulated through classroom observation, a semi-structured interview with an experienced TESOL professor, and learners' self-reflection diary. The intervention phase was conducted using a 'Bank of five' ICT activities, which are arranged in order from less-pressured, instructed activities (Quizlet, MindMeister) to interactive activities and games (Kahoot, Flip). These activities aim to create an environment that has a low emotional filter, allowing the learner to practice, record, and self-evaluate in her own digital space before communicating directly.

The findings showed a significant reduction in the learner's speaking anxiety and a corresponding increase in the WTC according to each situation. ICT tools played a role in the psychological safety net, which helps shift the focus from linguistic accuracy to meaningful communication oriented toward career goals. Visual support and asynchronous recording help reduce cognition and the fear of immediate judgment. However, the research also observed that although confidence was improved in the digital and structured environment, the state of scaffold dependency remained, showing that the shift from spontaneous communication beyond the digital environment needs a gradual process of fading support

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