A TRAINING DESIGN FOR PUBLIC SPEAKING ANXIETY

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ABSTRACT

This study developed a training design for Senior High School students and teachers. The design was composed of four learning packets which were revised and finalized after an on-line try out. The researcher used five stages in the model to undertake the study. Seels and Glasgow's (2018) ADDIE model was modified by the researcher into Needs Analysis, Plan, Create, Try Out and Assess (NAPCTA) and was followed in the duration of the entire research process. The results of the needs analysis served as basis for the topics in the learning packets. Specifically, the study determined: (1) the anxiety level of the senior high school respondents, (2) the needs to be addressed in speech anxiety and (3) the contents of the learning packets as the research product. The paper employed the Research and Develop (R&D) design.

KEYWORDS

Training Design, Anxiety, Public Speaking

1. INTRODUCTION

Communication is a primary need of humanity. This dates back since the origin of man. People strive to satisfy this need in various ways throughout the ages, yet the most effective way has constantly been speaking. The primary goal of all languages is to aid humans to communicate with each other so they can convey their thoughts.

According to Arnold (2000), speaking in a foreign language is an integral aspect of regarding language learning in that, when individuals refer to speaking, sometimes they mean knowing a language. Hence, many researchers have pointed out that speaking is the greatest anxiety producing skill (Conway, 2017). Communicative apprehension (CA) was then found to have a connection with speaking skills and is defined by Horwitz et al. (2006) as a type of shyness characterized by fear or anxiety about communicating with people. It is also regarded as an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either oral or anticipated communication with another person or people. Self-confidence and self-esteem are also important parts of communication. Kitano (2001) argues that speaking skill is usually the first thing that learners compare with that of peers, teachers, and native speakers. Hence, learners' low self perception of speaking ability is a cause and source of anxiety in second language learning.

What attracts attention in language classes or in any free conversation areas is that when students talk to someone in English, they apologize for how much English they speak, thinking their level is poor. Most of these students who apologize for their level of English feel like they should speak better than they do. As pointed by Russell (2017), achieving fluency in any language is a process that takes time. Students cannot be expected to become fluent instantaneously. Within social contexts, language anxiety may be experienced due to extrinsic motivators (Schwartz, 2002; cited in Scovel (2008:16), such as different social and cultural environments, particularly the environments where L1 and L2/FL learning takes place. The researcher stresses that the respondents of this study came from different social environment.

To be able to understand the affective factors that may aggravate foreign language speaking anxiety, it is important to understand the nature of speaking as a separate skill in language learning. Carter and Nunan (2002) explain speech production in terms of steps such as conceptualization, formulation, articulation and self-monitoring. First, the speaker plans the speech, considering the speech situation, necessary ideas and patterns of discourse. Secondly, the speaker formulates correct sentences and sound patterns. Next, the sentence is uttered with the help of articulatory organs, and finally, the speaker establishes an inner mind, a kind of

self-monitoring to check and correct any mistakes while speaking. These processes require automaticity on the part of the speaker and each stage must be accomplished in a limited time. Since the ultimate aim of the speaker is to convey the meaning successfully, it can be said that the demanding nature of speaking can be a source of anxiety. Young (2002) suggests that recognizing learner manifestations of anxieties related to speaking, negative evaluation, and foreign language learning-generated anxieties are important first steps in coping with language anxiety.

In the Philippine context, Azagra (2017) posits that the utmost concern of schools and educational managers for many decades is the deteriorating performance of the students in all subject areas particularly English, Mathematics, and Science where the English language is used. The Philippine academe then innovated a milestone through the implementation of the K to 12 curriculum. This responded to the demand of the 21st century education. Moreover, it answered the problem of decreasing performance of Filipinos academically. Generally, the ultimate goal was to produce holistically developed students with 21st century skills equipped with operative communication skills thus focusing on using English in the area of communication.

