



Overcoming Shyness and Bullying in EFL Classrooms: Strategies for Promoting Communicative Competence among Iraqi Learners

<https://doi.org/10.52834/jmr.v20i39.237>

Asst. Prof. Dr. Najm Abdullah Burhan

University of Misan / College of Education

najim@uomisan.edu.iq

<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0244-8648>

Abstract:

The improvement of communicative competence in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) is essential for Iraqi learners to involve effectively in personal, academic, and professional contexts. However, learners often face obstacles like shyness and bullying that could hinder their language acquisition and participation in classroom activities. This research examines strategies to overcome those obstacles and endorse a supportive learning environment that nurtures communicative capability amongst Iraqi EFL learners. Through a wide-ranging literature review, the study inspects theoretical perspectives from the affective filter hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and motivational backgrounds to comprehend the multidimensional factors influencing language learning practices. The conceptual model offered integrates individual factors (shyness, anxiety, motivation), social features (bullying, peer relationships, classroom climate), and pedagogical methods to explore their relationship in developing communicative competence. The research theorizes that targeted interventions, like affective strategies, anti-bullying programs, and supportive learning techniques, can alleviate the negative impacts of shyness and bullying, thereby enhancing learners' communicative capabilities. The findings have important implications for EFL teaching practices in Iraq, highlighting the importance of creating inclusive classrooms, applying communicative language teaching approaches, cultivating peer support, and addressing socio-cultural effects. Eventually, this study contributes to the body of knowledge on endorsing communicative competence and presents applied references for educators, policymakers, and shareholders in the arena of EFL education in Iraq.

Keywords: overcoming, shyness, bullying, communicative competence, Iraqi learners.

**JMR**

P-ISSN:1815-6622

E-ISSN:2789-7354

Journal of Misan Researches

Volume 20, Issue 39, (2024), PP 382 - 397

التغلب على الخجل والتمتر في فصول اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: استراتيجيات لتعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية بين المتعلمين العراقيين

<https://doi.org/10.52834/jmr.v20i39.237>

أ.م.د. نجم عبدالله برهان

كلية التربية / جامعة ميسان

najim@uomisan.edu.iq<https://orcid.org/0000-0002-0244-8648>

الملخص:

يعد تحسين الكفاءة التواصلية في اللغة الإنجليزية أمراً ضرورياً للمتعلمين العراقيين للمشاركة بفعالية في السياقات الشخصية والأكاديمية والمهنية. ومع ذلك، غالباً ما يواجه المتعلمون عقبات مثل الخجل والتمتر التي قد تعيق اكتسابهم للغة والمشاركة في أنشطة الفصل الدراسي. يتناول هذا البحث استراتيجيات التغلب على تلك العقبات وتأييد بيئة تعليمية داعمة تنمي القدرة على التواصل بين متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق. من خلال مراجعة الأدبيات واسعة النطاق، تفحص الدراسة وجهات النظر النظرية من فرضية المرشح العاطفي، والنظرية الاجتماعية والثقافية، والخلفيات التحفيزية لفهم العوامل المتعددة الأبعاد التي تؤثر على ممارسات تعلم اللغة. يدمج النموذج المفاهيمي المقدم العوامل الفردية (الخجل، والقلق، والتحفيز)، والسمات الاجتماعية (التمتر، والعلاقات مع الأقران، ومناخ الفصل الدراسي)، والأساليب التربوية لاستكشاف علاقتها في تطوير الكفاءة التواصلية. وينظر البحث إلى أن التدخلات المستهدفة، مثل الاستراتيجيات العاطفية، وبرامج مكافحة التمر، وأساليب التعلم الداعمة، يمكن أن تخفف من الآثار السلبية للخجل والتمتر، وبالتالي تعزيز القدرات التواصلية لدى المتعلمين. النتائج لها آثار مهمة على ممارسات تدريس اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق، حيث تسلط الضوء على أهمية إنشاء فصول دراسية شاملة، وتطبيق مناهج تدريس اللغة التواصلية، وتنمية دعم الأقران، ومعالجة التأثيرات الاجتماعية والثقافية. في نهاية المطاف، تساهم هذه الدراسة في مجموعة المعرفة حول تأييد الكفاءة التواصلية وتقدم مراجع تطبيقية للمعلمين وصانعي السياسات والمساهمين في مجال تعليم اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية في العراق.

