



The fear of public speaking in Vietnamese pedagogy freshmen

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ABSTRACT

Fear of public speaking, also known as Glossophobia which is defined as a form of social phobia leading to severely discourage speaking publicly owing to the dread of being ashamed or losing the respect of other people. The recent study used the Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety scale including 34 items to survey 374 pedagogy freshmen. The sample consisted of 374 students of which 144 students studying Social Science (38.5%), 140 students studying Natural Science (37.4%), and 90 students studying Educational Science (24.1%) of which were 86 males (23%) and 288 females (77%). The main finding of this study was that a large number of pedagogy freshmen suffered fear of public speaking. Besides, the result found that the difference between the three groups of majors in the levels of glossophobia just very slightly missed the significance level. Educational Science students suffered most public speaking anxiety in three groups of majors. To become professional educators in the future, pedagogy freshmen have to cultivate and self-improve speaking publicly skill which is one of the most essential and crucial soft skills. Additionally, the presentation skill is one of the compulsory academic activities and criteria for evaluation of the university of education. These findings contribute to developing courses aiming to reduce student's public speaking anxiety and improve their presentation skill. Besides, educators could create an education curriculum that is most suitable for freshmen and not causes much pressure leading to their anxiety.

Keywords: freshmen, glossophobia, public speaking anxiety, gender, major

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking is an essential communication skill for all people. It is a public performance that brings about speeches on a wide range of diverse subjects, matters, and social problems. Basically, the benefits of public speaking skill can be referred to (i) professional development; (ii) improving confidence; (iii) critical thinking; (iv) building, developing social relationships and professional network; (v) improving leadership skills. Although public speaking has numerous advantages, a great number of people have difficulty in presenting topics naturally and fluently in front of the crowd, which is called the fear of speaking in public. It is a terror feeling with physical manifestation such as a fast heartbeat, over-rapid reactions and pains in the neck and shoulder (Mohamad, Ab Wahid, & Tambahan, 2009). It's also associated with the insufficiency of bravery to connect oneself with a community (Cunningham, Lefkoe, Sechrest, Theory, & Practice, 2006) and anxiety which is claimed as a state of difficulty and embarrassment or dread resulting in anticipation of specific objects and phenomena frightening (Scovel, 1978). Individuals with public speaking fear frequently have symptoms which are tremble, a clear mind, barriers in public speaking, presentation (Kushner, 2010), hesitation in making decisions and engaging in daily activities and reducing the quality of life (Hancock, Stone, Brundage, & Zeigler, 2010). Fear of public speaking, also known as Glossophobia which is defined as a form of social phobia leading to severely discourage speaking publicly owing to the dread of being ashamed or losing the respect of other people (Hancock et al., 2010). The individuals experiencing Glossophobia have a fear of speaking in the crowd or can be elucidated as nervous (Herumurti, Yuniarti, Rimawan, & Yunanto, 2019).

These speaker's physiological symptoms such as dryness of mouth, rise in blood pressure, perspiration, fast breathing are produced by fear of speaking in community, in the role of feeling the embarrassment and looking

stupid and ridiculous (Kushner, 2010). The specific indications of Glossophobia can be classified into three: physical, verbal and non-verbal. The sympathetic part of the autonomic nervous system (ANS) plays a significant part as far as physical symptoms are affected because it explains the fight or flight response of the body. All or nothing nature of the response of ANS creates an immense variety of indications concurrently which totally act to get ready for the body for conditions causing panic and chaos. The appearances comprise severe hearing, dilated pupils, increased perspiration, increased oxygen intake, spasm of upper back muscles and neck rigidity. These symptoms will get better with drugs. The verbal symptoms insist on a strained and shaking voice, a faltering voice that relieves suffering speakers (Khan, Ismail, Shafique, Ghous, & Ali, 2015). The significant symptoms such as trembling or shaking hands, a blank mind, get in trouble with speech or presentation (Kushner, 2010). Students experiencing Glossophobia have not only psychological but also physical indications. Psychological symptoms consist of strain, panic and rapidly lead to physical symptoms, including body vibrates, looking into the ground, silent as a statue, blurred eyes, stomachache or even pee in the pants (Rahmawati, Ariffudin, & Mulawarman, 2018).

