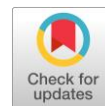


Balancing silence and participation: enhancing classroom engagement among Chinese EFL students



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ABSTRACT

This research explores the importance of balancing speech and silence in language classrooms, focusing specifically on Chinese EFL students' low levels of classroom participation. While silence is acknowledged as a key component of the learning process, excessive silence may hinder students' language acquisition by limiting active engagement and meaningful communication. Through a mixed-methods study involving 36 Chinese EFL students at Monash University, using both quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, this study investigates the primary factors affecting classroom participation. The findings highlight that cultural factors, lack of confidence, and fear of making mistakes are the main reasons for limited classroom participation, while motivations for active involvement include interest, encouragement from teachers, and self-confidence. To improve participation, the study proposes the "Mistake Sharing in language learning," an innovative teaching strategy designed to encourage students to speak more freely by reducing the fear of making mistakes. This research provides practical insights for educators seeking to enhance student engagement and create a more inclusive and positive classroom environment.



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1. Introduction

In globalization, the importance of language learning is becoming increasingly significant. Language serves not only as a medium for communication but also as a vehicle for cultural transmission. It is vital in shaping national identity, influencing the status of minority languages, and fostering social inclusivity (Imran & Natsir, 2024). As a former English teacher, I was once confident that I could perform well in class. However, during the first week of my studies at Monash University, I found that everything was completely different from what I had imagined. When I attended my first class, everyone actively interacted with the teachers, while I felt anxious and nervous about speaking. After discussing this with my Chinese friends, I was surprised they faced similar challenges. Students from Asian backgrounds, particularly international students, are often perceived as silent in English-speaking classrooms (Zhang, 2023). Further discussions with students from various backgrounds revealed that the challenge of remaining silent in the classroom is a shared experience transcending cultural boundaries. (Kumaravadivelu, 2003) finds that certain classroom behavioural traits (such as

submissiveness to authority, lack of critical thinking, and inactive participation in class interactions) observed in Asian students can also be seen in North American students. This suggests that the reasons behind silence and limited participation are complex and multifaceted. This raises my doubt about whether remaining silent in class is an issue.

Research indicates that verbal and silent participation should be recognised as essential learning components, as each holds intrinsic educational value (Bao, 2023). In the classroom, teachers should strike the right balance between students' speaking and silence. Moderate silence can give students more space to think and reflect, which helps them better understand the material, while excessive silence can contribute to a disconnect between students and learning. Timely speaking can help students build confidence, participate more actively in classroom activities, express their thoughts effectively, deepen their understanding of the material, and promote the development of creative thinking. However, frequent speaking may lead to a lack of deep thinking, reduce the quality of their studies, and hinder other students, decreasing their willingness to engage in the class. Therefore, speech and silence are important to the learning process, and silence in class is not an issue.

Silence may not always be a sign of insecurity or fear of making mistakes, but rather an indication of different ways of engaging with the learning process. Therefore, as an equally important aspect of classroom participation alongside speech, understanding the underlying causes of silence becomes crucial. Many scholars have studied the topic of silence from various perspectives and found that the reasons behind silence and limited participation are complex and multifaceted (Wentzel, 1998) (Schlenker & Leary, 1982). Among these factors, psychological influences have been extensively researched, with a lack of confidence and fear of making mistakes being common contributors to students' silence (House et al., 2014; WEST & ZIMMERMAN, 1987). Based on the literature, it is clear that while silence itself may not be a problem, the silence caused by underlying psychological factors in students requires our attention. It is also essential for teachers to maintain a balance between speech and silence in the classroom. Therefore, this study will focus on students who exhibit such behaviour, using surveys to identify whether their psychological needs require timely intervention. It will also propose practical, theoretical measures to help alleviate the tendency for silence in class from a psychological perspective, thereby boosting their confidence and increasing participation.

2. Literature Review

Before diving into the research, exploring how classroom interaction and silence affect the language learning experience is crucial. This literature review will examine existing studies, highlighting how language instructors can foster a more interactive and supportive learning environment.