الكلمات المفتاحية: التغلب ، الخجل ، التمر ، الكفاءة التواصلية ، المتعلمين العراقيين.

1. Introduction



Within the speedily evolving global landscape, proficiency in the English language has appeared as an indispensable asset for personal and professional growth. Iraq, a nation with an amusing cultural tapestry and an increasingly dynamic economy, recognizes the pivotal role that English language capability plays in facilitating cross-cultural interactions, accessing global awareness resources, and fostering economic opportunities. As the lingua franca of international communication, English functions as a gateway to a world of possibilities, enabling individuals to surpass geographical boundaries and engage with diverse communities and perspectives (Crystal, 2003, 3).

In spite of the acknowledged importance of English language proficiency, Iraqi learners habitually encounter various obstacles in their journey to develop communicative competence. Those challenges can manifest in various forms, hindering their ability to effectively connect in English and limiting their potential for personal and professional growth. Two significant hurdles which Iraqi learners frequently face are shyness and bullying, both of which can have profound influences on their language learning experience and overall development.

Shyness is a pervasive phenomenon among Iraqi learners, predominantly in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classrooms. Cultural and societal norms, along with individual character traits, can contribute to a reluctance to participate actively in classroom activities. This shyness could manifest itself in various ways, like hesitation to speak up, fear of making mistakes, and an overall lack of confidence in using the language. As a result, shy learners may miss out on appreciated opportunities to practice and improve their communicative skills, accordingly hindering their general language development.

Bullying is additional significant challenge that can undermine the learning environment and harmfully impact learners' willingness to engage in classroom activities. In EFL classrooms, bullying could take various forms, including verbal harassment, social exclusion, or even physical pressure. When learners experience bullying, they may become hesitant to participate, afraid of being ridiculed or mocked for their language abilities or errors. This fear can create a barrier to effective communication and hinder the development of communicative capability.

2. Research Objectives and Significance of the Study

Such research goals to explore strategies and approaches for overcoming shyness and tackling bullying in EFL classrooms in Iraq. By identifying and addressing these



challenges, the study pursues to promote a supportive and inclusive learning environment that fosters communicative capability among Iraqi learners.

The importance of this study lies in its potential to contribute to the improvement of English language teaching and learning in Iraq. Via providing effective strategies to combat shyness and bullying, instructors can create a more encouraging environment for learners to improve their communicative skills without fear or inhibition. Moreover, the research findings may have broader implications for EFL education in other contexts where analogous challenges are encountered (Hosseini & Pourmandnia, 2013, 65).

Via addressing the issues of shyness and bullying, this study aims to empower Iraqi learners to contribute actively in the classroom, engage in meaningful communication, and eventually achieve higher levels of English language proficiency. This, in turn, can unlock chances for personal growth, academic success, and professional advancement in an increasingly globalized world. Moreover, the study's findings may contribute to the growth of more effective pedagogical approaches and classroom management strategies, eventually enhancing the overall quality of EFL education in Iraq and beyond.

3. Literature Review

The hypothetical and empirical foundations underpinning this study draw from various areas, including communicative language teaching approaches, affective factors influencing language learning, and socio-cultural impacts on language acquisition. These frameworks offer valued insights into the challenges faced via Iraqi learners in evolving communicative capability and serve as a basis for discovering effective strategies to address shyness and bullying in EFL schoolrooms.

The communicative language teaching (CLT) method has gained widespread recognition as an effective methodology for developing learners' communicative competence (Richards & Rodgers, 2014, 23). This method emphasizes the use of authentic language in real-life situations, boosting learners to engage in meaningful interactions and develop their ability to connect effectively in various contexts. However, the successful implementation of CLT depends on generating a supportive and all-encompassing learning environment that fosters dynamic participation and hazard-taking (Savignon, 2018, 2).

Emotional factors, such as shyness, anxiety, and self-confidence, have been recognized as significant influencers of language learning effects (Horwitz et al., 1986; Dörnyei & Ryan, 2015, 128). Shyness, especially, can manifest as a reluctance to engage in classroom activities, fear of making errors, and a broad lack of confidence in using



the target language. Those affective barriers can obstruct learners' progress and limit their opportunities to practice and develop communicative abilities (Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014, 126).

