



SPEAKING ANXIETY AMONG TEACHER EDUCATION STUDENTS OF NEUST

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Abstract

Developing the students' communication skills is of the paramount goals of the Philippine education system. Over the years, our country has been facing challenges in developing students' language skills, mainly speaking. Many Filipino students at all levels find it difficult to master the second language due to some factors that cause speaking anxiety. This study aimed to determine the factors that cause speaking anxiety among Teacher-Education students of Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, San Isidro Campus (NEUST-SIC). The descriptive method was applied. The study's instrument is the modified survey questionnaire on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz (1986), using the 4-point Likert scale. The participants of this study were 34 teacher education college students enrolled at NEUST-SIC during the second semester, the academic year 2016-2017. The data analysis used frequencies and mean. Findings revealed that the majority of the respondents agree that they never feel quite sure of themselves when speaking in their English class ($M=2.65$). They also agree that they start to panic when speaking in their English class, especially when they are not prepared ($M=3.12$). The respondents also agree that they feel that other students are better than they do when speaking in English ($M=3.18$). All the participants agreed that speaking in front of the whole class or public causes anxiety for most learners. Moreover, this study's respondents agree that they feel very self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students ($M= 3.03$). They also have the same answer with the statement that they get nervous and confused when speaking in English class ($M= 3.18$), as well afraid that other students will laugh at them when speaking in English ($M= 2.76$). The findings were consistent because the respondents disagree that they feel confident when speaking in their English class ($M=2.47$). They also admitted that they feel nervous speaking the English language with native speakers since they gave a "disagree" mark with the statement "I would not be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers" ($M=2.50$). Students' low self-esteem and fear that what they will say is incorrect are the factors that contribute to their speaking anxiety. It may also be concluded that teachers play an essential role in helping students improve their self-confidence in English class. English teachers must motivate, encourage, and inspire students that they can do it to assist students in building their self-confidence in English communication and eliminating students' speaking anxiety in the classroom.

Keywords:

English language materials, students' feedback, learning materials

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1. INTRODUCTION

Learning English as a second language is one of the most difficult challenges that students experience. Mastery of using English in effective communication poses challenges to education as a learned language, particularly in improving students' macro abilities. Nowadays, speaking abilities give job aspirants an

advantage because of the numerous opportunities, such as call center agents and online teachers to international students. Because of online tutoring opportunities, education students were able to gain advanced teaching experience. However, while some students are willing to be trained and practice their speaking abilities, most college students are hesitant to express themselves in front of the class and in public, resulting in speaking

anxiety. Individuals typically have speaking anxiety when the medium is a foreign language, mainly English. Despite the Department of Education's mandate to use English as a medium of instruction and promote students' communicative skills (DepEd Order 36, S. 2006), students' English performance remains a concern. Numerous factors contribute to students' public speaking anxiety. In other country, speaking anxiety among Turkish EFL learners was discovered to be caused by pronunciation, immediate questioning, anxieties of making mistakes, and unfavorable evaluation in Ztürk's (2014) case study. Djigunovic (2006) conducted a separate study on Croatian undergraduate EFL learners to evaluate the impact of language anxiety on language processing. Her study found that students with high levels of language anxiety generate less continuous speech in a second language and take longer pauses when speaking than students with low language anxiety levels.

Students in foreign language classes report that speaking in the target language is the most stressful experience. Students in today's language courses aim to strengthen this productive skill in various methods. They provide oral presentations or participate in group discussions while performing in front of a group. Their teacher may occasionally ask them to talk in the target language. All of these difficult speaking tasks may sometimes influence the learners and result in the following sentences being uttered by the learners: "I always feel nervous when speaking English"; "I feel bad through my mind because I wonder why I cannot speak English very well."; "My English seems not good enough; I cannot express very well."(Tanveer,2007).

The purpose of this study was to identify the sources of speaking anxiety among teacher education students at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology's San Isidro Campus (NEUST-SIC).

