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SPEAKING ANXIETY AND SELF-CONFIDENCE IN PHYSICAL AND VIRTUAL POEM RECITATION

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Abstract

The ability to speak a second language can be influenced by psychological factors such as anxiety and self-confidence. The study aims to investigate the correlation between speaking anxiety and students' self-confidence in the Diploma in English for Professional Communication programme at Universiti Teknologi MARA, Cawangan Melaka, in physical and virtual poem recitation. The participants of the study were 73 students from semester four. Speaking anxiety and self-confidence questionnaires were used as the instrument of the study and survey was collected via Google form. The descriptive analysis showed that students' speaking anxiety is higher in virtual setting, where Fear of Negative Evaluation scored the highest compared to Communication Apprehension and Test Anxiety. Meanwhile, students have shown that their self-confidence is higher in physical presentation compared to virtual presentation. To investigate the relationship, Pearson Correlation analysis was conducted. The result showed no significant correlation between speaking anxiety and self-confidence in physical and virtual poem recitation. These findings suggest that students' speaking anxiety is higher in virtual setting, however their self-confidence is higher in physical poem recitation. This study is significant for educators as it will help them make decisions on implementing classroom assessments.

Keywords: ESL learners, face-to-face, online, speaking anxiety, self-confidence

1. Introduction

In Malaysia, English is regarded as the second language and used as the means of communication in almost all sectors, including industrial, business, and services. Since it is considered the economic language, teaching and learning English have been made compulsory in the Malaysia educational system to ensure the sustainability of language usage. Students in the country are introduced to the target language as early as preschool education, and it continues to be taught to the tertiary level, emphasising mastery of all four language skills. Diploma in English for Professional Communication is the course offered in Universiti Teknologi MARA. This two-half year course introducing the subjects that can enhance students' professional communication in English which can be applied in the relevant industry such as translation, journalism and others. The skills that are emphasizes in this programme are reading, listening, speaking and writing. Among these four skills, speaking is the focus of the programme as the aim of the programme is to produce students who can communicate professionally in related industry.

Anxiety is one of the affective factors influencing students' speaking performance (Hanifa, 2018). Language anxiety is defined as a specific complex of self-perceptions, beliefs, feelings, and behaviours associated with classroom language learning originating from the uniqueness of the language learning process (Horwitz et al., 1986). Students who experience anxiety will feel nervous and have the potential to make mistakes during their oral tests (Batubara et al., 2022). Anxiety is not the only factor that affects students' speaking performance. Since the sudden outbreak of Covid19 pandemic in early 2020, the education setting has changed from face-to-face to open distance learning (ODL), including the method of assessments. This transition has contributed more to students' language anxiety as they have no choice but to hastily accept, embrace and adopt ODL as the only assessment method. Yusuf (2022) found that online speaking assessment has influenced students' anxiety, where the students experienced psychological problems such as shyness, anxiety, and nervousness. For more than two years, the implementation of online speaking assessments has posed a myriad of challenges, thus negatively affecting overall academic performance (Putra, 2021). However, the recent transition from ODL back to traditional face-to-face settings due to the declaration of endemic has changed the landscape of education, whereby a hybrid mode of teaching and learning is introduced involving synchronous and asynchronous sessions.

Speaking anxiety often leads to students' poor communication skills, especially among undergraduates. As defined by Tercan and Dikilitaş (2015), anxiety is a feeling associated with the psychological structure of people with ordinary emotions. This condition makes the learner feel anxious in a variety of situations. Based on the foreign language anxiety theory by Horwitz et al. (1986), three components were identified: communication apprehension, fear of negative evaluation, and test anxiety. Second-language students often experience anxiety when they need to speak. It is known as speaking anxiety which can be defined as the fear of using the language orally (Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018). Several factors were found to be the factors that influence students' speaking anxiety, such as fear of making errors, fear of negative evaluation, fear of speaking to other people, and unpreparedness to answer the question (Mohammed Ibrahim & Yahya HamadAmin, 2021). In the speaking assessment, students are evaluated in terms of their competency and fluency. So, when communication skill is the central focus in a language classroom, students will feel pressured and negatively see the assignment or assessment

(Miskam & Saidalvi, 2018). Moreover, Suwartono et al. (2020) highlighted that a lack of confidence, motivation, and shyness could heighten students' anxiety during speaking tasks.

