



THE RESEARCH OF FACTORS AFFECTING PUBLIC SPEAKING SKILLS OF HIGH-QUALITY ENGLISH STUDIED STUDENT AT CAN THO UNIVERSITY, VIETNAM

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Abstract:

The purpose of the study is to find out the factors affecting the public speaking skills of 45th cohort students majoring in high-quality English and make recommendations to improve and enhance the public speaking ability of EFL students from High-quality English Studies Program. The study participants included 86 high-quality English language third-year students. We used questionnaires to collect data and used SPSS statistical software to analyze data by descriptive statistical method. Research results show that students' ability to speak in public is affected by their lack of confidence in speaking. At the same time, the factors of the study program and the school environment also affect the students' public speaking skills. Based on the research results, the paper makes some pedagogical recommendations.

Keywords: factor, speaking public skills

1. Introduction

English has taken over as the primary language used to communicate with foreigners in Vietnam in the modern era due to the growing demand for global integration and development among nations in all aspects, including business, culture, education, information, and medicine. The Faculty of Foreign Languages at Can Tho University has decided that one of the objectives of teaching English majors is to assist students in acquiring the capacity to interact effectively in English in a social setting. This decision was made after considering the needs of society. contact between cultures. In other words, one of the crucial abilities that the excellent English language training program of

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the Faculty of Foreign Languages seeks to cultivate is speaking English in public. However, the truth reveals that students, particularly third-year students, struggle greatly with their public speaking English skills for the following reasons: First of all, professors discourage speaking in class and place too much emphasis on theoretical learning at the expense of the language's practical applications. Second, there are no speaking activities in the curriculum to help pupils hone their public speaking abilities. In addition, students themselves find it difficult to communicate in English both within and outside of the classroom. Therefore, researching the elements influencing third-year students' public speaking abilities and coming up with practical fixes to the aforementioned issues can assist third-year students majoring in developing an effective learning strategy and enhancing their speaking abilities. Since then, students' speaking abilities will grow because they will be more self-assured, have a more positive attitude about speaking abilities, and develop all four talents more thoroughly. The project's findings can be used as a guide for teachers of speaking skills to modify their lesson plans to better suit their learners. This will help to raise the standard of instruction and help students learn English speaking skills first. broader public. The study's findings also help to promote, spread, and bring scientific research closer to students by laying the groundwork for additional research projects aimed at enhancing university teaching and learning. The project's outcomes will also serve as a source of reference information for faculty members at the CTU's Faculty of Foreign Languages as they make the required modifications to the training curriculum and program to make it more student-friendly.

2. Literature review

2.1 Concepts of public speaking

Liu (2011) defined public speaking as the act of speaking in front of a crowd. Every opportunity for public speaking typically has a purpose: it is either meant to educate, persuade, or entertain the audience. At the conclusion of the speech, it is anticipated that the audience will be able to recollect a key takeaway. Despite the well-known value of excellent public speaking, Liu (2011) further notes that many people, particularly tertiary students, suffer from glossophobia, or the fear of speaking in front of others.

A century ago, John Dolman, in his *Handbook of Public Speaking*, said that public speaking is very different from a theatrical performance. It is best in real communication with neighbors and when it is most real (Dolman 1922). Public speaking is the process or act of performing a presentation focused around an individual directly speaking to a live audience in a structured, deliberate manner in order to inform, influence, or entertain them. Public speaking is generally understood as a formal, face-to-face presentation by one person to a group of listeners. Presentation is closely allied to commercial activity, although the latter is more often associated with it.

Most people immediately think of the following when the phrase "public speaking" is mentioned: speaker, podium, microphone, and a large audience. The majority of people associate public speaking with giving a speech in front of a large

audience at events like rallies, political speeches, lectures, big corporate conferences, and the like. We don't often consider things like a musical performance, a university lecture, or guest appearances on television. Far from it, public speaking does not solely involve those circumstances (Teodosijevic, 2016).