It has been known that a skilled oral communicator is demanded globally. The careers offered by the global village such as banking, commerce, business, tourism, education, engineering and medicine among others use the English language as a means of communication. This is supported by Kachru (2006), as he cites that English is the international language of business and banking, aviation, tourism, negotiation, scientific research, and intellectual exchange. Hence, Filipino learners should respond to this demand of the global world; that is to learn and use the English language. Consequently, this paper placed emphasis for learners to develop their speaking skills. Among senior high school classes in this country, students usually encounter varied speech problems. These evidently hinder their ability to communicate and eventually negatively affect their general proficiency and academic performance. Therefore, resolving their problems in communication and finding out the finest solutions is deemed vital to help these learners in their oral language development.

English proficiency, specifically in speaking is a major concern not only in the academe but also in economics. With the ASEAN Integration there are two areas that should be dealt with; first is for Filipino graduates to keep their edge over their Asian counterparts in the English language. English used to be the Filipinos' competitive advantage in the job market. Second, there is a rise in business process outsourcing and influx of foreigners who want to learn English as a second language, therefore there is a greater demand of English Proficiency in speaking. However, the Filipinos' mastery is fast being eroded by rising competition from other countries coupled with declining mastery of the English language by most college students. If Filipino graduates cannot regain this edge, it would mean lesser, rewarding job opportunities and lesser income.

Nonetheless, it is the desire of the researcher to find out why speech anxiety still commonly occurs in the Philippine classrooms despite the early exposure to English as a second language. The researcher intends to discover the perspectives of the English teachers regarding speaking anxiety in the classrooms and how they handle these situations, the students' perspectives on the causes of these anxieties and address these needs by developing a speech module that can be implemented to create a low speech anxiety classroom especially to senior high school students. The training design will equip these students with the necessary skills and techniques, strengthen their confidence for them to become engaging audience and contribute in ensuring to maintain the Filipino's edge in the spoken English language.

Generally, this research aimed to identify and investigate the causes of anxiety among Senior High School students in public speaking. Thereafter, it recommended steps to overcome their anxiety level by developing a training design. This is supported by Tanveer (2007) as he posits that an apt utilization of strategies by language teachers can help reduce second/foreign language anxiety and can potentially increase students' confidence to learn and speak the target language. Teachers really need to structure classroom activities so that the amount of learner talk is increased at the expense of teacher talk. This will motivate students to communicate since they will do actual practice in the target language. By providing a rich classroom interaction, an avenue that this research designed, a communicative classroom mode was achieved among the English classes.

This study developed a training design for students to manage public speaking anxiety. It determined: 1.) the individual anxiety level of Senior High School students in Kong Hua School, 2.) the needs addressed among the respondents related to speech anxiety, and 3.) the contents of the training design for speech anxiety.

