

How Undergraduate Students Capture English Impromptu Speech Challenge

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Submission date: 28-Oct-2022 03:49AM (UTC-0600)

Submission ID: 1937713294

File name: 6601-23109-2-CE_1.doc (133K)

Word count: 4219

Character count: 23327

How Undergraduate Students Capture English Impromptu Speech Challenge

*¹Asti Gumartifa, ²Indawan Syahri

^{1,2} Universitas Muhammadiyah Palembang, Indonesia

Abstract

The practice of giving a speech or presentation in front of the class is a big challenge for students in English education majors. Students feel unable to speak directly or impromptu in English speech lectures. Thus, this study aimed to find out what were the problem factors that hinder students from practicing the impromptu speech in classes. Samples in this study were the fifth-semester students in the academic year 2022/2023 majoring in English education at the University of Muhammadiyah Palembang. The study was qualitative and quantitative with a mixed-method approach. The research design utilized was a descriptive approach. The instruments used in this study were questionnaires and interviews. Twenty samples of students responded to the questionnaires and 12 of them were selected for further interview. Results of the interview and questionnaire showed most students did not have the confidence to give an impromptu English speech in the public because of the anxiety factor. Students were shocked and unable to think properly when presenting the speech without preparation. Therefore students were hard to develop words into sentences, even the prepared sentences were lost as a result of that anxiety.

Keywords: Anxiety, Impromptu Speaking, Speech, Public Speaking

INTRODUCTION

In English learning activities there is always a demand for the practice of presentation in front of the public. Learning English as a second language is also difficult to be brave and confident when practicing public speaking activities (Jaya, Petrus, and Pitaloka, 2022). The English-speaking course is an excellent feature for improving students' speaking abilities (Jannah, Usman, and Marhaban, 2020). Therefore, students majoring in English education should complete the English-speaking course in a certain semester. Students had various responses to the English-speaking practice. Some students enjoyed every challenge of public speaking practice, and some were also to be anxious to speak in front of the public. According to Sholikhi (2022), students tend to be nervous and anxious when started to practice public speaking. Anxiety in speaking had a serious impact on the students and was driven by three factors: communication apprehension, test anxiety, and fear of negative evaluation (Rumiyati and Seftika (2018).

There are always problems with English language learning skills, such as; listening, speaking, writing, and reading. For example in understanding the ability to speak English, students complained about the limitations of vocabulary, mispronunciation, intonation discrepancy, and grammatical errors as the main difficulty factors in practicing public speaking. Nippold, Hesketh, Duthie, and Mansfield (2005) said that the biggest problem in public speaking or front of many audiences is the lack of vocabulary, mispronunciations, inappropriate intonation, and grammatical errors. In addition, the anxiety factor is also the biggest thing for students in public speaking. Factors that influence students in delivering a good speech are the ability of students to manage the anxiety that arises in front of many

students in the class. Horwitz (2001) stated that anxiety is the main factor that often appears in students when making presentations and speeches in front of audiences and the public. Besides, Syafryadin, Nurkamto, Linggar, and Mujiyanto (2016) agreed that one way to reduce anxiety when speaking English is by frequently practicing discussions and having questions and answers activities between lecturers and students. Thus, students are used to and naturally can reduce anxiety. Gudu (2015) stated that several activities can also improve students' ability in doing English presentations and speeches namely by assigning students to do drama, dialogue, role plays, presentations, and direct speeches.

Jannah, Usman, and Marhaban (2020) mentioned that impromptu involves giving a speech without any prior preparation, or occasionally, someone is called onstage unexpectedly. In addition, Sari and Rahmawati (2019) claimed that impromptu is a typical approach that is frequently utilized in speech class instruction. With this method, the teachers typically assign the speaking activity to the students on the spot without prior consulting them. After then, the students have a set amount of time to prepare it. Consequently, this restricted training motivates students to think critically and quickly.

