

UNIVERSITY OF TARTU
DEPARTMENT OF ENGLISH STUDIES

**USING GROUP DYNAMICS AT THE UPPER SECONDARY LEVEL TO
FOSTER SPEAKING IN ENGLISH IN THE CLASSROOM**

MA thesis

KADRI KÕIV

SUPERVISOR: Jun. Lect. ANNELI SIGUS

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ABSTRACT

Students' willingness to communicate (WTC), foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) and group dynamics connections have not been studied enough, but separately they are considered to be really important aspects of language learning. The purpose of this study is to examine whether and how group dynamics activities affect students' willingness to communicate and how their feelings and anxiety levels towards self-confidence in oral English change. Self-reported frequency in the use of the second language is also considered..

Based on the purposes of the study, an operational action research was conducted and qualitative methods were applied to analyse the gathered data. 20 secondary school students attended an oral English self-expression course that aimed to facilitate students' WTC through group dynamics activities and thereby also boost their confidence and lower their speaking anxiety level. The course took place in one of the Estonian upper secondary schools from September 2023 to January 2024. The three questionnaires were filled in during the course and the post-course questionnaire was completed in April 2024.

This thesis is carried out in two parts. The first part gives an overview of the previous studies and theories about WTC, group dynamics, FLA and FLSA. The second chapter focuses on the study itself, where through group dynamics activities the students' willingness to communicate should increase and thereby their FLSA should decrease and self-confidence in oral English is expected to rise. The chapter ends with a discussion and the conclusion of the study.

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LIST OF ABBREVIATIONS

CEFR- Common European Framework of Reference for Languages

CLT - Communicative Language Teaching

EFL - English as a Foreign Language

FLA - Foreign Language Anxiety

FLSA - Foreign Language Speaking Anxiety

L2 - second language, used synonymously with *foreign language*

WTC - Willingness to Communicate

INTRODUCTION

While teaching in gymnasium I have noticed that many students are afraid of speaking in English due to different reasons. Their self-perception tends to be fairly sensitive to imaginary situations, involving possible criticisms from classmates and the fear of making mistakes. Others say that they get anxious when they have to speak in a foreign language and have difficulties in expressing themselves in a second language. Nation and Newton (2009) suggest that 25% of the classroom time should be devoted to communicative speaking tasks which are activities where students mostly talk. Kerr (2017) has concluded that such tasks are necessary for the development of automatised language knowledge or spoken fluency. While Rao (2019) mentions different skills that are vital to people to achieve their communication goals, he stresses that speaking is the most important skill in learning a foreign language in order to interact with others. To explain his view, he quotes Brown and Yule (1983), who have stated that “speaking is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations” (Rao 2019:8).

According to the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR 2001), speaking is divided into spoken interaction and spoken production, in which interaction means the ability to keep a conversation going on and production is producing an oral text for the listener(s). Unfortunately teachers often feel the pressure to prepare students for exams and thereby they focus more on language knowledge than on communicative competence (Gorsuch 2000), although Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is considered to be a useful approach to language learning, because students get to solve real tasks like conversations, making decisions etc by using their general and linguistic knowledge (Riggenbach & Lazaraton 1991). The fact that most of the speaking activities in many textbooks are found at the end of the unit is also one of the reasons why they are often cut or abbreviated (Kerr 2017). By leaving out communicative activities we inhibit students’

willingness to speak (WTC) in a foreign language. In this thesis the author uses MacIntyre et al (1998:547) definition of WTC and it means readiness to engage in a conversation with a specific person or persons by using foreign language at a given moment. Focusing more on language knowledge and leaving out communicative activities affect students negatively, and to help them, it is necessary to create an environment that encourages them to speak more actively and freely in English (Dörnyei 2018). An environment created by a teacher that uses group dynamics activities could help students in letting go of their fears and developing their willingness to speak in English.

While searching studies about group dynamics, foreign language anxiety (FLA) and foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA), it emerged that there is a lack of research done regarding the connection between those themes. The author found only one study, where FLSA was found to be strongly connected to the classroom climate and group dynamics (Hadziosmanovic 2012). Students who participated in the study said that the factors that triggered their speaking anxiety were the teacher's reactions to mistakes and the fear of negative peer evaluation.

The purpose of this thesis is to investigate what effect does using group dynamics activities in an oral self-expression course have on students' willingness to communicate. Furthermore, changes in students' perceptions about their confidence in speaking in English are also examined. Finally, the third aim is to scrutinize the changes in the frequency of students' self-reported second language use in general English classes.

The thesis will be carried out based on an action research framework, where a group of 20 students fill in questionnaires four times- three times during the course and the fourth questionnaire will be filled in two months after the course has ended. The students will be monitored throughout the course and the teacher will keep a diary in order to make conclusions about the students and the activities that are being done in the classroom. This

study is the first cycle of the action research. The author is going to use the results, analysis and reflections while planning the next courses' activities, which will make up the next cycle.

The present course focuses on different communication and group dynamics activities that should help to improve students' willingness to communicate and thereby decrease their level of anxiousness, fears and perceptions towards speaking in English. The author of the thesis has run similar self-expression courses previously, but with fewer students in the classroom. Group dynamics has not been systematically emphasised in the previous courses and the aim is to see whether the conscious monitoring of this aspect significantly changes the conduct of the course and the attitudes of the learners.

1 LITERATURE REVIEW

1.1 Group Dynamics

Group dynamics is considered to be a form of an open and complex social system where a group of people interact with each other while different internal (psychological mindset and personal characteristics) and external (social and environmental impact) forces can affect the members' behaviour and the group structure (Lewin 1945; 1951, Toseland et al 2004). By following group dynamics, it is possible to create learning motivation and cast a light on learners' behaviour in a social system by focusing on pair- and group-work rather than learning things individually. According to Toseland and Rivas (2001), group dynamics can be viewed as a framework that follows five domains:

1. Communication processes and interaction patterns - These are the fundamental patterns of group dynamics as they consist of social interactions that influence the attitude and behaviour of group members.
2. Interpersonal attraction and cohesion - These factors are important in the stage of group formation. Attraction is often increased by proximity and communication between group members which eventually leads to bonding among associates. However, there are other factors that help to develop interpersonal attraction, like acceptance, approval and similarity among group members. Group cohesion consists of several blocks, including (1) interpersonal attraction; (2) meeting the needs of group members' affiliation, security and recognition; (3) resources and reputation assembled during the activities and participation; (4) useful outcome of the group work; and (5) finding positive comparisons between present and previous group (Cartwright 1986).

3. Social integration and influence - This part contains the norms, roles and status that show how members fit together and are accepted by other members. These factors are necessary to avoid conflicts which can lead to chaos.
4. Power and control - The role of a group leader is inevitable. There can be two types of power: attributed power which refers to perception of people within and outside the group about the ability to be a successful leader; and actual power comes from resources that change conditions within and outside the group. Usually the leader's role starts to form during early group activities, when members choose to communicate mostly with the leader and not with each other.
5. Culture - This part of the process contains group members' values, beliefs, traditions, assumptions and the way of doing things. All the members have different backgrounds, life experiences, ethnic and cultural heritage and as the members get together they start to search for a common ground to relate to each other.

As mentioned above, in order to get positive results it is necessary to take into account some of the most important factors like group cohesiveness, rules and norms, the leading style and the number of group members (Alikhani and Bagheridoust 2017:45). According to Ehrman and Dörnyei (1998), group cohesiveness is necessary and they have claimed that a mental logical bond is accomplished by group members' perceived similarity and from mutual acceptance. If group members accept each other and they have positive feelings regarding one another, then they will notice common interests between each other and therefore it will result in closeness of the group. These factors help to encourage the members to get involved in group activities, boost their performance and level of motivation (Clement et al 1994, Dörnyei and Murphey 2003).

Also, Maley (2000, in Hadfield (2000:3)) has said that one of the crucial factors in classroom dynamics is the positive group atmosphere, because it has a beneficial effect on

its members' morale, self-image, as well as motivation and it significantly affects students' learning. As a result, the group will have better performance and they get a positive attitude to the language being learned, to the learning process, and to themselves as learners. All of this is affected by the length of time that group members spend together, because the more they meet, the more cohesive the group will be (Clement et al 1994, Hinger 2006).

Cohesive groups usually have rules and norms that are created together by the teacher, as an external source, and by the group members, as an internal force (Ehrman and Dörnyei 1998, Levine and Moreland 2006). Rules should be worded in non-negative ways to motivate the students to contribute to their maximum potential. Along with the group norms comes the leading role of the teacher, which determines the outcome of the students' learning. Teacher leadership can be divided into autocratic, democratic and *laissez-faire* styles (Drobot and Rosu 2012). The first one denotes that the only person to dictate in the classroom is the teacher, but this approach does not meet the crucial factors about positive atmosphere that is needed to create or maintain group cohesiveness. The opposite to autocratic style is the *laissez-faire* style, which means that the teacher is with a positive attitude, but he or she has a passive role and students have to take all initiatives (Drobot and Rosu 2012). Democratic style, on the other hand, is learner-driven and in the Yakoub's (2020) degree project, carried out in Sweden, it was stated that the teacher and the students should take part in the learning process equally (Johansson 2001). It means that in the English classroom (as a foreign language) the teacher should act as a role model. Instead of making decisions alone, the teacher should involve students as well.

Although teacher's leadership affects group dynamics positively, this alone is not enough, because creating a cohesive group is a process. Tuckman (1965:396) divided group dynamics into four cohesive group formation stages and in 1977 together with Jensen they added the fifth stage:

1. Forming - The stage where people in the group may encounter difficulties in finding their place in the group and the most common feelings among the members are uncertainty and anxiety.
2. Storming - This stage is described as the state of the group where members create more emotional responses, they give more honest perspectives of others and the members start to take a deeper look of and between themselves. Also the competition for power and leadership within the group takes place in this stage.
3. Norming - By now the members should accept everybody's individuality and thereby the group cohesion can increase. It should be clear by now that conflicts are normal and relationships can survive disagreements. All the members know that everyone is responsible for the tasks and to each other and they understand their roles fully.
4. Performing - A high level of work will be done in this stage as the members have to use their interpersonal skills to achieve group goals. The group has established a synergy and they enjoy working together, task completion takes less time and is more efficient.
5. Adjourning - Different emotional feelings may emerge in this stage as it is the end of the group work.

Hadfield (2000: 25, 46, 163) has described similar stages, but she has divided these processes into three:

1. Forming the group - According to her, it is really important to start developing a good group atmosphere from the first lesson. It is possible that the students feel anxious, nervous, unsure of their skills and get confused. By taking all the mentioned feelings into consideration, it is definitely important to make the students feel relaxed and relieved from the tension. It is the teacher's obligation to introduce the learners to each other and to motivate them to get to know each other. Also, the teacher has

to explain to the students that the purpose of the activities is to involve them in language learning and group work. To be able to develop a cohesive working and learning group it is necessary to use affective activities to develop a positive and supportive group atmosphere and cognitive activities to develop effective group learning processes in the group formation stage (see p 13 below).

2. Maintaining the group - This is probably the hardest part of the process. The teacher has to ensure that the group manages to keep a positive atmosphere by encouraging students to take part in the activities. The activities should concentrate on increasing trust, decreasing cultural and personality gaps, developing empathy, cooperation and sense of cohesion.
3. Ending the group - It is the stage where participants might experience sadness, because group members have shared their emotions, worked together for months and therefore developed a certain type of friendship that can hopefully continue on. While ending the group, it is important to do it on a positive note. It is advised to do activities that allow students to reflect back over the group experience and feel thankful towards each other.

While examining Toseland and Riva's (2001) framework and group dynamics stages by Hadfield (2000) and Tuckman and Jensen (1977), some connections and similarities emerged. In the *Forming* stage by Hadfield (2000), it is utterly important to keep in mind Toseland and Rivas's (2001) framework about interpersonal attraction and cohesion (see p 8), as it has strong connections to Tuckman's (1965) *Storming* stage where group members' first conflicts, weaknesses and strengths rise up. Furthermore, in Hadfield's (2000) *Group maintaining* stage (known as *Norming* and *Performing* stages according to Tuckman (1965)), it is reasonable again to take into consideration Toseland and Riva's (2001) developed framework, because all of the aspects mentioned in the framework complement

group dynamics stages and help the teacher to reach for the best outcome in order to formulate a cohesively working group.

Furthermore, Hadfield (2000:15) has explained that each stage of group dynamics contains affective and cognitive activities. Turk et al (2002), Allen and Friedman (2010) have explained that affective learning consists of changes in feelings, values and attitudes, which are identified and modified in a way that help to build thinking, behaviour, personal development and meta-learning. Cognitive learning, on the other hand, means that students have to use their intellectual skills and capacities necessary for critical thinking, learning and problem solving (Anderson and Krathwohl 2001). The latter have also stated that affective activities are the most important in learning, but unfortunately, they are added into the curriculum infrequently (Sowell 2005:74).

Similarly to Maley (2000, in Hadfield (2000:3)), Caine and Caine (1991) have also emphasised the importance of the school's positive environment that helps students to develop self-confidence through affective learning activities which mostly lead to mutual respect and acceptance. If students feel confident and good about themselves as learners, then they are more focused on further studies and are even willing to take risks regarding studying. Hadfield (2000:21) has explained that it is possible to conduct numerous activities that are designed to fill in both affective and cognitive purposes, so the teacher can stick to the syllabus and students can work on their group dynamics.

Taking everything discussed above into account, it can be seen that group dynamics activities are beneficial in creating a safe speaking environment. In accordance with Kubanyova (2018), through these activities it is possible to provide students with plenty of time for speaking, use engaging goal-oriented speaking activities, foster positive interactions and this is likely to increase students' willingness to communicate.