On the other hand, public speaking can be done when we speak on camera, whether it's a live broadcast, through some means of communication, or footage that will later be broadcast, when we don't have any living people in front of us but are talking only to a machine. Which means that, in this case, the performance that occurs is public speaking. Even if you're speaking to a machine rather than a living person, you're actually speaking to anyone who will ever see the footage and through which you hope to achieve some goal.

Public speaking, therefore, includes, of course, speaking in front of the legislature, speaking at a rally, and delivering a lecture in front of a packed faculty amphitheatre, but it also includes talks and addresses to employees, reports to the company board, presentations of projects seeking funding from investors, sales presentations to individuals or groups, holding press conferences, and appearing as a guest on television shows.

After considering everything, we can now define public speaking as: every aspect of the individual addressing the group or individual listener, whether live or via electronic means of communication, with the aim of achieving a specific goal or projecting a certain image of themselves through various techniques of influence, information, and entertainment.

2.2. Who needs to be adept in public speaking?

We gradually grow to understand the critical role that oratory and public speaking skills play in developing our place in society, careers, lucrative sales, and even family relationships. A good outcome can only be anticipated if you are an effective, self-assured, and persuasive speaker. This is especially true if you want individuals or groups to take immediate action, whatever that action may be.

No matter how much you considered—or didn't consider—the significance of mastering public speaking techniques for your circumstance, and your particular work, you now realize how crucial it is. In order to succeed in anything you do today, whether it be changing your circumstances, starting to appear different to your peers, moving up in your career, improving yourself at your current job, getting better outcomes, etc., you must be proficient in public speaking skills. You must be an expert public speaker and have knowledge of oratory techniques regardless of your line of work.

Therefore, we can draw the conclusion that everyone absolutely must be able to master at least the fundamentals of rhetoric and public speaking. Whether your goal is to act and speak in front of crowds, management boards of companies, hold sales presentations to groups or individuals, better position yourself in society, or just to be liked by a girlfriend or boyfriend at a coffee shop, or to satisfy your professor to give you a passing grade, mastering public speaking is essential. This is true whether you are

dealing with public business, politics, or the media, whether you are a professor or a manager, retailer or restaurateur.

2.3. Factors influencing public speaking abilities

The importance of factors in public speaking allows students to understand how to develop their abilities. Therefore, it is important to understand the issues affecting students' public speaking skills in order for the researcher to accurately select the element as the study's title. Teachers must identify the variables influencing students' speaking abilities in order to assist them in overcoming difficulties in learning public speaking. According to Tuan and Mai (2015), students' speaking abilities can be influenced by listening skills, topical knowledge, feedback during speaking activities, affective factors (such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety), performance conditions (time pressure, planning, standard of performance, and amount of support), and affective factors (such as motivation, confidence, and anxiety).

A. Psychology and anxiety factors of learners

In any learning circumstance or setting where human psychology is significant, human psychology plays a significant role. The ability to speak English is one that is greatly influenced by psychological factors. According to Miles and Huberman (1994), psychological elements really have a negative impact on students' English-speaking activities. Though the majority of students believe they have solid vocabulary and grammar, they are not confident in their ability to speak English. The psychological aspect is the most complex factor at play, and it affects many students' oral presentations negatively by contributing to their nervousness, lack of drive, low self-esteem, shyness, and fear of making mistakes. These are the reasons why students' presentations are delayed. Speaking anxiety, motivation, and self-esteem are the three psychological elements identified by Ariyanti (2016) as having an impact on presentation performance. When presenting in English, it restricts the presenter's capacity to take in information and causes students to get uneasy. Additionally, this is the most common psychological barrier because they are constantly under the impression that they are bad at giving presentations. Public speaking has been regarded as one of the humanities' top anxieties, according to Zaremba (2006). When required to deliver something in front of an audience, people experience anxiety. Also included in psychological elements are personal processes and interpretations that affect mental states.