There are various English-speaking practices; impromptu is one of the methods that can be implemented by University students. The ability to speak or give an impromptu speech is very important to be practiced (Mortaji, 2018). According to Nawi and Yasin (2015)(R. A. Nawi, Yasin, & Champion, 2015). An impromptu speech is without any prior preparation or planning to start speaking. Therefore, it is the readiness of preparation, planning, and practice to speak in front of the public. This study is very important to make students' English speaking skills to be independent and directed by practicing English impromptu speech to be active and sustainable. Thus, students should have the concept that practicing the speech on one material is not difficult. As an illustration to have good thinking skills is important to start the practice (Nawi and Yasin, 2015).

Based on the explanation above, the researchers want to research the challenges and perceptions regarding impromptu speeches. The purpose of Speaking learning practice is that students can do presentations and speech activities using English. The categories of students who can do the active speaking practice are students that can convey ideas effectively and decrease anxiety when practiced to speak. According to Awan, Azher, Anwar, and Naz (2010) that many factors affect anxiety in giving a speech, namely; lack of self-confidence, ability in the field of science, unpreparedness, and negative opinions from the audience. Thus, these problems are the same as the researchers' analysis in terms of English impromptu speech. According to Oteir and Al-Otaibi (2019), foreign language anxiety demonstrated that language anxiety is a significant challenge to be comprehended. Furthermore, the researchers want to do deep research understanding related to the level of anxiety and what factors influence the students' anxiety in making presentations or speeches using English as a second language.

METHOD

Research Design

Based on the hypothesis, the study used both qualitative and quantitative data that enable a more thorough understanding of the study issues than using only one type of data (Creswell, 2012). In this study, a mixed method was used as the research methodology. Mixed method research design combines qualitative and quantitative methodologies in a single study.

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According to Johnson and Onwuegbuzie (2007) along with qualitative and quantitative research, mixed methods research also known as mixed research where is more articulated, linked to research practice, and recognized as the third major research approach. As a result, this study had the first research question that was addressed using qualitative data. Researchers described the results of interviews with students about impromptu speech in terms of challenge and perception. Additionally, the findings from the second research question were determined by using quantitative data, where the numbers were analyzed into percentage results.

Participants

The participant in this study is the fifth-semester students in the academic year 2022/2023 of the English Department of Muhammadiyah University Palembang. The participants were purposefully chosen. The categories of selected students were the students' major in the English education study program, the students having English speech class in the fifth semester, and the English students' speaking abilities in various competence. Therefore there were 20 total numbers of students mixed between male and female.

Data Analysis

The study used mixed method research, and the research design was utilized descriptively. The speech anxiety test and interview guidelines were the study's instruments. The information was qualitatively examined. The analysis was recommended for analyzing the qualitative data from interviews (Heigham and Croker, 2009). Six steps make up the thematic analysis: becoming familiar with the data, creating preliminary codes, looking for themes, evaluating themes, defining and labeling themes, and providing reports. The research instruments utilized to conduct the interviews with the participants such as; interview instructions, a recorder, a pen, and a book. Many questions were raised throughout the interview to learn the students' thoughts regarding English speech classes. To assess potential reasons for the student's concern about giving impromptu speeches, the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) by Horwitz, Horwitz, and Cope (1986) was given to students.

FINDING AND DISCUSSION

Students' Perception of the English Impromptu Speech Challenge

Generally, the interview has some advantages as a method for gathering samples from spoken data. According to Bolderston (2012), the interview has the advantage of allowing interviewees to express themselves personally. The researcher can modify the line of questioning to investigate new topics. Thus, the interview is one of the easy ways to obtain someone's opinion and interpretation of described phenomena. The results of the interview between researchers and students who are discussing speech courses in the fifth-semester class in responding to the questions, namely what do the students think about English speech lecturers? Students commented that the English learning process is very fun, although the course requires practice a lot to speak in front of the public. Kiener, Green, and Ahuna (2014) stated that affective learning can affect intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Thus, if students feel motivated, it will indirectly affect students' cognitive learning outcomes. Smiling, eye contact and a forward body lean are instances of instructor nonverbal immediacy. In addition, lecturers can ask students who are well prepared and

ready to practice the percentage, while the other students were having time to prepare perfectly. Sample 1 contains the transcription of the students' interviews.