Self-confidence is identified as a lack of anxiety which indicates the learners have a sense of confidence in their ability (Clément, 1986). In the context of students, self-confidence refers to their ability to communicate the target language effectively. They trust their abilities and skills to use a second language meaningfully. Besides, they do not have a sense of fear that may constrain them from achieving their goal of language learning (Fatima et al., 2020). Several factors could influence a person's self-confidence, such as personal experiences and social messages received from others (Al-Hebaish, 2012). Students must have high self-confidence in speaking because Al-Hebaish (2012) found that students' oral presentation scores were higher when their self-confidence was high.

Few studies have been conducted on the learners' self-confidence in speaking. It was found that self-confidence significantly and positively correlated with speaking a foreign language. Ozdemir and Papi (2022) identified that students are growth-minded and tend to feel confident speaking English. They perceived that speaking situation as an opportunity to improve their speaking skills and language learning capacity. Therefore, students with high confidence have the potential to perform well in their oral assessments.

The assessment method has changed since the Open Distance Learning (ODL) was introduced. It has shifted from physical assessment to online assessment. In the early implementation of virtual assessment, students and educators face several difficulties to adapt with it. Several studies reported that students do encounter challenges on online learning and some of them faced negative effects on their performance in learning when using the online platform (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al., 2021). Some students find that online assessment is troublesome as they need to adjust their limited internet access. This could increase their anxiety and will affect their performance during the test.

However, there are some students prefer face-to-face assessment as they can easily refer to their instructor or lecturer when they need to address their understanding of the subject matter (Megat-Abdul-Rahim et al., 2021). This will help the students to understand better the instruction given especially for the assessment. Additinally, some students can minimize the feeling of uncomfortable during the assessment. They will be more ready and confident to do their presentation virtually. Hence, it will help them to perform better and may influence their academic performance.

2. Problem Statement

Speaking is one of the language skills and is considered an important part of the language curriculum. Mastering speaking skill ensures that students to effectively and confidently convey their messages. The skill is also highly valuable as the ability to conquer public speaking skills such as speaking confidently, projecting controlled body language, and presenting good enunciation and pronunciation which could impress employers and enhance job prospects for professionalism and employability (Mousawa & Elyas, 2015). Students are taught to communicate well in the classroom, and speaking activities such as public speaking, oral presentations, and forum discussion are set as a part of language assessments. Nevertheless, despite various research, speaking anxiety remains persistent among second-language students. Students' failure to cope with the challenges in dealing with speaking activities

may lower their performance and negatively affect their ability to communicate with clarity and conviction in academic and non-academic settings.

3. Research Questions

The present study examined the correlation between students' speaking anxiety and self-confidence in two different assessment methods in a Malaysian public university. This study answered three research questions:

i. What is the students' speaking anxiety level in the physical and virtual poem recitation?
ii. Which assessment method could influence students' confidence in poem recitation?
iii. Is there any significant relationship between students' speaking anxiety and self-confidence in the physical and virtual poem recitation?

4. Purpose of the Study

In the context of this research, poem recitation is one of the assessments for semester-four students in the Diploma in English for Professional Communication. During the Movement Control Order (MCO), students are required to do their poem recitation virtually, in which they need to record themselves recite the poem and the lecturers will assess the video. In the recent development of hybrid teaching and learning, both physical and virtual methods were used for the assessment. This study was designed to identify the relationship between students' self-confidence and speaking anxiety in two different assessment methods to evaluate their implications on students' academic performance.

5. Research Methods

5.1. Research design and data collection instrument

A correlational design was employed to test the significant relationship between students' self-confidence and speaking anxiety in physical and virtual poem recitation. A survey was distributed to the study's sample using Google Forms. The questionnaire was adapted from Horwitz et al. (1986) for speaking anxiety and self-confidence. The questionnaire consists of three sections. The first section consists of class, the second section is speaking anxiety (30 items), and the third section is self-confidence (14 items). The instrument used a six-point Likert-scale response format ranging from 1 (Not at all true of me), 2 (somewhat not true of me), 3 (slightly not true of me), 4 (slightly true of me), 5 (somewhat true of me) and 6 (very true of me).

5.2. Sample of the study

The sampling technique used in selecting the sample is purposive sampling, whereby semester-four students were selected as the sample of the study. The sample of this research consisted of 73 semester-four students of the Diploma in English for Professional Communication at Malaysian public university. They were selected as the sample of the study as they need to take creative writing subject in semester four.

5.3. Data collection procedure

Poem recitation was conducted via two online modes; physical and virtual. For virtual presentation, students are required to record their poem recitation and upload the video to a YouTube channel. The uploaded video is open to the public, and people are allowed to give comments on the video. As for physical presentation, the poem recitation was conducted in class. After the students had performed their recitation, the google form link was shared through the Whatsapp group, and respondents were asked to answer the questionnaire. The questionnaire was given right after their presentation to ensure that the students were still in a high state of awareness.