Public speaking anxiety of student has been mentioned in numerous scientific researches for a long time. Fagsao and Mi-ing (2021) stated that pre-service teacher students suffered glossophobia and found that audience's manifestations were one of the factors affected the levels of glossophobia. Perveen, Hasan, and Aleemi (2018) surveyed 126 undergraduate students from Karachi's university and reported that female students suffered from Glossophobia more than male students. This result is directly in line with findings of prior research of Khan et al. (2015). The cross-sectional analyses examined the prevalence of public speaking anxiety in medical students and affirmed that females had a higher level of anxiety when speaking publicly compared to males. Specifically, the majority of female students had moderate anxiety while most of the male students had a low level of anxiety. On the contrary, the scientific research of Tse (2012), conducted in Malaysia and surveyed numerous technical students majoring in engineering and computing, indicated that the level of public speaking anxiety was equal among female and male students. Besides, the research also investigated the effect of affective learning strategies in decreasing students' anxiety and revealed that students suffered considerably less distress while speaking in public after learning effective ways to manage public speaking anxiety. Colbeck (2011) also concluded that without learning techniques to reduce anxiety, females in Midwestern University had higher levels of communication apprehension than males. However, when they participated in an introductory college speech course, female students displayed a significant reduction and got the same average score on the levels of communication apprehension as male students.

Public Speaking Anxiety is one of the obstacles in the academic adjustment of students (Turner, Beidel, Borden, Stanley, & Jacob, 1991), career opportunity and daily life of adults. Particularly, because of absence from school and skipping courses requiring speaking in front of the crowd, individuals had poor academic outcomes. Moreover, they decided to make a transfer to a different learning environment to evade public speaking. People suffering from public speaking anxiety were confronted with huge obstacles in achieving their career ambition and promotion. If individuals usually experience public speaking anxiety, they frequently vacillate between engaging and not engaging in routine activities leading to reducing life-cycle cost (Hancock et al., 2010). The adults suffering from Glossophobia are incapable of displaying their expertise in various social circumstances. Notwithstanding that people clearly realize groundless fear, they endure extreme fear of public speaking (Pertaub, Slater, Barker, & Environments, 2002).

Glossophobia of students is not a new topic. However, few studies have focused on this subject with freshmen in Vietnam. According to Cambridge Dictionary, freshmen can be described as students in their first year of study. To fill this gap, we examine the levels of public speaking anxiety of Vietnamese freshmen, the associations between gender and Glossophobia, and influences of major on the levels of students' Glossophobia. The research starts with reviewing the literature of the relationship between students' public speaking anxiety and gender. A basic analytical framework is described in the second section, including the research methodology, result, and discussion, respectively. Finally, the conclusion is in the last section.

METHODS

Participant

The recruitment process was conducted and ensured that all Vietnamese freshmen participated voluntarily to assist the research. Freshmen have just entered the university environment after graduating from high school. This population-based observational study was performed on data obtained from three groups of majors including Natural Science, Social Science and Educational Science in Ho Chi Minh City University of Education. In short, 400 questionnaires were assessed for eligibility, of which 373 were eligible for this study. The sample consisted of 144 students studying Social Science (38.5%) with 33 males (8.8%) and 111 females (29.7%), 140 students studying Natural Science (37.4%) in which 34 males (9.1%) and 106 females (28.4%) and 90 students studying Educational Science (24.1%) with 19 males (5.1%) and 71 females (19%) (figure 1).