Researchers: *What do you think about the English speech lecture?*

Student 1: *For me, speech class is very interesting and I can enjoy every single task or assignment from my lecturer. Besides, the situation of my English speech class is enjoyable thus I can study with very pleasure.*

Student 2: *In my opinion, the speech course gives us various knowledge of the public speaking practice. I think the lecturer also has broad insight when presenting the lesson. Furthermore, the delivered lesson can be responded to and understood well. One important thing is the teachers' teaching practice can overcome my nervousness even though I have to make a speech in public.*

Student 3: *I think my lecturer is a nice person. She can teach very seriously but not make us as students to be stiff and tense in the learning process. My lecturer also can manage the time well, therefore every student can practice speaking at the front. On the other side, I cannot overcome my nervousness when the lecturer invited me to present my speech at the front.*

Student 4: *I think the lesson is easy to be understood and the explanation is very appropriate to the topic material. Unfortunately, I am the type of student who cannot practice presenting a speech at first. Sometimes, I have no idea what to say, therefore I hope the lecturer can appoint a smart student to be the first to present the speech. Thus, this can be an example for me to prepare a better percentage*

As for the transcription of the students' interview results, researchers interpreted the student's responses from the meaning of the word. Student 1 said that learning English, especially with the English speech lecturer was very enjoyable. This means that student 1 felt comfortable participating in the learning process or in other words student had self-motivation in presenting an impromptu speech. According to Menggo (2018) understanding students' English learning motivation is critical to ensuring students' success in learning English. High motivation of students can respond the learning situations, get involved in all opportunities in learning English, create chances to improve the language, possess analytic skills, be adaptable in active learning, have self-esteem, and take risks for student learning. Student 2 also said that good teaching practice by the teachers can overcome or decrease students' anxiety in practicing impromptu speeches. It is also supported by Inada (2021) that improving the relationships between educators and students can decrease students' anxiety. On the other hand, student 3 had the opinion that nervousness always appears when the lecturer called to practice speaking in public. Finally, student 4 said that impromptu speech practice took more time to prepare. This can be seen in the statement from student 4 that seeing other students' impromptu speaking practice at first can prepare them to be optimal. It is critical to practice speaking without worrying about making errors. Students' speaking ability will surely enhance if they have more occasions to speak English and receive information from others' talk, Inada's (2021) idea.

Researchers also analyzed the abilities and difficulties of students related to learning Speech lectures. According to Wahyu, Rizal, and Syah (2021) that the advancement of excellent lecturer performance will enhance educational quality. The teacher should master the learning material while also having a pleasant personality and

selecting appropriate methods, models, and learning media to help students understand and avoid boredom during the learning process. The role of the lecturer is very important in order to know the progress of students' understanding of the material. Therefore, the lecturer can measure and continue the material that will be explained. Each student was asked about what is some strength of students during the learning process. Furthermore, not a few students also complained about the weaknesses of the speech lecture when students were asked to come forward to give the English presentation and speech without any preparation. Sample 2 contains the transcription of the students' interviews about how our students speaking competence and difficulties during the speech lecture.

Researchers: how are your speaking competence and difficulties during the speech lecture?

Student 1: In my opinion, speaking competence is something that must be possessed by every student because through learning we are able to convey thoughts, ideas, and opinions well. In fact, there is difficulty in speaking and it is mostly because of nervousness, unconfident, and afraid to be judged by others students. Therefore, the thoughts that have been prepared will suddenly disappear because of the anxiety and nervousness when I was asked by the lecturer to practice the speech

Student 2: I am able to deliver a speech if I have prepared the things that I want to deliver. If I get an impromptu speech, sometimes I have to think a little bit hard to share what I want to say. The difficulty that I have is dealing with my nervousness when I am in front of people.

