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Challenges and strategies for creating an English-speaking classroom

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Overview

- Reticence – what does the research say?
- University of Adelaide ELC
- Survey results
- Challenges
- Strategies
- Summary
- References

“Speech is not only a product of acquisition, but also a necessary precondition to it’

Baron – Lucarz (cited in Carter & Heinrichsen, 2015)

Research – Reasons for reticence

- Students are reluctant to engage in English – avoid interaction
- Performance anxiety
- Fear of losing face
- Proficiency in target language
- Previous experience
- Cultural beliefs about appropriate classroom behaviour
- Habits
- Lack of confidence
- Personality

Research –

- Students are very motivated to participate in classroom discussions but remain passive / reticent (Liu & Jackson, 2019; Tsui, 1996 and others)
- Students often perceive themselves to be active just by listening to others (Jackson 2002)
- More proficient students - the most positive and most active
- All proficiency levels - most active in pair work but least active when responding to teacher questions
- All students became more active in class with increasing exposure and familiarity with the learning environment (Liu & Jackson, 2019)

Research –

- Create a safe, relaxing and supportive learning environment
- Encourage students to be interested in and motivated to speak

Reduce anxiety



Students more relaxed



Increased willingness to participate

The University of Adelaide ELC

Pre-Enrolment English Program (PEP)

The PEP course

- Pathway students
- 15 classes; 16 students per class
- English-speaking policy
- Course Progress Consultation grades – general speaking & IL
- Class norms

Challenges & Strategies Survey

Student perspective

Challenges and Strategies – Class survey

- Class discussion to explore the challenges faced by students & strategies they use
- Most effective classroom strategy-
punishment or reward
- 16/17 prefer reward over punishment
- 14/17 punishment is highly effective