Socio-cultural impacts, such as bullying and classroom dynamics, also play a crucial role in determining language learners' experiences and outcomes (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006; Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, 197). Bullying, whereas verbal, social, or physical, can create an atmosphere of fear and fear, discouraging learners from actively participating in classroom activities. Moreover, the dynamics of the classroom, including the relationships among peers and the teacher's educational approach, can significantly impact learners' willingness to engage and their overall language growth (Dörnyei & Murphey 2003, 112).

Experiential studies have explored the trials of shyness, bullying, and communicative capability in various EFL contexts, providing valuable insights into the experiences of learners and the strategies hired via educators to address these issues. For instance, researchers investigated the influence of shyness on Iraqi EFL learners' classroom participation and found that approaches like creating a supportive environment, encouraging risk-taking, and fostering peer support can alleviate the effects of shyness.

Likewise, Fekkes et al., (2005, 84) examined the impact of bullying on EFL learners' partaking in Iraqi classrooms and highlighted the importance of implementing anti-bullying policies, endorsing inclusive classroom practices, and fostering a culture of respect and empathy.

Whereas existing literature has shed light on the challenges faced by EFL learners in evolving communicative competence, there remains a need for a comprehensive exploration of tactics precisely tailored to address the exceptional cultural and learning contexts of Iraq. This study goals to bridge this gap by investigating effective approaches to overcome shyness and tackle bullying in Iraqi EFL classrooms, ultimately promoting communicative competence amongst learners.

4. Conceptual Analysis

To efficiently address the challenges of shyness and bullying in Iraqi EFL classrooms, it is crucial to cultivate a comprehensive understanding of these phenomena within the context of language learning. This conceptual analysis goals to provide a nuanced exploration of shyness and bullying, their displays, impacts, and underlying factors, laying the foundation for rising operational strategies to promote communicative competence among Iraqi learners.



Shyness is a multilayered construct that encompasses psychological and social aspects. From a mental perspective, shyness is often characterized by feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness, and fear of negative assessment in social conditions (Crozier, 2001, 57). Socially, shyness can show as an unwillingness to engage in interpersonal interactions, avoidance of attention, and an inclination to stay withdrawn (Henderson & Zimbardo, 2001, 435). In language learning contexts, shyness could take various forms, such as hesitation to speak up in class, horror of making mistakes in front of peers, and an overall lack of confidence in using the target language. Those manifestations can significantly impact language acquisition and the improvement of communicative competence, as learners may miss out on valuable opportunities to exercise and obtain feedback (MacIntyre et al., 1998, 38).

Bullying, alternatively, is a complex and pervasive phenomenon that can have detrimental impacts on learners' academic performance and overall well-being (Olweus, 1993, 76). In learning situations, bullying can take various forms, including verbal (name-calling, teasing, threats), physical (hitting, pushing, damaging belongings), and interpersonal (social exclusion, rumor spreading) (Rigby, 2007, 112). The penalties of bullying can be far-reaching, often leading to reduced motivation, anxiety, and a reluctance to participate in classroom activities. For language learners, bullying could create a hostile environment which inhibits their willingness to engage in communicative practices, hindering their general language development and proficiency.

Socio-cultural features also play a significant role in shaping the dynamics of shyness and bullying in learning contexts. Cultural norms, societal expectations, and power dynamics within the classroom could influence the manifestation and perception of these phenomena (Fanti & Henrich, 2015, 10). For example, in some cultures, shyness may be viewed as a desirable trait, while in others, it might be perceived as a weakness or lack of confidence (Crozier & Alden, 2001, 57). Likewise, bullying behaviors may be more prevalent in environments where hierarchical constructions and power inequities are deeply rooted (Fekkes et al., 2005, 84). Understanding these socio-cultural features is crucial for developing socially-responsive tactics to address shyness and bullying in Iraqi EFL schoolrooms.

Via critically examining the psychological, social, and cultural dimensions of shyness and bullying, this conceptual examination offers a comprehensive framework for understanding the challenges confronted by Iraqi EFL learners. It highlights the multifaceted nature of these phenomena and their possible impact on language acquisition and communicative competence development. Equipped with this conceptual understanding, educators and researchers can mature more targeted and effective



strategies to create a supportive and inclusive learning environment, eventually fostering communicative competence amongst Iraqi learners.