Researchers like Horwitz agree that anxiety has a significant impact on pupils' ability to study (1991). Fear is typically linked to public speaking concerns among various groups of individuals in any community (Gibson, Gruner, Hanna, Smythe, and Hayes, 1980). Additionally, "*public speaking anxiety comprises a cluster of evaluative attitudes regarding speech-making,*" according to Daly, Vangelisti, Neel, and Cavanaugh (1989). A further definition of anxiety given by Spielberger (1983) is "*the subjective experience of tension, trepidation, nervousness, and worry connected with the stimulation of the nervous system. It is linked to sensations of unease, annoyance, uncertainty in oneself, trepidation, or*

worry" (Brown, 2000). Generally speaking, anxiety is linked to "*threats to self-efficacy and assessments of situations as hazardous*" (Pappamihiel, 2002). Anxiety or fear of speaking was one of the main issues students were said to have encountered throughout the oral presentation. Anxiety can hinder EFL students' production and achievement, according to research (Abdul-Kareem and Taqi, 2014). Other research focused on identifying the challenges that students typically have when giving an oral presentation, such as feeling anxious (Chuang, 2009; Abu El Enein, 2011; Alwi and Sidhu, 2013).

Following are some causes of "anxiety" in students. The first explanation is that they are afraid of making blunders or errors in public. Another factor is that they are concerned about how others will see them; students want to provide a good first impression on their professors and peers (Tanveer, 2007). Most of the students I have in class don't like to speak English. Speaking of anxiety, it is a normal psychological trait that involves the often-uncontrollable emotion of terror. It frequently happens when learning a language. Every time they make a mistake, people often experience anxiety, but this is especially true when they do so in front of others because it relates to how many others will see their ability to deliver a speech. Furthermore, there is a chance of embarrassment if one makes mistakes in front of others or if one's speech is misinterpreted or ineffective. Anxiety is a state of tension, trepidation, and nervousness related to learning a foreign language (Horwitz, 2001). Additionally, Nascente claims that among other affective elements, anxiety is one of the major roadblocks to successful language learning. In other words, students' capacity to learn the language is impacted by worry. As a result, giving attention to this learning component should also be taken into account. Other experts, including Horwitz, concur that anxiety has a significant influence on pupils' learning (1991). They think that students' performance may be impacted by their fear of speaking a certain language. It can affect how well oral language is produced and cause people to sound less proficient than they actually are. Ur (1996) asserts that the inhibition factor makes it challenging for students of second or foreign languages to talk.

B. Motivation and attitude

Probably one of the most significant factors determining whether language acquisition is successful or unsuccessful is the emotive side of the ARN (Oxford, 1990). According to Krashen (1982), a number of affective factors have been linked to success in second language acquisition in studies over the past ten years. Motivation is undoubtedly one of the most important affective components, if not the most important, for successful language learning. The level of a teacher's ability to motivate students can be measured. According to Johnstone (1999, p.146), it is a drive that is focused on achieving a goal. According to Brown (1980, p.112), motivation is an internal urge, drive, emotion, or desire that propels one to take on a particular activity. Students who are highly motivated and have good attitudes may participate more in class activities and oral exercises, which can boost self-esteem, self-confidence, self-awareness, and belief in one's own talents for that activity (Brown 2002). Due to poor self-esteem, some students struggle to learn how to

public speak English or feel less willing and confident. When public speaking English, they consistently remain silent or uninterested. Low self-esteem is a major factor in the majority of their issues. Due to their lack of confidence, they frequently feel unwelcome, frustrated, and confused. As a result, they tend to speak more negatively about themselves, which has a detrimental impact on their oral English learning.

C. Some external affective factors

The impact of the learning environment on students' academic performance is well documented. There are numerous components to a learning environment. For instance, providing kids with access to fresh air and a comfortable temperature in the classroom might help them stay focused and upbeat. Therefore, a better learning environment can enhance the effectiveness of instruction and learning. On the other hand, a poor learning environment might make teaching and learning less effective. Another significant environmental factor is class size. Leonard S. Cohen believed that small classes might accommodate students' varied needs since they often have happier and more engaged professors and students. Thus, a smaller class size is necessary to create a more conducive setting for learning oral English.