1.2 Willingness to communicate

Willingness to communicate (WTC) is connected with several factors that this thesis discusses. According to researchers (MacIntyre and Charos 1996, MacIntyre et al 1998), foreign language anxiety, self-confidence and learners' beliefs might affect WTC, which is defined as readiness to initiate or join in a communication by using a second language (MacIntyre et al 2001, MacIntyre et al 1998). McCroskey (1990) believed that willingness to communicate is affected by introversion, self-esteem, communication capability, cultural differences and communication anxiety. According to him, these features are all considered to have a correlation with WTC. Many scholars like Yashima (2002), Kang (2005) and MacIntyre and Legatto (2011) have stressed the fact that willingness to communicate is the key factor in language learning. It has also been determined that in foreign language acquisition, individual differences and personality traits play a crucial role in accomplishing the readiness to communicate (Dornyei 2005, MacCrae and Costa 2004).

Cetinkaya (2005) and Chu (2008) have conducted a study in Taiwan and Turkey among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) university/college students and the results indicated that extroverted people had no problems with willingness to communicate in L2. It is explained by the fact that extroverted people are energetic, talkative and outgoing (Eysenck 1964) and this personality trait is linked directly with communication apprehension. On the other hand, if a person is an introvert, it is a known fact that they are shy and quiet. The more introverted the person is, the less she or he is willing to participate in or initiate communication (Darasawang and Reinders 2021).

MacIntyre et al (1998, cited in Lee and Chiu 2023) collated a pyramid framework (Figure 1) of trait-like and state-like factors that affect WTC in the second language (L2). Layer VI represents social and individual context which contains personality characteristics and intergroup climate. If a student is more internationally experienced than their peers then

the proficient student is more likely to start a conversation in English (Lee 2018, Lee et al 2021).

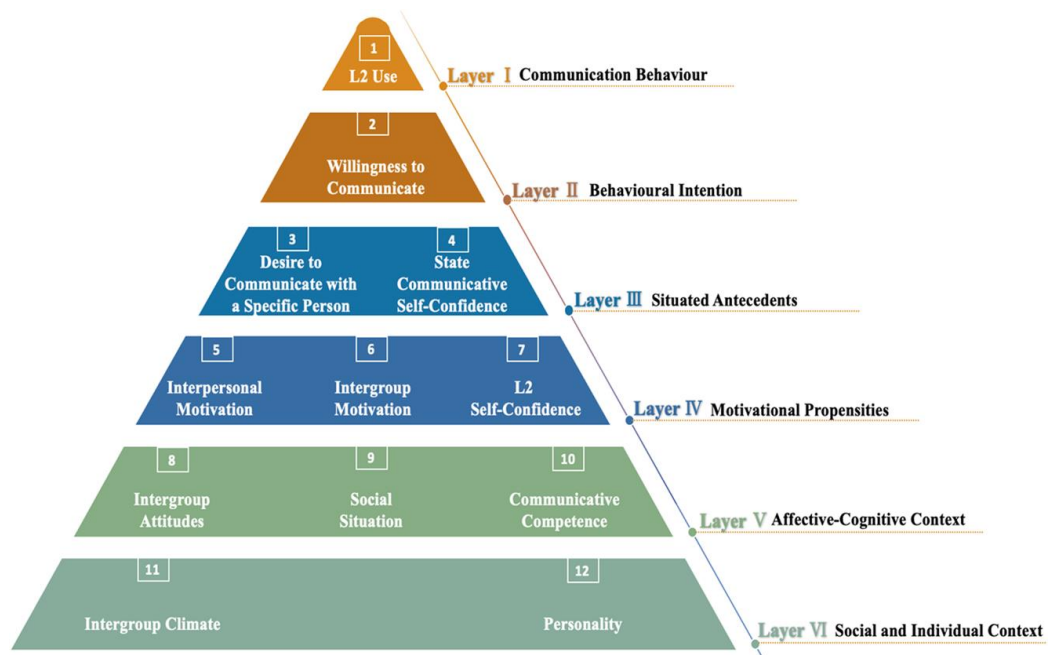


Figure 1. The pyramid framework of L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al 1998, cited in Lee and Chiu 2023) .

The affective-cognitive context (Layer V) reflects intergroup attitudes, social context and communicative skills, which means that people who enjoy learning a second language more than others and have confidence in speaking tend to have higher L2 willingness to speak (Peng 2019, Song et al 2022). Layer IV, motivational propensities, include interpersonal (directed towards other people (Holtforth et al 2010)) and intergroup (group members' perceptions, feelings, beliefs and actions towards another group and its members (Levy and Dovidio 2021)) motivation and L2 confidence. EFL students who are more confident in communicating in the foreign language than others have a higher WTC in L2 (Lin 2018).

Contrary to previous variables, Layer III projects situational antecedents, which can be defined as stimulus events, circumstances or situations that were present before the behaviour or while the behaviour occurs (Miltenberger 2008). These include a desire to communicate with a specific person and a state communicative self-confidence, which refers

to being able to effectively communicate in L2 in a specific situation (Aoyama and Takahashi 2020). These are considered to be context-dependent, which means that the particular details of the situation create motivation to use the L2. Layer II has only one component, willingness to communicate, which is a behavioural intention. It is the final step in the culmination of moving toward or away from unforced language use (Layer I; MacIntyre 2007). According to MacIntyre and Wang (2021), these three top layers emphasise the fact that WTC emerges from the constant interaction among multidimensional enduring and situational impacts that can change quickly, even within one second.

All of the mentioned social and psychological influences (Layers VI-I) potentially affect the decision to communicate or not. The pyramid enables us to understand that the moment of decision is established continuously and instantly. It carries a sense of arriving at a point in time where L2 learners might decide to communicate or not. After every moment of decision another moment immediately arrives for the communication to unfold (MacIntyre and Wang 2021).

Since willingness to communicate depends on the person's decision whether or not to speak in a certain situation, it is also connected to foreign language anxiety, because the more confident and without hesitations the person is, the more he/she is able to communicate effectively. Less confident people tend to get nervous if they have to speak in a foreign language, especially in impromptu situations.

1.3 Foreign Language Anxiety

Over the last decades there have been many studies about the correlation between anxiety and learning a foreign language (Worde 1998, Horwitz 2001). Anxiety in its overall meaning is characterised as a future-oriented emotion that is marked with bodily symptoms

of tension and chronic apprehension (Barlow et al 2003). It may also endanger people's life stability and shut them out from different activities (Horwitz et al 1986).

Although foreign language anxiety has been an important research theme, it does not have one universally accepted definition. Scholars like Horwitz et al (1986) and MacIntyre (1999) have stated that it is a complex of different feelings, such as stress, nervousness, worries, beliefs, behaviours and self-perceptions related to learning foreign language in the classroom. Furthermore, Young (1991) has declared four primary causes of FLA: low self-esteem, perspectives of a learner, false perceptions and peer pressure. Krashen (1982) and Gynan (1989, cited in Mao 2023) have reached a conclusion that self-esteem and false perceptions are closely related to FLA, as students tend to care too much about classmates' thoughts about them. They also add that students' anxiety turns up if the expected outcome and reality are in disaccordance.

In 1989, MacIntyre and Gardner conducted a study where they used nine different anxiety scales and found out that FLA is not connected with general anxiety. Instead, it emerged that FLA and foreign language proficiency have a strong connection. However, five years later they stated that foreign language anxiety (FLA) can derive from a person's overall anxiety as they (MacIntyre and Gardner 1994) and Wörde (2003) found it to have inimical effects on second language acquisition. For instance, if an introverted student is asked to give a speech in front of the class, she or he might get 'stage fright' (Mao 2023). There are also studies where the quality of oral language performance was influenced by anxiety, but it did not have a significant effect (Steinberg and Horwitz 1986, Kleinmann 1977).

MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) have stated that the best research approach for FLA is the situation-specific perspective. It means that the person gets anxious in a specific situation in the language class and it is consistent over time. The same was found in

Hadziosmanovic's (2012) study where she reached the conclusion that speaking anxiety was situation specific and in her study it was limited to the language class setting.

FLA is also considered to have a negative impact on a learner's language development as the anxiety increases due to the student's perception of his/her poor linguistic skills (Pan and Lou 2023). Emotional factors are also proven to have a connection with second language learning, as well as cultural, individual, peer and teacher factors (Arnold and Brown 1999, Li and Li 2016, Feng 2015 cited in Pan and Lou 2023). Rubio-Alcala (2017) has argued that the dimensions of self-esteem (identity, security, purpose, competence and belonging) and the issues related to it are the main reasons for FLA. Based on these dimensions and reviewing the FLA-related literature, Marnani and Cuocci (2022) have categorized the sources of anxiety into three overarching the categories:

1. Student-centered causes - Anxiety may be the result of the student's unrealistic expectations, poor language ability, low self-esteem, language disorders and different language learning styles. According to them, self-esteem related issues are considered to be the most remarkable causes of FLA. These issues may occur when a student's characteristics and achievements do not match their self-concept. They are afraid of judgment from teachers and other students because of a conflict between their evaluation of themselves and their self-perceived competences and they way the others evaluate them (Dörnyei 2005).
2. Teacher and instruction-centered causes of FLA - Anxiety-provoking situations can be a result of the teacher's instructions that are given directly or indirectly. According to studies (Aydin 2016, Kruk 2018), the way the teacher gives feedback on student's mistakes and corrects them may be a source of anxiety. It is also stated that a teacher's attitude and personality affect students' anxiety, for example, if the

teacher is impatient with the learners and does not give enough time to think and answer the question, then it can raise students' anxiety levels.

3. Society and interaction-centered causes of FLA - These causes can be divided into three main groups: peer-induced causes, identity-related factors and cultural connotation. For further explanation about peer-induced causes, Marnani and Cuocci (2022) have used Horwitz et al (1986) and Young's (1991) conclusions, which state the fact that students are constantly afraid of peers' judgment and making mistakes that they feel make them look and sound dumb. When addressing identity factors, Marnani and Cuocci (2022) illustrated it with two studies (Hilleson 1996, Zhang and Zhong 2012) that explain the process of losing students' ethnic identity and weakening of their native language due to merging more into the target society. If the student is faced with losing their self-identity, it is likely to cause foreign language anxiety. The cultural aspect is explained by many researchers (Tsui 1996, Horwitz 2010, Woodrow 2011, Liao and Liang 2021) by discussing the fact that FLA varies due to diverse cultural backgrounds, where students have different habits, beliefs, values, customs and ways of communication. For instance, Chinese students' FLA is influenced by their cultural background and heritage where they are taught to be quiet and not ask questions from the teacher.

Horwitz et al (1986) have distinguished two types of anxiety: specific and general. If anxiety occurs in a specific situation only, such as using foreign language, then it is considered to be a situation-specific anxiety. General anxiety is a term used with those people, who are almost always anxious in various situations. Horwitz et al (1986) also established three related situation-specific performance anxieties: test anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and communication apprehension.

In this thesis, the focus is on communication apprehension, which means that anxiety emerges while communicating with people. Horwitz et al (1986) talks about spoken production (talking in groups or in front of others) and spoken reception (receiving and responding to a spoken message) apprehensions. This definition of reception coincides with the notion of oral interaction in the CEFR.

Speaking in a foreign language in the classroom is considered to be the most frightening sub-skill in language learning according to students with anxiety that have participated in previous studies (Horwitz et al 1986, Würde 2003, Jones 2004). Teachers are aware of the problem, but they find it difficult to classify if the student is unwilling to speak in the target language because of decreased motivation for language learning overall or because of increased anxiety when the student is expected to speak (Yalcun and Incecay 2014). Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) pointed out that students prefer to stay silent and tend to be unwilling to speak until they have reached a level of fluency that they feel satisfied with. They are afraid of making errors and getting corrected by the teacher in front of the others.

Horwitz (1986) has written that foreign language speaking anxiety (FLSA) can also be called 'stage fright', because people freeze and feel stressed when they have to talk to others or make a presentation in front of other people. People with FLSA are also afraid that they will not understand spoken messages and they feel that their performance in the classroom is being continuously monitored not only by the teacher but also by their fellow students. Studies have shown that learning in a smaller group or doing pair-work can help to reduce anxiety, because the students are not being constantly observed by others in the classroom (Li and Wang 2019, Watcyn-Jones 1997).

Young (1992) and Krashen (1980, cited in Young 1991) have stated that all of the mentioned fears, beliefs and perceptions are attributed to the learners by themselves due to

low self-esteem. Because of the lack of self-confidence, learners always worry about what other people think of them and that is a great source of anxiety. Other major reasons for anxiety onset are the learners' beliefs and attitudes (negative or positive feelings about the language they want to learn or people who speak that language) towards the language (Zhang and Zhong 2012, Hosseini and Pourmandnia 2013).

Furthermore, some teachers expect students to perform beyond their obtained ability (Krashen 1991, cited in Young 1992). During their language learning period, teachers often force students to break the silence before they are ready and expect them to use aspects of language that they have not yet unconsciously acquired. By acting like this as a teacher, speaking will probably become anxiety-provoking for foreign language learners. The teachers should take this into account if they want the students to feel that they are learning in a supportive environment.

Although giving a presentation, oral activities and discussions in a foreign language may cause immediate anxiety, they are still a necessary part of the language learning process and cannot be ignored (Yalcun and Incecay 2014, Koch and Terrel 1991). Researchers like Foss and Reitzel (1988), Horwitz (2002, 1986) and Young (1991) have suggested many strategies to manage speaking anxiety. They are divided into two groups: student strategies and instructors' (including teachers) strategies. To defeat anxiety, it is necessary for the student to acknowledge their feelings of nervousness while speaking in a foreign language and consider this experience as normal. The teacher's assignment is to create and maintain a positive safe environment for the language learning, as was also stated by Tuckman (1965) and Hadfield (2000, discussed in the section of Group Dynamics, see p 8). Yalcun and Incecay (2014) interviewed EFL teachers for their research and the first thing the teachers pointed out was the friendly environment created by the teacher to help to decrease anxiety and promote students' willingness to communicate.