Student 3: In my opinion, my speech ability depends on who I talk with, if she or he has better English speaking skills I will be inferior and nervous, and vice versa

Student 4: Sometimes when I feel nervous and have little preparation then I will forget what I will present, then my speaking ability is complicated. But when I was confident and there was a lot of time to prepare, at first I was nervous then I lost my nervousness by walking while speaking at the front. Thus, it depends on the situation and conditions that make me confident or not.

The results of the interview between researchers and students related to the student's ability and difficulty when practicing the impromptu speeches are; students say that they can explain their speeches as long as they don't feel nervous. According to He (2013), Speaking a foreign language has already made students who are not fluent in it feel depressed, and speaking it on an unexpected topic often makes the situation painful. As a result, if possible, teachers should begin by focusing on themes that are accustomed and well-known to students. Furthermore, student 2 will be more comfortable in speaking a foreign language practice with good preparation then it creates more self-belief before starting to move on to more difficult topics. As the interview result, student 4 assumed that what they have prepared will disappear if the nervousness appeared. Student 1 also agrees that the practice of speech is not easy, thus students must practice well before presenting the speech in front of an audience. Finally, self-confidence is more important to support the students' ability of impromptu speeches. The ability to speak will immediately disappear if confidence is also lost.

Furthermore, the researcher also gave questions through the interviews as to students whether the learning strategies of students and lecturers can reduce anxiety when

students had English impromptu speeches. The following sample 3 is a transcription of the question suits of the interview between researchers and students related to.

Researchers: Does the lecturer's approach help you to decrease your anxiety in the speech lecturer?

Student 1: It is quite helpful to reduce anxiety feeling, the lecturer gave me feedback and strategy on how to convince students' mindsets that the student actually could practice the English speech presentation well.

Student 2: Yes, because in my opinion that the lecturer's approach helped us when we felt nervous by arranging our error sentences or vocabulary that is difficult to be expressed to the audience. Besides, the lecturer also motivates me and gives great self-confidence to myself then this approach helped me to lose my nerve.

Student 3: In my opinion, the lecturer only understands what I say, and responds to ascertain what I am talking about. Unfortunately, it didn't help to reduce my nervousness when I spoke in front of many people.

Student 4: The lecturer teaches many students to feel confident to speak in front of people, and also the teacher protects students so they don't feel nervous to come forward.

Sample 3 showed what can be done by the lecturer to reduce the level of student anxiety during the practice of speech. Students mentioned that the lecturer appreciated students' English speaking practice during the learning process. Thus, it is very important to increase student self-confidence. Self-confidence is important to develop excellent communication skills, particularly in public speaking. Therefore, students 4 have good self-confidence to practice impromptu speech in front of the public. Based on the interview, student 2 said that the lecturer often motivated the students. It can be seen from the statements that "lecturer also motivates and gives great self-confidence approach". Thus, knowing one's feelings, recognizing reasons, and determining appropriate anxiety-reduction strategies are the most important things in the learning process (Yuliani, Sintu, and Yugafiati, 2019). Furthermore, student 1 should be able to find out the appropriate strategy to eliminate nervousness when delivering English speeches. In addition, one of the most important things is mental and English language skills preparation fluently affect student success when giving a speech. Your fluency will improve as your practice. Fluency as having two meanings, the first is the ability to connect units of speech with ease even without strain or in possibilities slowness, and due hesitation, and purpose. Second, a more thorough sense of fluency occurs while speaking activities that focus on interpretation and its negotiation, when speaking strategies are used, and when over-adjustment is minimized.