2. THE THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

This research utilized concepts from the theory of Johns (2007), which is the Eight Steps to Planning an Effective Training Event and the Systematic Approach to Training (SAT) which is similar to Seels and Glasgow's (2013) Instructional System Design Model (ISD). These models begin with Analysis. As the first phase, it rationalizes the necessity for the training. This phase can be likened to steps 1 and 2 of John's model. Next is the Design phase referred to as the decision-making phase. Also similar to steps 3 and 4 of John's model, this phase will complete three important activities: (1) deciding what participants will learn, (2) what will be taught and (3) the instructional methods to be used and what competency will be required from the participants. In the Development phase, the training concept is made into a material in the form of the training design with different parts. This is step 5 of John's model, of developing instructional activities. Both models refer the Implementation phase as the "actual training". This is where the developed training design will be placed into a realistic context. Step 6 of John's model also refers to this as the training scheme preparation and implementation. Evaluation is listed last in these models. It ensures that processes work well and improvements are identified right away. Step 8 of Johns model, preparing evaluation forms and determining follow-up activities discusses this also. By combining the different concepts of the three theorists cited above, the researcher came up with her theoretical framework. Although some concepts were modified, these were adopted from the key concepts gleaned from the three models as subsequently shown in figure1.
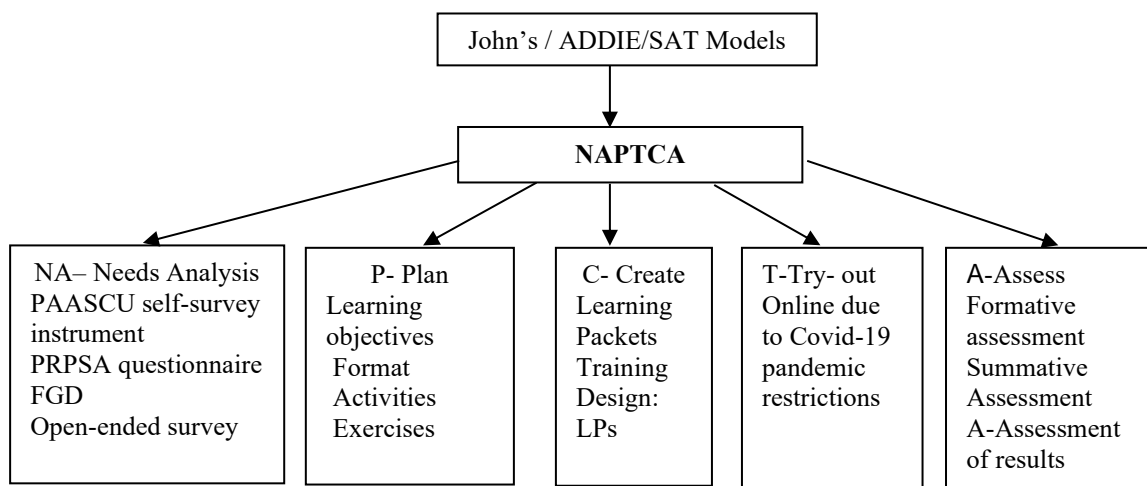
Figure 1. The Theoretical Framework of the Study

3. METHODOLOGY

The specific procedures in the preparation of the speech module and the try out stage to validate this research are discussed as follows. The research locale and respondents are likewise explained.

This research was conducted in Kong Hua School, a Filipino-Chinese Basic Education Institution located in Kauswagan Road, Barangay Kauswagan Cagayan de Oro City. It has a population of more than a thousand from Early Childhood Education Department to Senior High School Department. The respondents conducted the needs analysis among the Senior High Classes. This was done in the second semester of academic year 2019-2020. The try-out and assessment phases were conducted in the respective homes of evaluators as an online evaluation was undertaken due to community quarantine brought about by the Corona virus pandemic.

The researcher began the analysis stage of her research by conducting the Personal Report on Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) questionnaire, Focus Group Discussion (FGD), open-ended survey, and used the Philippine Accrediting Association of Schools Colleges and Universities (PAASCU) self-survey instrument. The Personal Report on Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA) questionnaire, Mc Croskey's (2015) PRPSA questionnaires were distributed to 78 Grade 11 students. The researcher used the questionnaire developed by McCroskey to collect information from students regarding their level of anxiety. This is a commonly used

method in both ethnographic and quantitative research. The grade 11 students rated statements numerically as to the level of how they feel in speaking situation. Moreover, the researcher distributed an 8-item open-ended survey questionnaire to all 78 students. Questions were modified from Dr. Nick Morgan, one of America's top communication theorist and coach. The questions included public speaking related questions on past experiences, physical effects, emotional effects, exposure, and need.

The results of these needs analysis showed that the respondents belong to the high anxiety level. This led the researcher to the design of topics and activities addressing the anxiety. After the design topics were identified, the next step was taken, the development stage. With the design phase already done in the form of the training design, it was further simplified in the form of the learning packets.

The first learning packet brings the trainees to a self-journey bringing them back to past experiences that might have contributed to all the negative feelings you have towards public speaking. Activities are provided for them to unlock the causes of public speaking fear, recognize the need to overcome public speaking, clean off negative experiences in public speaking, uncover one's strengths and weakness in public speaking, and recognize opportunities and threats in public speaking anxiety.

