



MOTIVATING THE QUIET ONES: STRATEGIES TO SUPPORT INTROVERTED EFL LEARNERS


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Аннотация. В данной статье рассматриваются стратегии поддержки интровертированных учащихся на уроках английского языка как иностранного (EFL). Основываясь на психологии учащихся, социокультурной теории и исследованиях, проводимых непосредственно в классе, автор утверждает, что интроверсия — это не недостаток, а иной способ вовлечения в учебный процесс. В статье анализируются методы, такие как перевёрнутое обучение, ведение рефлексивных дневников, асинхронные обсуждения и индивидуальное целеполагание, направленные на повышение мотивации и вовлечённости более тихих студентов. Шестинедельное исследование проводилось в первом курсе Международном институте пищевых технологий и инженерии в Фергане, в Узбекистане. Результаты показывают, что персонализированные и поддерживающие автономию подходы способствуют росту уверенности учащихся, лучшему запоминанию словарного запаса и точности выражения, одновременно снижая уровень тревожности. В статье предлагаются практические рекомендации для преподавателей, работающих в многоязычной и культурно разнообразной среде EFL.

Annotatsiya, Ushbu maqolada ingliz tili (chet tili sifatida) o'rgatiladigan darslarda introvert o'quvchilarni qo'llab-quvvatlash strategiyalari tahlil qilinadi. O'quvchi psixologiyasi, sotsiomadaniy nazariya va amaliy dars tajribasiga tayangan holda, maqola introvertlik kamchilik emas, balki o'ziga xos ishtirok usuli ekanini ilgari suradi. Unda flipped metod, reflektiv yozuvlar, asinxron munozaralar va individual maqsad qo'yish kabi usullar yordamida tinch o'quvchilarning motivatsiyasi va darsdagi faolligini oshirish yo'llari ko'rib chiqiladi. Tadqiqot O'zbekistonning Farg'ona viloyatida joylashgan Oziq-ovqat texnologiyalari muxandisligi xalqaro institutining Turizm yo'nalishi birinchi bosqich talabalaridan tashkil topgan guruhda olti hafta davomida olib borildi. Natijalar shuni ko'rsatadiki, shaxsga yo'naltirilgan va mustaqillikni qo'llab-quvvatlovchi yondashuvlar o'quvchilarda o'ziga ishonch, lug'at boyligini saqlab qolish va aniq ifoda qilish ko'nikmalarini kuchaytiradi, shuningdek, tashvish darajasini kamaytiradi. Ushbu maqola turli madaniyatli va ko'p tilli muhitda ishlovchi EFL o'qituvchilari uchun amaliy tavsiyalar beradi.

Annotation. This article explores strategies for supporting introverted learners in the English as a Foreign Language (EFL) classroom. Drawing on learner psychology, sociocultural theory, and classroom-based research, it argues that introversion is not a deficit but a different mode of engagement. The article examines methods such as flipped instruction, reflective journaling, asynchronous discussions, and individual goal setting to




increase motivation and classroom participation among quieter students. The six-week classroom-based study was conducted in a fresh year students in Food Technology and Engineering international institute in Fergana, Uzbekistan. The findings suggest that personalized and autonomy-supportive practices foster greater learner confidence, vocabulary retention, and expressive accuracy, while reducing anxiety. Practical implications are offered for teachers working in diverse, multilingual EFL contexts.

Keywords: *introversion, EFL motivation, learner engagement, quiet learners, flipped classroom, reflective practice*

Introduction In many EFL classrooms, participation and verbal fluency are treated as the gold standard for learner success. However, this model often overlooks introverted students who, while capable and motivated, may process language differently and hesitate to speak in large groups (Cain, 2012). Rather than seeing these learners as "unmotivated," teachers need to reconsider how classroom structures may privilege extroversion. Introverted learners often prefer observation over performance, and depth over speed, which contrasts with high-energy communicative classrooms. This paper discusses alternative teaching strategies that validate and empower quiet learners and makes a case for differentiated instruction grounded in psychological insight. The importance of addressing introversion in EFL settings is particularly relevant in collectivist cultures, where classroom dynamics may already discourage individual expression. In countries like Uzbekistan, where public performance is highly valued, introverted students may struggle to participate not due to lack of interest, but because of the classroom's social architecture. Understanding this dynamic is the first step toward equitable and inclusive education.