2.1. The Relationship between Language Learning and Classroom Interaction

Many theorists argue that active classroom interaction is the key to language learning (Bernstein, 2020; Gibbons, 2003; Lin et al., 2016; Palermo & Mikulski, 2014; Wu & Dong, 2024). For instance, (Palermo & Mikulski, 2014) explore the relationship between active interaction among peers and language learning. They found that active peer interaction can improve students' language learning skills, especially their English-speaking proficiency. Similarly, (Lin et al., 2016) analysed data from 270 students through teacher reports and measured the role of peer interaction in students' learning and language-related behaviours. The research shows that such learning behaviours are crucial for promoting active peer interaction. Conversely, active peer interactions can also support students' development. Besides interacting with peers and classmates, interacting with teachers is equally important. (Gibbons, 2003) explores how teachers support ESL students' language learning. He found that students can increase their chances of using language by interacting with teachers and promoting language development. Under teachers' guidance, students can continuously adjust their expressions and enhance second language learning. (Wu & Dong, 2024) conducted a study with 387 students and found that actively interacting with teachers contributes to many positive outcomes. A positive student-teacher relationship can improve students' learning motivation and academic performance. Additionally, teachers' career happiness is also related to the quality of student-teacher interaction. In summary, building positive student-teacher relationships plays an important role in both students' language learning and teachers' professional development.

2.2. The Dual Role of Silence in Language Learning

Silence in language learning is often seen in a negative light, with language teachers frequently finding it challenging to interpret the reasons behind a learner's lack of verbal participation. (MacIntyre et al., 2001) conclude that silence in the language classroom is negatively correlated with students' learning outcomes. Conversely, students' willingness to communicate is positively correlated with their learning achievements. This means that when students actively participate in communication and interaction in the classroom, it is beneficial for their language development. (House et al., 2014) explored the interaction styles of Japanese international students in a British academic learning environment.

They found that their silence was often interpreted as a lack of communicative interest or unwillingness to engage in discussions. Additionally, silence, as a part of interaction in the EFL learning and teaching environment, may lead to teacher frustration and hinder language input and output. However, research also shows that silence is a powerful and necessary tool for students' language learning. A deeper understanding of silence can improve language teaching practices. Silence is valuable for constructing meanings from different perspectives in the language learning experience. It serves as both an input and output in the process of connecting society, culture, and history. (Sulzer, 2022) argues that silence is meaningful, as it can be seen not only as the absence of verbal communication but also as the presence of dynamic interpretation. Silence is not just a real-time verbal experience; it is also a way of constructing meaning and exchanging ideas. The concept of "silence as a presence" suggests that when students remain silent, it is not complete stillness but a form of re-voicing after reflecting on and analyzing their behaviours. (Ha & Li, 2014) conducted research with university students in China, exploring the complexity and diversity of silence behaviours in classrooms in China and Australia. They found that silence is not equivalent to non-participation but is a vital part of language learning. Silence can serve as a way for students to express their resistance and dissatisfaction.

3. This Research

Despite the significant contributions that silence research has made over the past decades, it still faces some limitations. One is the low respect for learners, which should be addressed more. Although numerous studies clearly analyse the reasons behind students' silence in class from multiple perspectives, very few articles attempt to propose clear solutions. This study focuses on students who experience classroom silence due to socio-psychological factors. It aims to identify the specific needs of these students through surveys and propose targeted solutions to help them overcome internal barriers, build confidence, and participate more actively in classroom interactions. This study seeks to fill this gap by proposing a practical activity plan that explores effective methods for helping students feel more comfortable and confident, encouraging more significant interaction with peers and instructors, and fostering a more dynamic and positive learning environment.

4. Data collection and method

Some students are not active in class because they are afraid of making mistakes, although we always emphasize that silence is not a mistake. For these students, reducing the frequency of silence and boosting their confidence to engage in classroom activities is particularly important. Therefore, before identifying potential solutions, research was conducted with a group of Chinese EFL students from Monash University to explore their true thoughts and determine whether they needed assistance.

4.1. Research Design and Participant

The mixed-methods design primarily consists of quantitative surveys and qualitative in-depth interviews. This approach allows for data triangulation, enhancing the validity of the research findings by comparing quantitative results with qualitative insights. This study involves 36 Chinese EFL students enrolled at Monash University. Participants were selected through random sampling from students who tend to remain silent in class, ensuring a diversity of backgrounds and experiences. Prior to participation, they were informed about the purpose of the research, specifically focusing on their classroom behaviours and attitudes towards speaking, and were asked to provide informed consent.