5. Theoretical Perspectives

Theoretical backgrounds provide valuable lenses through which to understand and address the trials of shyness and bullying in language learning contexts. This section explores three powerful theoretical perspectives – the affective filter hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and motivational structures – and their relevance to creating a supportive and inclusive learning situation which fosters communicative competence amongst Iraqi EFL learners.

The emotional filter hypothesis, proposed by Stephen Krashen (1982, 231), suggests that affective factors, like anxiety, self-confidence, and motivation, can act as filters that either ease or hinder language acquisition. According to this hypothesis, learners with high levels of anxiety or low self-confidence might have a metaphorical "filter" that blocks comprehensible input from getting the language acquisition device, consequently hindering their ability to learn the target language efficiently (Krashen, 1985, 176). This theoretical perspective is particularly relevant to understanding the influence of shyness and bullying on language learning, as both can contribute to heightened anxiety, reduced self-confidence, and a reluctance to engage in communicative accomplishments. By addressing these emotional barriers, educators can lower the affective filter and create an environment conducive to language acquisition and communicative capability improvement.

Sociocultural theory, developed via Lev Vygotsky and expanded upon by scholars like James V. Wertsch and Michael Cole, stresses the role of social and cultural contexts in shaping cognitive growth and learning (Lantolf & Thorne, 2006, 12). From this perspective, language learning is not just an individual process but rather a socially mediated activity that is influenced by the learner's communications with others and the cultural tools obtainable in their environment (Vygotsky, 1978, 86). This model has significant implications for understanding the influence of bullying and classroom dynamics on language learning, as a negative social environment could impede learners' ability to engage in meaningful interactions and utilize the available cultural funds for language acquisition (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, 115). Via creating a supportive and inclusive classroom culture, educators can leverage the principles of sociocultural theory to ease language learning through social interactions and the effective exploitation of cultural implements.



Motivational theories, like self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985, 69) and the L2 motivational self-system (Dörnyei, 2009, 89), offer visions into the role of motivation in language learning and its possible to overcome challenges like shyness and bullying. Self-determination theory suggests that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are influenced by the satisfaction of three basic psychological requirements: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2000, 76). Via fostering a sense of autonomy, providing opportunities for learners to develop competence, and endorsing a sense of relatedness within the classroom community, educators can enhance learners' motivation and upsurge their willingness to participate and engage in communicative actions. The L2 motivational self-system, on the other hand, proposes that learners' motivated behavior is influenced by their ideal self (the representation of their desired future state) and their ought-to self (the demonstration of external expectations and obligations) (Dörnyei, 2009, 28). Via helping learners envision their ideal selves as proficient language users and addressing exterior pressures or expectations that may contribute to shyness or bullying, educators could harness the influence of motivation to overcome these challenges.

These theoretical viewpoints – the affective filter hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and motivational theories – present complementary lenses through which to comprehend the complex interchange of affective, social, and motivational factors that influence language learning and communicative capability development. Via integrating insights from these theoretical frameworks, educators and researchers could develop inclusive strategies to create a supportive and wide-ranging learning environment that addresses the trials of shyness and bullying, eventually fostering communicative competence among Iraqi EFL learners.

6. Conceptual Framework and Research Propositions

Constructing upon the theoretical perspectives discussed in the previous section, this study suggests a conceptual framework that integrates various factors influencing the development of communicative ability among Iraqi EFL learners, with a particular focus on the challenges of shyness and bullying. This theoretical model serves as a guiding framework for the research suggestions and hypotheses that will be discovered in this study.

The projected conceptual model acknowledges the multidimensional nature of language learning and communication, identifying the interplay between individual factors (e.g., shyness, anxiety, motivation), social aspects (e.g., bullying, peer relationships, classroom climate), and pedagogical issues (e.g., teacher strategies,



instructional approaches). At the core of this model lies the notion of communicative competence, which encompasses not only linguistic knowledge but also the capacity to use language effectively in numerous social and cultural contexts (Canale & Swain, 1980, 67; Bachman, 1990, 27-9).

