

## **Speech Wheel: An Intervention in Reducing Speaking Aporia of Freshmen English Major Students**

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### **Abstract**

*Speaking aporia is a usual problem for many learners that hinder them to communicate and affects their learning performance. It is defined as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to the use of second language for communication. This encouraged the researchers to come up with a study of reducing the speaking aporia through Speech Wheel to develop speaking skills, enhance critical thinking, and boost confidence and motivation. Having the Freshmen English Major students of University of Nueva Caceres as the respondents, this study determined the following (1) the causes of speaking aporia; (2) the level of speaking aporia; and (3) the effects of the Speech Wheel as an intervention. Through descriptive quantitative method, the researchers were able to identify the following factors that cause the speaking aporia of the respondents: (1) 25 % of them has the fear of standing in front of large groups; (2) 20 % has concern that others are judging them and; (3) 13 % of them fear that they might appear nervous. Using the same method, the researchers found out that 50% of the respondents have moderate level of speaking aporia. Moreover, descriptive qualitative method was used to identify the effects of Speech Wheel to the students along with stress, motivation, and self-confidence, these include the following: (1) it reduced the stress level of the students in terms of speaking as they enjoyed the activity; (2) their self-confidence and motivation improved especially in speaking in front of the large groups of people; and (3) it stimulated the students in speaking. The researchers concluded that factors that affect students' ability in speaking were shown through their stress, motivation, and self-confidence. Speech wheel is an effective intervention to reduce the speaking aporia of the students and the researchers recommend that it must be used as an intervention that exposes the students to be more confident and boosts their self- confidence.*

**Key words-** Speech Wheel, Intervention, Speaking Aporia

### **INTRODUCTION**

Speaking skills have a prominent place in language programs around the world today. It is said that the ability to speak is the most essential skill since it is the basic for communication and yet the most difficult skill for learners. It may be true because speaking involves a lot of ability within, such as pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar and even accent. According to Bygate (1987), speaking is a skill that deserves cautious attention as much as literary skills in both first and second languages. It is the vehicle par excellence of social solidarity, social ranking, professional advancement and business, also a medium through which much language is learned, and which for many is conducive for learning. According to Uygulama (2008), anxiety in language learning is

one of the fewer research areas. While educators and administrators concentrate mostly on teaching English proficiency, factors such as aporia are often overlooked inside the classroom decisions.

Speaking aporia is a usual problem for many learners that hinder them to achieve something and affects their learning performance. It is defined as a distinct complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviors related to using a second language for communication beyond the classroom. According to many teaching theorists, speaking skills can be developed through communicative activities which include an information gap, a jigsaw puzzle, games, problem solving, and role-playing. Furthermore, new strategies are being designed or developed to help lessen the speaking aporia of students. Speech Wheel is one of the strategies that teachers can use to develop the speaking skills of students. This strategy will reduce the speaking aporia of every student and will enhance their critical thinking. It will also boost the student's confidence in terms of speaking.

The result of this study provided important and reliable information regarding the causes of speaking aporia of most students and how to reduce it using the speech wheel. They will be able to share these results to many more communities for them to apply. Language teachers will be more aware of the factors that may contribute to the speaking aporia of the students. These factors come from themselves or what the students feel when they are speaking English. They will be more sensitive to what the students are experiencing or what they feel whenever they're speaking. By this, they can easily adjust or change their teaching styles that will satisfy the needs of the learners. Teachers may also use Speech Wheel, in reducing the anxiety of students in speaking the English language. This study can also lessen the anxiety of language learners in speaking the English language, also in enhancing their skills in speaking. They will be more exposed to strategies that can strengthen their weaknesses in speaking the English language like the speech wheel.

#### Objectives of The Study

The purpose of this study was to reduce the speaking aporia of freshmen English major students through Speech Wheel at the University of Nueva Caceres. To do this, the researcher employed descriptive quantitative and qualitative research method to identify the causes of the speaking aporia of the freshmen students, their level of speaking aporia and its effects along with stress, motivation, and self-confidence.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The researchers used a researcher-made questionnaire to identify the causes of Speaking Aporia of the respondents. Furthermore, researchers determined the level of their speaking aporia through the Public Speaking Anxiety Test by McCroskey (1970). A structured interview was also conducted by the researchers to identify the effects of the intervention speech wheel to the respondents along with stress, motivation, and self-confidence. Rank and percentage were used to determine the levels of the speaking aporia of the students, the causes of speaking aporia and the level of effectiveness of Speech Wheel in reducing speaking aporia to the students.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Causes of the Speaking Aporia to the Freshmen English Major Students**

The researchers identified the three main causes of speaking aporia which are Fear of standing in front of large groups of people, concern that others are judging you and fear of appearing nervous. Poor or insufficient preparation and discomfort with your body movement are the factors that are less affecting the students to their speaking aporia. The highest percentage is the Fear of Standing in front of large groups of people where 25% of the respondents identify this as the main cause of their speaking aporia. These findings implied that standing in front of large groups of people causes speaking aporia as the students lose their focus and worried on how they looked in front of their audience that will eventually affect their performance. Students who are predisposed to feeling anxious find it more challenging to face large crowds and conquer the fear of speaking and will opt to avoid it.