4.2. Data Collection Methods

4.2.1. Quantitative Survey

A structured questionnaire was developed to assess students' self-perceptions and attitudes toward speaking in class. Key areas covered in the survey included Self-Identification as Silent Students, Attitudes Toward Silence, and Perceived Barriers to Speaking. The survey data provided quantitative insights into the general trends and attitudes of the students and helped identify those who were silent and unhappy about it.

4.2.2. Qualitative In-Depth Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with 5 participants selected based on the survey results, mainly focusing on those who frequently keep silent. In order to deeply understand the specific reasons behind inactive participation in classroom discussions, it is essential to investigate the motivations, challenges, and demands students face when engaging in such discussions. Analyzing these factors provides vital theoretical evidence for designing related classroom activities and interactions, helping identify key elements that can promote positive classroom engagement. Key questions included. (**Q1:** Why do you inactively participate in class?; **Q2:** What are your inner feelings when you remain silent in class (bored, relaxed, more anxious, etc.); **Q3:** Do you have a desire to improve your classroom participation? What kind of assistance do you need)

4.3. Data Analysis

4.3.1. Quantitative Survey

Research question 1: Self-Identification as Silent Students [Fig. 1](#).

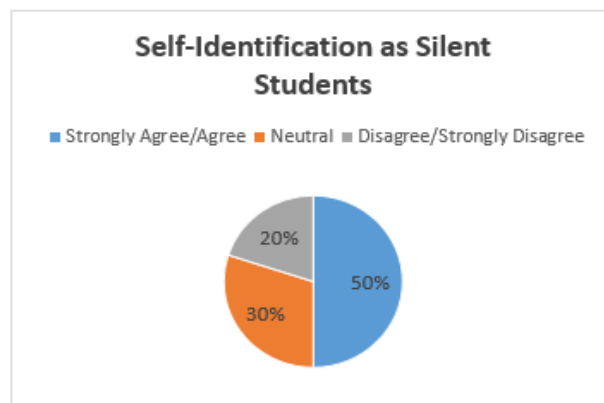


Fig. 1. Chart 1

The survey results on Self-Identification as Silent Students reveal clear trends. The data show that most students admit to having low participation frequency (50% agree or strongly agree). Notably, 30% of students reported a neutral perspective, while 20% of students disagreed with considering themselves silent students. Thus, it is clear that most students identify themselves as silent. Research question 2: Attitudes Toward Silence [Fig. 2](#).

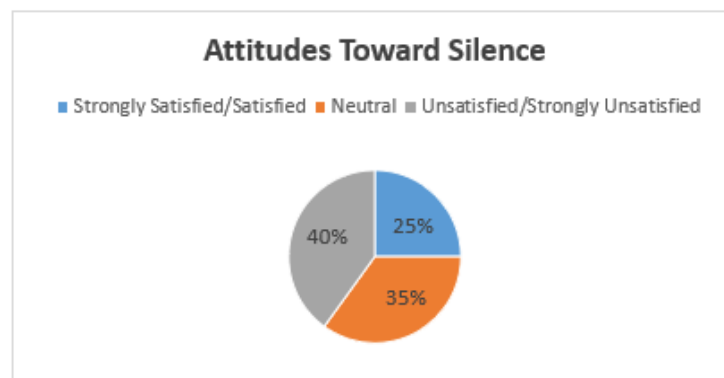


Fig. 2. Chart 2

According to the survey results, students' attitudes toward their silence in class reveal diverse perspectives. A notable 25% of students expressed satisfaction with their silence, indicating that they are content with their level of participation. However, a more significant portion, 35%, remained neutral, neither satisfied nor dissatisfied with their silence. Interestingly, the majority of students, 40%, expressed dissatisfaction with their silence, highlighting a desire for greater participation. This suggests that many students are not entirely comfortable with their level of engagement in class and may benefit from strategies that encourage more active involvement. These findings emphasize the importance of addressing students' emotional and psychological factors to enhance classroom interaction and participation.

Research question 3: Perceived Barriers to Speaking (Table 1).