Literature Review Introversion, as defined by Jung (1921), refers to a preference for minimally stimulating environments. Eysenck's (1967) biological theory also suggests that introverts have a higher level of cortical arousal, making them more sensitive to external stimulation. These learners often excel in tasks that allow for depth, introspection, and written expression. Dörnyei (2005) emphasized the importance of understanding individual differences in language acquisition, advocating for motivation-based instruction tailored to learner personality. Flipped classrooms, where content is consumed at home and practice occurs in class, offer a quieter, low-pressure format for learners to absorb and rehearse language (Bergmann & Sams, 2012). In traditional classrooms, introverts may shut down during rapid turn-taking discussions. In contrast, flipped settings give them time to internalize concepts and arrive better prepared. Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) posits that autonomy, competence, and relatedness are core to sustaining motivation. Reflective journals and asynchronous peer feedback directly support these psychological needs, especially for quieter students who thrive on structure and personal insight. Zafar and Meenakshi (2012) found that introverted learners often outperform extroverts in grammar and reading comprehension, further underscoring the need to move beyond speaking-based



assessments of language proficiency. Teachers who fail to adapt may unintentionally silence learners who could otherwise succeed.

Methodology This classroom-based study was conducted at a regional university in Uzbekistan during the Spring semester. The setting was a General English course for first-year students in the Food Technology and Engineering Institute, Turism faculty. A mixed-methods approach was used, combining student journals, participation logs, observation checklists, and end-of-term surveys.

Participants: 24 first-year EFL students (aged 17–19), of which 11 self-identified as introverts through a personality inventory (based on MBTI and Eysenck Personality Questionnaire). The group had mixed proficiency levels between A2 and B1.

Intervention: Over six weeks, the instructor implemented:

- Flipped video lectures (10–15 minutes, created in Uzbek and English)
- Weekly reflective writing prompts with peer feedback
- Asynchronous discussions via Telegram groups with moderation
- Individual check-ins and self-assessment forms
- Modified group work (pairs and triads, assigned roles)

Data Collection Instruments:

- Pre- and post-intervention questionnaires (based on Dörnyei's L2 Motivational Self System)
- Qualitative content analysis of reflective journals
- Frequency tracking of in-class and online participation
- Semi-structured interviews with 5 introverted learners


Reliability & Ethics: Participation was voluntary, and pseudonyms were used. Students were briefed on the study's purpose. The teacher maintained a reflective log to document classroom decisions and student reactions.

Results and Discussion The data revealed three main outcomes: (1) increased participation in asynchronous discussions, (2) stronger self-reported motivation and reduced anxiety, and (3) improvement in vocabulary retention and grammar accuracy.

Participation: Introverted learners posted an average of 3.7 messages per week in Telegram discussions, compared to only 1.2 verbal comments per week in the traditional class format. Several posts reflected deep comprehension and engagement, using new vocabulary and forming coherent arguments.

Motivation and Confidence: Post-intervention surveys showed that 9 out of 11 introverted students felt more comfortable contributing to class, and 7 reported increased confidence in their English abilities. One participant wrote, "I feel like I can finally express my ideas without pressure."

Language Gains: While this study was not designed to test language proficiency in a standardized way, journal analysis indicated more varied vocabulary use and greater sentence complexity by week 6. Introverts used more self-correction and metacognitive



language (e.g., “I realized I use passive voice too much” or “I avoided phrasal verbs because I wasn’t sure”).

These findings support the argument that learner personality shapes not only classroom behavior but also learning outcomes. As Cain (2012) argues, introverts are not antisocial or disengaged—they simply require space and time to thrive. In line with Deci & Ryan’s Self-Determination Theory, allowing learners to exercise autonomy in expression fosters sustainable motivation.

Conclusion and Pedagogical Recommendations This study reinforces the idea that introverted learners are equally capable of linguistic success when instructional formats honor their learning style. Flipped classrooms, reflective writing, and structured asynchronous tasks all proved effective in engaging and motivating quieter students.

Recommendations:

- Diversify participation formats (verbal, written, digital)
- Introduce reflection prompts before live discussions
- Use anonymous polls or feedback boxes for shy learners
- Encourage quiet leadership roles (e.g., discussion summarizer)
- Provide individualized feedback and goal-setting sessions

Importantly, teacher attitude plays a central role. Viewing introversion as a strength, rather than a challenge, transforms the classroom into a more inclusive space where all learners can thrive.

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