NON-ENGLISH MAJOR STUDENTS' STRATEGIES TO REDUCE ANXIETY TOWARDS ENGLISH GROUP PRESENTATIONS

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Article info	Abstract:
	Anxiety indeed an ordinary thing experienced by everyone when talking in public and can be increased if it is done by using a foreign language. Accordingly, this study aimed to provide a specific description of the students' anxiety in delivering English presentations as well as provided a solution on how to deal with the anxiety. By applying the quantitative method, a questionnaire survey was floated to the participants for a seven-day period at Hanoi Law University within 100 non-English major students who shared anxieties about delivering presentation and recommended effective strategies for the method. There were several factors that affected student anxiety, namely internal factors which covered fear of failure, fear of criticism, conflicting emotion, speech anxiety, negative experience, fear of losing the thread of material, fear of being stopped, and negative thinking; and external factors which covered condition of presentation room, failing to practice, gender, and physical factor. Strategies that could be applied by participants to cope their anxiety in delivering English presentation were to keep thinking positively toward the audience, the speech, and their self as a speaker, to make good preparation, to rehearse, to keep self-confidence, and to do relaxation.

CÁC PHƯƠNG PHÁP GIÚP GIẢM LO LẮNG CỦA SINH VIÊN KHÔNG CHUYÊN KHI THAM GIA THUYẾT TRÌNH NHÓM

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Thông tin bài viết	Tóm tắt
	Lo lắng thực sự là một điều bình thường mà mọi người đều trải qua khi nói chuyện trước đám đông và có thể tăng lên nếu nó được thực hiện bằng cách sử dụng ngoại ngữ. Theo đó, nghiên cứu này nhằm cung cấp một mô tả cụ thể về sự lo lắng của sinh viên trong việc thuyết trình nhóm bằng tiếng Anh cũng như đưa ra giải pháp về cách đối phó với sự lo lắng. Nghiên cứu sử dụng phương pháp định lượng, bảng khảo sát câu hỏi đã được đưa ra cho sinh viên trong thời gian bảy ngày tại Đại học Luật Hà Nội với 100 sinh viên không chuyên tiếng Anh, những sinh viên này chia sẻ lo lắng trong quá trình thuyết trình và đề xuất các chiến lược hiệu quả đối với việc áp dụng thuyết trình nhóm này. Nghiên cứu cũng chỉ ra một số yếu tố ảnh hưởng đến sự lo lắng của sinh viên khi thuyết trình nhóm, cụ thể là các yếu tố bên trong bao gồm nỗi sợ thất bại, sợ bị chỉ trích, mâu thuẫn cảm xúc, lo lắng về lời nói, trải nghiệm tiêu cực, sợ mất vật chất, sợ bị dừng lại và suy nghĩ tiêu cực; và các yếu tố bên ngoài bao gồm điều kiện của phòng thuyết trình, không được thực hành, giới tính và yếu tố thể chất. Các chiến lược mà người tham gia có thể áp dụng để đối phó với sự lo lắng khi thuyết trình tiếng Anh là giữ cho mình suy nghĩ tích cực đối với người nghe, bài phát biểu và bản thân họ với tư cách là một diễn giả, chuẩn bị tốt, luyện tập, giữ sự tự tin và thư thái.

1. Introduction

In spite of a technology - driven society, the ability to communicate orally continues to be an essential skill for students at school and university. In addition, speaking ability is extremely useful for them when confronting with an English presentation. To achieve a good speaking performance, their linguistic and non-linguistic competence must be excellent. The presentation itself is intended to assist them if they are given the opportunity to work in a foreign field where English is required. Presentation, which can be classified as one part of public speaking, commonly becomes a dreadful situation for some people, even if people who have proficiency in talking face to face. Many of students confess that they are nervous about speaking in public; they are even more nervous when speaking face to face [1]. Even though good public speaking skills are required for many professions, these skills are still

thought to be challenging for many required for almost professions. Similarly, presentation skills are required almost everywhere, including universities. Anxiety in public speaking is very common among both college students and other professionals. According to Katz [8], 20-85 per cent of people experience some level of anxiety when required to speak in public. Many people who speak for a living, such as actors, businesspeople, and politicians, suffer from public speaking anxiety [13]. In fact, some of these experienced public speakers believe that a little nervousness before a performance or speaking engagement allows them to give their best performance. However, for some people, the anxiety becomes so intense that they are unable to perform at all. Emotion is important in the classroom since it has a great impact on speaking. It influences learners' self-efficacy to process information and to accurately understand what they encounter. Brown [4] states that emotions affect learning in the most fundamental way because they are the foundation of the learning strategies and techniques. In other words, emotional state can encourage or discourage learning. Anxiety harms students' performance by way of worry, self-doubt, and reducing participation. In the case of students, this may result in avoiding certain courses or even majors that require oral presentations, never speaking in class, or deciding against certain careers that require occasional public speaking. Students, especially non-English major ones, are nervous about giving a presentation in class or at an examination seminar may avoid attending social events [5].