Table 1. Perceived Barriers to Speaking

Perceived Barriers to Speaking	
Lack of Confidence	50%
Fear of Making Mistakes	25%
Cultural factors	19.44%
Other (Please Specify)	5.56%

The survey results reveal that a lack of confidence is the primary factor contributing to classroom silence, with 50% of students selecting this option. This data indicates that self-confidence significantly affects students' willingness to participate in class discussions. Moreover, the 25% of students who choose silence due to fear of making mistakes point to a widespread issue regarding the anxiety surrounding errors in classroom interactions. Additionally, 19.44% of students cited cultural factors, suggesting that cultural backgrounds may restrict their engagement. Together, these findings provide a multidimensional understanding of classroom silence, reflecting the psychological barriers students may face in various contexts.

Many studies show that remaining silent in a language-learning classroom is related to students' psychological factors. Silence is a defensive strategy, which can be explained as 'over-self-monitoring' or the 'internalization of official surveillance.' It may stem from students' shyness, lack of verbal communication skills, and fear of being mocked by classmates (King, 2013). When faced with unfamiliar and challenging tasks, a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and the worry of being mocked often lead to silence in class (Gulliksen & Waaler, 2023). This psychological barrier stems from doubt about students' knowledge and abilities and from the classroom environment, classmates' comments, and teachers' expectations. (Lei Li & Heydarnejad, 2024) indicate that self-esteem, teacher support, and critical thinking are inversely related to the shyness and anxiety of EFL students. EFL students with high self-esteem, strong teacher support, and good critical thinking skills tend to experience lower levels of shyness and anxiety. Specifically, students who lack confidence are often uncertain about the learning content, worried about how they will express themselves and whether they fully understand the material, thus remaining silent to avoid exposing their perceived deficiencies. At the same time, many students fear making mistakes and being criticized by teachers or mocked by classmates, negatively impacting their self-image. These psychological factors can lead to behaviours such as indifference or avoidance.

From a cultural background perspective, traditional ideas rooted in Chinese culture, such as Confucianism, should be considered first. Confucians primarily emerged in Chinese history as educators, scholar-officials, and counselors to the ruler (Lin Li, 2020). Confucius, one of the greatest philosophers in ancient China, profoundly impacted Chinese history and culture, deeply influencing the thoughts of teachers and students. Many of Confucius' teachings emphasize the necessity and advantages of maintaining silence. Junior learners are expected to listen attentively without asking questions and follow a proper sequence of study (Opdal, 2022). In English classrooms, students who view themselves as less experienced or feel they cannot produce high-quality content tend to remain silent. According to Confucius, knowledge and wisdom are defined as "to acknowledge when you know and to admit when you do not know" (Lau, 1992). As a result, Chinese EFL students often

remain silent in areas where they feel their understanding is limited. This reflects the Confucian emphasis on recognizing students' knowledge limitations and responding with appropriate silence.

Furthermore, Confucius stated that "governance is about being correct. If you set an example of correctness, who would dare to act incorrectly?" (Lau, 1992). In an English language classroom, the teacher is often called "Authority." Under this traditional framework, Chinese EFL students are accustomed to maintaining silence, even when teachers make mistakes, as respect for authority discourages questioning.

Second, as (Luo, 2019) noted, the traditional Chinese educational event's heavy focus on exam-oriented learning has significant limitations in developing practical English skills, particularly listening and speaking. This teacher-centered approach, where students passively receive knowledge, contrasts with Western practices that emphasize student-centered, active participation (Lee & Branch, 2022). In Australia, where verbal engagement is key, Chinese EFL students often struggle to adapt to more interactive methods like CLIL (Content and Language Integrated Learning) and CLT (Communicative Language Teaching) (Bao, 2020). Introducing foreign branch campuses in China, which adopt these more active, inquiry-based methods, highlights the challenges students face in shifting from passive learning. This transition is difficult for Chinese EFL students, who are accustomed to a traditional, exam-focused environment, and has raised concerns among educators and researchers (Jin, 2017).

4.3.2. Qualitative In-Depth Interviews

To better understand and improve students' levels of participation in classroom discussions, I randomly selected five participants who inactively contributed to class discussions for interviews. These interviews revealed the experiences and perspectives of students who are reluctant to participate in class due to fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence, helping us understand the reasons behind their silence and occasional speaking.