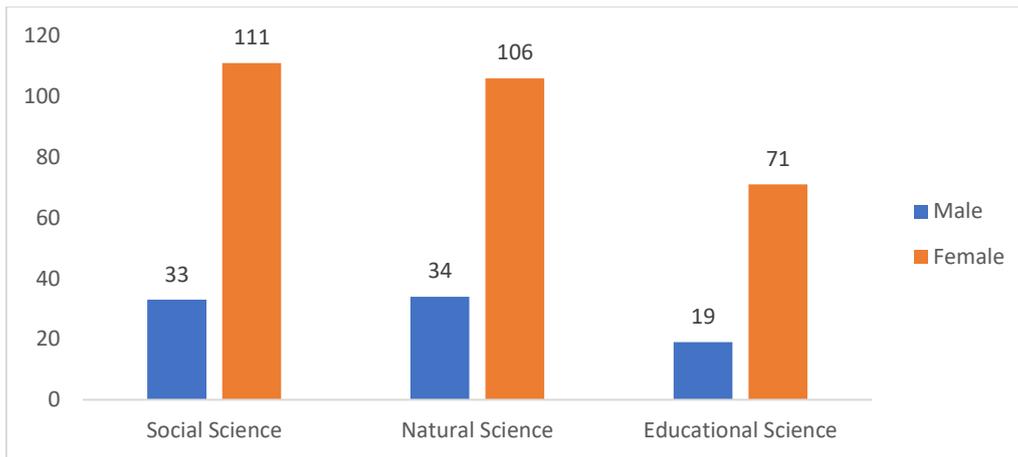


Fig.1: Number of Participants in the Groups of Major by Gender

Measurement

The PRPSA stands for The Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety was developed by McCroskey in 1970. This anxiety instrument has been used in several studies and indicated to be reliable. The measurement includes 34 items examining emotion related to giving a speech and has been reported to be unidimensional.

The PRPSA is scored using the same procedures: the instrument is used the five-point Likert to assess with answers ranging from one to five (1 = Never; 2 = Rarely; 3 = Sometimes; 4 = Regularly; 5 = Always); guidances for the participants are provided at the top of the form. The Cronbach’s Alpha of this instrument was 0.944. This reliability is coincidentally the same with the reliability of PRPSA of McCroskey (1970), 0.94. Therefore, the Cronbach’s Alpha of this study shows that the scale is significant and reliable.

The self-reported scores of PRPSA were divided into five levels which were presented in the following Table 1 to examine the Public Speaking Anxiety among undergraduate students.

Table 1: The levels of Public Speaking Anxiety

Categories	Range
Low Anxiety	34 - 84
Moderate Low Anxiety	85 - 92
Moderate Anxiety	93 - 110
Moderate High Anxiety	111 - 119
High Anxiety	120 - 170

Procedure

Before accepting the attendance in this research, it was confirmed with the participant if the information sheet had been read and understood; participants were encouraged to contact researchers if they had any questions or queries. Through questionnaire surveys, the participants could withdraw from the study at any time if they felt unable to continue. Likewise, they also provided their self-information about gender and major for completing the questionnaires. After fulfilling the requirements for personal information, the instructors needed to ensure that there were no aspects in the questionnaire that were difficult to understand. As a result, all of the participants demonstrated a clear understanding of the questionnaire and completed them precisely. It took 2 weeks for the authors to collect the data and the research lasted approximately 6 months from December 2020 to June 2021.

RESULTS

The levels of public speaking anxiety among Vietnamese pedagogy freshmen are shown in Table 2. The below table presented that the highest rate of public speaking anxiety was Low Anxiety (25.9%) with 97 students scoring from 34 to 84 points and the lowest rate was Moderate High Anxiety (13.4%) with 50 students scoring 111-119 points. The proportion of High Anxiety was 21.1% of the students in which the cases with Moderate Anxiety and Moderate Low Anxiety had 24.4% and 14.2%, respectively.

Table 2: The levels of Public Speaking Anxiety among students

		Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid	Low Anxiety	97	25.9	25.9	25.9
	Moderate Low Anxiety	53	14.2	14.2	40.1
	Moderate Anxiety	95	25.4	25.4	65.5
	Moderate High Anxiety	50	13.4	13.4	78.9
	High Anxiety	79	21.1	21.1	100.0

Total	374	100.0	100.0
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According to the norms from the PRPSA (McCroskey, 1970), the participants scored in the average range on the Public Speaking Anxiety scale. The mean score was 2.93 (SD = .68). Figure 2 presents descriptive statistics of dependent variable results by gender and major groups.