In consideration of these thoughts and suggestions discussed in this thesis, it may be proposed that the classroom atmosphere is probably the most important factor for anxious foreign language learners. Also, the teacher plays a major role in creating and maintaining the positive environment in the classroom that would boost students' willingness to take part in speaking activities and their engagement in them.

2 USING GROUP DYNAMICS TO FOSTER SPEAKING

This part of the thesis concentrates on the action research that was carried out with a mixed up group of year-10- and year-12- students in one Estonian upper-secondary school during September 2023 - April 2024. The first aim of the research was to investigate what effect using group dynamics activities in an oral self-expression course will have on students' willingness to communicate. The second goal was to examine changes in students' perceptions about different types of speaking activities and furthermore, how their self-reported second language frequency changes. The particular school was chosen because the author of the thesis works there. The study tries to answer these research questions:

1. What effect does using group dynamics activities have on students' willingness to communicate?
2. How does students' perception of their confidence towards speaking in English change?
3. What changes occur in the frequency of students' self-reported L2 use?

2.1.1 Methodology and procedure

To conduct the study an operational action research framework (planning, acting, observing, reflecting (George 2024)) was used and qualitative methods were applied to analyse the gathered data. Action research is usually a cyclical process, but George's (2024) framework was more suitable to the author due to the nature of the research and the need to treat the course as a whole. Before gathering the data, a group of secondary school learners was formed in order to carry out an English self-expression course. The course was meant to be carried out even without the aspect of MA thesis. Participation in the study/course was voluntary and 20 students (seven year-10-students and 13 year-12-students in total) chose this course to boost their speaking skills in English and reduce anxiety. The description of

the course referred to the group dynamics activities that help students feel more carefree and confident while speaking and performing in English. The anonymity of the participants was ensured by giving a code to each student and only the author of the thesis can see the list of names and codes. As the participants were all students, then a signed permission was asked from the parents, the students and from the principal of the school (See appendices [1](#) and [2](#)).

Only three of the 20 students participating have been the author's students before, and they still are, but in general English classes. The students were all on CEFR B level in English, which means that their language levels varied between B1-B2. The language level was determined with a placement test which was taken at the beginning of the year 10. As the year-12-students had done it two years earlier and they are currently studying at the B2 language level, it was not necessary for them to retake the test. This test is a common practice in our school that is taken by the year-10-students every September to form groups. The participants had never studied together as a cohesive group. Ten year-12-students had been studying together in another teacher's group and three of the year-12-students had been the author's students. Year-10-students had just started a new class and had very little experience learning together.

The data to determine the effects of systematically applying techniques to foster group dynamics was gathered in two different ways: students' feedback (gathered through a questionnaire and administered four times in total) and teacher's observations. The questionnaire was created based on the FLCAS (Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale) (Horwitz et al 1986) and Willingness to Communicate Scale (Darasawang & Reinders 2021) and modified to suit the purposes of the research (See appendix [3](#)). Despite the fact that Horwitz et al's (1986) FLCAS has been widely used as an instrument in foreign language anxiety studies, there are some researchers who have questioned the validity of the anxiety scale. They have argued that this scale measures language skills rather than anxiety

level (Sparks and Ganschow 1991, 1996, 2007). Moreover, Aida (1994) and Rodriguez and Abreu (2003) have claimed that the FLCAS seems to assess anxiety primarily associated with speaking situations. A study that was carried out among female learners in Saudi Arabia determined the problem that FLCAS does not address the opportunity to rate students' experience of giving oral presentations in the classroom (Al-Saraj 2014). The same point came out when the author of the thesis started to analyse the scale. For this reason the section *Confidence in communication* was added to the questionnaire by the author after discussing it with the supervisor. Despite the few limitations to the Horwitz et al's (1986) scale, it is accepted as a valid measurement tool and has been widely used by different language anxiety researchers.

During each stage of data gathering the questionnaire instructions were modified accordingly. The statements that were presented to students fulfill the purpose of getting to know about learners' perceptions, fears, initial state and attitude towards speaking in English. The statements were designed to give an indication of whether students' willingness to communicate had increased and fears connected to speaking in English had decreased based on students' self-reported perceptions. The sections of the questionnaire also covered the L2 WTC pyramid framework (MacIntyre et al 1986, see p 15).

The questionnaire was filled in four times:

- 20.09.2023, at the beginning of the course - The aim of the questionnaire was to establish a baseline about the students' feelings and evaluations regarding their willingness to communicate, speaking anxiety and the usage of English in general classes.
- 18.10.2023, after the group formation stage had been accomplished - The purpose of the second questionnaire was to find out if the group had gained momentum and whether or how students' evaluations had changed since the first questionnaire.

- 31.01.2024, in the last lesson - The third questionnaire filled the purpose to sum up the course and to evaluate the students' feelings about their progress by the end of the lessons.
- 11.04 2024, a follow-up questionnaire 2.5 months after the course had ended - This questionnaire was necessary to examine whether and how the students' evaluations about their willingness to communicate, speaking anxiety and the usage of English had changed. This time the students also had to leave open-ended feedback about the course and its success, which will be reviewed in the discussion part. None of the questionnaires were examined by the author during the course in order not to let any conclusions or prejudice affect the further work within the group.

The questionnaire used in the study (See appendix [3](#)) is divided into four sections:

1. Perceptions and attitudes of willingness to speak - this block investigates how much the students are willing to speak up in four different situations in English lessons. There are four statements to assess on the scale of *1- Very unwilling, 2- Somewhat unwilling, 3- Neutral, 4- Somewhat willing, 5- Very willing*.
2. Confidence in communication - this section concentrates on students' evaluations about their anxiety and self-perceived communicative competence (skills and attitude) while communicating in English during the lessons. The student has to evaluate his/her feelings and thoughts regarding the ten statements about confidence in communication. The answers to choose from are *1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral/No opinion, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly agree*.
3. Confidence in performance - the focus is to find out about students' evaluations about their confidence while they have to perform in English in front of the class. There are four statements that concentrate on different communication situations and the

answers to choose from are *1- Strongly disagree, 2- Disagree, 3- Neutral/No opinion, 4- Agree, 5- Strongly agree.*

4. Frequency of using oral English - this block investigates how often students use oral English during their lessons and it is connected to their communication behaviour (MacIntyre et al 1986, L2 WTC pyramid framework, see p 15). There are seven statements to evaluate and the answers to choose from are *1- Never, 2- Rarely, 3- Sometimes, 4- Often, 5- Always.*

The questionnaire was translated into Estonian to make sure that every statement is clear and understandable to all of the students. The students filled in the questionnaire mostly at school on paper, but there were some students who were absent on those days and they could fill in the questionnaire at home on Google Docs. The data was entered manually into Excel by the author and the same programme was used to analyse the input.

The teacher also kept a diary on Google Drive, in the lesson plans file, where she wrote down notes after each lesson (See appendix [4](#)). These observations and reflections helped the teacher to make changes in planned activities. If there were tasks that the students did not like, understand, or took part in with low motivation, then the teacher made a note of it down in order not to put the learners into the same situation again. The positive thoughts and experiences were also written down in the diary, so the teacher could remember and use those activities in general lessons and in the next similar course. The first ten lesson plans are really comprehensive and formalized according to the expected thoroughness of the course “Trainee Practice in Teaching English”. The rest of the lesson plans are written just for the teacher without such thorough detail due to high workload and lack of time. But they were an important part of the course in order to plan the activities and comment on the success or failures of the lessons.

2.1.2 Planning the course

In the beginning there was a plan to form two separate groups with ten students. Unfortunately it was not possible due to different factors like the teacher's work overload and financing. When the one bigger group was formed it was time to start planning the course. It was a known fact to the teacher from the beginning that the students would not be graded to take off the pressure of evaluation. Students were introduced to the fact that they have to take part in at least 80% of the lessons (28 academic lessons out of 35) in order to pass the course and in the last lesson they have to be ready to introduce themselves to the classroom as they would do if they were at a conference.

While planning the activities for the group, the author decided to follow the suggestions and activities from the book "Classroom Dynamics" by Jill Hadfield (2000). A lot of the activities were modified, supplemented with ideas from the Internet and many of the tasks and games were adapted from different websites that offer ideas on how to lower students' anxiety and fears and increase their willingness to communicate. The purpose of the thesis was to examine the effect that group dynamics activities could have on students' perceptions about different types of speaking activities and what kind of changes take place in students' willingness to communicate during the process. Keeping that in mind, the activities were mostly a mix of affective and cognitive activities, yet there were some exceptions. When the purpose of the lesson was to build up and reinforce positive feelings about each other and oneself or break the ice, it was advisable to use only affective activities, because it would be difficult to create a positive environment by learning about it from a book. On the other hand, some of the activities needed to be carried out by using the cognitive side in order to encourage students to think about the process of learning and to understand the elements of it. It was also warned by Hadfield (2000:19) that some affective

activities might need a cognitive approach in the middle of the task, because the students might get too emotional.

At first the activities were carried out in groups or through pair-work, because research has shown (Li and Wang 2019, Watcyn-Jones 1997) that studying in a smaller group or doing pair-work can help to reduce students' anxiety, because they are not being monitored constantly by the teacher or all of the classmates. Their mistakes can be heard by few others or only by one student and it gives them more privacy. After a few lessons they started to get individual tasks that needed further discussion within a group. The purpose of these tasks was to train the students to be braver and more talkative during the activities that needed speaking in front of the groupmates. The author's goals through these activities, which got confirmation from Hadfield (2000), were to make students feel comfortable and safe enough to overlook their fears of poor language level, fluency, anxiety or any other behavioural manner that differs from the norm.

The author has done similar courses previously, but without direct emphasis on group dynamics and with fewer students in the classroom. It was always a logical part to the author, that in order to reinforce students' willingness to communicate, it is necessary to gain each other's trust, create a safe classroom environment and plan such activities that will make learners more confident and carefree step-by-step. The tasks and activities were similar to the research course, because the author had studied language anxiety and willingness to communicate prior to the first self-expression course in 2022. Since the feedback to the course was really positive, it became clear that this is an actual problem among the students and it needs more attention.

2.2 The results of the study and its analysis

As said above, the questionnaire is divided into four sections and it consists of 25 statements about perceptions and attitudes regarding willingness to speak, confidence in communication and performance and frequency of using oral English. While analysing the data, it emerged that the 25th statement's evaluations cannot be taken into account, because the author of the wording of the statement made it impossible to understand it in one single way. Statements 1-24 were analysed in the study. All the participants answered all the statements and each answer could be taken into account when conducting the analysis.

Another change took place regarding the number of lessons- instead of 35 lessons 28 were carried out. Lessons were cancelled due to school events and mock exams. In order to pass the course it was compulsory for students to take part in at least 22 lessons.

2.2.1 Perceptions and attitudes towards willingness to communicate

While examining the charts, it is important to keep in mind that the colour and number represent the statement (S) from the questionnaire and the values that follow the colours are the averages of each question in a certain questionnaire. Also, phrases like *by the end of the course* means in the last lesson and *by the end of the process/study* refers to the time when students filled in the fourth questionnaire, 2.5 months after the course had ended.

In the first block of statements, students had to evaluate their willingness to participate in four different situations in an English classroom. By using group dynamics activities, students' WTC in those situations was expected to grow. In this section, the rise of the values is measured as a positive change.

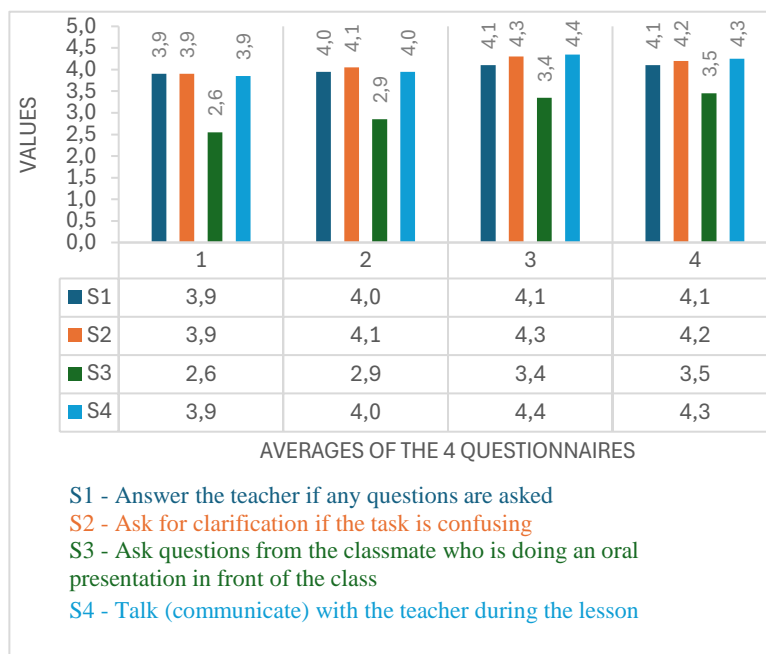


Figure 2. Perceptions and attitudes towards willingness to communicate.

As the data shows (Figure 2), the major change in WTC emerged from the fact that students got more courage or interest in asking questions from their classmate, who is giving a presentation (S3). Most of this change took place during the group maintenance period. Students also felt that they were more willing to communicate with the teacher during the lesson (S4) and ask for further explanations (S2). However, 2.5 months after the course the students' enthusiasm about communicating with the teacher and asking for more information had dropped a little. Feelings about answering the teacher's questions (asked from the whole class) during the lesson (S1) seems to be the same throughout the course and after it had ended.

In terms of changes in the WTC of individual students, it emerged that there are 12 students, whose WTC in the second language has grown during the study and there are five students who felt that their willingness to communicate is lower than before the course. At the beginning, those five students had mostly assessed their wish to take part in the communicative situations with the values 4 and 5, but the more towards the end of the

process, the more *Neutral* answers were given. Three students did not feel any change regarding their wish to communicate in those four situations.