Firstly, the participants generally agreed that they lack the confidence to engage in classroom activities and are even afraid of making mistakes. Confidence plays a crucial role in classroom participation.

Yulia: "I do not participate much because I'm afraid of making mistakes when I speak. I'm worried that others might judge me if I say something wrong, so I prefer to stay silent."

Milca: "I don't overly worry about the content of my contributions because classroom discussions often lack absolute right answers and are more about sharing personal perspectives. But sometimes I am afraid that my thoughts might not be good enough or that I will make a mistake."

Those students who are accustomed to inactively engaging in classroom activities consistently express negative inner feelings. When they remain silent in class, they are often overwhelmed by anxiety, worry, and self-blame. Although they understand that silence does not equate to being wrong, they still struggle to overcome the fear of making mistakes, leading to low self-esteem and a sense of helplessness.

Annie: "Wow, actually, I really want to speak in class, but I always feel like I'm not well-prepared and haven't organized my thoughts properly. When I see my classmates speaking, I also worry whether my contributions will lack depth."

Sanyi: "I'm not very used to speaking in class. Whenever the teacher asks me a question, I freeze and get nervous. I'm always worried that my classmates might laugh at me or question my answer and that the teacher might disagree with what I say. So, I tend to choose silence and give up expressing myself."

In the end, almost all students desire to improve their classroom participation, but a lack of confidence remains their biggest obstacle. Most students feel that overcoming this issue is a significant challenge, and they believe that external support and assistance would be highly beneficial.

Ya: "I have a strong desire to improve myself, and I deeply understand that remaining silent is not helpful, not only for my studies but also for the relationship between the teacher, my classmates, and me."

Milca: "Why not! I must try to speak more in class, but it's hard to change on my own. I really need someone's help. If the school or teachers can offer any assistance or methods to alleviate this, I believe I can change a lot and improve even more!"

5. Analysis and Findings

Based on the data collected from both the quantitative surveys and qualitative interviews, it is clear that students who remain silent in class due to socio-psychological factors—such as lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, and cultural influences—need targeted support. The survey results show that most students identify as silent participants, with a significant portion dissatisfied with their lack of engagement. Fear of making mistakes (25%) and lacking confidence (50%) were identified as the primary barriers to speaking in class. Interviews further revealed that students experience anxiety and self-blame when silent, and despite wanting to engage, they struggle to overcome these internal barriers without external support. These findings indicate that students remaining silent due to socio-psychological factors urgently need intervention. They require strategies that address their fear of making mistakes and build their confidence in a supportive environment. In response to these findings, the following section will propose a practical solution to help these students overcome their internal barriers, build confidence, and encourage greater classroom participation. This solution will focus on creating a more inclusive and supportive classroom environment through targeted activities and teacher support.

6. Proposed Solution

As (Bao, 2023) points out, there is no straightforward solution to silence in the classroom, much like how we cannot ask a doctor for one medicine that cures all diseases. Therefore, for students in the case study who remain silent in class due to the fear of making mistakes and lack of confidence, an effective activity called "Mistake Sharing in language learning" is strongly recommended. This event encourages students to openly share their mistakes and engage in discussions about the correct solutions. By creating an environment where mistakes are viewed as valuable learning opportunities, the activity aims to reduce students' fear of errors, motivate hesitant students to participate more actively in class and foster a classroom culture that supports learning through trial and error.

6.1. The role of the "Mistake Sharing in language learning"

(James, 2013) stated that mistakes in language expression are more likely to reflect human uniqueness, as animals and artificial products cannot make mistakes (p. 1). Making a mistake is an unconscious behaviour. In language usage, "deliberate errors" are not regarded as "mistakes" but as "deviations," which occur only when learners do not intend to make errors (p. 77). Moreover, mistakes are observable phenomena, allowing us to recognise, analyse, and study them. However, many individuals choose to remain silent to avoid making errors. James pointed out that if remaining silent is the sole means of indicating a student's lack of knowledge, our learning would be severely limited, ultimately leading us to abandon Error Analysis (p. 63).