1. Students' Attitudes to the Anxiety of Impromptu Speech

Table 1. The findings of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS)

N	Question	STRONGLY AGREE	AGREE	NEITHE R	DISAGRE E	STRONGLY DISAGREE
1	Question-1	18.75%	37.50%	31.25%	12.50%	0.00%
2	Question-2	6.25%	56.25%	18.75%	18.75%	0.00%
3	Question-3	12.50%	12.50%	50.00%	25.00%	0.00%
4	Question-4	6.25%	31.25%	37.50%	25.00%	0.00%

5	Question-5	37.50%	43.75%	18.75%	0.00%	0.00%
6	Question-6	0.00%	43.75%	43.75%	12.50%	0.00%
7	Question-7	43.75%	56.25%	0.00%	0.00%	0.00%
8	Question-8	12.50%	12.50%	43.75%	25.00%	6.25%
9	Question-9	12.50%	56.25%	6.25%	25.00%	0.00%
10	Question-10	0.00%	56.25%	31.25%	12.50%	0.00%
11	Question-11	0.00%	50.00%	43.75%	6.25%	0.00%
12	Question-12	6.25%	50.00%	25.00%	12.50%	6.25%
13	Question-13	0.00%	25.00%	43.75%	31.25%	0.00%
14	Question-14	0.00%	25.00%	43.75%	31.25%	0.00%
15	Question-15	6.25%	18.75%	43.75%	31.25%	0.00%
16	Question-16	12.50%	75.00%	6.25%	6.25%	0.00%
17	Question-17	50.00%	31.25%	12.50%	6.25%	0.00%
18	Question-18	18.75%	56.25%	18.75%	6.25%	0.00%
19	Question-19	0.00%	43.75%	18.75%	37.50%	0.00%
20	Question-20	50.00%	31.25%	12.50%	6.25%	0.00%

Twenty questions measured students' Foreign Language Class Anxiety Scale is given by researchers. There were two forms of the questionnaire, namely the questionnaire which showed students' anxiety and confusion in an impromptu speech. The questions that expressed anxiety in an impromptu speech the questions number 1, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 9, 10, 13, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, and 20. Next were questions of numbers 2, 8, 11, 12, and 14 that did not show anxiety when practicing impromptu speech.

Question statements that indicated anxiety when practicing English impromptu speech were feelings of insecurity, panic, nervousness, anxiety, and confusion. On the other hand, some questions expressed a comfortable and relaxed feeling when practicing the English impromptu speech.

As a result, students' level of anxiety when given an impromptu speech was high. It can be seen from table 1 that most of the questionnaire statements lead to feelings of anxiety to having impromptu speech. As a percentage result, there were only 6.25% of students responded that impromptu speeches made them nervous and depressed feeling. Thus, the rest was the responses of students who had the category agree strongly and agree in practicing the impromptu speech.

Besides, table 1 also indicated that the agreed category was 56% as the dominant average and the highest percentage score was 75%. Furthermore, table 1 also showed that there was also a neutral choice category responded to by the students. Students had the perception that anxiety appeared during the English impromptu speech. This can be seen from the percentage results that there were 6.25% to 50% as neutral choices or neither choice.

The number of answers given by students represented the anxiety level. As the results of table 1 showed that most of the students felt nervous when were asked to give an English impromptu speech. Furthermore, the researchers interpreted that students tend to be flustered and anxious if they were asked to give an impromptu speech or without well preparation. Panggabean (2018) concluded that one of the causes of students' problems in

speaking practice was preparation time. He said that speaking performance needs students' time to prepare for a speaking task, teach students how to use mind maps to generate ideas, and allow students enough time to complete the tasks. Therefore making a plan or preparation is important before practicing the speech. This finding is also supported by Humaera and Pramustiara (2022) that nervousness feeling, fear and worry, and lack of vocabulary always happen in impromptu activities. According to Hanifa and Yusra (2018) that readiness including academic content and exercise is essential for presentation success.

