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**RHETORICAL PERSUASION BY ADAPTING LOGOS IN PUBLIC  
SPEAKING**



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### Abstract

Self-confidence is a strong feeling towards the capabilities of a student in the process of communication, decision-making and public speaking. The students with low self-confidence would not present their ideas properly. This is because individuals with low self-esteem are certain that their opinions could not stand upon are firm and are reinforced by clear arguments as their evidence or reason. Thus, these form of logos character are expressed through nonverbal communication such as paralanguage cues; tone, pauses, volume and body movements especially eye and hand movements. Also, the logos play a vital role to assist the presenter to provide a logic and fact argument. Thus, this study embarks on the objective, to explore the strategies to increase confidence level through logos (persuasion communication mode). By using focus group, the data would analyse through Nvivo. Finding shows the logos elements including Question and Answer (Q and A) session, teaching techniques, eye-contact, and etc, contribute to the high level of confidence in public speaking. Interpersonal communication among lecturer and students, also among peer group, help to build up the students' confidence.

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## 1. Introduction

Public speaking is an example of open communication where speakers talk in front of a large numbers of audiences to inform, entertain, persuade or influence listeners. The purpose of public speaking is to sell goods, services and corporate communication training to create a mutually beneficial relationship with stakeholders. Public speakers are usually people with a high level of confidence. To present opinions or views in front of a vast number of people is not an easy task. Most people, especially students, will avoid any activity that requires them to speak in front of the public because of lacking confidence, motivation and stage fright (Azlina, 2015; Hui Ni, 2012).

Besides, public speaking is also one of the skills in leadership. Persuasive communication is a technique often used by leaders to gain trusts from their colleagues because these people are the ones that will support their reign. The rhetorical persuasion is the most common persuasion technique applied in public speaking activity by using ethos, pathos and logos. Thus, this study would focus on logos as the main elements to enhance confidence among university students.

By highlighting public speaking as an activity that enhances self-confidence, this study takes the initiative to cultivate students' confidence level in public speaking activities by adapting logos. This study conducts at Universiti Utara Malaysia, with a sample of three informants. This study uses qualitative methods of focus group interview with interview protocols compiled from previous studies. Data was transcript through thematic analysis using NVivo software to produce relevant themes. The findings show that the element of logos contribute to enhancing the level of confidence among students during public speaking activities.

## 2. Problem Statement

The logos refer to some factual arguments such as statistical data and evidence in the conversation. To enhance confidence level of students, all lecturers need to adapt the logos in conveying message to the students. It is including, the language used by them, the sharing of the activities in the classroom, and more objectives ideas to develop students' awareness.

University students are not only expected to graduate with excellent command of English but also the ability to convert their ideas coherently and confidently. Rajaendram (2016) stated that even the job candidate understands the questions, unfortunately, they still unable to do the interview questions in English. The problem is about language. The ability to speak in English is one of the most crucial aspects employers look for among job seekers. Graduate students alert that a potential employee is aware that they should be able to communicate in English like what has been practised or taught during education years, but when it matters, they fail to deliver their opinion. Furthermore, students have a lack of understanding of the importance of mastering public speaking skills to enhance the level of confidence.

Subsequently, lacking confidence among graduates may be a contributing factor to more inadequate communication skills, which often mask off their amazing talents (Azlina, 2017). The high confidence level plays a huge role in helping students to speak in public. During undergraduate studies, each subject courses require students to present their work in class to help them to familiarize with idea

pitching and open discussion, which will assist them to build their confidence. However, most of the students take this for granted or seen it as a simple. Thus, low confidence building has become a threat to them because they cannot seem to 'sell' them in front of potential employers (Sani, 2016). Public speaking anxiety (PSA) is a common condition which can be treated effectively with exposure therapy (Lindner et al., 2019).

In the class, a lack of confidence among students becomes the priority to find an excellent solution to enhance their level of confidence in public speaking. The VRT group was exposed to the virtual reality public speaking scene while the comparison group was exposed to a trivial virtual reality scene and guided by the experimenters to manage their phobia either by using visualization techniques or self-exposure to the situation they feared (Glassman et al., 2016). Besides, therapy for public speaking phobia using virtual reality exposure (VRE) has focused on distress arousal rather than distress habituation. Understanding habituation will help optimize session duration, making treatment more affordable and accessible (Takac et al., 2019). Thus, the logos play a vital role to assist the public to understand and believe in the message provided by the speakers. Logos is the mode of persuasion characterized by its emphasis on logic and argument (Dillard, 2019).

As lecturers, they should think wisely to what extent that our teaching style would assist them to be confident. The researcher traces the problem since the beginning of our lecture and attempt to build rapport with the students, so then they will feel more comfortable communicating with us. The researcher do treat them as my friends to make our relationship become more efficiently and smoothly. By knowing their name is one of the alternatives that the researcher thinks very effectively to gain information about them.