In this context, self-cognitions significantly influence our understanding of the varying outcomes between success and failure scenarios, particularly in failure situations (Suter et al., 2022). As a second language teacher, it is essential to emphasize the crucial role mistakes play in learning. Research by (Fokkens-Bruinsma et al., 2020) highlights that mistakes are integral to self-improvement and practical learning. To enhance students' focus on mistakes, teachers can emphasize learning tasks, allow exploration, involve students in decision-making, recognise progress, promote non-competitive group work, and underscore the importance of mistakes in the learning process.

Therefore, "Mistake Sharing in language learning" can effectively alleviate students' unwillingness to speak in class and significantly improve their overall learning outcomes, as it combines both extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Intrinsic motivation is often defined as participating in activities for their inherent value and gaining a sense of happiness and satisfaction from the tasks themselves (Hennessey, 2015). Many studies have found strong connections between intrinsic motivation and learning outcomes. For example, (Guthrie et al., 1999) found that young readers with intrinsic motivation perform better in reading and memorization than their peers with low participation. Moreover, findings from (Harter & Jackson, 1992), (Lepper & Cordova, 1992) illustrate that high

levels of curiosity and interest are linked to deeper information processing and enhanced memory retention.

Furthermore, (Harter, 1978) noted that students driven by intrinsic motivation are more likely to embrace challenging tasks, while those motivated extrinsically tend to choose easier problems. Extrinsic motivation refers to the drive to achieve external goals and participate in activities, such as receiving encouragement after completing tasks (Hennessey, 2015). In teaching and learning, extrinsic motivation is particularly effective when there is only one correct answer to a problem. This type of motivation can be implemented through reward events, point events, or other forms of recognition, encouraging students to participate in class actively and enhancing their learning motivation. However, (Hennessey, 2015) discusses that when students face more open-ended problems, extrinsic rewards can suppress their intrinsic motivation and creativity, making them less willing to take risks and lacking the excitement to learn, preventing them from achieving creative outcomes in challenging tasks.

On the other hand, the research by (Castro & Berridge, 2014) indicates that rewards are not merely external stimuli; they also involve internal feelings and desires. Therefore, teachers must actively balance extrinsic incentives and intrinsic motivation in their teaching processes to promote the overall development of students. When external rewards primarily convey a sense of competence and self-determination, rather than serving as tools for behavioural control, they tend to enhance intrinsic motivation rather than undermine it (Corduneanu, 2020). In the classroom, educators should not focus solely on controlling student behaviour through various incentive methods but should instead find ways to stimulate students' intrinsic potential. As (Ryan & Deci, 2000) point out, helping students feel capable of completing a task, having decision-making power and choice, and feeling connected to others are fundamental to maintaining intrinsic motivation and enhancing extrinsic motivation.

The "Mistake Sharing in language learning" is an effective classroom activity that integrates three key conditions: competence, autonomy, and relatedness. This event encourages students to share their mistakes, discuss measures to correct them, and encourage positive participation, thereby creating a supportive learning environment. This design strengthens language learning and improves interactions and cooperation among students, fostering a more positive and dynamic classroom atmosphere. Students can experience a sense of achievement when they face tasks and challenges that align with their current levels but slightly exceed their abilities. Before presentations, students can freely select roles and tasks that interest them, which increases their sense of control. During presentations, they can choose their preferred modes of expression—such as videos, scripted acting, or posters—further enhancing their autonomy. Through role distribution, every student can showcase their strengths and uniqueness, increasing their sense of attendance and responsibility, thus enhancing their confidence and expressive skills. After presentations, students are allowed to share their comments in the voting section, which emphasizes their sense of being respected and promotes inclusivity in the classroom. By thoughtfully designing tasks, providing choices, encouraging collaboration, and implementing feedback mechanisms, the Mistake Reward event effectively meets students' basic psychological needs, fostering their intrinsic motivation and learning outcomes.

6.2. Activity: "Mistake Sharing in language learning" - Travel Adventure Edition

6.2.1. Introduction

This activity is designed for error correction in language teaching, especially in grammar and writing classes. The following example demonstrates its application in a grammar lesson focusing on the past perfect tense.

6.2.2. Previous knowledge/skills

This is an English practice lesson. Before this class, students should have a basic vocabulary in Travel and Tourism (such as check-in, boarding pass, Luggage, baggage claim, passport, etc.), complete a course on Past Perfect Tense, and possess basic practical proficiency.

