Enhancing Oral Communication Confidence: World Literature Activities for BSED Students

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Abstract— This study investigates the effectiveness of selected speaking and listening activities in reducing oral communication apprehension among second-year Bachelor in Secondary Education – Major in English students at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, Manila. Employing a descriptive research methodology, data were collected from 102 respondents using a questionnaire adapted from James McCroskey. Findings reveal that students generally experience nervousness and lack confidence in public speaking situations. However, the selected activities demonstrated content validity and were deemed effective in classroom discussions. Embarrassment emerged as a significant factor contributing to communication apprehension, alongside speech handicaps and anxiety. Recommendations include teacher-led interventions to motivate and support students, integration of diverse speaking and listening activities, seminars addressing communication apprehension, and encouragement of positive reinforcement strategies. Creating a supportive and inclusive classroom environment is essential for mitigating apprehension and fostering student engagement. It is imperative for educational institutions to recognize and address communication apprehension among students, offering appropriate support and resources for their holistic development.

Keywords— BSED Students, Classroom Interventions, Content Validity, Oral Communication Apprehension, Speaking and Listening Activities, Educational Psychology

I. INTRODUCTION

Teachers have long grappled with the challenge of effectively supporting their students, utilizing various approaches, tools, and techniques to enhance learning outcomes. Forecasting student performance could significantly aid in tailoring learning activities to individual needs, preemptively addressing potential issues. In countries like the Philippines, where English proficiency isn't widespread due to its status as a second language, individuals often struggle with international communication in English.

English proficiency holds increasing importance in academic and professional realms, yet many Filipino students lack adequate exposure and practice in speaking the language. Despite the emphasis on oral communication skills in professional education, traditional teaching methods often prioritize grammar rules over practical language use, leading to limited speaking opportunities. Communication apprehension, a widespread fear related to communication, affects individuals to varying degrees across different communication scenarios, highlighting the need for targeted interventions to build confidence and competence in oral communication.

This study entails to find out the content validity of the selected speaking and listening World Literature activities in minimizing the levels of Oral Communication Apprehension of the students.

Thus, this seeks answers to the following sub-problems:

1. What is the level of Oral Communication Apprehension of the Second Year BSEDEN students in terms of the following:
    1.1 group discussion
    1.2 meetings
    1.3 interpersonal relationship, and;
    1.4 public speaking?
2. What is the measurement of the Content-Validity of the selected Speaking and Listening activities in terms of the following:
    2.1 objectives
    2.2 materials
    2.3 procedures
    2.4 language focus, and;
    2.5 presentation?
3. What are the reasons why the Second Year BSEDEN students exhibit Oral Communication Apprehension in World Literature classes?
4. How does Oral Communication Apprehension affect the competency of the Second Year BSEDEN students?
5. What are the ways to minimize the Oral Communication Apprehension of the Second Year BSEDEN students?

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Oral Communication Apprehension
James McCroskey (1977) defined Communication Apprehension or CA as "the predisposition to avoid

communication, if possible, or suffer a variety of anxiety-type feelings" (McCroskey, 1977). It is "an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons" (McCroskey, 1977, 27). The person 140 Filipino Students' Communication Performance experiencing CA feels fearful and uneasy about the communication situation he is about to participate in. He feels apprehensive and anxious about the speaking assignment as he anticipates its coming. He also foresees experiencing unpleasant psychological as well as physical manifestations on the day of the speech. He will, if possible, withdraw from the situation to escape the offensive feelings altogether.

In addition, communication state anxiety or CSA "refers to the reaction experienced during the actual communication" (Spielberger, 1966, 3). It is situational. It is the consequence or the "actual reaction" whereas CA is the "predisposition". CSA is the unpleasant psychological and physical condition experienced by the apprehensive speaker on the day of the performance itself. He may sense any or all of the following physical and psychological manifestations: nausea, clammy hands, profuse sweating, knocking knees, palpitations, twitching of facial muscles, blushing, stammering, diarrhea, and shortness of breath, mental block, confusion, fear, and panic.

According to Del Villar (2006a) oral communication apprehension is one of the most studied phenomena among western communication researchers. So much attention has been given to this phenomenon that almost every aspect of it has been explored and written about. Yet, despite it being extensively studied the case is quite different in the Philippine setting. There is still a dearth of research data on Filipinos considering oral communication anxiety's overwhelming impact on speakers.