Bare (2015) as cited by Ramirez (2013), that students perceived improvement in their oral skills after attending and participating in the Oral Skills course. The findings also revealed that although students are aware of the importance of participating in-class activities, they leave the responsibility of interaction with the teacher whose presence is necessary to maintain the use of the target language in the activities. Bagagnan (2016) cited Liu and Chen (2013), which revealed in their study that the participants were worried about their language class performance thinking

that they may fail; other classmates were better than them in speaking the language and performing in their class. This study supported the present study that learners were worried about their academic performance in class and on their poor speaking ability. 20% of the respondents are concern with the things that people may think and says about them. The fear often arises when you are concern if others will judge you because when students overestimate the stakes of communicating their ideas in front of others, viewing the speaking event as a potential threat to their credibility, image and chance to reach the audience. The findings stated that the concern that others will judge you is one of the factors why students developed speaking aporia. They are afraid to be embarrassed and always think that people will say negative things about them or how they speak.

This was supported by as stated by Liu and Chen (2013) as cited by Bare (2015) who states that speaking ability and confidence were too little that they worry when they were asked to recite especially if they were not prepared to answer the questions because they were afraid to be judged. Gregersen (2003) as cited by Bagagnan (2016) stated that all of these anxious students feared that mistakes in speaking activities would destroy their social image as able students and they are afraid to be judged. Mu-Hsuan Chou (2018), stated that Speaking a foreign language is a complex process that involves linguistic competence, speaking skills, and strategy use. Speaking strategies have been viewed as first aid devices used for interaction and communication, to address problems or breakdowns, and to remain active in communication. The purpose of this article is to investigate university students' anxiety, strategy use, and difficulties when speaking English in full and partial EMI contexts. 13% of the respondents states that fear of appearing nervous is one of the causes of their speaking aporia. Every student experience the feeling of being afraid of appearing nervous. Nervousness is one fear of every student especially when speaking, because whenever they feel nervous, they think of negative things that might happen and causes mental block that leads to embarrassment. This present study showed that the fear of appearing nervous is one of the causes of the speaking aporia as students do not have much confidence to speak because they lack of experience in speaking and focus more from being heard and understood to being evaluated or judged that make them more nervous and anxiety tends to go higher. They more likely to have their families as their audience because students that feel nervous can easily overcome it as they have these persons that they know that will support them. Bagagnan (2016) cited Graffifth (2013),

which defined anxiety based on other researchers' perception, as an effective condition when person feels nervous or worried that affects his or her performance. According to her, anxiety does not always affect behavior negatively because there is a point where it can motivate learners to attain something if only the person is not overcome by it. The situations that made students anxious in the English classes were being called on in English class, unable to comprehend, speaking in front of their classmates, fear of failing English classes, and lack of preparation as per Pramuktiyano (2014) as cited by Bagagnan (2016). In addition, he stated the higher the students see themselves that they have a good aptitude in language learning, the lesser anxiety will be in communication apprehension, however, the higher their belief that English is a difficult language, the higher their anxiety in communication apprehension and test anxiety.

#### The levels of speaking aporia of the freshmen english major Students

The researchers were able to identify that there are 15% of the respondents that have high level of speaking aporia, most of them have the moderate level with the percentage of 50% and only 35% students have low level of speaking aporia. It was identified through the Personal report Public Speaking Anxiety Test that the respondents answered. Twenty-two items are negatively formulated, e.g., BI feel anxious while waiting to give my speech, and 12 items are positively formulated, e.g., BI enjoy preparing for a speech. In the analyses of these data, the positively formulated items of PRPSA were reversed so that high score on the scale consistently reflected higher fear of public speaking. Cronbach's alpha of the scale has been shown to range from 0.84 to 0.94 (McCroskey 1970; Hsu 2012). Speaking Aporia is present to all respondents and it is categorized as high, medium and low because feeling anxious while speaking is uncontrollable especially if there are factors that affects our performance in speaking. Students with high speaking aporia are not exposed to an environment that uses English as their medium in their previous school. They do not have the confidence to speak the language because they are afraid to commit mistakes and be embarrassed. They have negative feelings toward the language.

Most of the Freshmen English Major students have the moderate level of speaking aporia because these students were already exposed in speaking activities during their junior and senior high school year which has been part of the curriculum but they lack on practice as to why the speaking aporia are not low nor too high. They already have the capability to speak the language.