6.2.3. Objectives

- Linguistic Objective

- Master the Use of the Past Perfect Tense: Students will be able to understand and correctly use the past perfect tense, particularly in describing the order of events and causal relationships.
- Correct Grammar Errors: The activities help students identify and correct grammatical errors in sentences, enhancing their understanding of grammatical structures.
- Expand Vocabulary Related to Travel and Tourism: Students will be able to express themselves using vocabulary related to the theme of travel and tourism
- Communicative Objectives
 - Increase Confidence in Oral Expression: Through role-playing and group discussions, students can use English more confidently for verbal communication, gradually changing their reluctance to participate actively in class due to a lack of confidence.
 - Cultivate Teamwork Skills: Students will collaborate in group activities, enhancing their teamwork and communication skills.
 - Engage in Effective Discussion and Feedback: In the reporting and comparison phases, students can provide constructive feedback on other groups' performances, engaging in peer learning
- Cultural Objectives
 - Understand Travel Experiences in Different Cultural Contexts: Students will learn about various countries and regions' travel customs and cultural differences through discussions and role-playing.
 - Enhance Awareness of Global Travel: Students will explore cultural exchange and influences in global travel through poster design and role-playing.
 - Cultivate an Open International Perspective: Students will understand and respect other cultures through discussions on travel and tourism, fostering a global outlook

6.2.4. Activity Process

- Presentation (10 minutes)
- Teacher Activity
 - Review the topic and structure of the past perfect tense,
 - Summarize key points to reinforce learning
- Learn Activity
 - Actively listen to the teacher's explanations and examples;
 - Critically think of the knowledge they have learned about the past perfect tense;
 - Take notes on key points, examples, and explanations
- Practice (21 minutes)
- Step 1: Grouping and Material Preparation (1 minute)
- Teacher Activity
 - Divide 40 students into five groups of 8 randomly
 - Prepare the same set of incorrect sentences or short passages for every two or three groups
- Learner Activity
 - Listen and follow the instructions from teachers;
 - Find partners in their groups and communicate with teachers immediately if there are any problems with group division.

- Step 2: Activity Start (20 minutes)
- Teacher Activity
 - Distribute the same incorrect sentences to each pair of groups.
 - Ask students to discuss and identify the errors in the sentences, then correct them and record their findings in 5 minutes;
 - Explain the rules of activities, including role-play and poster design, and ask them to assign roles within their groups;
 - Show them the examples in the classroom materials and ask them to prepare their role-play and design their posters in 15 minutes;
 - During this process, positively walk around and provide help for students if they need it;
 - Remind them of the limited time
- Learner Activity
 - follow teachers' instructions and observe the learning content;
 - Think deeply about the structure and grammar related to sentences or passages;
 - Find out the mistakes in the materials and correct them;
 - Interact positively with partners in their group and share more ideas about their own role-play and poster design.
- Production (29 minutes)
- Step 1: Reporting and Comparison (20 minutes)
- Teacher Activity
 - Ask Each pair of groups (e.g., Groups 1 and 2) to present their role-plays and posters to the class.
 - Provide support and encouragement immediately after each group finishes presentation;
 - Facilitate discussion, ask for students' advice, compare the results, and encourage students to offer differing perspectives
- Learner Activity
 - Each group takes turns presenting their outcomes;
 - Accept the advice from teachers and classmates while other students are critically thinking and compare the advantages and disadvantages of each group
- Step 2: Collective Reflection (5 minutes)
Teacher Activity: After all groups have presented, conduct a collective reflection and guide students to reflect on what they learned.
- Learner Activity
 - Reflect on each group's performance with the teacher's guidance;
 - Reflect on what they have learned in this class
- Step 3: Voting Session (2 minutes)
- Teacher Activity
 - ask students to vote for 'Best Role-Play Group' 'Best Poster Design Group' and 'Best Correction Group';
 - Explain the voting rules to students that each student only can vote for another group;
 - Prepare voting cards for each student to write down their chosen group;