To the interview result, it was found that giving a speech without preparation is difficult, especially if the topic delivered is not understood by the students. According to Leong and Ahmadi (2017) despite having appropriate linguistic skills, people with low self-esteem, anxiety, and motivation have significant difficulties speaking. Then, the student also agrees that impromptu speaking can make all the presentation preparations disappear. More details can be seen in Figure 1;

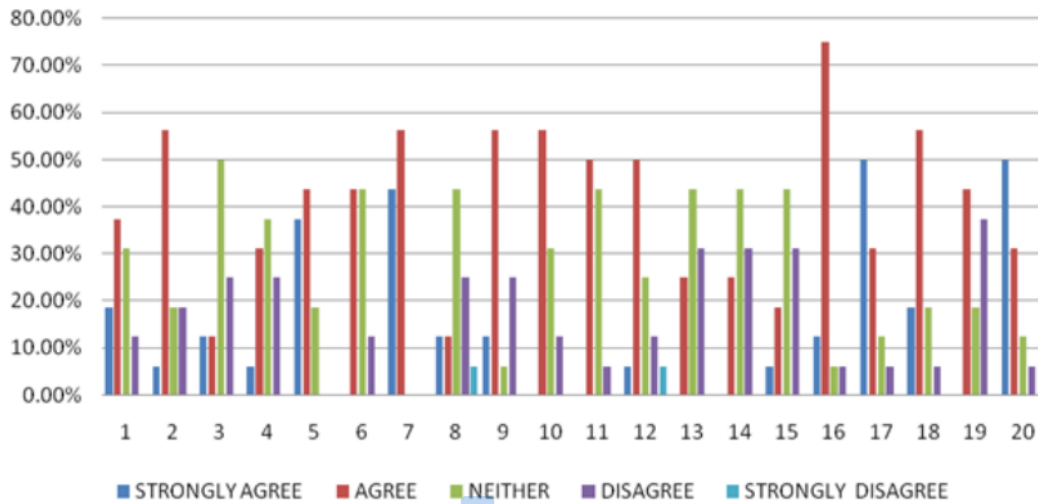


Figure 1. The Percentage of Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale

The interview results regarding student perceptions of English impromptu speech challenge and the results of students' anxiety levels in practicing impromptu speech. Therefore the researcher will provide an interpretation that there are factors related to this research. There were still many students who did not know how to reduce anxiety and nervousness when doing impromptu English speeches. There are some perceptions from students that they should be able to build confidence when making speeches. This can be supported by preparing well about what will be delivered at the time of the speech. Students can memorize repeatedly, thus, indirectly students get used to and understand the technique of memorizing the vocabulary or sentence. In addition, memorizing can increase the level of vocabulary.

Sekhar and Chakravorty (2017) also stated that a better understanding of the topic and better preparation decreases the chances of making an error or obtaining off track during a public speaking activity. Better preparation also allows speakers to recover faster

if students are confused. Then Students would benefit from participating in an active public speaking forum. Once students develop the habit of considering themselves comfortable in an unfamiliar environment while speaking in public, their anxiety will naturally decrease, making the speakers feel comfortable.

From the results of the percentage above, it can be concluded that students tend to agree in the category of agree for each question. The highest percentage result there were 75% of students who agreed on question number 16 that students became nervous if the teacher asked questions that have not been prepared properly. The second highest percentage level was that 55% of students who responded agreed that they were afraid to make mistakes, nervous, felt anxious, and had hearts pounding when asked to give an impromptu speech.

CONCLUSION

Speaking is one of the English skills. The ability to speak English consists of various levels, making a speech using English well is a benchmark to determine a person's level of fluency in understanding English. However, in reality, there are still many students categorized as intelligent students and still have a problem practicing the speech in front of the public. Many factors influence this issue, such as the example is a feeling of lack of confidence which ultimately has a bad impact. Students feel less confident with the knowledge and what is conveyed when giving speeches; students also tend to feel nervous and finally, students were not able to say anything because everything that has been prepared becomes lost instantly. Thus, students still need motivation from the lecturer to have high self-confidence and be able to process anxiety or nervousness during speech learning.

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