2.2.2 Confidence in communication

This block contains ten statements about the feelings of students' anxiety, skills and attitudes towards communicating in an English classroom. Among statements 6-10, all values were expected to decrease, in order to get positive results.

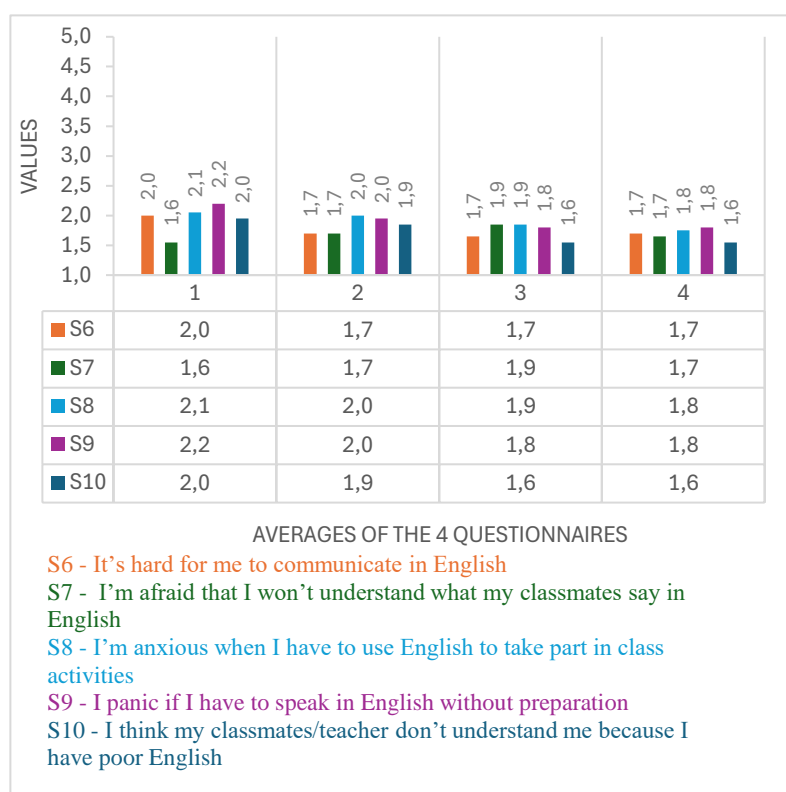


Figure 3. Confidence in communication.

There are some positive changes in students' attitudes and feelings towards speaking in the English classroom (Figure 3). For example, it can be seen that learners' thoughts about the difficulty of communicating in English (S6) started to decrease right after the course began and it remained like this throughout the process. One of the biggest changes has occurred in students' perceptions about their poor language levels (S10). By the end of the

course, 19 students out of 20 felt that their language skills were enough for others and the teacher to understand them, and the feelings had remained like that 2.5 months afterwards.

For some reason, in the middle of the course, the learners were more afraid that they cannot understand their group mates' spoken language than they were prior to the course. Despite the unexpected negative turn, students started to feel less insecure about comprehending their peers' spoken language again after the course had ended (S7).

Two most important aspects of this section are connected with students' anxiety levels. There are 18 students out of 20 whose anxiety level while speaking in English unprepared (S9) stayed the same or dropped by the end of the last lesson. Also, 15 students' feelings about FLSA, while taking part in the class activities (S8), remained the same throughout the course or took a more positive note by the end of the course. There were six students among those 15, who ranked their speaking anxiety level high or neutral in the first part of the course, but eventually their anxiety levels dropped lower and remained like that. On the contrary, evaluations also show that FLSA levels during class activities had increased for five students.

In the second part of the section *confidence in communication*, all the values were expected to increase and, by the end of the study, there had been improvements in the results for each statement. The biggest change can be seen in students' thoughts about the normality of communicating in English in the classroom (Figure 4, S13). They felt that it was a typical behaviour from the beginning and the feeling continued to grow. Furthermore, positive changes emerged towards the confidence in speaking in English to share one's thoughts, ideas and feelings with the group (S11). Eight students out of 20 had evaluated their confidence with neutral or low values in the first questionnaire, but they started to get more confident by the end of the course and the confidence was still there after 2.5 months.

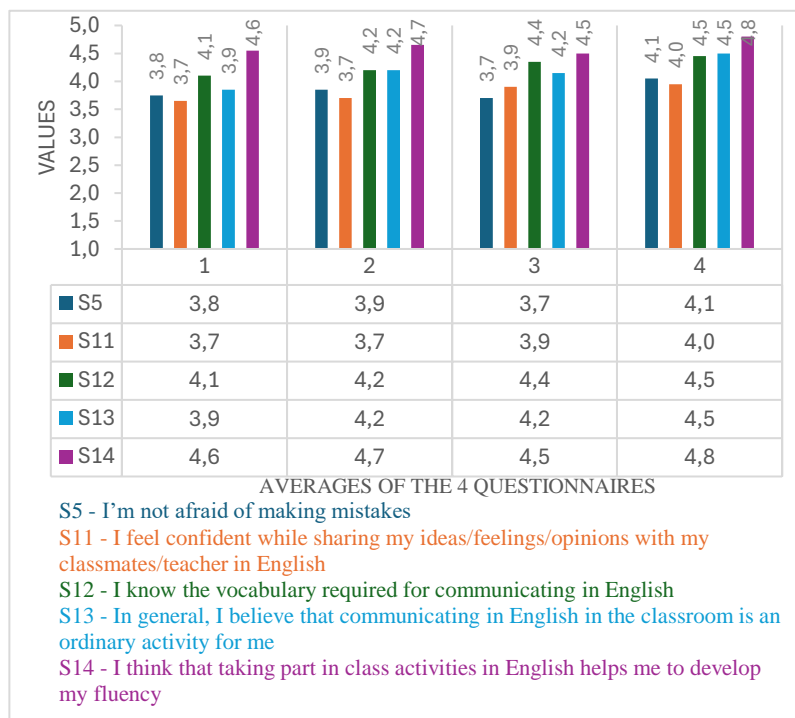


Figure 4. Confidence in communication II.

As the data shows, students felt quite secure about not making mistakes at the beginning of the course, but became slightly more concerned by the end of the course (S5). 2.5 months after the course, their feelings had changed again and they seemed to be confident enough not to care about making mistakes. The results also show that the vocabulary needed for communication (S12) increased during the course and there seems to be a slight tendency towards the thought that taking part in class activities in English can help develop fluency (S14).

Regarding the changes of individual students, the results indicate that there are 12 students, whose fears and anxiety towards speaking in English have decreased and for five students, being afraid to communicate in L2, was not a problem from the beginning. When analysing the results about self-confidence in communication, the data revealed that there are 17 students, whose confidence has grown compared to the beginning of the course.

2.2.3 Confidence in performance

In this section, the focus was to find out about students' evaluations about their confidence while they have to perform in English in front of the class. The statements the students had to assess were all related to the anxiety that emerges in specific situations. All the values were expected to increase for a positive outcome.

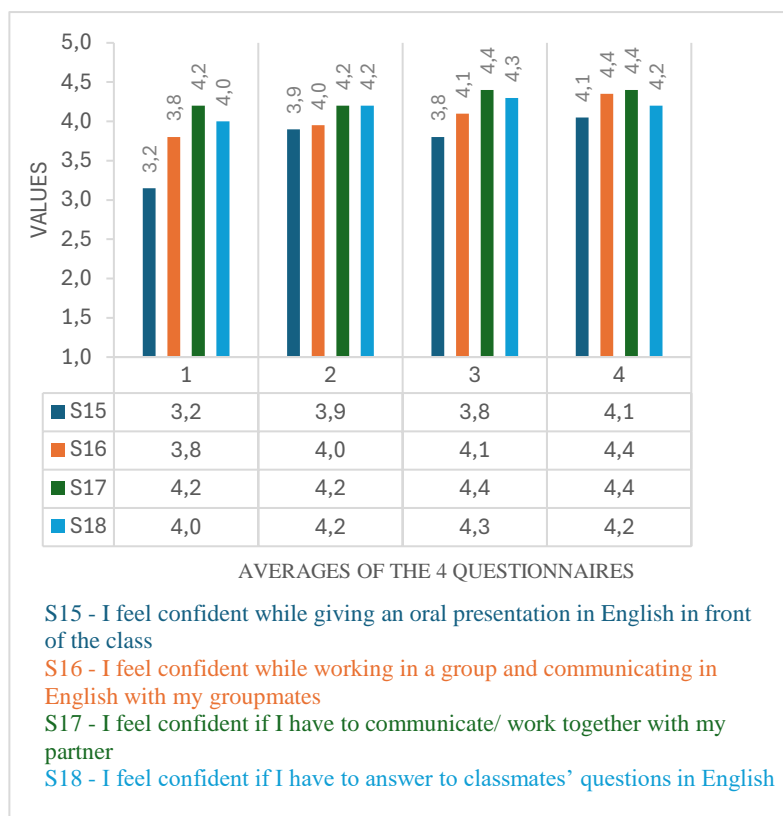


Figure 5. Confidence in performance.

The major development in students' self-confidence about making an oral presentation in front of the classroom emerged during the group forming stage (Figure 5, S15). Over the duration of the course, 12 students out of 20 had gained more courage to perform and for seven students, the feeling stayed the same throughout the process. Only one student felt that his / her self-confidence dropped during the course (from 4 to 3). Another significant change has occurred regarding the confidence in speaking in English while doing group work (S16). By the end of the process, 11 people felt more confident in speaking in English while doing group work, compared to the beginning of the course. Three

of the 20 students did not feel any change in their self-confidence while communicating in English during group work, as the students had evaluated their self-confidence already quite high. Five students experienced some changes in their self-confidence regarding the group work and communicating in English, as their confidence dropped during the course, but had increased by the end of the process.

There are also positive changes in students' self-confidence when they have to do pair work or communicate with their partner in English (S17) and the feeling of confidence if the student has to answer classmates' questions in English (S18). The positive feeling towards confidence in answering classmates' questions was the highest by the end of the course. During the 2.5 months that had passed, students' evaluation about it had decreased a little.

To sum up the *confidence in performance* development, the results demonstrate that the overall confidence in L2, while performing in front of the classroom, in groups or while doing pair work, has improved significantly for 17 students. Their anxiety level in these specific situations has decreased remarkably, as 12 students managed to rate their self-confidence in these specific situations in the last questionnaire with the values 4 (*agree*) and 5 (*strongly agree*), which means that their confidence in communicating with their partner or group mates in English has grown remarkably. Before the course had started, four students out of the 12 had evaluated their feelings towards these situations with very low values, but by the end of the process their perceptions had reversed. It is evident that students' confidence in performance in L2 has made a major change for the positive.

2.2.4 Frequency of using oral English

This block investigates the frequency (communication behaviour) of using oral English in students' general English classes. In order to see more utilisation of oral English in general classes, the values were assumed to increase for each statement.

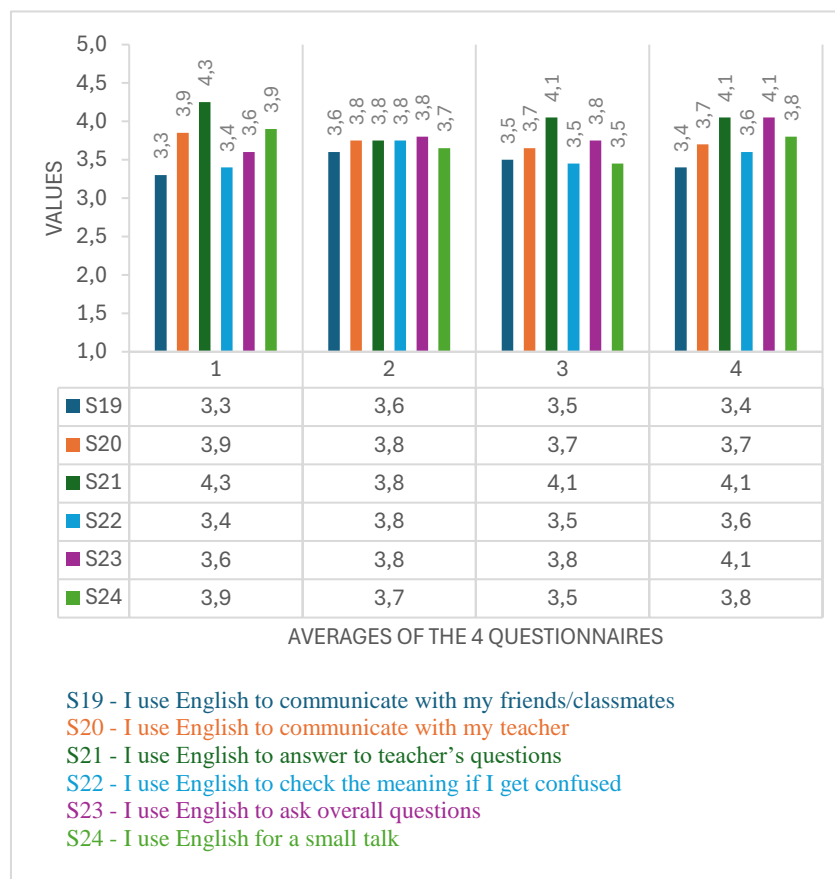


Figure 6. Frequency of using oral English.

This section has the most fluctuations in values (Figure 6). Students used English to communicate with their classmates more during the course and the frequency started to drop at the end of the course (S19). Using English with their teacher for communication purposes was more frequent at the beginning of the course and it continued to decline throughout the process (S20). Although answering the teacher's direct questions in English was not a problem at first, it became less frequent when the students and the teacher had finished the group forming stage (S21). Students started to use more oral English again to answer the teacher's questions during the group maintenance period and continued to do so months after

the course had ended. As the data indicates, students were less motivated to use oral English to comprehend the meanings of vocabulary provided by the teacher (S22). By the end of the group forming stage, the students were slightly more interested in using English to understand the context, but it started to decline in the group maintaining stage.