Since the curriculum doesn't give students practice exercises, it has a significant impact on the students' issues with oral English communication. Rabab 'ah (2005) discovered that students' limited exposure to the target language caused them to struggle with oral presentations in English. Although students may be willing to communicate in English with others, the curriculum may not be able to support their success. Furthermore, CheeKeong, Yassin, and Ali (2014) claimed that because there were so few oral communication drills available to students, the curriculum was not created to encourage and improve oral communication. Additionally, the curriculum "*pays much attention to theoretical frameworks such as grammar and written knowledge, which do not stimulate pupils to speak verbally,*" claim Checkeong, Yassin, and Abdulrahman (2014).

In a speaking class, teachers must take on a variety of responsibilities. These include overseeing the classroom, planning the activities, evaluating the performance of the students, offering assistance, participating in the activities, supplying the necessary linguistic materials, offering tutorials, and watching the students (Hammer, 1991). However, some classrooms are overrun by teachers. They constantly discuss and give explanations. As a result, the pupils are unable to speak the language with their partners or practice it. This obstacle prevents students from speaking or using their English, particularly when giving speaking in public. Yassin and Abdulrahman (2014) claim that the teacher did not encourage pupils to utilize the target language in class and that they focused primarily on grammar points or structural elements, ignoring the language's practical applications.

3. Material and methods

This study is related to the factors affecting the public speaking skills of students majoring in English (high-quality program) at Can Tho University, conducted by quantitative method. What factors affect the public speaking skills of EFL third-year students? Our research method consists of the main phase of data collection through questionnaires. Participants included 86 undergraduate students. Taking advantage of the time after school, we invited reporters to stay for about 5-10 minutes to complete the questionnaire.

Our study used quantitative research using questionnaires to collect data on factors affecting the public speaking skills of EFL students from the High-Quality English Studies Program. According to Creswell (2014), the questionnaire is used to acquire quantitative data since it is useful for getting information from a variety of individuals. Additionally, questionnaires are a method used to learn more about participants' perspectives, emotions, and responses (Walliman, 2018). These reasons are why this tool was applied in this study. It is a questionnaire consisting of three main parts, namely Parts A, B and C. Part A consists of questions aimed at checking the participants' personal information about gender and length of English learning. For Parts B and Part C, participants indicated how well they felt about each on a 5-point Likert scale.

Quantitative data collected from the results of the questionnaire were analyzed using Statistical package for Social Science (SPSS) software version 20 to reconfirm, compare, and contrast views from interviews. The data obtained from the questionnaire were tested using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 26.0. The results from the Scale test indicate that the reliability coefficient of the questionnaire (Cronbach's Alpha = 0.889) is sufficient to carry out this study (as shown in Table 1).

Table 1: Reliability of the questionnaire

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
0.889	29

3.1 Results from the quantitative portion of the study

SPSS software version 20 was used to evaluate quantitative data collected from survey respondents. The Quality English Studies Program High level's EFL students' public speaking abilities are influenced by five factors: the students themselves, the teaching staff, the curriculum, the learning environment, and extracurricular activities.

Table 2: Factors of anxiety and psychology of learner

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Every time I misunderstand English, I'm afraid people will mock me.	86	1	5	3.19	.888
I often have to review my notes during a presentation, even though I'm well prepared.	86	1	5	3.77	1.014
I am shy and easily irritated when communicating in English.	86	1	5	3.16	1.050
I don't have the vocabulary to express or argue an idea or topic in English.	86	1	5	3.44	1.001
During the presentation, I had problems with my speaking and pronunciation.	86	1	5	3.20	1.156
I care more about grammar than my ability to express myself during a presentation.	86	1	5	3.10	1.096
I think in Vietnamese and then translate it into English during the presentation.	86	1	5	3.33	1.068
I find it difficult to organize my ideas logically during a presentation.	86	1	5	3.00	1.227
I would rather be evaluated through written exams than through oral presentations.	86	1	5	2.64	1.126
Valid N (listwise)	86				

As can be seen from Table 2, most participants (86) strongly agree and agree that they often lack confidence when giving presentations. The majority of the participants agreed that they often had to review their notes during a presentation, even though they were well prepared (M = 3.77). In addition, participants also said that they did not have the vocabulary to express ideas or arguments in English (M = 3.44)