Likewise, De Vito (1980), a highly respected, oft-published communication expert, discusses what he calls "shyness" as a common behavior exhibited by communicators. According to him, this behavior is distressing and causes much anxiety. The individual suffering from this problem fears the unsuccessful outcome of a communication encounter with others and thus avoids the situation if possible. Basically, shyness is a response to communication with others. And because the shy person tries to avoid encounters as much as possible, he prevents himself from taking part in a potentially worthwhile and productive communication.

De Vito (1980) explains that shyness varies from "extremely mild to extremely severe". The in-betweens, where most shy people belong, experience only some forms of discomfort depending on certain situations. Those who suffer from the extremely severe form "are totally debilitated and cannot function interpersonally at all". Of those studied, it was found that 73% feel that "being the center of attention as in giving a speech" is the main reason for experiencing shyness. Other circumstances mentioned were large groups, new social situations, and occasions calling for assertiveness, being evaluated and small task-oriented groups.

CA in Philippine schools
According to Castro (2011), as observed that in a fifty-minute lesson of a class of thirty students in a public school classroom, the opportunity to speak for each student is thirty seconds per lesson or one hour per year. Looking into account of Philippine public schools with an average of 60 students in a 60-minute English class, each student is given an opportunity of one minute to talk excluding time intervals among students. This will happen if the teacher will give an ample time to the students to talk, but the teacher does most of the talking.

Research show that apprehension has negative effects on individual's communication behavior including other aspects of his life. In addition, the communication apprehensive person is expected to experience anxiety in public setting such as discussion among peers or even in formal conversation with a teacher with the scenario, every teacher has a responsibility to help the students overcome their fears in oral communications and assist them in developing positive view of communication activities Miller and Watson (1992) say that language classes should produces students who are more confident about reaching out symbolically to others rather than withdrawing from others.

Neglecting this phenomenon would simply mean that a student may become very competent in other skills but not in speaking. However, speaking activity would never be realized unless listening, writing and reading are employed in a certain communicative task. Speaking and listening that are embedded with each other are the only focus in this study as the resulting factor of the mentioned skills being developed in a student. These are then closely knitted with each other.

Hence, this study would give the content validity of some developed speaking and listening World Literature

activities to see if those can help minimize the students' current level of Oral Communication Apprehension. Thus, at the same time giving suggestions on how the literature instructors should provide their learners with opportunities for meaningful communication activities in and outside the classroom. Nevertheless, it is indeed very important that teachers must still look for some way to anchor their students' classroom activities in meaningful situation to develop the student's speaking abilities.

III. METHODOLOGY

The research methodology employed a descriptive approach, allowing for a nuanced analysis beyond simple data tabulation. This involved numerical and comparative analysis to delve into the meaning and interpretation of the data collected. Respondents comprised second-year Bachelor in Secondary Education Major in English students at the Polytechnic University of the Philippines, all enrolled in a World Literature class during the second semester of the academic year 2013-2014. Out of the total freshman population of 137 students, 102 were selected as respondents for the study

Primary data were gathered using the "Personal Report on Communication Apprehension," a 24-item questionnaire developed by James McCroskey and adapted for this study. Researchers personally met with professors to distribute the questionnaires to the target respondents and allocated a week for respondents to complete them. Retrieval of completed questionnaires occurred immediately after administration to ensure a high retrieval rate. Subsequently, responses were organized and subjected to statistical treatment, including the computation of weighted means to assess the content validity of speaking and listening World Literature activities for integration into classroom settings.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION
Findings on Communication Settings

Group Discussion
Respondents generally express comfort (weighted mean 3.87) and enjoyment (3.78) in participating, although some experience tension (3.13) and dislike (2.10). This indicates a mixed response towards group discussions, with some feeling at ease while others feeling apprehensive.

Meetings
Respondents report feeling calm (3.49) and relaxed (3.20) when expressing opinions, but some feel uncomfortable (2.77) or nervous (2.71). While many respondents feel at ease during meetings, a notable portion still experiences discomfort or nervousness.

Interpersonal Communication
Overall, respondents feel calm (3.67) and confident (3.40) but also experience nervousness (2.62) and fear (2.33). Despite a general sense of calm and confidence in interpersonal communication, there are still instances of apprehension among respondents.

Public Speaking
While some feel tense (3.33) and nervous (3.33), others face speeches with confidence (3.25) or feel relaxed (2.78). Public speaking evokes a range of emotions among respondents, from confidence to nervousness.