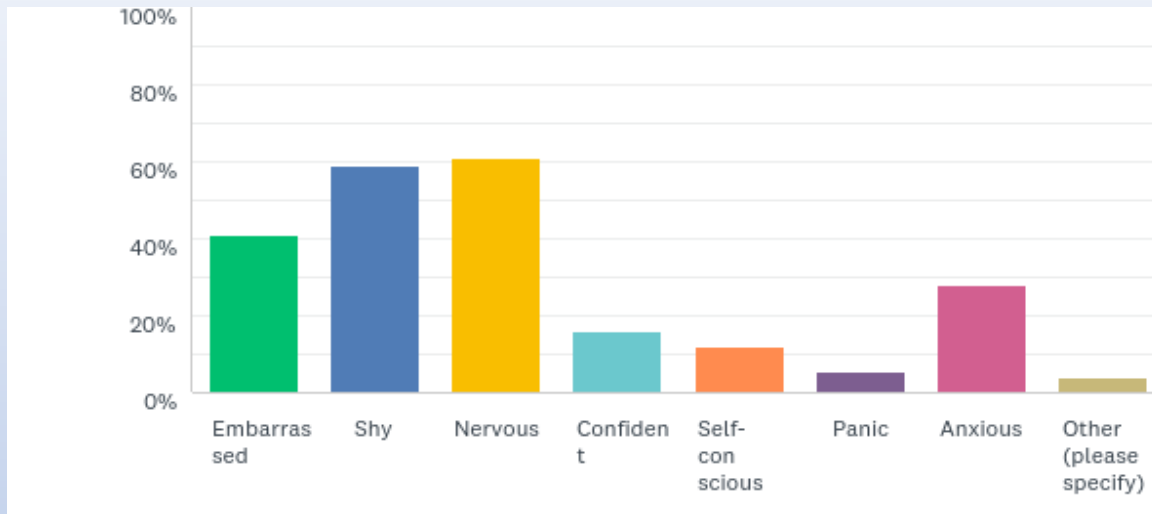
Challenges and Strategies

– PEP student survey

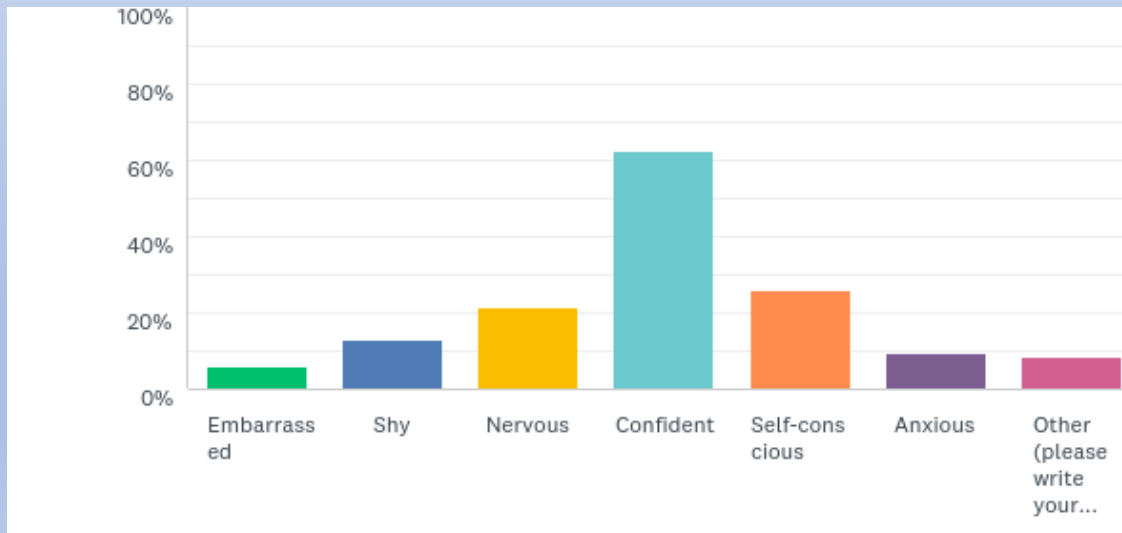
149 PEP students 6 questions



How students felt in week 1 when speaking English in class



How students felt after 7 weeks (average) when speaking English in class

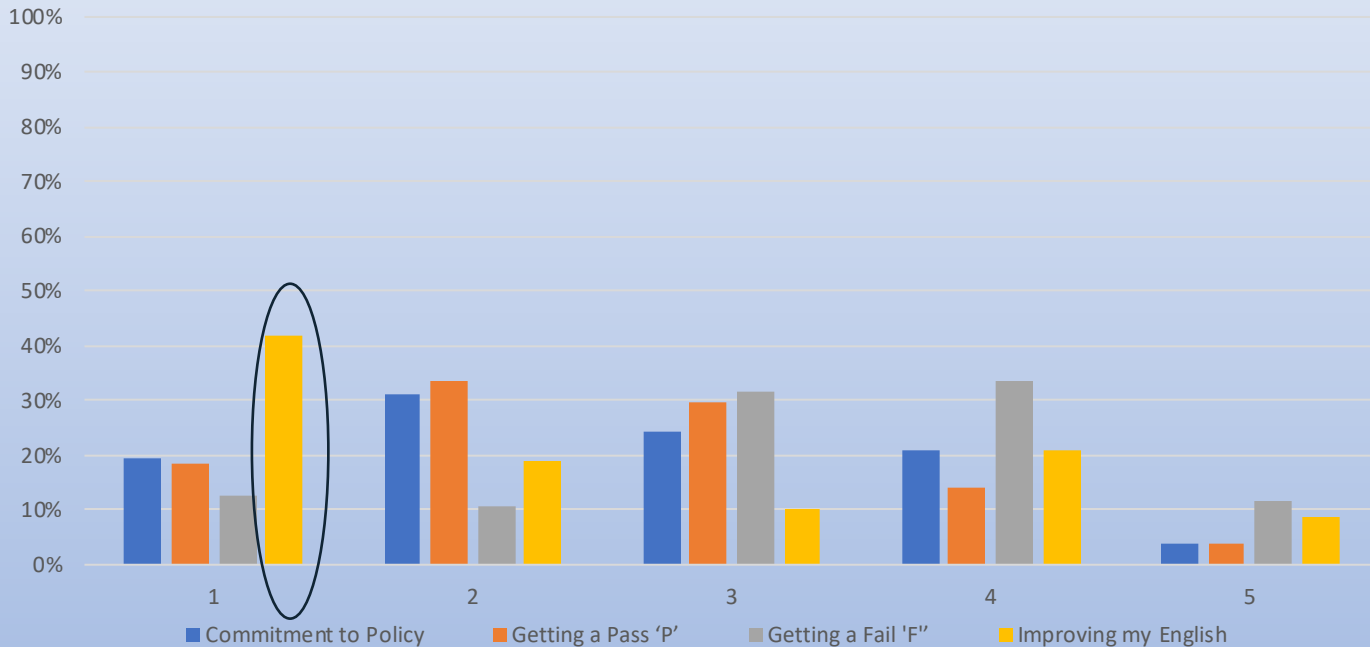


Results – student reasons for reticence

Students are more concerned about grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation than what their peers and teachers think about them

	1	2	3	4	5	TOTAL	SCORE
Grammar	28.19% 42	25.50% 38	26.85% 40	11.41% 17	8.05% 12	149	3.54
Vocabulary	34.23% 51	25.50% 38	14.09% 21	14.09% 21	12.08% 18	149	3.56
Pronunciation	17.45% 26	19.46% 29	32.21% 48	9.40% 14	21.48% 32	149	3.02
Being worried about what my classmates think of me	7.38% 11	16.78% 25	18.12% 27	28.19% 42	29.53% 44	149	2.44
Being worried about what my teachers think of me	12.75% 19	12.75% 19	8.72% 13	36.91% 55	28.86% 43	149	2.44

Motivators for speaking English in the classroom



Results – Student comments how they feel

Week 1

Normal

Cannot express clearly

Afraid error

A little bit hard

Hope to express myself but fear making mistakes

Excited

Week 7

More confident than before

It seems like I have more time to think when speaking English

Just a little nervous

OK

a little better

Much better

Relaxed

Better than before but still a little nervous

Afraid of making mistakes

Results – Student comments

- what motivates them

- Improve English skill
- Improve my speaking skill
- Improve my oral speaking
- Improve my English skill in order to communicate with others
- Improve my oral English skill that can find me a good job in Australia
- I want to improve my oral English and communicate with local students
- I want to pass PEP and communicate easily so I always speak English in class.
- Pass the pep
- I think the most thing which motivates me most is the "P" in the finial exam
- Communicate...



What are the main challenges for you and for your students?

5 minutes

Challenges & Strategies

Teacher perspective

Survey

- 10 PEP teachers
- 2 open-ended questions

Challenges

- Monocultural classrooms
- Culture
- Fear and frustration
- Lack of awareness



What are your most effective strategies?

5 minutes

Strategies

- ELC English-speaking policy
- CPC grades
- Benefits
- Student responsibility

Summary

- Challenges for both students and teachers
- Student and teacher perceptions may be different
- Policy is important
- Some strategies are more effective than others
- Creating a safe and supportive environment is essential

References

Carter, SJ & Henrichesen, LE 2015 'Addressing reticence', *Journal of Adult Education* Vol 44, No 2, pp. 15-20.

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Tsui, A. (1996). Reticence and anxiety in second language learning. In K.M. Bailey & D. Nunan (Eds.), *Voices from the language classroom: Qualitative research in second language education* (pp. 145-167). Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.



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