Table 3: The factors taught by teachers affect the public speaking skills of EFL students

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Teachers don't often use English in their courses, so I prefer to use my mother tongue.	86	1	5	2.79	1.042
The teacher's inquiries or comments have an impact on my academic achievement.	86	1	5	2.99	1.079
Our teachers often criticize our pronunciation, so we are afraid to	86	1	5	2.83	1.119

speaking English and we feel demoralized.					
There are very few foreign lecturers directly teaching.	86	1	5	3.71	1.115
The teacher did not provide me with any insightful feedback following my presentation.	86	1	5	2.76	1.188
The teacher does not force us to express our ideas in English.	86	1	5	2.87	1.015
Valid N (listwise)	86				

Some students agreed or completely agreed that public speaking was limited due to the few foreign teachers teaching ($M = 3.71$). In addition, a few said that teachers were often critical. their pronunciation errors, so they don't want to speak and feel demoralized ($M = 2.99$). From the above data analysis, it is clear that teachers have very little impact on students' performance in their ability to speak English in public.

Table 4: Factors from the curriculum

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
I had little chance to practice speaking English during the course.	86	1	5	2.92	1.065
Most of our tests are written, so we don't prioritize spoken language.	86	1	5	2.80	1.094
The course did not give me the opportunity to use many of my speaking skills.	86	1	5	2.81	1.112
The communication course was not enough to improve my speaking skills.	86	1	5	3.19	1.133
No activities to communicate in English	86	1	5	2.93	1.082
Speaking skills are not focused on the test, only on writing skills.	86	1	5	2.87	1.186
Valid N (listwise)	86				

From the table above, it can be seen that the curriculum did not contribute much to the participants' inefficiencies in public speaking. Students reported that most tests were written, so they did not prioritize spoken language. In contrast, a large number of students revealed that they did not prioritize speaking ability because of the way the curriculum was tested and assessed. However, the majority of participants still felt that the course was not enough to improve their public speaking skills ($M = 3.19$).

Table 5: Learning environment factors

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Speaking classes are usually crowded with students.	86	1	5	3.26	.984
There are no assistive devices to practice speaking English.	86	1	5	3.41	1.010
My friends and I often use Vietnamese to communicate more.	86	1	5	3.85	.927
The good students in the class will be more confident in speaking English.	86	1	5	3.83	.897
Classroom arrangement is limited, making it difficult for students to communicate and interact.	86	1	5	3.23	.978
Valid N (listwise)	86				

From the above table, it can be seen that environmental factors have a great influence on the public speaking ability of high-quality English language students. It can be seen that most agree that the reason for affecting public speaking ability is because: good students in the class will confidently demonstrate their ability to speak more (M = 3.83) and they often communicate with friends in Vietnamese more (M = 3.85). Therefore, it will limit the ability to speak English in public. In addition, a small number of students said that they do not find many devices to support practicing public speaking skills (M = 3.41).

Table 6: Extracurricular activities

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
There are not many extracurricular activities about English at school.	86	1	5	3.26	.948
Fewer English clubs to join.	86	1	5	3.20	.968
Clubs often do not have interesting activities to attract learners.	86	1	5	3.49	1.093
Valid N (listwise)	86				

Most of the students agreed that the few English clubs on the campus did not help them develop public speaking skills. Most said that clubs do not have interesting activities and do not attract you to join (M=3.49)

4. Results and discussion

This result is in agreement with Dornyei and Kormos's (2000) assertion that, despite their low language skills, pupils often struggle to communicate their ideas while still understanding what is being said. Chen (2009) lists linguistic issues such as improper vocabulary, a lack of comprehension of grammatical structures, and poor pronunciation as obstacles to students' oral presentations (Chen, 2009). Juhana (2012) also made the point that language barriers for students while presenting in English include a lack of

vocabulary, an inability to comprehend grammar rules, and poor pronunciation. It is clear why the majority of participants are having this issue. In lower grades, most children lose their foundational English skills. Additionally, because they frequently converse in Vietnamese, their mother tongue, pupils may not have many opportunities to speak in the target language. Additionally, it appears that taking notes helps kids feel less uncomfortable and insecure. According to Chuang (2011), students in his study indicated that without flashcards, the presentation would not have been possible. According to Chuang (2009), anxiety impairs cognitive function, which makes students less able to learn and demonstrate what they have learned. He advises, though, that note-free presentations are better for enhancing pupils' speaking abilities. As a result, teachers might encourage students to take as few notes as possible during presentations.