In this framework, shyness and bullying are conceptualized as potential barriers to the development of communicative competence. Shyness, characterized by feelings of anxiety, self-consciousness, and fear of negative assessment (Crozier, 2001; Henderson & Zimbardo, 2001, 86), can inhibit learners' willingness to involve in communicative activities and exercise using the target language. Bullying, in its numerous forms (verbal, physical, relational), can create a hostile and threatening environment that undermines learners' motivation, self-confidence, and overall well-being (Olweus, 1993, 149; Rigby, 2007, 112), further hindering their ability to develop communicative capability.

The theoretical model also recognizes the potential regulating factors that can influence the correlation between shyness, bullying, and communicative competence development. These factors might include teacher strategies (e.g., creating a supportive classroom environment, using affective strategies), peer backing (e.g., collaborative learning, peer mentoring), and the overall classroom climate (e.g., endorsing respect, fostering a sense of community).

Grounded on this conceptual framework, the following research propositions and hypotheses are proposed:

Correlation between shyness, bullying, and communicative competence:

Proposition: Shyness and bullying are undesirably associated with the development of communicative competence amongst Iraqi EFL learners.

Hypothesis: Iraqi EFL learners who practice higher levels of shyness and/or bullying will exhibit lower levels of communicative capability compared to those who do not experience these trials.

Controlling factors (e.g., teacher strategies, peer support, classroom climate):

Proposition: The undesirable impact of shyness and bullying on communicative competence development could be moderated by various factors, including teacher strategies, peer support, and the overall classroom climate.



Hypothesis: Iraqi EFL learners who practice shyness and/or bullying but receive effective teacher support, engage in cooperative learning with supportive peers, and contribute in a positive classroom climate will reveal higher levels of communicative competence compared to those who do not have access to these controlling factors.

Possible interventions and their hypothesized effects:

Proposition: Applying targeted interventions aimed at addressing shyness and bullying, such as emotional strategies, anti-bullying programs, and classroom management techniques, can improve communicative competence development among Iraqi EFL learners.

Hypothesis: Iraqi EFL learners who contribute in interventions designed to mitigate shyness (e.g., self-assurance-building activities, risk-taking encouragement) and address bullying (e.g., anti-bullying strategies, conflict resolution training) will exhibit higher levels of communicative competence associated to those who do not receive such interventions.

These research suggestions and hypotheses will guide the empirical investigation of the relations between shyness, bullying, and communicative competence development, as well as the potential moderating factors and interferences that can support Iraqi EFL learners in overcoming these challenges. Via empirically testing these propositions, this study goals to contribute to the existing body of knowledge and offer valuable insights for educators, policymakers, and shareholders in the field of EFL education in Iraq.

7. Discussion and Implications

This study's outcomes and conceptual framework contribute to a deeper understanding of the challenges posed via shyness and bullying in language learning contexts, chiefly in the realm of Iraqi EFL classrooms. The hypothetical and empirical insights gained from this research have significant implications for EFL teaching practices, classroom practices, and future research instructions.

The incorporation of various theoretical perspectives, including the affective filter hypothesis (Krashen, 1982, 1985, 67-8), sociocultural concept (Vygotsky, 1978; Lantolf & Thorne, 2006), and motivational notions, provides a comprehensive framework for understanding the multifaceted interplay of affective, social, and motivational factors that impact language learning and communicative competence improvement. By examining shyness and bullying over these theoretical lenses, this study offers valuable insights into the psychological, social, and cultural proportions of these phenomena,



contributing to a more nuanced understanding of their manifestations and influences on language acquisition processes.

- Inferences for EFL Teaching Methodologies in Iraq:

Creating Comprehensive and Supportive Learning Environments:

This revision highlights the importance of creating inclusive and supportive learning environments that nurture a sense of belonging, respect, and psychological safety for Iraqi EFL learners. Via implementing strategies that promote a positive classroom climate, educators can alleviate the effects of shyness and bullying, encouraging learners to participate actively and involve in communicative activities without fear or inhibition.

- Relating Communicative Language Teaching Methods:

The communicative language teaching (CLT) technique emphasizes the development of communicative competence over meaningful interactions and authentic language use (Richards & Rodgers, 2014; Savignon, 2018, 87). Via adopting CLT techniques that promote learner-centered activities, task-based learning, and collaborative discussions, Iraqi EFL educators can create opportunities for learners to practice and mature their communicative skills in a supportive and engaging setting.