The effectiveness and efficiency of the learning packets were measured afterwards. The evaluation occurred throughout the entire instructional design process – within phases, between phases, and after implementation. This appeared in dual form, the formative and summative evaluation. The formative evaluation was done before and during the implementation of the training design. These were made possible through the consolidated effort of the panel members, and the research adviser. The panel examined the needs analysis results during the thesis proposal of the researcher. The research adviser corrected and made the refinement of the packets. The implementation, which was in the form of online assessment focused on content, training objectives, organization, and methodologies. The summative evaluation occurred after the final version of the training scheme was tried out. This assessed the overall effectiveness of the learning segments. Both teachers and student evaluators did this. A training evaluation form developed by Ong (2009) was modified by the researcher. This was used by the students and teacher evaluators in evaluating the learning packets.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The score range in the PRPSA was between 34 and 170. It is described as High = > 131, Low = < 98 and Moderate = 98-131. After getting the scores, the researcher categorized the anxiety results as Low, Moderately Low, Moderately High, and High. The results of the aforesaid PRPSA showed that 54%, which is 42 out of the 78 respondents from grade 11 experienced moderately high and high anxiety level.

Twenty-five (25) out of forty-six (46) female respondents commented during the written survey that they felt conscious and scared to make mistakes. These reasons made them avoid speaking in front. If forced, for grades purposes, they tend not to give their all, for apprehensions that they may be laughed at. This result is affirmed by Yamna & Rahma (2018) stating that female students get more anxious than males while giving speech publicly. The same responses are mentioned in the study of Wicks-Nelson & Israel (2006), who postulate that female students feel more anxious when it comes to oral activities in class. Accordingly, this is due to the fact that female students need to feel secure in class, thus trying to avoid any kind of activities that might expose their mistakes. Also, some of them are more concerned about 'maintaining their faces' in front of others especially from the male students. In addition, five female respondents wrote that they feel conscious when all eyes are on them on stage.

Female students naturally do not like to appear less proficient and less confident (Bruce et al, 2005), therefore escalating their anxiety whenever they are asked to get involved with activities like speaking and listening. This is perceived as a demonstration of weakness in front of others especially while presenting in front of the opposite gender (Tom et. al, 2013). Some male students on the other hand, do have more self-control and the ability to detach themselves from unpleasant feeling. In short, some of them might adopt the 'shutting down' technique where they appear to be more laid back and careless exteriorly. Additionally, according to the results of the quantitative research of Öztürk & Gürbüz (2013), female students demonstrate a higher level of foreign language learning motivation than male students. The results also showed that the female students get more anxious than the male students while speaking in English in the classroom. The results of the qualitative data showed parallelism with the quantitative results which occurred in this study. This is found in the needs assessment stage when 21% among males or 8 out of 32 experience low anxiety compared

to 13% among the females or 6 out of 46 only. Apart from this, struggling in understanding instruction is too major a problem for female students compared to the male ones. Agitation and apprehension are projected when they could not execute the task according to the instructions, thus making them more vulnerable in front of the class. This is consistent with Mclean & Anderson's paper (2009) which found out that females develop greater risk of anxiety according to their social factor and surrounding. This lowers down their confidence level thus making them feel more insecure in class. In this paper, it showed that 10 out of 32 female respondents mentioned "scared" to make mistakes as one of their feelings towards public speaking.

The open-ended survey conducted among the Senior High School respondents on December 10, 2019 generated similar results. The students manifested public speaking anxiety through stuttering and stammering, often leading to mental block. These manifestations directly affect spontaneity and clear expression of ideas. The students' reported experience in public speaking is coherent with the committee's self-survey ratings. This result was also agreed by the body during the plenary session.

The areas examined comprised of feelings towards public speaking, manifestations of their anxiety, past experiences, and the needs they have. The highly repeated answers in the open-ended survey when asked about their feelings towards public speaking is on *nervousness and anxiety*. This matched the results in the Personal Report on Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA). Thirty percent (30%) of the students further shared, their anxiety and nervousness would depend on the audience and topic.

When asked about their past experiences in public speaking, negative experiences such as mental block, being laughed at, being conscious on how people perceive him/her and were repeatedly mentioned. Based on their classroom exposure, they claimed they need help in public speaking which were categorized into encouragement before, during and after delivery; provision of more speaking opportunities and mentoring. These were the common answers.