They already know what to say but they have difficulty on how to say it. Students with low level of speaking aporia are already used in speaking the English Language. They are very active in all the speaking activities and equipped with the necessary characteristics of being a good speaker as they already practice speaking on their previous school. This was supported by the Stephen Krashen's Affective Filter Hypothesis which states that the number of affective variables play facilitative, but non-causal, role in second language acquisition that reduces the speaking aporia of the students. Krashen claims that learners with high motivation, self-confidence, and stress are better equipped for success in second language acquisition that will also improve their speaking skills. As the researchers identified the level of speaking aporia, an intervention called Speech Wheel, was conducted to reduce the level of speaking aporia of the Freshmen English Major Students for two weeks. The intervention consists of 6 categories such as Love, Friends, Family, School, Life and Society. These categories have different questions that students may choose from. Each student was given 2 mins to answer their chosen question. Most of the students were able to speak in front of the class, however some of them are experiencing some discomfort. Several students showed signs of anxiety when speaking. Through the intervention which was conducted by the researchers, students were able to acquire the skills of speaking the second language in front of the crowd but not literally learning how to speak. Speech wheel intervention helps them practice and improve their speaking skills. Language anxiety or speaking aporia is prevalent around the world, and has been happening for two decades already, studied by Mohamad and Wahid (2015). Gaibani (2014) as cited by Bare (2015), recommended the students to have self-identification of feelings towards their speaking anxiety and to practice speaking orally to increase their competence level of speaking English language. Similarly, the present study supported the importance of exposing the students to speaking orally to reduce the anxiety.

The effects of the speech wheel to the freshmen english major Students

The high level of speaking aporia decreased from 15% to 5%, the moderate level also decreased from 50% to 40%, while the low level of speaking aporia increased from 35% to 55% after the intervention was conducted for two weeks. Student's stress while speaking is because of the past failures they always think of and were observed on the discomfort on their body movement. Whenever the students feel stress and remember the failures they undergone, their

mannerism is being observed specially when they are speaking. They do not feel comfortable in speaking in front of the large groups that causes unnecessary movements and affects their performance when it comes to speaking. The intervention reduced the student's stress as they no longer have to think of failing because the intervention let them speak what they wanted to align to the category on the speech wheel. As per student's experience in speech wheel, it reduces their stress in speaking because they were practiced to be speaking impromptu on front of a large crowds and talk about a specific topic that they don't have an idea yet because the speech wheel will identify the topic for them. The mechanics of the speech wheel reduces their stress because it excites them every time the speech wheel rotates and point to a certain topic that they have to talk about.

The intervention speech wheel was able to reduce the stress of the students in speaking because as the researchers conduct the intervention, the students' willingness was observed during the activity. They are really participative to speak in front, spin the wheel and share something about their topic. Bagagnan (2016) cited Mitchell, Mules, and Marsden (2013), emphasized that in order to mediate the anxiousness of the students, willingness to communicate is suggested which is one of the objectives of the intervention. Self-Confidence is a vital factor in speaking. In order to speak the language well, a person should be confident enough to express his/her ideas accurately. The students showed fear of standing in front of large groups of people, fear of appearing nervous, and dissatisfaction with their abilities before the intervention was made. Freshmen English major students improve their self confidence through the speech wheel intervention, as they stated that they were more confident in speaking. According to these students, they don't bother if someone will judge them because the intervention enhanced their self-esteem as well. They no longer have to think of what others has to say, they just enjoy the activity.

The intervention boosted the student's confidence as they needed to speak in front of their classmates and teachers. They don't feel timid when speaking because the intervention is very engaging which made them forget all the worries when speaking. Heyde (2018), highlighted that high self-confidence can be positively correlated with oral performance. Furthermore, highly anxious learners might deal with their target language task differently from one another, depending on their self confidence. Motivation is a very strong tool we can use to get further in life and achieve our dreams and goals. This is defined as psychological forces that determine the direction of a person's behavior, level of effort and person's level of persistence in the face of obstacles.

Students stated that they are more motivated to speak and express themselves, for they will not be judge by their classmates. They are motivated because the intervention does not give them much pressure instead; they just treat this as a game that they enjoy. The categories that are on the speech wheel that they have to talk about is just about anything that they wanted to share.

The intervention's goal is for the students' willingness to speak the language and express their ideas freely which motivates the students because the intervention that was conducted exposes the students to their environment that helps them to acquire and speak the language. The categories that are on the speech wheel that were used are also in relevance on the people around them and their environment so it's easy for them to express themselves. The interactionists theory by Lightbown and Spada, stated the importance of linguistic environment in the development of the language acquisition that includes speaking the language. This theory is connected to the present study as this emphasizes the capacity of the learner as an essential element in the language acquisition process that help them develop their speaking skills and ability to speak in public or in front of large groups. The findings stated that the level of speaking aporia of the Freshmen English Major students were reduced. This implied that the intervention speech wheel is effective in reducing the speaking aporia of the students. It helps the students to practice their speaking skills. Relative to this as stated by Basic (2011) as cited by Bagagnan (2016), practice speaking is therefore a central part of English lessons today that helps students to lessen their speaking aporia.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

Students may need to be expose and practice to speak more in public t overcome their fears whenever they speak. Students and teachers can work together to lessen the speaking aporia of the students by engaging in any activities that manage their emotions and stress so that it would not affect their speaking skills and would not cause anxiousness while speaking. With these, students may develop their selfconfidence and motivation to speak. Students need should be engaged in activities that can improve their speaking skill. Teachers should promote a linguistic environment for students to develop their speaking ability. Speech Wheel is a great example of a strategy that can reduce the speaking aporia of students. Teachers may employ this strategy among their students. This is very beneficial for students especially English Major Students who might be



experiencing speaking aporia, also it would be a great help for the students to practice their speaking ability.

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