The only constantly increasing positive change occurred regarding the students' frequency of using oral English in general classes to ask questions from the teacher or peers (S23). As for some reason, willingness to initiate small talk decreased during the course and had slightly started to increase, when the fourth questionnaire was filled in.

To review the fourth section of the questionnaire as a whole (*frequency of using oral English*), it must be pointed out that students' development here was the least successful compared to the three other sections. Only nine students out of 20 felt more willing to use L2 in their general English class in contrast with the first questionnaire's evaluations. One student had the same willingness throughout the process and one student managed to raise his/her enthusiasm, but after the course had ended, the enthusiasm started to drop. Negatively noteworthy is the fact that nine students considered themselves less willing to use L2 in their general English class than they were prior to the course.

2.2.5 Noteworthy developments at different stages

While analysing the input, it is obvious that the results varied between different stages of the study. Here are some of the major changes that occurred between the distinct periods of the process.

Differences between the first and third questionnaire - Regarding the results of the three sections of the study (out of four), it emerged that for most of the sections, the students' feelings and thoughts had increased by the end of the group forming (questionnaire 2) or group maintenance (questionnaire 3) stage. For example, the evaluations that were

connected to FLSA, confidence in communication and performance and willingness to ask questions from the classmate or the teacher for explanations, made the biggest breakthrough during the second and third stage.

Differences between the first three questionnaires and the last one - As the last questionnaire was filled in 2.5 months after the course had ended, then it was somehow expected that the students' end-of-the-course positive feelings and thoughts may drop a little by then and that was the case for willingness to ask clarifying questions from the teacher about the lesson tasks and WTC with the teacher during the lesson. Also, the confidence in answering classmates' questions was not as big anymore as it was at the end of the course.

2.3 Discussion and reflection

The first aim of the study was to examine what effect using group dynamics activities has on students' willingness to communicate. As the results indicate, group dynamics activities did have a positive effect on students' WTC. 12 students felt that they were more willing to communicate in English in specific situations during and at the end of the whole process than they were before taking part in the course. Three students did not have any changes in WTC, as their willingness was already slightly biased to the positive side. It can be explained by the fact that in order to accomplish the readiness to communicate, individual differences, personality traits and foreign language acquisition need to be taken into consideration by group members (Dörnyei 2005, MaCrae and Costa 2004). But to reach the level where the mentioned aspects are taken into account, the group must have a positive learning atmosphere, respectful feelings towards one another and mutual acceptance (Ehman and Dörnyei 1998, Maley 2000, in Hadfield (2000:3)). It can be assumed that for most of the participants these conditions were fulfilled, because more than half of the group's students made a development towards their WTC.

There were also five students who felt rather less willing to take part in specific communicative situations by the end of the study. Before the course had started, they considered themselves quite willing to ask questions from classmate who was giving a presentation, to answer the teacher's questions and to inquire for further explanations. It may be that they are extroverted people by nature and since these people do not tend to have problems with willingness to communicate in L2 (Cetinkaya 2005, Chu 2008), they felt at the beginning that it is not going to be an issue for them. However, as the group started to become more and more cohesive, other students also needed to show their desire to participate in those specific situations and these five people did not get so many chances to speak up anymore.

The second purpose of the study focused on the changes of the students' perceptions about their speaking confidence in English. The aim was to look into students' evaluations about their speaking anxiety, fears and self-confidence towards communicating in English and how their feelings change over time. When analysing the students' thoughts and feelings regarding FLSA, it emerged that 12 students out of 20 were significantly less anxious and afraid of speaking in English for communication purposes by the end of the study. According to Dörnyei (2018), such changes can be achieved if the teacher has managed to create an environment that uses group dynamics activities, which can help students to let go of their fears and anxiety. The same results were perceived in Hadziosmanovic's (2012) degree project, where FLSA was found to be strongly connected to the group dynamics and classroom climate. Another development in L2 communication occurred among 17 students, whose self-confidence grew in time. Researchers (Maley 2000, Caine and Caine 1991) have emphasised the importance of affective learning activities, which lead to mutual respect and acceptance and thereby it helps to develop students' self-confidence and they are willing to take more risks in the classroom. It seems that the activities provided by the teacher helped

the students to feel more confident in the lessons, because according to students' evaluations, they had become more confident in sharing their thoughts and ideas with the class and the teacher by the end of the study. The fact that students liked the course and got more courage to speak in English is also evident from their feedback comments:

"I recently took a Cambridge exam and the oral part went really well thanks to the course." ("Käisin hiljuti Cambridge'i eksamil ja suuline osa tuli tänu kursusele väga hästi välja.").

"My communication skills have developed a lot." ("Väga palju olen paremaks saanud oma suhtlemisoskust.").

"It made me braver to communicate in English with my friends and classmates." ("Tegi mind julgemaks, et inglise keeles suhelda oma tuttavatega ja klassikaaslastega.").

"It was really great, we should do it again." (Väga tore oli, võiks uuesti teha.").

What is more, Horwitz, Horwitz and Cope (1986) have stated that students tend to be unwilling to speak until they have reached a level of fluency that is satisfying to them. It emerged from the data and the feedback that students' vocabulary increased during the course and they have also developed their fluency level, which confirms the researchers' previous findings.

"I have become more courageous and my fluency is better." ("Olen saanud palju julgemaks ja soravus on paremaks läinud.").

"I have become more confident and courageous. Also, using certain vocabulary has developed." ("Olen muutunud enesekindlamaks ja julgemaks. Samas on ka teatud sõnavara kasutus arenemist saanud.").

Also, when it comes to confidence in sharing their thoughts with the teacher, there are several sentences in the teacher's notes (see p 69, 74, 76), where students expressed their dislikes and suggestions about some activities, which were taken into account and changes were adjusted accordingly, as it is the teacher's obligation to keep the students motivated (Hadfield, 2000). It also means that the students have started to trust the teacher and they feel secure enough to express themselves.

It can be seen from the results that over half of the students' foreign language speaking anxiety and fears have decreased during the study. For most of the participants,

self-confidence in communication and presentation increased, which means that regarding this specific combination of learners, the group dynamics activities served their purpose.

The third purpose of the study was to examine how students' frequency of using oral English and behaviour in their general classes change. There were few positive changes regarding the communication behaviour. For example, asking questions from the peers or the teacher in their general classroom, was the only constantly positively growing development in that section. Only nine students out of 20 agreed that their use of oral English in general class has increased and the exact number of students felt the opposite. This part confirms the results from the previous study (Kubanyova 2018), where the importance of group dynamics activities was emphasised, because such activities are beneficial in creating a safe speaking environment. Since most of the students' WTC and self-confidence within this specific group increased and FLSA decreased, it is possible to draw a conclusion that students felt safe with the teacher and their peers, because they had worked through many stages and activities that were oriented in creating a bond and a friendly relationship between all parties. Unfortunately, in general classes the importance of group dynamics is often given little attention, because teachers are focusing more on language knowledge, but in order to boost students' communicative skills in L2, it is necessary to create an environment that encourages students to speak more actively and freely in English (Dörnyei 2018). It must be pointed out that it is hard to break behavioural patterns with only one course, since it is the last aspect of a person's L2 willingness to communicate and reaching this level requires accomplishments from lower stages (The pyramid framework of L2 WTC (MacIntyre et al 1998, cited in Lee and Chiu 2023, see Figure 1 p 15). One student wrote about it in the feedback: "This course gave me confidence in communicating with the people who attended the same course. Communicating with strangers and others is still scary.". ("See kursus andis

mulle enesekindlust suhelda inimestega, kes tegid selle sama kursuse läbi. Võõraste ja teistega on siiski hirmus suhelda.”).

When reflecting back on the course, it must be pointed out that next time there should be fewer students in one class in order for them to get more speaking time. There were also activities that did not attract the students and they politely asked to do something else. It emerged that the activities that did not engage them were about guessing something (Alias, Who am I?). These will be probably left out in the next courses, as it has become clear that students need topics that are geared more towards practical issues and humor.

This process of conducting an oral English self-expression course with more structured purposes gave the author the confirmation that these kinds of courses are necessary for the students. Not only for those who have problems with L2 anxiety and confidence, but even for those students who just need a place where to express themselves by speaking in English with their peers. It also confirmed the feeling that the author had provided students with the right activities in the previous courses and had carried out those courses by using group dynamics framework unbeknownst to herself. Teacher's notes that were written during the study can be used while planning the next course and all of the lesson plans and notes can be of help to other teachers who want to run a similar course.

Although the author has a positive feeling towards the thesis, this study is not without limitations. If there had been two smaller groups, as originally planned, then it would have been possible to compare the results and make conclusions. Also, it would have been interesting to find out whether the same type of activities emerge as disliked. One suggestion for further research would be about the duration of the course, as the author recommends it to last throughout the school year in order to see the changes on a wider scale. This is a small-scale study that contains results about one specific group, which means that these conclusions cannot be expected to be drawn in the same way in any other second language

course. Lastly, no duplicate analysis was performed regarding the data. The analysis was done by the author only and it contains her interpretations.

CONCLUSION

In the introduction of the thesis, the author emphasises the importance of the English language speaking skill, as it receives less attention at school than it should. As a result, the students are afraid of communicating in English with their teacher and classmates, because they get anxious in certain situations and their lack of self-confidence towards speaking in English has not been adequately dealt with. The present study focuses on three aspects in second language learning: students' willingness to communicate, their anxiety and fears towards speaking in English and how group dynamics activities help to ease students' difficulties in second language communication. The first part of the thesis gives an overview of the topics related to the three major points mentioned above. The chapter includes previous studies, discussions and ideas regarding the importance of group dynamics in L2, the nature of FLA and FLSA and the factors that affect WTC. In order to see changes in students' communication behaviour, anxiety levels and self-confidence, an English oral course was carried out with a focus on group dynamics activities. The study aims to answer the following questions:

1. What effect does using group dynamics activities have on students' willingness to communicate?
2. How does students' perception of their confidence regarding speaking in English change?
3. What changes occur in the frequency of students' self-reported L2 use?

The second part of the thesis describes the data and the methodology that was used to conduct this study. It also introduces the author's compiled FLSA and WTC questionnaire and gives an overview about the nature of the statements and the procedure of data gathering. The statements were divided into four sections and each section filled its own purpose - perceptions and attitudes towards willingness to speak, confidence in communication,

confidence in performance and frequency of using oral English. The numerical values assigned to the students' responses in the questionnaires were transferred to Excel and then it was possible to analyse the data.

The analysis from this research indicated that group dynamics activities have a positive effect on students' willingness to communicate. Furthermore, students' anxiety levels dropped and self-confidence in oral English increased. Focusing more on affective activities enhances students' trust and openness towards each other, which enables them to work together as a cohesive group and then the learning (cognitive activities) also will become more effective. This study seems to confirm the importance of group dynamics in L2 learning: in order to achieve confidence and WTC in a second language, the students and the teacher needed to establish a safe positive environment and on the basis of the results, most students probably felt safe enough to speak. The fact that the group was bigger than initially planned and the students still managed to increase their WTC and confidence, shows the effectiveness of group dynamics activities. With these findings, it is also possible to explain the low increase of frequency of using oral English in students' general classes. Since it is directly connected to a person's communicative behaviour, then it is obvious that these patterns are hard to break with only one short course and then to carry them over to the general English class.

Even though the research showed that by using group dynamics activities, it is possible to foster students' willingness to communicate and thereby decrease their FLSA and increase the self-confidence in oral English, it must be pointed out that this small scale study cannot guarantee generalisations to other similar L2 oral courses. The connections between group dynamics, WTC and FLSA should be studied further, but with a larger sample in a variety of learning context and different age groups of students.

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APPENDIX 1 - Parents' agreement

Lapsevanema nõusolek uuringus osalemiseks

Tere. Olen Tartu Ülikooli võõrkeeleõpetaja eriala teise aasta tudeng Kadri Kõiv. Kirjutan magistritööd teemal "Using group dynamics at the upper secondary level to foster speaking in the classroom". Uuringu eesmärgiks on grupidünaamika tegevuste kaudu suurendada õpilaste enesekindlust ja valmisolekut inglise keeles suhtlemiseks nii klassiruumis kui ka väljaspool kooli. Sellega seonduvalt viin neljal korral õpilaste seas läbi küsimustiku, et välja selgitada, kas ja kuidas nende arvamused ja hoiakud inglise keeles suhtlemisel kursuse käigus muutuvad. Küsimustiku tulemused on oma õigel kujul nähtavad vaid minule, teiste jaoks on need anonüümsed.

Mul oleks väga hea meel, kui lubaksite oma lapsel uuringus osaleda. Küsimuste korral võite pöörduda minu poole meilitsi kadri.koiv@parksepa.werro.ee või helistades 53303961.

Ette tänades

Kadri Kõiv

Kas lubate oma lapsel uuringus osaleda?

- JAH, olen nõus, et minu laps osaleb uurimuses ja tema vastuseid kasutatakse anonüümselt magistritöö koostamisel
- EI

LAPSE NIMI

LAPSEVANEMA/SEADUSLIKU ESINDAJA NIMI

KUUPÄEV JA ALLKIRI

APPENDIX 2 - Students' and headmaster's agreement

Osalemisleping

ÕPILANE (nimi ja klass) _____ osaleb uurimuses “Using group dynamics at the upper secondary level to facilitate speaking in the classroom”, mis viiakse läbi Parksepa Keskkoolis ajavahemikus september 2023- aprill 2024 inglise keele õpetaja Kadri Kõivu poolt. Kõik uuringus kogutavad andmed on oma õigel kujul nähtavad vaid õpetajale Kadri Kõiv, teiste jaoks jäävad need anonüümseks.