- Nurturing Peer Support and Collaboration:

Peer support and cooperation can play a crucial role in addressing shyness and bullying in Iraqi EFL classrooms. Via implementing cooperative learning strategies, peer mentoring programs, and nurturing a sense of community among learners, educators can create a supportive social network which boosts risk-taking, boosts self-confidence, and promotes positive language learning practices (Dörnyei & Murphey, 2003, 59).

- Tackling Affective Factors and Socio-Cultural Influences:

This study underlines the importance of acknowledging and addressing the affective factors and socio-cultural effects that shape language learning experiences. By implementing affective strategies, such as anxiety-reduction methods, confidence-building activities, and cultural awareness training, educators could help Iraqi EFL learners manage their emotions, form self-sureness, and develop a deeper understanding of the cultural contexts that may donate to shyness or bullying deeds (Horwitz et al., 1986,126 ; Gregersen & MacIntyre, 2014; Fanti & Henrich, 2015, 10).



- Limits and Future Research Directions:

Whereas this study provides valuable visions and implications, it is essential to acknowledge its limitations and identify potential areas for future investigation. Firstly, the conclusions and proposed strategies may be influenced via the specific cultural and educational contexts of Iraq, requiring further investigation and adaptation for other EFL learning environments. Moreover, longitudinal studies examining the long-term effects of implemented interventions on communicative capability development would be beneficial.

Upcoming research could explore the intersections of shyness, bullying, and other factors, such as gender, socioeconomic status, or learning incapacities, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of their impacts on language learning. Additionally, comparative studies across diverse cultural contexts could provide valuable insights into the cross-cultural variations in the manifestations and insights of shyness and bullying, notifying the development of culturally approachable pedagogical tactics.

Via addressing the limitations and pursuing future research directions, the field of EFL education can continue to progress its understanding of the challenges faced by learners and develop increasingly effective approaches to promote communicative competence and create inclusive and supportive learning surroundings.

Conclusion

This research has discovered the challenges posed by shyness and bullying in the context of Iraqi EFL classrooms, offering valuable conceptual insights, practical references, and a roadmap for promoting communicative competence among learners. Over a comprehensive review of hypothetical frameworks and empirical research, this study has highlighted the multidimensional environment of shyness and bullying, their manifestations, and their potential impact on language acquisition and communicative capability development. The integration of the affective filter hypothesis, sociocultural theory, and motivational theories has delivered a robust conceptual basis for understanding the complex interplay of affective, social, and motivational factors which impact language learning experiences. Additionally, the proposed conceptual model has offered an all-inclusive perspective on the relationships between shyness, bullying, communicative competence, and possible moderating factors, such as teacher strategies, peer provision, and classroom climate.

Founded on the insights gained from this study, several recommendations can be made to support educators and policymakers in creating inclusive and compassionate learning



environments that nurture communicative competence among Iraqi EFL learners. Educators should include affective strategies into their teaching practices, like anxiety-reduction techniques, confidence-building activities, and risk-taking encouragement. The application of communicative language teaching methods, such as task-based learning, learner-centered activities, and authentic language usage, can create opportunities for learners to develop their communicative abilities in a supportive and engaging environment. Fostering peer support and collaboration over cooperative learning strategies, peer mentoring programs, and a sense of community among learners can generate a supportive social network that mitigates the effects of shyness and bullying, endorsing positive language learning experiences. Policymakers and educational institutions should develop and implement comprehensive anti-bullying policies and offer training for educators, learners, and parents on identifying and addressing bullying behaviors. Moreover, educators should incorporate cultural awareness and sensitivity training into their curricula, recognizing the socio-cultural influences that may contribute to shyness or bullying actions.

Increasing communicative competence is a multilayered endeavor that requires addressing not only linguistic proficiency but also the emotional, social, and cultural factors that shape language learning experiences. Via implementing the recommendations outlined in this study, educators and policymakers in Iraq can make inclusive and supportive learning environments that empower learners to overcome shyness, tackle bullying, and actively engage in communicative actions. It is crucial to recognize that promoting communicative competence is an ongoing procedure that requires sustained effort, collaboration, and a commitment to creating positive and inclusive learning environments. Over a holistic approach that incorporates affective strategies, communicative language teaching methods, peer support, anti-bullying measures, and cultural consciousness, Iraqi EFL learners can develop the confidence, motivation, and skills necessary to become proficient communicators in the English language. Via addressing the trials of shyness and bullying, educators and policymakers can reveal the full potential of Iraqi EFL learners, equipping them with the communicative competence essential to navigate the globalized world and donate to the cultural, economic, and intellectual advancement of their communities and the country as a whole.