Validated Activities to Minimize Apprehension
Ten selected activities, including Connect the Chain, Bingo Game, and Guess What's On My Mind, are deemed content valid for minimizing oral communication apprehension. These activities have been shown to effectively reduce apprehension among students.

Causes and Effects of Apprehension
Findings reveal various factors contributing to apprehension, including embarrassment (44%), inadequate communication skills (20%), and lack of confidence (14.71%). These findings highlight the multifaceted nature of communication apprehension and its impact on students.

Student Perspectives on Apprehension Mitigation
Students believe teacher interaction (64.71%), communicative activities (45.10%), and supportive climates (44.18%) aid in minimizing apprehension. This underscores the importance of supportive environments and interactive teaching methods in addressing communication apprehension.

V. CONCLUSION
Dominantly, the students are not totally confident to speak up, instead they prefer to stay calm and relaxed. They are experiencing nervousness, confusion and fear whenever they get involved in a setting that they need to speak in front of many people.

All the selected speaking and listening World Literature activities are content valid to be integrated in classroom discussions. Most of the students experience embarrassment which obviously the major reason of communication apprehension. However, the other reasons have something to do also with their speech handicap and anxiety in public speaking.

Majority of the students lack the ability or confidence to express their ideas intelligibly and effectively during class discussions. This is a manifestation that they are exhibiting oral communication apprehension.

Majority of the students are encouraged and motivated through the teacher's way of interaction with them. It is clear that the students' confidence will boost or increase if the teacher knows how to handle the student wholesomely. The teacher is the one who is responsible for executing activities that will utilize their speaking abilities. Also, the atmosphere plays a pivotal role to students and teacher; the students are participative in the engaging atmosphere. Moreover, the students' oral communication is minimized when the teacher is not tolerating embarrassment.

VI. RECOMMENDATIONS

The study recommends several strategies to address oral communication apprehension among students. Firstly, teachers should offer support to students who have experienced embarrassment, motivating them to overcome apprehension through self-help methods and practice. Additionally, integrating various speaking and listening activities into lessons can help alleviate anxiety among apprehensive students, providing opportunities for gradual exposure and skill development.

Furthermore, the study suggests conducting further research to explore additional factors influencing students' oral communication apprehension, such as gender and degree program, in order to inform the development of tailored interventions. It also recommends organizing seminars dedicated to addressing oral communication apprehension, providing a platform for discussing effective strategies and fostering a supportive learning environment.

Lastly, the study emphasizes the importance of positive reinforcement and encouragement from teachers, urging them to provide ample time for students to formulate responses and avoid negative feedback. Teachers are encouraged to praise students consistently and refrain from exhibiting behaviors that may contribute to increased apprehension, such as reprimanding. Additionally, creating inclusive classroom activities that involve the entire class can help reduce feelings of isolation and anxiety among apprehensive students, fostering a more supportive and engaging learning environment.

VII. IMPLICATIONS

It is important to recognize that implementation of a treatment program is not the only method by which highly apprehensive students may be helped. While providing such help is desirable, even in the absence of such a program. Some assistance can be provided. Academic counselors can help by steering highly apprehensive students away from courses and/or majors which have high communication demands. While some highly apprehensive students are likely to recognize the desirability of such moves on their own (Daly & McCroskey, 1975), many others may not. In addition, counselors may need to be encouraged to be persistent in attempts to get highly apprehensive students to come in for help. Highly apprehensive students are likely to see communication with adult authority figures, such as counselors, to be particularly threatening and try to avoid such interactions.

Therefore, it's essential to acknowledge that addressing oral communication apprehension extends beyond classroom interventions. While treatment programs are beneficial, additional support can be provided through academic counseling. Counselors can assist highly apprehensive students by guiding them away from courses or majors with high communication demands, helping them navigate academic paths that align better with their strengths and comfort levels.

However, it's crucial to recognize that some students may be reluctant to seek help independently, and counselors may need to actively encourage their participation in support services.

Given that highly apprehensive students may perceive communication with adult authority figures as threatening, counselors should strive to create a welcoming and non-intimidating environment to facilitate open dialogue and support.

By offering holistic support both within and outside the classroom, educational institutions can better meet the diverse needs of students experiencing oral communication apprehension.

APPENDIX

Questionnaire: Personal Report on Communication Apprehension

This questionnaire, adapted from James McCroskey's work, was utilized to gather primary data for the study. It consists of 24 items aimed at assessing various aspects of communication apprehension among respondents.

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