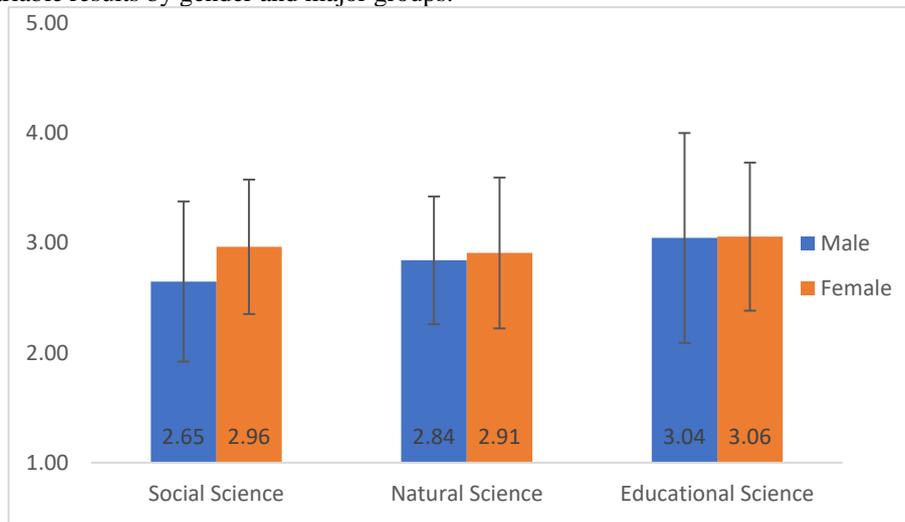


Fig.2: Descriptive statistics of dependent variable results by Gender and Major Groups.

A two-way analysis of variance (ANOVA) was performed with gender and the majors of students participating in as the independent variable and the Public Speaking as the dependent variable. In order to run ANOVA, the researchers conducted a preliminary assumption to examine the normality of residuals, absence of multicollinearity and homogeneity of variances for each combination of the groups of the two independent variables. The residuals are normally distributed to perform a two-way ANOVA with a non-significant value of the Shapiro-Wilk test ($p=0.444$). Levene's Test of Equality of Error Variances tests the assumption ANOVA that the variances of each variable are equal across the groups. If Levene's test is significant, this means that the assumption has not been satisfied. In this study, the value of Levene's test was non-significant for PSS [$F(5, 368) = 2.185, p = 0.055$]. So, the assumption that the variances of each variable are equal across the groups was met.

Table 4: Univariate ANOVA

Dependent Variable: Glossophobia						
Source	Type III Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.	Partial Eta Squared
Corrected Model	4.444 ^a	5	.889	1.959	.084	.026
Intercept	2105.423	1	2105.423	4639.622	.000	.927
Gender	1.071	1	1.071	2.361	.125	.006
Major	2.282	2	1.141	2.514	.082	.013
Gender * Major	1.160	2	.580	1.278	.280	.007
Error	166.995	368	.454			
Total	3384.626	374				
Corrected Total	171.440	373				

a. R Squared = .026 (Adjusted R Squared = .013)

The data analysis revealed that there was a non-significant gender effect on the public speaking anxiety, $F(1, 368) = 2.361, p = 0.125$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.006$. The difference between three groups of majors is just very slightly missed the significance level, $F(2, 368) = 2.541, p = 0.082$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.013$. Particularly, Educational Science students had the highest level of public speaking anxiety ($M = 3.05, SD = 0.09$) following by Natural Science students ($M = 2.88, SD = 0.07$) and Social Science students ($M = 2.81, SD = 0.07$). In addition, the result reported that there was a non-significant multivariable effect for interaction between gender and groups of major, $F(2, 368) = 1.278, p = 0.28$, partial $\eta^2 = 0.007$.