From the public speaking activities in the classroom, most of the students involve with the moderate tendency to do eye-contact with the audience. Furthermore, eye contact anxiety can restrict with daily social collaborations. The ability to sustain good eye contact is an essential aspect of social interaction. In this context, people who look others in the eye are perceived as friendly and courtesy. Moreover, the students involve in the public speaking activities might feel unable to look directly into other people's eyes when talking or feel like they are being judged or scrutinized when making eye contact.

The lecturers could trace the students who have a Social Anxiety Disorder (SAD). People with SAD have an irrational fear of being watched, judged, or of embarrassing or embarrassing themselves. The anxiety and embarrassment become so extreme that it interferes with daily functioning. While it can be a debilitating disorder, it is possible with applicable treatment recovery.

### **3. Research Questions**

The research question for this study is:

- How logos would help to develop the rhetorical persuasion strategies in teaching experience to increase students' confidence level?

## **4. Purpose of the Study**

Meanwhile, this study embarks on the following objective: To explore the strategies to increase confidence level through logos (persuasion communication mode).

## **5. Research Methods**

This study conducts using a qualitative design method. Semi-structured interviews are used to measure students' confidence. To gain trust, the researcher needs to begin with a lot of activities which could contribute to enhancing the level of confidence in public speaking. The more students' practice, stand in front of people, and the more faith they are in the future. The character as a leader should be a highlight to assure students could motivate them as a good leader. The researcher implements some strategies or activities to assist students in developing their potential in communication skills in class.

### **5.1. Thematic Analysis**

According to Thomas and Harden (2008), thematic analysis is used to produce an inductive or deductive reasoning. For this study, researchers prefer to use inductive reasoning, which is the themes in analysis part emerged accordingly while doing the analysis. Thematic analysis consists of three phases which are interrelated to each other. First, the data is coded freely (open coding) line-by-line to classify them into common themes that will and the researcher research questions. Next, these themes emerged to construct 'descriptive' themes that may provide key concepts and new ideas; this step is known as axial coding. Then, selective coding is the development of 'analytical' themes to compare and contrast among other sub-themes in order to provide deeper understandings and additional concepts.

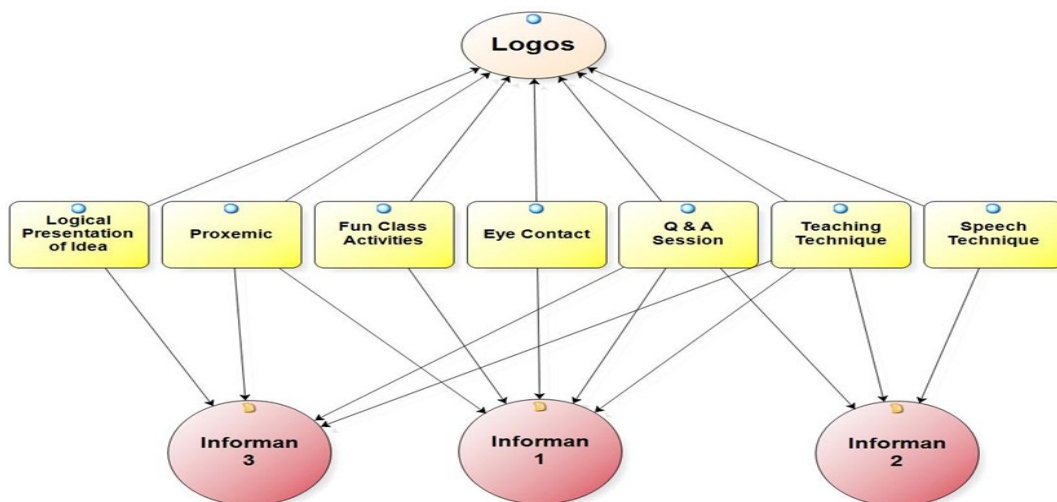
The first stage is starting a project. This step involved the creating of a project file which will be the storage of raw data, coded data and production of tree relationships of the study. If the researcher feels the need to make it private and confidential, he or she can create a password to protect the file. It is also important to save the project file to avoid data lost. The second stage is working with qualitative data files; the researcher is required to import transcribed data whether they are in text form or audio recordings (digital based) and name all the files in accordance to his or her informants' name or maybe numbered them accordingly. Since my informants are anonymous, the researcher saved their files according to numbers. Documents browser will help the researcher to recognize all of the text in the imported document. The third stage is working with nodes; tree nodes and free nodes. In this research, researchers used tree nodes in order to show the relationships of the themes and sub-themes in the topic. The fourth stage is coding qualitative data which refers to the open coding phase. The fifth stage of the process is going further where the data is being analysed several times in order to identify categories, key concepts and analytical themes. The last stage refers to the process of axial coding and selective coding (Jackson & Bazeley, 2019).