Environmental considerations are the final common barrier to public speaking skills. According to some participants, there is no unique atmosphere for learning English. Rarely do they get to study from native professors directly. As a result, English club lack engaging activities to entice students to join in on improving their public speaking skills. According to research by Tanveer (2007), students' communication skills do not fully develop due to "*limited exposure to the target language and a lack of opportunity to practice speaking in such situations*" (p. 24). When a student is required to give a presentation, it frequently embarrasses or stresses them out.

Some students said that because the more capable students communicate fluently and frequently to the teacher, the less capable students have fewer opportunities to speak in the target language, which causes their English to deteriorate. Additionally, some students claimed that teachers frequently corrected their pronunciation in class when they were unfamiliar with the right way to say certain terms or when they were unable to do so owing to the impact of their mother tongue. Additionally, the program did not provide pupils with the chance to practice speaking English and was more theoretical than practical.

5. Recommendations

5.1 Several suggestions for university instructors and students were provided in view of the study's findings

The majority of the participants struggled with a vocabulary deficit. Thus, a focus on language instruction is necessary to prepare pupils for good public speaking. Students also struggle with the majority of the main English language grammatical categories. Therefore, we vehemently urge that topic that seriously hinder students' public speaking be given more attention, sufficient treatment, and instruction so that they can be applied in real-world settings. "*Presentation is a skill developed through experience and instruction,*" notes Gupta (2008:258). This implies that practicing presentation skills is essential. Giving students the time to practice public speaking, teaching them how to use mind maps to generate ideas, and allowing students enough time to prepare for speaking assignments are all ways that teachers can help students perform better.

By being approachable, accommodating, and cooperative, teachers can assist students in overcoming shyness and inhibitions and encourage them to speak up in class without fear of making errors. and comprehensive, unambiguous directions. Additionally, pupils place a high value on being praised. Building strong relationships with them, making them feel at ease in the classroom, and inspiring them to demonstrate their skills are all highly beneficial as well. To make textbook topics easier and more entertaining, teachers should tailor and simplify them. Teachers should also carefully consider when and how to correct students in order to reduce students' fear of making mistakes. Teachers should also encourage students to take part in speaking activities. Finally, teachers should encourage English speaking in the classroom so that pupils develop a habit of using the language.

First and foremost, students should comprehend the value of public speaking abilities. Their attitude toward their research may influence how motivated they are to learn. To improve your ability to utilize English successfully, you should practice speaking English outside of class more frequently by practicing on topics related to daily life and joining a speaking group. Transmit your message. Finally, in order to develop a habit, they should speak English in class rather than Vietnamese. It is believed that the findings would help faculty members teach more effectively and help excellent English language majors develop their public speaking abilities.

The school can also set up additional English clubs with more engaging activities. In order to design events that encourage more students to engage, it is important to understand the psychology and trends of the student body. Exchange programs between foreign students are something that can be set up. students from Vietnam. Joining groups greatly aids pupils in honing their public speaking abilities. You'll get the chance to speak with others and make lots of new acquaintances. Improve their communication and speaking abilities.

6. Conclusion

The factors that arise from the learner's language proficiency are those that English majors encounter most frequently when it comes to public speaking. Linguistic factors include students' poor pronunciation, poor grammar, and limited vocabulary when giving presentations. According to research, poor word choice, poor pronunciation, and improper word placement are the three main issues that prohibit students from understanding the information and render presentations ineffective

Conflict of interest statement

The authors declare no conflicts of interest.

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