Anxiety from the perspective of the former is defined as subjective feelings relating an arousal of automatic nervous system, such as tension, apprehension, nervousness and worry [12]. These subjective anxious feelings also carry over into the area of language. Emotions have the potential to energize students' thinking and also have the potential to interfere with speaking. Negative emotions such anger, anxiety, and sadness have the potential to distract students' learning efforts. Unfortunately, in the case of foreign language learning, students' emotions tend to be more discouraging rather than encouraging. One of the emotional states that make such process become difficult is anxiety. Emotional states such as anxiety can distract students in the language learning process. Feeling of tension, worry, and nervousness will impact students' ability to perform successfully in

a foreign language classroom. In an effort to explore learners coping strategies for foreign language anxiety, Iizuka [6] surveyed 105 students of English language program at a University in Japan. The results showed that students experienced anxiety in some context as follows: participating in class without enough preparation, speaking in front of the class, difficulty in following teachers' (and classmate) talk, fear of making mistake in presentation, and students' feeling about their own English proficiency [14]. Meanwhile, during his teaching practice in a junior secondary school, the writer found signs of anxiety among the students. Many of them got anxious, created avoidance, and reduced participation in the classroom. They were afraid and shy to practice with the target language, particularly English, the reasons why they underwent these feelings because they were worried about making mistakes. One of them thought if he made mistakes in speaking, the teacher would get angry and his peers would ridicule him. So, he preferred to be quite and sit passively [9].

While some of them also believed that English was a difficult subject. Such beliefs can affect their self-esteem and lead them to feel worried in classroom. In the end, when asking to practice, they started to stutter. Moreover, some of them were unable to produce the sound or intonation even after a few repetitions because they were not sure if they can practice English. Since the goal of English study program is to develop students' communicative competence in speaking English in any type of communication, studies focusing on students' anxiety related to speaking English as a second/foreign language, particularly in presentations where speaking is mostly used and extremely useful to give explanation or bring forward the presentation, appear to have a significant pedagogical implication. Riegel [11] proposes that public speaking anxiety is not directly proportionate to the number of audience's presence in one's talk. A small group of audience may terrify you as badly as a large group. She suggests that when this fear hits presenters, they need to deploy strategies which might enable them to stand on the stage with confidence and vigor. The presentation procedure should be transactional with a constant exchange of floor between the presenter and the audience. The presenters must ask questions at intervals to engage the audience more actively which requires more dialogue than monologue. Strategies as basic as these can create a visible difference and can assist individuals surmount

the fright of public speaking and facilitate them in building poise while speaking in front of an audience.

Morgan [10] lists few things that hold great importance during a speech or presentation: (a) intent to be open with your audience, (b) intent to connect with the audience, (c) intent to be passionate about your topic, and (d) intent to listen to your audience. These are few tips that help speakers connect with the audience, to become motivating speakers. The audience too, in turn will be interested in the speech and will help speakers to be comfortable while speaking. Abu-Rabia et al. [3] explains the reasons why some speakers speak faster when they face the audience. He writes that when a presenter comes in front of an audience, the pressure of the situation prompts adrenaline rush which produces time warp that causes the presenter to speak fast. He further says that this can be overcome by using pauses and lubricants, which allow more time to the audience to process the information and also gives the speaker enough time to phrase another sentence. Kushner [7] talks about simple yet very effective strategies to overcome the fear of public speaking as well as delivering good presentations. He starts off by describing effective styles for starting and ending a speech. Rhetorical questions, a quotation for the opening or conclusion can be used to involve the audience and grab their attention. He elaborates that the speaker should also analyze the requirements of the topic and examine the motivation for speaking and the audience's motivation for listening. He emphasizes on goal setting and puts forward that one should also set some specific goals that need to be achieved at the end of the presentation. If the speaker is not certain about his/her stance, it will not leave a good impression on the audience and the audience may get demotivated (Nikam & Ambekar, 2016). Regarding the aforementioned reasons, I conducted this study to investigate strategies recommended by non-English major students to reduce anxiety towards English group presentation at Hanoi Law University (HLU). The aim of the research is to address the following questions:

1. What is the connection between s environment and students' feelings of anxiety?

2. How is this anxiety manifested amongst students?

3. What are the strategies would be effective in reducing levels of anxiety suggested by HLU's non-English major students?