ÕPILASE nimi ja allkiri _____

DIREKTOR Aigi Sikkal _____

Kuupäev _____

APPENDIX 3 - The questionnaire

Willingness to Communicate Questionnaire (Suhtlemisvalmidus inglise keeles)

Before the first lesson:

See küsimustik koosneb neljast sektsioonist, et saada teada teie soovi ja valmidust inglise keeles suhtlemiseks inglise keele tundides. Selleks läheb umbes 10 minutit. Palun vastake küsimustele/väidetele nii nagu te päriselt tunnete, et garanteerida uurimuse edukus. Teie vastused on konfidentsiaalsed ja ainult mina näen neid nimeliselt. See on vajalik selleks, et saaksin omavahel seostada vastuseid, mille annate erinevatel aegadel kursuse jooksul.

After the group formation stage:

See küsimustik koosneb neljast sektsioonist, et saada teada teie soovi ja valmidust inglise keeles suhtlemiseks inglise keele tundides. Selleks läheb umbes 10 minutit. Palun vastake küsimustele/väidetele nii nagu te päriselt tunnete, et garanteerida uurimuse edukus. Teie vastused on konfidentsiaalsed ja ainult mina näen neid nimeliselt. See on vajalik selleks, et saaksin omavahel seostada vastuseid, mille annate erinevatel aegadel kursuse jooksul.

OLEME NÜÜD KOOS TÖÖTANUD JUBA 8 AKADEEMILIST TUNDI. PALUN VASTAKE KÜSIMUSTELE OMA HETKEOLUKORRAST JA TUNNETEST LÄHTUVALT.

After the course had ended:

See küsimustik koosneb neljast sektsioonist, et saada teada teie soovi ja valmidust inglise keeles suhtlemiseks inglise keele tundides. Selleks läheb umbes 10 minutit. Palun vastake küsimustele/väidetele nii nagu te päriselt tunnete, et garanteerida uurimuse edukus. Teie vastused on konfidentsiaalsed ja ainult mina näen neid nimeliselt. See on vajalik selleks, et saaksin omavahel seostada vastuseid, mille annate erinevatel aegadel kursuse jooksul.

Vastates mõtle sellele, kuidas tunned end antud hetkel, kui kursus on läbitud.

2.5 months after the course:

See küsimustik koosneb neljast sektsioonist, et saada teada teie soovi ja valmidust inglise keeles suhtlemiseks inglise keele tundides. Selleks läheb umbes 10 minutit. Palun vastake küsimustele/väidetele nii nagu te päriselt tunnete, et garanteerida uurimuse edukus.

Teie vastused on konfidentsiaalsed ja ainult mina näen neid nimeliselt. See on vajalik selleks, et saaksin omavahel seostada vastuseid, mille annate erinevatel aegadel kursuse jooksul.

Vastates mõtle sellele, kuidas tunned end antud hetkel, kui kursusest on möödunud 2 kuud.

Arusaamad suhtlemisvalmidusest

Juhised: Allpool on näha erinevad suhtlusolukorrad, millega tuleb inglise keele tunnis arvestada. Palun märkige, kuivõrd te soovite ja olete valmis **inglise keeles** nendes olukordades **inglise keele tundides** osalema. Palun märkige X sinna kastikesse, mis kirjeldab teie valmisolekut ja soovi kõige enam.

1	2	3	4	5
Üldse ei soovi	Mõnevõrra soovimatu	Neutraalne	Mõnevõrra soovin	Väga soovin

	1	2	3	4	5
1.Vastad õpetajale, kui ta esitab klassis küsimusi					
2.Kui ülesande puhul jääb midagi arusaamatuks, siis küsid selgitavaid küsimusi					
3.Esitad küsimusi klassikaaslastele, kes teeb klassi ees suulist esitlust					
4.Räägid (suhtled) õpetajaga tunni ajal					

Enesekindlus suhtlemisel

Juhised: Selle ploki ülesandeks on välja selgitada teie ärevus ja enesetaju kompetents (oskused ja hoiakud) **inglise keeles suhtlemisel klassiruumis**. Palun märkige X sinna kasti, mis näitab teie nõustumist/mitte nõustumist antud väidetega.

1 2 3 4 5
 Üldse ei nõustu Ei nõustu Neutraalne/ Arvamus puudub Nõustun Väga nõus

	1	2	3	4	5
5.Ma ei karda teha vigu					
6.Minu jaoks on inglise keeles suhtlemine raske					
7.Ma kardan, et ma ei saa aru, mida mu klassikaaslased inglise keeles räägivad					
Ma olen ärevil, kui pean kasutama inglise keelt tunnitegevustes osalemiseks					
Ma satun paanikasse, kui pean rääkima inglise keeles ette valmistamata					
Ma arvan, et mu klassikaaslased /õpetaja ei saa minust aru, sest mul on kehv inglise keele oskus					
Ma tunnen end enesekindlalt, kui jagan oma ideid/ tundeid/ arvamusi oma klassikaaslastega/ õpetajaga inglise keeles					
Ma tean inglise keeles suhtlemiseks vajalikke sõnu					
Üldiselt arvan, et inglise keeles suhtlemine klassiruumis on minu jaoks tavaline tegevus					
Ma arvan, et osalemine klassitegevustes inglise keeles aitab arendada minu soravust (vähendada kõhklemist ja pause)					

Enesekindlus esinemisel

Selle ploki eesmärgiks on välja selgitada teie enesekindlus klassis **inglise keeles esinedes**.
 Palun märkige X sinna kasti, mis näitab teie nõustumist/mitte nõustumist antud väidetega.

1 2 3 4 5
 Üldse ei nõustu Ei nõustu Neutraalne/ Arvamus puudub Nõustun Väga nõus

	1	2	3	4	5
Ma tunnen end enesekindlalt klassi ees inglise keeles suulist ettekannet tehes					
Ma tunnen end enesekindlalt rühmatööd tehes grupikaaslastega suhtlemisel inglise keeles					
Ma tunnen end enesekindlalt, kui pean paarilisega inglise keeles suhtlema/koos töötama					
Ma tunnen end enesekindlalt, kui pean vastama klassikaaslaste küsimustele inglise keeles					

Inglise keele kasutamise sagedus

Juhised: Selle ploki eesmärgiks on välja selgitada **inglise keele** kasutamise sagedus **klassiruumis**. Palun märkige X sinna kasti, mis kirjeldab, kui sageli te **inglise keele tundides** kasutate **inglise keelt**.

1 2 3 4 5
 Mitte kunagi Harva Vahepeal Tihti Alati

	1	2	3	4	5
Ma kasutan inglise keelt, et oma sõpradega /klassikaaslastega suhelda					
Ma kasutan inglise keelt, et oma õpetajaga suhelda					
Ma kasutan inglise keelt, et õpetaja küsimustele vastata					
Ma kasutan inglise keelt, et teha kindlaks tähendused (nt“What does it					

mean?”, “I do not understand.”)						
Ma kasutan inglise keelt, et esitada küsimusi						
Ma kasutan inglise keelt lihtsateks vestlusteks (nt “How are you today?”)						
Ma kasutan inglise keelt ainult siis, kui ma osalen tunni tegevustes						

The last questionnaire included two open-ended feedback boxes.

Kuidas on see kursus mõjutanud sinu enesekindlust ja julgust inglise keeles suhelda oma tavalises inglise keele tunnis?

On sul mulle veel mingeid mõtteid jagada?

See on küsimustiku lõpp.

Aitäh koostöö eest.

Kasutatud allikas

Darasawang, P & Hayo Reinders. 2021. Willingness to Communicate and Second Language Proficiency: A Correlational Study. *Education Sciences*, 11:9.

APPENDIX 4 - Teacher's notes and lesson plans

Tunnikonspektid 1 ja 2.

Kool: Parksepa Keskkool

Klass: 10. ja 12. (20 õpilast)

Praktikant: Kadri Kõiv

Juhendav õpetaja: pole vajadust

Aine: Inglise keele vestluskursus

Aeg: 20.09.2023, 6.-7.tund (2x45min)

Teema: Üksteisega tutvumine, küsimustiku täitmine.

Tunni eesmärgid:

During the class students will:

- get to know each other by different communication and group dynamic activities
- learn about the teacher's MA thesis and the questionnaire connected to it

Tunni läbiviimiseks vajalikud materjalid ja töövahendid:

- printed questionnaires for MA thesis
- printed questions and question cards for group work
- small blank papers

Tunni käik

Time	Activities	Comments
Introduction: 15 min.	I will begin the lesson by introducing myself and since the course focuses on my MA thesis I will introduce them the topic and the activities that we are going to do during the course. After that I will give them the questionnaires that they are going to fill in before we start with our activities. After that I am going to explain today's lessons' purposes and activities.	
Main part: 65 min.	1.Divide students into 4 groups and they have to ask questions from each other. They have to memorise everything (including names), because they can't write anything down. When everyone has spoken then they have to	4 groups of 5 students. Teacher observes and listens to students in each activity.

	<p>tell what they remember about their team members and they can test their memory. (20 min.)</p> <p>2. Every student writes down 3 facts about him/herself and folds the paper. Then they mix the papers and start reading the facts out aloud to other groups members. They have to guess the owner of the facts. (20 min.)</p> <p>3. 10 questions to ask from the group members. This time they can write down the answers. After finding out the answers they have to check within their group if everybody got the same answers. (20 min.)</p> <p>4. Questions cards- each student gets a card with a task on it. They have to give an expanded answer to the group members. (5 min).</p>	<p>Groups remain the same. Teacher hands out small papers.</p> <p>Forming new 4 groups of 5 people.</p> <p>Teacher hands out questions(1).</p> <p>Same groups as in previous activity. Teacher hands out question cards(2).</p>
Conclusion: 10 min.	<p>Since it is their first time to study together then the teacher sums up the lesson in order not to pressure the students. The ending includes analysing the lesson purposes and how the students managed to work together with each other from the teacher's point of view.</p>	

Lessons went by really quickly. I was a bit nervous at the beginning but I think it didn't show. Everything went as it was supposed to go, there were no awkward silence situations or protests against activities. It was fun to observe the students and try to get to know them through it. When students left the class they thanked me and said that it was fun. I'm looking forward to the next lessons.

Tunnikonspektid 3 ja 4.

Kool: Parksepa Keskkool

Klass: 10. ja 12. (20 õpilast)

Praktikant: Kadri Kõiv

Juhendav õpetaja: pole vajadust

Aine: Inglise keele vestluskursus

Aeg: 27.09.2023, 6.-7. tund (2x45 min)

Teema: Building group dynamics

Tunni eesmärgid:

During the class students will:

- get to know each other by different communication and group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their speaking and listening skills

Tunni läbiviimiseks vajalikud materjalid ja töövahendid:

- blank sheets
- white board and markers
- printed debate topics

Tunni käik

Time	Activities	Comments
Introduction: 5 min.	Greeting the students and starting a small talk. Then I will introduce them the purposes and plans for the lesson.	
Main part: 65 min.	<p>1. Each student gets a sheet of paper which is folded half. The right side of the sheet includes questions and students have to write their names to the left side and the papers start to rotate between the students. In the end every paper must have each student's name before the questions. They can unfold the paper now and turn to this person whose name they see before a certain question. They must write short answers behind the questions for the next task. (20 min)</p> <p>2. After getting the answers I will divide the students into 4 groups of 5 people. They must all have a different name in front of the questions and now everyone has to read out the facts they found out about their classmates. (15 min)</p>	<p>This activity can help students to remember their names and learn new facts about each other (3).</p> <p>I will observe and listen to students in every activity.</p> <p>This activity helps to consolidate the names and facts about classmates in order to get to know them better, step-by-step.</p>

	<p>3. Make a list of 3 things: things we should stop doing; things we should do more; things we should do less. They will remain in the same groups and each of them will write down 3 things in each category. Then they have to read them out to their group mates, discuss and analyse them and decide together what are the 3 most important things in each category and write them down. After that one group member shares their thoughts and when every group has done it we will discuss the similarities and differences in one big group. (25 min)</p> <p>4. Students are in 5 groups of 4 people and each group gets a statement. First task is to decide which of the two group members agree and which two disagree with the statement. Then they have to discuss the facts in pairs and after 5 minutes they have to start arguing within their group. (10 min).</p> <p>5. I like people who...-we sit in a circle and one chair is moved away. I will stand in the middle of the circle and shout out a fact like I like people who wear glasses. Everybody who is related to the statement must stand up and switch seats. One person who doesn't get a seat has to stand in the middle of the class and shout out a new fact. (10 min).</p>	<p>It also helps to formulate sentences according to answers and develops their listening and speaking skills.</p> <p>I will write the headings on the board.</p> <p>This exercise helps them to communicate with each other and they have to analyse their thoughts and try to work together as one in order to decide about the most important things that were asked.</p> <p>We will sit in a big circle and I will start a discussion and hopefully the students will join.</p> <p>I will hand out the debate topics to groups (4).</p> <p>This game helps to develop trust and friendship between the students and the teacher, because it is really entertaining and it gives an opportunity to those students who are shy, because they can just sit and watch. There is no pressure that everyone has to move and take part physically in the game.</p>
Conclusion: 5min.	We will remain on our seats in the circle and I will sum up the lesson. I will	If anyone wants to share their thoughts it is welcomed, but I

	discuss if the purposes were met.	won't pressure them to say anything, that's why I will sum up the lesson.
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We managed to do all the activities, but I decided that the 4th game will be done differently. As we were sitting in the circle and the students were really comfortable with it I didn't want to break the mood. I gave them the statements and I hoped that they would explain if they agreed or disagreed with the statements and expand their answers. Almost everybody said something about the statements and overall the lesson went really well. It is amazing that the students already get along very well and they aren't afraid to speak in front of everybody. Of course it is necessary to mention that nobody has to share intimate or personal information, maybe this is the reason why they have agreed to participate so actively in communication tasks. I like that I had the courage to make this decision and I didn't stick to the lesson plan.

Tunnikonspektid 5 ja 6.