References

Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental Considerations in Language Testing*. Oxford University Press.



- Canale, M., & Swain, M. (1980). Theoretical Bases of Communicative Approaches to second language teaching and testing. *Applied Linguistics*, 1(1). <https://doi.org/10.1093/applin/1.1.1>
- Crozier, W. R. (2001). *Shyness: Development, Consolidation and Change*. Routledge.
- Crystal, D. (2003). *English as a Global Language*. Cambridge University Press.
- Deci, E. L., & Ryan, R. M. (1985). *Intrinsic Motivation and Self-Determination in Human Behavior*. Plenum.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2009). The L2 Motivational Self System. In Z. Dörnyei & E. Ushioda (Eds.), *Motivation, Language Identity and the L2 self* (pp. 9-42). Multilingual Matters.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Murphey, T. (2003). *Group Dynamics in the Language Classroom*. Cambridge University Press.
- Dörnyei, Z., & Ryan, S. (2015). *The psychology of the Language Learner Revisited*. Routledge.
- Fanti, K. A., & Henrich, C. C. (2015). Effects of Self-Esteem and Narcissism on Bullying and Victimization During early Adolescence. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 35(1). <https://doi.org/10.1177/0272431613519498>
- Fekkes, M., Pijpers, F. I., & Verloove-Vanhorick, S. P. (2005). Bullying: Who does What, When and Where? Involvement of Children, Teachers and Parents in Bullying Behavior. *Health Education Research*, 20(1) . <https://doi.org/10.1093/her/cyg100>
- Gkonou, C., Daubney, M., & Dewaele, J. M. (Eds.). (2017). *New Insights into Language Anxiety: Theory, Research and Educational Implications*. Multilingual Matters.
- Gregersen, T., & MacIntyre, P. D. (2014). *Capitalizing on Language Learners' Individuality: From premise to practice*. Multilingual Matters.
- Henderson, L., & Zimbardo, P. (2001). Shyness as a Clinical Condition: The Stanford Model. In W. R. Crozier & L. E. Alden (Eds.), *International Handbook of Social Anxiety: Concepts, Research and Interventions Relating to the Self and Shyness* . Wiley.
- Horwitz, E. K., Horwitz, M. B., & Cope, J. (1986). Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety. *The Modern Language Journal*, 70(2). <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-4781.1986.tb05256.x>



- Hosseini, S. B., & Pourmandnia, D. (2013). Language Learners' Attitudes and Beliefs: Brief Review of the Related Literature and Frameworks. *International Journal on New Trends in Education and Their Implications*.
- Krashen, S. D. (1982). *Principles and Practice in Second Language Acquisition*. Pergamon Press.
- Krashen, S. D. (1985). *The Input Hypothesis: Issues and Implications*. Longman.
- Lantolf, J. P., & Thorne, S. L. (2006). *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development*. Oxford University Press.
- Obaid, A. A., Zeraatpishe, M., & Faravani, A. (2022). On the Interrelationships between Iraqi EFL Learners' Classroom Environment, Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety and Willingness to Communicate: A SEM Approach. *English Language Teaching Educational Journal*, 5(2), . <https://doi.org/10.12928/eltej.v5i2.2806>
- Olweus, D. (1993). *Bullying at School: What we Know and What we can do*. Blackwell.
- Richards, J. C., & Rodgers, T. S. (2014). *Approaches and Methods in Language Teaching*. Cambridge University Press.
- Rigby, K. (2007). *Bullying in Schools: And What to do about it*. Australian Council for Educational Research.
- Ryan, R. M., & Deci, E. L. (2000). Self-Determination Theory and the Facilitation of Intrinsic Motivation, Social Development, and Well-Being. *American Psychologist*, 55(1). <https://doi.org/10.1037/0003-066X.55.1.68>
- Savignon, S. J. (2018). Communicative competence. *The TESOL Encyclopedia of English Language Teaching*. <https://doi.org/10.1002/9781118784235.eelt0047>
- Vygotsky, L. S. (1978). *Mind in Society: The Development of Higher Psychological Processes*. Harvard University Press.