## 5.2. Research Instrument

An interview protocol developed according to research objectives and support by the literature review. The questions are accordingly:

1. Demographic of Informants:
  - Age, Gender, education, background, family etc.
2. Factors Affecting Confidence Level in Public Speaking:
  - Do you participate in speaking activities? (Yes/No) Why?
  - How do you feel when you participate in speaking activities? Explain.
  - Do you think that the atmosphere in the classroom is relaxed, motivating or boring? Justify.
  - Do you think your friends support you when you give your own opinion? Explain.
  - Do you think your lecturer allows you to voice out your point of view? How?
3. How logos would help to develop the rhetorical persuasion strategies in teaching experience to increase students' confidence level :
  - Do you think you are confident to speak in front of the class? (Yes/No)
  - Why do you think that you are/are not sure to talk in front of the course?
  - What type of message did you always use in class presentation?
  - How logos could help you to increase your credibility?
  - Does your lecturer praise you when you answer correctly?
4. Which activity do you like more? For example, discussion, role-play language games and presentations. Justify your answer.

## 6. Findings



**Figure 1.** Research Findings

Figure 1 described the findings of the research by visualizing the qualitative data from three informants. The logos were described further below:

### **Fun Class Activities**

*But in Dr.'s class, it feels really fun. Each time the syllabus runs out. Within half an hour, Dr will do the activity. Haa. At that time, we saw a lot of people trying hardly to participate. In this activity, we are not sleepy. And we will be fast. Because Dr will call our name to share anything. So, everyone is motivated to get ready. (Informant 1)*

### **Eye Contact**

*When I speak in front of people, I like to have eye contact. For me, when I do my eye contact with people, I feel more confidence. (Informant 1)*

*Yes, eye contact will help me to gain confident. (Informant 3)*

### **Teaching Techniques**

*Dr. Azlina (lecturer) always called (upon) her students by their names. I think this is an excellent way to guide students to be brave and confident in speaking in front of the class. I think if the students are frequently called upon to speak in front of the course, they will be more confident to talk in the future. (Informant 2)*

### **Question and Answer Session**

*By sharing opinions, students may find some answers as the others do, subsequently, will make them feel like there is someone who thinks alike. Hence, the shared value was developed to assist the students. (Informant 2)*

*My lecturer will conduct the question and answer (Q&A) session after each lesson to measure students' understanding of the topic. Plus, the lecturer's personality makes me feel comfortable and more confident to give my opinion. (Informant 3)*

In the communication context, public speaking is a type of persuasive communication activity to influence the audience to change their behaviour. This study has chosen the Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM) developed by Petty and Cacioppo (1986). In their theory, the scholars suggested two ways to persuade people, through central route message and peripheral route message. The model stated that the speaker needs to know the audience before planning the speech.

Central route message creates through strong evident, rational arguments and immense information. Study finds that through the activities conducted to achieve logos; debate, games and group discussion are also ways to create centrally routed messages. However, these messages only efficient if audiences are highly motivated and can understand the speech. In other words, the audience is people who 'see' the expression in the same context and are interested enough to participate in a public speaking activity. For example, informants are students who attend the Leadership Communication class, which also means that they are in the same context of learning. Thus, the audiences can understand the speech because they know the terminology, subject or jargon used by the speaker. Eventually, when the researcher see the issue, it makes them motivated to participate in the public speaking activity because they are aware of what is being delivered by the speaker. Following this, the speaker shall present substantial evidence, rational arguments and information thoroughly to give long term cognitive impact on the audience.

Likewise, the peripheral route requires the speaker to know their audience before designing emotionally driven messages to create a short term impact on the audience. Moreover, there is little

possibility for the audience to show emotional response in this technique, even if it exists, it does not exist for long. The lecturer's role in class fit the authority cue of ELM. In a classroom, the lecturer has the power to assign students with tasks. Also, the lecturer can direct them to speak in front of the class. Calling students by their name should be the most effective way to encourage confidence level in public speaking. When a lecturer calls upon his or her students to give opinions or to answer the questions, they need to convey their stand by giving an objective argument, based on facts or statistic.

The peripheral cues include commitment and social proof. Based on this study, being a student means you cannot escape from assignments and presentations. The degree of responsibility enforced through these tasks in class. Informants agree that students' confidence level cultivate through group discussion. Meanwhile, their awareness of being a member of the group makes them committed to the tasks given. In explaining reciprocity, group tasks contribute to overall course performance, meaning that students have to perform their best in class to get excellent marks. Social proof, on the contrary, is the influence of peer pressure in a situation. Study finds that informants acknowledge the presence of supportive, friendly and active friends make them feel confident in public speaking.

However, the study fails to obtain information about time pressure (scarcity) and reverse psychology (contrast) techniques in ELM. In conclusion, ELM has proved that the central route and peripheral route messages are suitable in the preparation stage for public speaking.

## 7. Conclusion

In conclusion, the logos which refer to factual arguments such as statistical data and evidence are one of the strategies to increase the confidence level in public speaking. Informants stated that logos could be achieved through activities such as games, debate partners and group tasks to promote interaction among classmates. These activities require planning to solve a problem which will encourage students to brainstorm and present their ideas so they would reach a common ground that everyone agreed on. Besides, these activities will train students to listen, to accept, to counter, to modify or to combine each other's opinion based on their knowledge

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