Kool: Parksepa Keskkool

Klass: 10. ja 12. (20 õpilast)

Praktikant: Kadri Kõiv

Juhendav õpetaja: pole vajadust

Aine: Inglise keele vestluskursus

Aeg: 04.10.2023, 6.-7. tund (2x45 min)

Teema: Activities in groups

Tunni eesmärgid:

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills

Tunni läbiviimiseks vajalikud materjalid ja töövahendid:

- printed papers with debate topics
- printed papers with a topic
- computer and projector
- ASK card game

Tunni käik

Time	Activities	Comments
Introduction: 5 min.	I will start the lesson by discussing what we did last time and what the activities planned for today are .	
Main part: 80 min.	1.For the warm-up I will give some	We'll sit in a circle.

	<p>students a character and they have to guess who they are. They can only ask questions to answers Yes or No. For example: Am I a woman? Do I live in Estonia? etc (10 min).</p> <p>2. Debating in groups. Students are arranged into 5 groups of 4 people and each group gets a statement. First task is to decide which of the two group members agree and which of the two disagree with the statement. Then they have to discuss their thoughts in pairs and after 5 minutes they have to start augmenting within their group.(20 min).</p> <p>3. Talk about a topic for a minute- Every student gets a different topic and they have to talk about it for 1 minute in their group (7 min).</p> <p>4. Fake news- I'll show them a video of fake news and then they have to come up with their own fake news in groups and play it out in front of the class (30 min). https://youtube.com/shorts/v4kwIHKMs7Q?si=64Va2Oy3F8XSAjo0</p> <p>5. ASK card game- for the ending we'll sit in a circle and everyone gets cards with questions on them. First, they have to translate the question into English and then they have to pick the person that they are going to ask. The rule is that everyone must be asked (10 min).</p>	<p>It's the same activity that I wanted to do in the last lesson, but I changed it. In this lesson we will do it as I had planned in the first place (5).</p> <p>Change of group members. I'll hand out speaking topics (6).</p> <p>Groups of 2 or 3 people in it.</p> <p>This time I want everybody to participate in the game by answering the questions. I have taken out personal and intriguing questions to avoid embarrassing moments.</p>
Conclusion: 3 min.	As we are sitting in a circle then I think it is advisable to end the lesson that way. I will sum up the lesson by stating if we managed to fill in the purposes and then I will ask if anybody wants to share their thoughts about our lesson or group mates etc.	Nobody is forced to give feedback.

We managed to do tasks 2, 3 and 4. The first character game wasn't a match for them. A few

students tried at first but they said that it wasn't funny at all and asked me to move on with the next game. I really appreciate their honesty and I don't want to offer them boring activities. As we moved on to the next activity then the fun began! We all had a good time and the activities and conversations were very meaningful. Fake news task was probably the funniest, because they could let their imagination free and some of them have a real talent in acting. All the activities lasted longer than I had expected and that's why we couldn't play ASK. But we managed to sum up the lesson and some students gave me feedback and thanked me for the fun and asked what I have planned for the next time.

Tunnikonspektid 7 ja 8.

Kool: Parksepa Keskkool

Klass: 10. ja 12. (20 õpilast)

Praktikant: Kadri Kõiv

Juhendav õpetaja: pole vajadust

Aine: Inglise keele vestluskursus

Aeg: 11.10.2023, 6.-7. tund (2x45 min)

Teema: Getting braver

Tunni eesmärgid:

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
- analyse their progress so far by filling in questionnaire no 2

Tunni läbiviimiseks vajalikud materjalid ja töövahendid:

- ASK card game
- questionnaire
- blank sheets
- Find someone- printed sheets

Tunni käik

Time	Activities	Comments
Introduction: 5 min.	Talking about the last lesson and informing them again about group dynamics and how this course helps them to gain confidence in communication in English and how these activities help to achieve it step-by-step. And after today's lesson they have to fill in the second questionnaire regarding my MA thesis (8 min).	
Main part: 70 min.	1. We'll sit in a circle and I will take part in the activity as well. Every student has	I will start with the fact. This is a good game to test if

	<p>to say one fact about him/herself, but it has to be smth that others don't know yet. When this round is done then everyone must pick one person and try to remember the fact and say it out loud. And the person that was picked out has to tell if it was correct or not (15 min).</p> <p>2.ASK card game- we'll remain in a circle and everyone gets cards with questions on them. First, they have to translate the question into English and then they have to pick the person that they are going to ask. The rule is that everyone must be asked. I will take part in the game. (15 min).</p> <p>3. Groupwork: they have to write down as many statements as possible with what they all agree to: for example 'The Earth is flat' or 'Women are more intelligent than men'. After 10 minutes of thinking each group has to read out their list. The group with the longest list wins (15 min).</p> <p>4.Find smth in common- they will remain in the same groups, but this time they have to make a list about things they have in common. For example: they all have a sister, live in a house etc. And after 10 minutes they have to read them out loud (15 min).</p> <p>5.Find someone- they have a list of different statements and each student has to walk around the classroom and find a person that matches the statement (10 min).</p>	<p>the names have been memorised and it builds group dynamics because they share things about each other.</p> <p>Activity that we didn't manage to do last time. This time I want everybody to participate in the game by answering the questions. I have taken out personal and intriguing questions to avoid embarrassing moments. If someone doesn't want to answer then a new question can be picked.</p> <p>5 groups of 4 people.</p> <p>I will observe the activities that I won't take part in.</p> <p>They will decide within the group who reads the statements out.</p> <p>I'll give them the list of statements (7). They have gathered a lot of information about each other so they can probably assume which statement matches with whom. This also helps them formulate</p>
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		different questions and practise grammar.
Conclusion: 12 min.	Summing up the lesson and discussing what went well and what needs more attention. Filling in the second questionnaire.	

Overall, the lesson went really well and we had lots of fun. They like when I participate in the activities because then they can learn things about me and it makes them feel like I'm one of them. They said it in the feedback. Last activity, find someone, this didn't go well. It was a bit boring to them and they didn't want to walk around the classroom, they prefer sitting all the time. At this point they have really gotten used to each other and that's why I decided that the group dynamics building area is finished, it's time to move on and start maintaining the environment and group vibe.

Tunnikonspektid 9 ja 10.

Kool: Parksepa Keskkool

Klass: 10. ja 12. (20 õpilast)

Praktikant: Kadri Kõiv

Juhendav õpetaja: pole vajadust

Aine: Inglise keele vestluskursus

Aeg: 18.10.2023, 6.-7. tund (2x45 min)

Teema: Playing is learning!

Tunni eesmärgid:

During the class students will:

- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
- start trusting each other more
- learn the language and boost their confidence through games

Tunni läbiviimiseks vajalikud materjalid ja töövahendid:

- notes with THIS or THAT questions
- blank notes
- printed out antonym pairs

Tunni käik

Time	Activities	Comments
Introduction: 5 min	<p>I'm going to explain to them that we are now in the group maintenance era and this includes games where they start loosening up a bit more and they can honestly feel free and don't have to hold themselves back, because we have seen how much fun we can have by letting our creativity fly. They can talk about themes that they feel comfortable with and we'll agree on the rule that we won't judge anybody. Then I'll explain today's activities and their purposes.</p>	
Main part: 80 min	<p>1.How are you?- For the warm up. Before the game we will discuss what the typical answers to this question among Estonians are. After we have agreed on the 3 typical answers then the game begins. We'll be sitting in a circle and everyone gets a question "How are you?". If the answer is "I'm fine" then everybody changes their seats. If the answer is "OK" then you'll switch seats with the right hand partner and if the answer is "Not good" then you stand up for a second and sit down again (10 min).</p> <p>2.THIS or THAT train. I'm the train driver and take one note from the table. For example I get a question "Party or movie night?". Students are lined up behind each other and I'll face them. When I say "party" then I'll show my left hand, when I say "movie" then I'll show my right hand. Now the students have to decide whether they move to the right or left, according to the activity. And I have to walk through the "train" and move to the end. Then the next one in front of the line acts as a train driver and picks one question from the table etc (20 min).</p> <p>3.THIS or THAT questions vol 2- this</p>	<p>I'll put the questions on the table (8).</p>

	<p>time each student makes up a question and writes it on the paper. Then they start moving around the classroom and ask the questions from each other. The person who answers has to expand the response. Every time they have asked the question they have to switch it with the partner so they get a new question (15 min).</p> <p>4. Antonym pairs- the game is in pairs and each pair gets a note with antonyms on it, for example “rich-poor”. They have to decide how to act it out to the group by using only body language (7 min).</p> <p>5. Advertisement- activity in groups. They have to think about a product that hasn’t been invented yet and they have to sell it to the audience. Students have to stand side-by-side and each student can say only one sentence per round, there are 3 rounds in total. After advertising the audience can ask questions about the product (25 min).</p>	<p>The purpose of it is that everybody can communicate with each other and learn smth new about them.</p> <p>I’ll divide them into pairs and give them antonyms (9). Preparation time: 2 min.</p> <p>I will make the groups to save time. 4 groups of 5 people. I’ll give them 5 minutes of preparation time.</p>
Conclusion: 3 min	We’ll sum up the lesson by discussing how did they feel during the lesson.	

We managed to do all the games, but the first one didn’t go as I had planned. They didn’t like it and they asked me not to play it. It’s really good that they aren’t afraid of telling me honestly what they think and suggest what could be more meaningful for them. Both THIS or THAT games were super fun and again they had a suggestion- when it was time to ask questions from each other then they wanted to sit in a circle and ask the question from the right hand partner instead of walking around in the classroom. Advertisement activity was hilarious and it’s so good to see how they work together as friends. The pantomime activity was also successful but one pair was a bit clumsy- a super talkative boy and a shy girl.

11. ja 12.tund

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group

- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
1. Murder wink- M täht sildil ja igaüks võtab sildi. See, kellel on M peab seda varjama ja kui kellegi pilk satub temale, siis ta peab silma pilgutama ja see, kellele pilgutati siis langeb välja. Võidab see, kes viimasena mängu jääb.
 2. Topin kotti asju ja õpilased peavad inglise keeles kirjeldama neid katsumise kaudu ja siis klass arvab, mis see on.
 3. Aliase mäng
 4. Confession- igaüks tunnistab miskit üles, paneb kirja ja me paneme need asjad korvi. Siis igaüks saab ühe ülestunnistuse ja me hakkame arvama ja arutlema, kes see olla võiks. See ülestunnistus võib olla ka väljamõeldis, aga peab ikkagi isiku olemusega kokku minema.
 5. Piinlik bingo?
 6. Never have I ever

Tänases tunnis tegime 1, 2, 3, 4 mängu. Koti mäng oli väga lahe, õpilased said harjutada asjade kirjeldamist. Murder Wink õnnestus ka väga hästi, kuigi tegemist oli täiesti vaikse ülesandega. Aga siiski grupidünaamika mõttes oli see täitsa asjalik mäng, sest suhelda saab ju tegelikult ka silmade ja kehakeele abil. Aliast mängisime gruppidega, aga see tundus nende jaoks igav. Võib-olla seetõttu, et seda mängu on ilmselt kodudes mängitud omajagu. Confession mäng oli ülilahe, sest õpilased julgesid oma patte üles tunnistada, aga keegi ei judginud neid vaid me naersime koos nende asjade üle.

13.ja 14.tund

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
 - learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
 - develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
1. Make a line- Students have to form a line according to the questions. How old are you? When is your birthday? How tall are you? It is to make them communicate with each other.
 2. Fun BINGO- I will give them Bingo charts with different statements (I have seen “Home Alone”, I have a dog etc) and they have to find those people among themselves. The first one who has all the squares crossed is the winner.
 3. Choose 5 objects/things that you really like or are important to you. Later they will explain why they chose those things.
 4. Pulls out a name and has to write down a description about him/her. Later the group pulls out the descriptions and we have to start guessing who that person is.
 5. Making dialogues- every student has to write down one positive and one negative sentence and one question. Then I will mix them up and each student gets someone else’s 3 sentences. Then they will take into pairs and start a dialogue on a theme that the class suggests. While speaking they have to read out the line that they have on their paper. So it's chaotic and totally improvised.

Tänases tunnis mängisime kõik need mängud läbi. Esimene mäng ajas õpilased alguses korralikult segadusse, aga mingi hetk nad said aru, et peavad strateegia välja mõtlema, mitte lihtsalt läbisegi üksteise käest küsima vanuseid kuupäeva täpsusega jne. FUN Bingo õnnestus ka. 5 asja valimise

mäng näitas seda, mis on kellelegi tähtis ning kui palju sarnaste mõtetega inimesi ühes grupis koos on. Üksteise kirjeldamise mäng oli pisut väljakutset pakkuv, sest mõned õpilased said sellise õpilase nime, kes on grupis väga silmapaistev (nö liidri rollis) ja tema kirjeldamisel oleks koheselt vastus teada. Siin mängus oli hea vaadata seda, kui palju õpilastel üksteise kohta meeles on. Õnneks olid tõesti igasugused faktid õpilastele meelde jäänud, mis annab kinnitust, et see grupp hoolib üksteisest. Dialoogide koostamine oli nii naljakas, me kõik naersime nii, et silmad märjad.