Kankam (2017) postulates that the anxiety that usually comes with a speaking performance is said to be both personal and situational. Researchers have over the years sought to understand how the combined effects of personal traits of an individual and situational conditions such as the nature of the speaking environment, the size of the audience and negative perception over the outcome of a speech, affects a person's ability to effectively communicate. While studies on speech-related anxiety in the academic environment is not new (Basic, 2011; Behnke et al., 2006), the attention of many of these studies has focused on students rather than lectures/instructors. This study found that out of fear of being negatively evaluated, students became highly apprehensive when asked to perform a speech-related task in the classroom. This, the study found, can potentially have adverse effects on the academic and professional performance of students. Most importantly, the study established the significant role of teachers in managing a friendly and pleasant environment that facilitate speaking and positive learning outcomes. As Varron (2011) asserts, the teacher is the one that facilitates the whole process of learning and creates a favorable environment, where there is a smooth flow of communication. The study of Varron (2011) proves to be in consistency with this research because the needs raised by the students can be addressed through motivation for encouragement, guidance and feed backing for mentoring, and integration of communicative approach in the Language classroom to provide more exposure. The teachers also, can avoid situations that could cause embarrassment to the student speaking by proper orientation on the responsibility and decorum of the audience.

A study conducted by Wu (2010) entitled The Relationship between Language Learners' Anxiety and Learning Strategy in the CLT Classrooms indicated in the results that most of the participants express a favorable attitude toward the Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) approach; however, they also reveal their high level of anxiety in the language classroom. Accordingly, language anxiety is usually reported to have adverse effects on the learning of a second language. It is the language instructors' mission to accelerate the language learning of their students. One way is to teach students how to learn more effectively and efficiently. Language learning strategies (LLS) are procedures that learners can use to facilitate learning. Wu's (2010) research results have some bearing to this study as revealed in the needs assessment. The Senior High School respondents experience anxiety in public speaking but they also identified in their needs to have more exposure. This shows they want to be helped and they have a favorable attitude towards Communicative Language Teaching (CLT).

Sapuya (2018) conducted an analysis of students' speaking anxiety towards their speaking skills. According to the results of speaking test, using Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) had positive meaningful effect on improving students' speaking skill viewed from different speaking anxiety. In the needs analysis administered by the researcher through an open ended survey, the Grade 11 students have identified that there

is less talk time in their classes. If there are speaking activities, the same students repeatedly do the talking. 50% said, they get anxious but never refuse whenever asked to speak in front.

In summary, the needs assessment results showed that 100% of the teachers observe students with public speaking anxiety in their classes. They observed the apprehension through the students' verbal and non-verbal language. Students did shy away, refuse to speak, and requested to code-switch. While speaking, the students stuttered, stammered, had difficulty maintaining an eye contact and exhibited incorrect posture. According to four teachers, they observed that students intentionally spoke in a low voice so that they were not heard. When the teachers were asked what the perceived causes of anxiety are, majority of them reiterated that the student is probably just shy, lacks vocabulary and fluency. These identified reasons served as basis for the researcher in designing and developing the learning packets.

5. CONCLUSIONS

Taking the findings as strong points for evaluating this research, the following conclusions were drawn: (1) various opportunities for student-talk should be provided in senior high school classes, this calls for teachers' creativity in designing meaningful and communicative tasks; (2) the activities provided in class did not encourage enough class interaction, students therefore need exposure to communicative teaching to reduce speech anxiety level; and (3) to place high regard for class mentoring to widen the spectrum of language learning areas. These were the baseline data used in the production of the training design's final form, classified into learning packets.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

The researcher recommends to physically implement the Training Design when the situation affected by COVID19 pandemic improves. After the training, it is suggested to have a follow through on the trainees after 6 months to a year to see the impact on the level of their public speaking anxiety.

For teachers, who are curriculum designers and mentors, it is further recommended that they will undergo more trainings across levels with the integration of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) Approach through professional learning communities. Further researches on addressing public speaking anxiety starting in the primary grades is also recommended.

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