DISCUSSION

The main objective of this research is to investigate public speaking anxiety among pedagogy freshmen. Based on available data, this study has illustrated three things: (i) Vietnamese pedagogy freshmen had public speaking

anxiety; (ii) there was no significant difference in the level of public speaking anxiety between male and female students; (iii) the difference between three groups of majors is just very slightly missed the significance level. The main finding of this study was that a large number of pedagogy freshmen suffered fear of public speaking. This is consistent with the findings of Marinho, de Medeiros, Gama, and Teixeira (2017) which suggest that more than 720 undergraduate students reported public speaking anxiety. Besides, another study of Khan et al. (2015) showed that a large number of survey participants from universities in Karachi reported a moderate level of glossophobia. The survey participants of the current study were freshmen who have to adapt themselves to the new environment following just graduating from high school. Moreover, speaking in front of people is one of the most essential and crucial soft skills which students have to cultivate and self-improve when learning in pedagogy. This leads to the fear of public speaking in freshmen.

Our results demonstrated that there was no significant difference in the level of public speaking anxiety between male and females. Nevertheless, when comparing this recent result with the precedent study, it pointed out that the current finding was reversed with several studies. A cross-sectional analysis of Khan et al. (2015) affirmed that females had a higher level of anxiety when speaking publicly compared to males. Additionally, this result is directly in line with findings of Perveen et al. (2018) and Colbeck (2011). Without learning techniques to reduce anxiety, females in Midwestern University had higher levels of communication apprehension than males. Then, when they participated in an introductory college speech course, female students displayed a significant reduction and got the same levels of communication apprehension as male students. This finding is also consistent with prior study of Tse (2012) who indicated that the level of public speaking anxiety was equal among female and male undergraduate students in Malaysia. In Vietnamese high school context, both male and female have not been trained to present confidently and logically in front of people yet. Therefore, when starting their new stage of education in the university, they have the same conditions and experiences to adapt in the new environment. This leads to non-significant differences in males and females' anxiety. In the future research should conduct studies with factors affecting student's public anxiety such as confidence, academic situation, academic achievement, academic friendship, relationship between students and teachers to clarify the levels of public speaking anxiety in both genders.

Additionally, the present study demonstrated that the difference between three groups of majors in the levels of public speaking is just very slightly missed the significance level. Students in these majors have to self-improve the presentation skills as speech in front of others is one of the compulsory academic activities and criteria for evaluation of university of education. This finding is directly in line with the result of Fagsao and Mi-ing (2021) who stated that pre-service teacher students, future educators, suffered glossophobia and found that audience's manifestations were one of the factors affected the levels of glossophobia. In addition, other study reported that most of medical students participating in the study had moderate level of public speaking anxiety (Khan et al., 2015).

In the future investigation could undertake the research with other participants, not just freshmen, from different majors to examine factors influencing the levels of glossophobia among students. Then, researchers and educators could design courses and programs to reduce the levels of glossophobia in students and enhance their mental health. This study suffers from a number of limitations - notably related to sampling process and the range of participants. The data is collected in the context of COVID-19 pandemic so that the google form questionnaires were completed by participants. The subjects in this research, freshmen, could be also a factor limiting the achieved findings.

CONCLUSION

Glossophobia which is defined as a form of social phobia leading to severely discourage speaking publicly owing to the dread of being ashamed or losing the respect of other people. The physiological symptoms of people having glossophobia are dryness of mouth, rise in blood pressure, perspiration, fast breathing, in the role of feeling the embarrassment and looking stupid and ridiculous (Kushner, 2010). Public Speaking Anxiety is one of the obstacles in the academic adjustment of students, career opportunity and daily life of adults. Our finding provides additional information about the relationship between glossophobia and gender; glossophobia and majors. Because the result of this findings was no significant difference in the level of public speaking anxiety between male and female students; the difference between three groups of majors is just very slightly missed the significance level, future studies should aim to replicate results in various ranges of participants to clarify the relationship between public speaking anxiety and factors related to university environment. Nonetheless, the authors found that Vietnamese pedagogy freshmen had public speaking anxiety. From that point, Vietnamese educators could recognize student's anxiety of speaking in front of the crowd and assist them in decreasing the levels of glossophobia in the learning process. Teachers could integrate their lectures with movement activities which make students more energetics and more confident. Besides, educators could create education curriculum which teach students several skills to speak in community. This is the most suitable needs for freshmen to make them comfortable to finish their own presentation without any fears. The developing courses aiming to reduce student's public speaking anxiety and improve their presentation skill need to be concerned.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.

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