15. ja 16. tund

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills

1. Alustame mänguga KUIDAS LÄHEB?- How are you?. Kui vastatakse, et I'm fine- siis vahetatakse kohti, kui vastatakse OK, siis vahetad paremat kätt oleva naabriga kohad. Kui vastatakse NOT GOOD vms, siis tõused püsti korraks ja istud tagasi.
2. Train- this or that? Esimest korda mängime nii, et mina ise annan neile sedelid valikutega. Party or movie night? Peab näitama oma käega paremal on Party valik ja vasakul on movie night. Siis õpilased liiguvad vastavale poolele ja küsimuse esitaja saab sealt vahelt rongina läbi sõita.
3. Seejärel mängime seda nii, et iga õpilane ise kirjutab ühe valiku ja hakkab käima teiste käest seda küsimas ja vastates peab põhjendama, kumma valib. Siis vahetavad omavahel sedelid ära.
4. Omadussõnade paarid- peavad pantomiimiga need omadussõnad kuidagi teistele selgeks tegema.
5. Reklaam- jagan nad neljasteks gruppideks ja nad peavad välja mõtlema toote, mida veel olemas pole ja seda reklaamima käigu pealt. Iga uus lause peab hakkama sõnaga exactly.
6. Mis on kollane ja väike? Sa esitad kaks omadussõna ja klass peab ära arvama, millele sa mõtled. Pakkuma hakatakse erinevaid vastuseid ja kui õige vastus kõlab, siis ütleb mõtleja, mis oli õige.
7. Kirjeldab miskit siin ruumis või kedagi siin ruumis.

Jõudsime ära mängida this or that mängu- läks väga lõbusalt ja õpilased õppisid nii mõndagi teineteise kohta. Samuti õnnestus väga hästi ise kirjutatud this or that mäng. Seda soovisid nad mängida ringis istudes ja et küsid oma paremal käel olevalt sõbralt seda küsimust. Nad on minuga juba nii julged, et jagavad soovitusi, kuidas mängu põnevamaks ja nendele mugavamaks teha. Esimest mängu nad nt ei soovinud teha, sest see tundus neile igav. Ja see pole esimene kord, kui nad mulle ütlevad mingi tegevuse kohta, et see on igav ja ärme teeme. Ma väga hindan seda ausust, sest ma ei tahagi neile pakkuda igavaid tegevusi.

Seejärel nad tegid oma reklaame- muutsin natuke mängu kulgu, nad said 10min ettevalmistusaega. Oli jällegi väga lõbus ja nalja nabani. Pantomiimiga samuti läks hästi, aga üks paar tõrkus- kokku juhtusid väga jutukas noormees ja ülivaike tüdruk, kes muidu käivad ühes klassis, aga nad ei suhtle üldse omavahel. Aga kuidagi nad selle mängu ikkagi meile ära esitasid. Kahte viimast mängu mängida ei jõudnud.

17. ja 18. tund**During the class students will:**

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills

1. Tee seda miimikaharjutust ja huultelt lugemist.
2. Mis on kollane ja väike? Sa esitad kaks omadussõna ja klass peab ära arvama, millele sa mõtled. Pakkuma hakatakse erinevaid vastuseid ja kui õige vastus kõlab, siis ütleb mõtleja, mis oli õige.
3. Intervjuud- uurivad välja, mida tegid nv ja panevad vastused kuidagi kirja, seejärel loevad uudise ette. Grupitööna-
4. One big family- jagan nad viiesteks gruppideks ja nad peavad grupisiselt otsustama, milline roll peres neile kuulub ja nad peavad ka selgitama, miks neil selline roll on. Tutvustavad oma peret
5. Iga grupp saab ühe mõtte ja nad peavad teistele selgeks tegema, miks nende mõtte kõige parem on.
6. So vestluskaardid

Sel tunnil jõudsime teha miimikaharjutust, mis oli väga naljakas. Kõik naersid nii, et pisarad silmis. Teise harjutuse puhul samuti said õpilased oma fantaasia lendu lasta ning nagu noortele kohane, siis seal käis läbi igasuguseid teemasid. Tegevus nr 4.- ka see õnnestus, sai nalja. Viienda tegevuse puhul natuke ebaõnnestus, kuna nad ei arvanud, et minu antud teemad oleks piisavalt huvitavad. Nad tegid ettepaneku, et mõtlevad ise teemad välja ja seejärel tegevus õnnestus paremini. Mulle meeldib, et nad teevad ettepanekuid ja annavad tagasisidet, milline see tegevus oli või võiks olla jne.

19. ja 20.tund**During the class students will:**

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
- learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
- develop their creative, speaking and listening skills

1. Alustame AKP mänguga- kirjutan tahvlile tähekombinatsioonid ja nemad peavad hakkama järjest lauseid nende kombinatsioonidega moodustama.
2. Tähestiku dialoog- panen kirja tähestiku ja siis nad peavad iga tähega ühe lause moodustama, aga teatud situatsioonides. Nt kohvikus, poes, koolis. Paaritööna on see, aga kõigi ees teevad läbi. Nt alustab üks E tähe pealt ja Excuse me, I would like to..., teine jätkab nüüd F tähe pealt- For real?
3. Naljajutu ümberrääkimine- 4 tiimi, Esimesele loen teksti ette, tema peab järgmisele jutustama ja siis järgmisele jne. Teised liikmed ootavad ukse taga. Lõpuks on näha kui palju algupärasest jutust alles jääb.
4. SO vestluskaardid.
5. Would you rather- igitüks saab küsimuse

Alguses nad ei saanud aru, miks me seda esimest mängu üldse teeme. Kui juba mängima said, siis jõudis neile mängu eesmärk kohale. Ma nimelt seletasin neile seda hiljem, et nad ise ka mõtleks, miks me miskit teeme. See oli väga lahe ja nad tahtsid seda mitu korda lausa mängida. Teise harjutusega üks tiim tõrkus, neil kuidagi mõtted ei olnud sünkroonis. Naljajutu ümber rääkimine oli väga lõbus. 5 tegevus läks ka hästi ja 4.tegevust ei jõudnud.

21. ja 22. tund

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
 - learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
 - develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
1. Good, bad and the worst advice- 3 students are experts who have to give advice. For example one student asks a question- How to not gain weight during christmas? Student A gives good, B bad and C the worst advice. Students will think about the questions.
 2. Every student gets a paper, every paper needs a sentence- one question, one exclamation sentence and one positive sentence. Then the papers are rolled together and changed many times with other students. Then we will divide the students into pairs or into a group of 3 and they have to start a dialogue- for example a mother and daughter. They have to have some kind of a situation and students who are not currently going to carry out the dialogue will suggest the theme. And during the dialogue students have to open the papers and read out the sentence it contains.
 3. Name smth
 4. Appi kui piinlik-students will read out different statements and they have to admit if they have done these things or not and comment on them.

We managed to do all the activities besides 3- name smth. All the activities were fun, we laughed and they really enjoyed this good-bad advice activity.

23 ja 24. lesson

During the class students will:

- build their confidence through group dynamics activities
 - learn how to work, analyse and make decisions as a group
 - develop their creative, speaking and listening skills
1. Chopping up a text and dividing students into groups. Every member has a role- fortune teller, reader, questioner, answer provider, summary maker. First I will read the introduction of the story, then each fortune teller tells what's next and then the reader will read the next paragraph, then the questioner will ask a question, the answer provider will answer and the summary maker will summarise the paragraph. And then the roles are switched.
 2. Complaint letter to Santa- they will write down a complaint letter to Santa. They will say what they wanted for Christmas but got smth else instead. They have to express their dissatisfaction. They will read out their letters.
 3. Adjectives and putting them into a text.
 4. Name smth.
 5. Write the word on the back. Students are standing in a row and they have to write a word on each other's backs.

We managed to do the first exercise but in a way that I tossed the ball to someone and this person had to be the fortune teller and we rejected the other roles. But it was fun, they predicted funny stuff. Then we did an adjective story in groups. Name smth game was hilarious. The game where they had to write smth on their backs was also hilarious because they had difficulties understanding the letters.

25. and 26. lesson

Eesmärgid: loovuse arendamine, grupisese vestluse aretamine

1. Pesumasina mäng- istuvad ringis ja iga õpilane saab paberi. Õpilased hakkavad vaheldumisi paberile kas joonistama või siis sõnu kirjutama. Nt esimese tiiru ajal igaüks joonistab mingi asja paberile ja jätab selle siis nähtavale ning annab edasi endast paremal olevale õpilasele. Nüüd see õpilane kirjutab ühe sõna selle pildi kohta ja seejärel voldib joonistuse kinni. Kolmas õpilane näeb vaid seda sõna ja peab nüüd selle sõna järgi miskit joonistama ja seejärel voldib ta selle sõna kinni, et jääks näha ainult joonistus jne. Kuigi see on vaikne mäng, siis jällegi aitab see grupil luua ühiseid toredaid mälestusi ja pakub ka nalja ning arendab nende loovust.
2. Lause moodustamine- Igaüks saab viis silti ja igale sildile läheb kirja üks sõna- kes? kus? kellega? millal? mida tegi?- seejärel toovad õpilased oma sildid vastavasse kohta ja hakatakse üksteise järel lauseid moodustama suvaliselt valitud siltide abil.
3. ASK kaardimäng- kuna neile meeldib lobiseda, siis nende kaartide abil saab seda edukalt teha. Nad saavad ise valida, kelle käest tahavad küsida.
4. Luuletuse kirjutamine rotatsioonis- õpilased jagatakse väikestesse grupidesse ja vastavalt grupi arvule asetatakse laudadele valged paberid, nõ iga tiim saab paberi. Nad peavad pealkirjastama luuletuse ja kirjutama esimesed kaks rida. Seejärel liiguvad kõik järgmise paberi juurde ja panevad sinna kirja kaks rida jne. Mäng kestab seni kuni kõik on oma algsete luuletuste juures tagasi.

Mängud olid väga lõbusad, luuletused pakkusid ehk kõige rohkem huvi, sest nad said oma loovust arendada. Sealt tuli muidugi igasuguses kontekstis luuletust, aga ma ei seadnud neile ka mingeid piiranguid. Lausete moodustamise mäng oli ka lõbus, sest kokku sattusid sellised tegelased ja tegevused, mis tegelikult päriselus loogilised pole, kuid pakkusid meile nalja. Esimese tegevuse üle nad natuke torisesid, et kes ei oska joonistada jne. Aga pärast neid lehti vaadates sai nalja küll.

27. ja 28. lesson

Eesmärgid: enesetutvustus kogu klassi ees ja tagasiside kursusele.

Tänane tund kulub enamasti kursuse arvestusliku esitluse peale. Iga õpilane peab ennast tutvustama ja endast rääkima, aga kujutama ennast ette kuskile konverentsile vms, kus on saalitäis võõrast rahvast. Pärast seda teeme kokkuvõtva ja reflekteeriva vestluse, kuidas nad end siin kursusel tundsid, mis emotsioonid neid hetkel valdavad jne. Nad täidavad ka kolmandat korda küsimustikku.

Õpilaste enesetutvustused läksid hästi, kõik olid julged ja rääkisid. Tagasiside ringis oli isegi päris kurb meeleolu kohati, sest see oli meie viimane tund ja nii mõnigi ütles, et jäävad seda gruppi, mind ja antud kursust väga igatsema, sest see aitas neid ka oma tavaklassis ja siin tehti nii palju teistmoodi tegevusi, mis aitavad keele arengule kaasa. Ka mina olin sisimas kurb ja ütlesin ka neile seda, sest mul polegi varem nii toredat gruppi olnud ja nendega saavutasin ma kõige kiiremini sellise ühise grupi tunde.

RESÜMEE

TARTU ÜLIKOOL

ANGLISTIKA OSAKOND

Kadri Kõiv

ENG: Using group dynamics at the upper secondary level to foster speaking in English in the classroom.

EST: Neljandas kooliastmes grupidünaamika võtete abil inglise keeles suhtlemisvalmiduse arendamine klassiruumis.

Magistritöö

2024

Lehekülgede arv : 79

Käesoleva töö eesmärgiks oli grupidünaamika võtete abil suurendada õpilaste suhtlemisvalmidust inglise keeles, mille tagajärjel väheneks ka nende võõrkeele suhtlemisärevus ning suureneks enesekindlus.

Selleks, et antud uurimust läbi viia ning eesmärgi saavutada kasutati kvalitatiivseid uurimismeetodeid. Tegevusuuringu raames loodi neljandas kooliastmes inglise keele suuline eneseväljendus kursus, millest võttis osa 20 õpilast. Õpilased pidid täitma uurimuse käigus neli korda küsimustikku: enne kursuse algust, peale grupi moodustumise etappi, kursuse viimases tunnis ning 2,5 kuud peale kursuse lõppu. Küsimustiku eesmärgiks oli kaardistada õpilaste hinnangud erinevate olukordade ja väidete kohta ning hiljem sai andmeid analüüsides tuua välja muutused õpilaste arvamuste ja hoiakute kohta.

Magistritöö on jagatud kaheks peatükiks. Esimeses osas käsitletakse suhtlemisvalmiduse, grupidünaamika, võõrkeele ärevuse ja võõrkeeles suhtlemise ärevuse erinevaid varasemaid uurimusi ning teadlaste arvamusi. Samuti rõhutatakse antud peatükis grupidünaamika olulisust võõrkeele õppes ning arutletakse, kuidas on võimalik suurendada õpilaste suhtlemisvalmidust teises keeles. Empiirilises osas selgitatakse antud kursuse loomise tingimusi ning kuidas uurimus läbi viidi. Kursus toimus inglise keeles ning kestis 20.septembrist 2023.a kuni 31.jaanuarini 2024.a. Selles ajavahemikus viidi läbi ka kolm küsimustikku. Neljas küsimustik täideti 11.aprillil 2024.

Antud tulemustest sai teha järeldusi käesoleva kursuse raames, mille kohaselt on grupidünaamikal võõrkeele õppimise suhtes väga oluline roll. Andmed näitasid, et enamuse õpilaste suhtlemisvalmidus ja enesekindlus inglise keeles suurenes ning nende võõrkeele rääkimise ärevus vähenes märgatavalt. Samuti selgus õpilaste hinnangutest asjaolu, et nende suhtluskäitumine ja keele kasutamine tavalises inglise keele klassis on 9 õpilase jaoks muutunud sagedasemaks, aga 9 õpilast tundsid, et see on nende jaoks problemaatilisemaks muutunud.

Märksõnad: inglise keele suhtlemisärevus, suhtlusvalmidus inglise keeles, grupidünaamika.

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