6. Findings

The data was analyzed using SPPS. Descriptive analysis and Pearson Correlation Analysis were conducted. To ensure the reliability of the questionnaire, Cronbach's Alpha analysis was conducted. It has been identified that Cronbach's Alpha with a scale above .70 or higher is reasonably reliable. Table 1 shows Cronbach's Alpha analysis for self-confidence and speaking anxiety. The findings show that the items for self-confidence are reliable, where the value for Cronbach's Alpha is .811. As for speaking anxiety, Cronbach's Alpha is .923, which indicates that the reliability is high.

Table 1. Reliability test for self-confidence and speaking anxiety

	Reliability Statistics	
Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Self-Confidence	0.811	14
Speaking Anxiety	0.923	30

Table 2 shows the descriptive analysis of students' speaking anxiety in physical and virtual presentations. The findings show that fear is the highest mean score for virtual and physical presentation. Meanwhile, communication apprehension and anxiety show a small difference in the mean score. As for self-confidence, the finding shows that the mean physical score is higher than virtual.

Table 2. Students' speaking anxiety and self-confidence in physical and virtual poem recitation

	Group	Mean	Std. Deviation
Communication Apprehension	Online	3.828	.860
	Face-to-face	3.927	.898
Fear	Online	4.186	1.30
	Face-to-face	4.339	1.44
Anxiety	Online	3.800	.834
	Face-to-face	3.950	.879
Confidence	Online	3.983	.752
	Face-to-face	4.259	.682

Table 3 shows the Pearson correlation to see the significant relationship between speaking anxiety and self-confidence. The findings show a low positive correlation and no significant relationship (p =

.104, r > .05) between students' self-confidence and speaking anxiety during poem recitation conducted physically and virtually.

Table 3. Relationship between self-confidence and speaking anxiety in vitual and physical oral recitation

		F	Sig. (2-tailed)
Confidence	Equal variances assumed	.275	.104
	Equal variances not assumed		.108
Speaking Anxiety	Equal variances assumed	.375	.529
	Equal variances not assumed		.525

7. Discussion

The present study aims to identify the relationship between students' self-confidence and speaking anxiety in poem recitation conducted physically and virtually. The findings show that there is no significant relationship between physical and virtual poem recitation. However, the mean score from the descriptive analysis shows that fear of negative evaluation is the highest mean score for both modes of poem recitation delivery. It shows that students' anxiety is high during the presentation because they think that other students are better than them in English. The students feel anxious with how they are portrayed to their audience. The students are worried about the lecturer's negative reactions and peer judgment (Alsowat, 2016). This could be caused by the person's trait and state apprehension. Trait apprehension refers to the personality of the person who can be more prone to being anxious than others. State apprehension refers to the surrounding condition that can reduce or produce more stress to the person. Other than that, students will experience intense apprehension, tension and fear when they know that they will be evaluated, especially for an oral assessment. They are expected to be fluent and proficient and perform well in English subjects. This can be related to the Asian culture, whereby students should fulfil society's expectations to perform academically (Chen, 2015).

Meanwhile, the descriptive analysis of the students' self-confidence in poem recitation shows higher in face-to-face mode compared to online mode. This indicates that students feel more confident about doing the oral assessment in class. Some students prefer to do the assessment face to face so that they can receive feedback directly from the lecturers. Receiving appropriate feedback from the lecturer could facilitate students' language development and help them perform in the English subject (Kasbi & Elahi Shirvan, 2017).

Al-Hebaish (2012) mentions that social feedback from others can increase self-confidence. Therefore, lecturers are recommended to build students' self-confidence by encouraging them to speak and participate in oral activities without fear.

8. Conclusion

The pandemic of Covid 19 has changed the methods of teaching and learning, including how the assessment is conducted. The survey reveals that there is no significant relationship between students' speaking anxiety and self-confidence in online and face-to-face oral assessments. However, it was found that students' self-confidence is higher in face-to-face assessments. This indicates that students can gain

self-confidence in face-to-face classes because the lecturers can support positive thinking and fight negative views and beliefs. The teaching of oral presentations need to also take into account on how to manage the fear of oral presentation. Learners should be guided to handle their oral presentation fears; both from external and internal sources. Future researchers could explore issues like what do learners do to overcome their fear before and even during the oral presentations. Therefore, these findings have highlighted an overview and provided input for the lecturers to implement a suitable assessment for the students (Kristen & Wacana, 2020).

Acknowledgments

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