

Presenter

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Background

Group work and pair work can give learners more chances to use English, and also reduce speaking anxiety.

However, for some students, working in a group can be can cause discomfort because of feelings of social anxiety.

Few studies have examined the situations that make learners anxious in groups.

Method

372 learners from 3 universities
Open-ended question:

In as much detail as you can, write about an anxious learning experience you had in group- or pair-work, and how you felt about it.

Analysis:

Qualitative Content Analysis

Results

Learners mentioned a range of sources for anxiety when in groups:

- + expressing opinions (56)
- + discomfort with new people (51)
- + uncertainty about what do (41)
- + uncomfortable silences (21)
- + evaluations (negative) of you (13)
- + general social anxiety (10)
- + excluded from the group (9)
- + becoming the center of attention, or standing out from the others in the group (6)
- + causing trouble for others (3)
- + miscellaneous (3)

Why are learners anxious when they do group work?



expressing opinions

uncertainty and silence

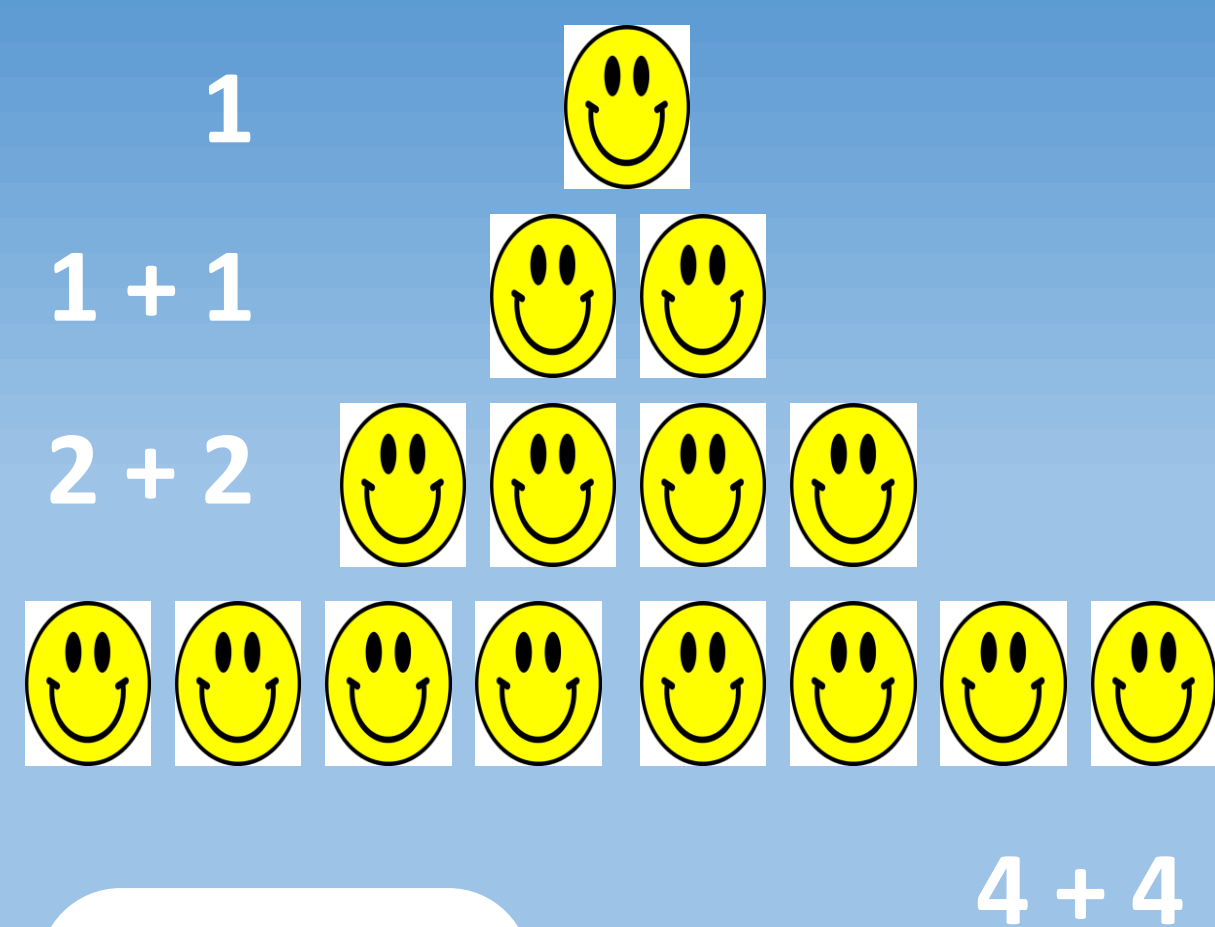
new people

What can teachers do?

pyramid discussion

conversation scaffolds

A/B games



1 st Question	+ α Question
Do you have a hobby?	What is your hobby?
Do you like music?	What is your favorite song?
Are you into games?	What is your favorite game?
Are you interested in sports?	How often do you play sports?
About you:	
I enjoy playing shogi in my free time. I play shogi once a week. I play at home. I play with my friends. It's fun and interesting.	
I love music. I like all kinds of music, jazz, rock, reggae, hip-hop, anything. My favorite singer is Ju-Ju. She is a Japanese jazz singer.	

A: Hi. How are you?
 B: I'm _____. How about you?
 A: I'm _____.
 Can I ask you a question?
 B: OK.
 A: (ask B a question)

A

→ What's 3 across? 三の横はなんですか? ↓ What's 5 down? 五の縦はなんですか?

DON'T SAY the WORD!! Give hints or use gestures to explain the word.

Across		Down	
3. grapes	ぶどう	2. truck	トラック
9. taxi	タクシー	8. radio	ラジオ
10. music	音楽	11. teacher	先生
12. notebook	ノート	13. coffee	コーヒー
15. phone	電話		
16. house	家		

Implications & Suggestions

Teachers need to find ways to ease learners' feelings of social anxiety when working groups.

Learners need a psychologically safe and comfortable learning environment for language learning to take place.
(Kebrowska, 2012)

They won't share ideas and opinions until they feel sure that the teacher or their peers won't reject them.
(King & Smith, 2017)

Structured activities can reduce ambiguity and encourage interaction
(Fanzuzzo et al, 1989; Xethakis, 2017)

Build rapport between students, and develop social cohesion
(Young, 1991; Xethakis, 2017)

Promote acceptance by exchanging genuine information in low-risk self-disclosure activities.
(King & Smith, 2017)

Reduce in-group / out-group distinctions by rearranging seating to encourage communication between class members.
(King & Smith, 2017)

Poster



Social and Communicative Anxiety in Group-work

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