- Collect the votes and count the results
- Announce the winning groups
- Learner Activity
 - Write down their favourite group in the voting cards
 - Winning groups go to the stage and accept their rewards
- Step 4: Summary (2 minutes)
- Teacher Activity
 - Encourage the winning groups to share their successful experiences while others can share their learning takeaways.
 - Summarize the key point of this activity
- Learner Activity
 - Winning groups present their success
 - Other groups share their learning outcome.
 - Discuss the following discussion questions
- Review after class
 - Can students accurately explain the structure and usage of the past perfect tense?
 - Did students successfully identify all the grammatical errors during the correction activity? Were their corrections accurate?
 - Did each group use the past perfect tense correctly in their role-play preparations? Is their script clear and aligned with the theme?
 - Does the travel poster created by the students effectively showcase the vocabulary and grammar learned? Is the content explicit and visually appealing?
 - Did every student actively participate and contribute their ideas during group discussions and role-plays?
 - Did the teacher provide timely and constructive feedback during the reporting and comparison phase to help students improve?

7. Discussion and Conclusion

"Mistake Sharing in language learning" has a significant positive impact on education and language teaching. First, this event offers an innovative approach to alleviate the phenomenon of student silence caused by a lack of confidence and the fear of making mistakes. The "Mistake Sharing in Language Learning" activity can effectively balance silence and verbal participation during classes, creating a healthy environment for the overall development of students. By speaking moderately, students can also enjoy thinking spaces, avoiding the pressure of excessive speaking. During the guiding process, teachers can sensitively observe students' needs and help them engage in the discussion at their own pace.

Secondly, the event emphasizes the balance between silence and speech, a fundamental concept in language teaching. An ideal classroom environment should strike a balance between silence and speech. As teachers, we should maintain a sense of strategy and sensitivity in student-classroom interactions, paying attention to the purpose and timing of our educational decisions to speak or remain silent (Bao, 2023). Teachers should consciously choose when to speak and remain silent while consistently monitoring students' needs and reactions, especially for those who may not feel comfortable speaking in class. When students need time to think or express themselves, teachers should remain silent to respect and listen; when students require guidance and support, teachers should offer help immediately. Only in this healthy environment and learning mode can students express

themselves positively, feeling a strong sense of safety. By creating this balance, students can immerse themselves into thinking during silence, ultimately enhancing their learning outcomes and self-identity.

Despite the theoretical significance of this study on "Mistake Sharing in language learning," there are several gaps and limitations in the existing literature. Firstly, the relatively small sample size of this study, with only 36 participants, limits the generalizability of the findings to all Chinese EFL students. Therefore, future research should involve a larger sample size to provide more robust insights and validate the results across a broader range of educational contexts.

Secondly, current research mainly focuses on constructing theoretical frameworks, lacking specific case studies on the practical application of this approach in teaching. The absence of practical applications poses challenges for educators, as they lack clear guidance and best practices for implementation. Future studies should focus on collecting successful case studies of "Mistake Sharing in language learning" implemented in various educational settings, using empirical data to confirm its effectiveness.

Moreover, existing literature often overlooks the impact of different cultural backgrounds on the applicability of "Mistake Sharing in language learning." Cultural factors profoundly influence classroom participation and silence behaviors, and different cultures have varying degrees of acceptance and perspectives on mistakes. Therefore, future studies should consider cultural diversity and explore how to adapt and implement "Mistake Sharing in language learning" in different cultural contexts, developing more flexible and adaptive teaching strategies.

Another important direction for future research is investigating the long-term effects of "Mistake Sharing in language learning." Since this study is cross-sectional, longitudinal studies could track changes in students' engagement, confidence, and academic performance after implementing this approach. Such studies would provide valuable insights for educators, helping them optimize teaching methods and ensure the long-term benefits of the intervention.

Finally, it is essential to acknowledge that while "Mistake Sharing in language learning" can improve student engagement by addressing the fear of errors, it cannot fully address all factors that influence classroom participation. Future research should explore additional strategies that can support students with diverse needs, enhance their overall involvement, and create a more inclusive classroom environment.

In summary, while this study provides a theoretical foundation for "Mistake Sharing in language learning," further research must address its limitations, including the sample size, cultural adaptability, long-term effects, and practical applications. Future studies that address these gaps will offer more comprehensive guidance for educational practices, promoting active student participation and fostering holistic development in the classroom.

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