Objective of the Study

The main objective of this study was to determine what mostly generates speaking anxiety in English class for NEUST-SIC teacher education students enrolled during the second semester of the 2016-2017 academic year.

2. METHODOLOGY

The researcher employed the descriptive method to determine the causes of Teacher- Education students' speaking anxiety. A descriptive method focuses on the present situation (what is) and provides essential knowledge about objects and persons' nature (Calmorin, 2016). Modified survey questionnaires on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz (1986) were employed to determine the speaking anxiety of the respondents. Items about speaking anxiety were chosen, applying the 4-point Likert scale. The participants of this study were 34 teacher education college students enrolled at Nueva Ecija University of Science and Technology, San Isidro Campus (NEUST-SIC). The data analysis used frequencies and mean.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Table 1

Summary of the Mean Scores of the Respondents' Speaking Anxiety in English Language Class

Questions	Mean	Verbal Interpretation
I never feel quite sure of myself when I am speaking in my English language class.	2.65	Agree
I start to panic when I have to speak without preparation in language class.	3.12	Agree
I feel confident when I speak English in my English class.	2.47	Disagree
I would not be nervous speaking the English language with native speakers.	2.50	Disagree
I always feel that the other students speak the English language better than I do.	3.18	Agree
I feel very self-conscious about speaking the English language in front of other students.	3.03	Agree
I get nervous and confused when I am speaking in my language class.	3.18	Agree
I am afraid that the other students will laugh at me when I speak the English language.	2.76	Agree

Weighted Mean	Verbal Interpretation
1.00 - 1.75	Strongly Disagree
1.76 - 2.50	Disagree
2.51 - 3.25	Agree
3.26 - 4.00	Strongly Agree

Based on the data in table 1, the respondents' speaking anxiety in their English language class is quite evident. The majority of respondents believe that they never feel completely confident when speaking in English class (M=2.65). They also agree that they worry when they have to speak in English class, especially if they are unprepared (M=3.12). Respondents also agree that they believe other students are better than them in speaking English (M=3.18). Many studies have found that the ability that causes the most anxiety is speaking (MacIntyre and Gardner 1991). These findings are consistent with Tanveer's (2007) study on the factors that create language anxiety in ESL/EFL learners learning speaking skills and the impact it has on communication in the target language. It was discovered that all of the participants felt that speaking in front of the entire class or in public causes anxiety for the majority of the students.

Furthermore, respondents in this study agree that they are pretty self-conscious about speaking English in front of other students (M=3.03). They also have the same answer with the statement that they get nervous and confused while speaking in English class (M=3.18) and that they are afraid that other students would laugh at them when they answer in English (M=2.76). The findings were consistent since respondents disagreed on whether they felt confident speaking in English class (M=2.47). They also confessed that they are apprehensive while speaking English with native speakers, as seen by their "disagree" response to the statement "I would not be nervous speaking English with native speakers" (M=2.50). Overall, respondents lack confidence when it comes to speaking English in front of a class. As non-native English speakers, they are constantly concerned that native speakers will correct them. These variables contribute to learners' fear of public speaking. According to Young (1991), learners' perceptions about language learning can play a significant role in developing language anxiety in students. The findings of this study are consistent with Horwitz's (1988) presentation of various types of learners' beliefs, such as some learners being concerned about the correctness of their speech in comparison to

native-like accent or pronunciation, and others believing that success in English learning is limited to a few individuals who are gifted in language learning.

Conclusion

As the universal language, English is regarded as one of the most key parts of globalization. Improving students' English communication skills has always been a priority in the Philippine education sector. However, a number of factors influence learners' abilities to master a second language, particularly in a communicative manner. According to the study's findings, students' poor self-esteem and concern that what they would say is inappropriate are variables that contribute to their speaking anxiety. It is also possible to conclude that teachers have a vital role in helping students improve their self-confidence in English class. Motivation, encouragement, and encouraging students that they can are essential things that English teachers may do to help students build their self-confidence in English communication and eliminate students' speaking anxiety in the classroom.

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