The research is significant and beneficial to other higher learning institutions because it offers insights into the causes of anxiety faced by students. It reveals the causes of English presentation anxiety and subsequently proposes strategies to help students overcome their stress. Furthermore, the findings are not only applicable to students and lecturers but are helpful for others who are facing the same problem of oral presentation anxiety in making a presentation using English as a means of communication.

2. Method

Design of the study

This research aimed to investigate non-English major students' anxiety towards English group presentation at HLU. In accordance with this aim, a questionnaire was employed to collect data in this study. Specifically, quantitative data collected from close-ended questionnaire provided a statistical view for the aims of the studies. The questionnaires were answered by participants through online platform in one week. After participants returned their feedbacks, the researcher carried out the data screening, and 70 samples were selected for the purpose of data analysis.

Data collection instrument

The primary methods for data collection in this research were a questionnaire survey. 100 English-major students: 50 from Law Studies and 50 Economic Law Studies were participating in the survey. In the first part, students were required to provide information regarding their current course. In the second part, 18 statements were presented were concerning (1) procedures of students' preparation before delivering group presentation (4 statements); (2) student's use of preparing strategies in order to improve knowledge of English for presentation (4 statements); (3) aspects of new vocabulary that students focus on the most when preparing for group presentation in English (10 statements). Towards investigating the second part, each statement is assessed based on 5 scales ranking from never - 1/ rarely - 2 / sometimes -3 / usually - 4 / always - 5. In the final part, 12 statements investigated student's opinion on implementing some features of flipped learning method in class. These statements were design in the form of five-point Likert scale with option ranging from Strongly Disagree – 1/ Disagree – 2/ Neutral – 3/ Agree – 4/ Strongly Agree – 5. Basing on the results, the interval scales were determined such

as very low (1.0 – 1.8), low (1.81 – 2.6), moderate (2.61 – 3.4), high (3.41 – 4.2), and very high (4.21 – 5.0).

Participants

All participants are Hanoi Law University's non-English majors. The study was notified and had received approval and support from the school as well as from the students themselves. The study required a total of 100 students to be surveyed. The sample size of the survey was 100 participants. Participants from the Department of English at Hanoi Law University obtained two studies that are Law Studies and Economic Law Studies, with 24 females, 24 males and 22 students preferred not to reveal their gender.

Procedures of data collection

The information was gathered and fortified by research-made questionnaire. The survey was allowed to collect student data from the Hanoi Law University, as well as personal consent. The researcher collected data over a seven-day period. Owing to the diverse schedules of class members, it was difficult to assemble the entire class to complete the questionnaire survey directly; therefore, the questionnaire was delivered to K46 Law Studies and Economic Law Studies to complete online via Google Forms. The online questionnaire provides a succinct description of the intent and a straightforward explanation of how to respond to the questions; hence, there was no need for additional explanation. Both Law Studies and Economic Law Studies had a strong response rate with 37 out of 50 responses from Law

Studies and 33 out of 50 students from Economic Law Studies present on the day of the questionnaire survey. The responses were transcribed and restored for review. When the questionnaire on Google Forms was finished, it was closed to ensure that the registered data did not change.

The primary method for data collection in this research was a researcher-made questionnaire survey. There were 10 separate questions on the questionnaire survey which were placed in two parts. There were 10 separate questions on the questionnaire survey which were placed in two parts: Respondents' information and respondents' practice of prepare for presenting English with a group implemented by HLU's non-English major students in delivering presentation. The results of the questionnaire survey were analyzed using Google Forms, Microsoft Office Excel and IBM SPSS software in this study. The data gathered are illustrated by the means of tables. Two main types of analysis used are Google Forms, SPSS Descriptive Statistics (for information such as Strategies implemented by non-English majors in the process of improving knowledge of English to prepare for presentation) and SPSS Frequency Statistics (for information such as Gender ratio, English proficiency levels, etc.).

Results and Discussions

• Procedures of non-English majors' preparation at HLU before delivering group presentation

Table 1. Procedures of non-English majors' preparation at HLU before delivering group presentation

	N		Frequency	Percent
When searching for material of the topic that your group choose, you will…	70	Search all information in English	38	54.3
		Search all information in Vietnamese and then use google translate	32	45.7
How many times will you group practice before group presentation?	70	1-3 times	25	35.7
		4-6 times	13	18.6
		More than 6 times	14	20.0
		None because all	18	25.7
When choosing the option of dividing the speaking parts in the presentation, which option will you choose?	70	Divide the presentations equally among the members	11	15.7
		Member who knows English will receive longer part of the presentation, who afraid of speaking will present less	25	35.7

	Leader will be the one present longer, the rest of the presentation will segregate among other members in the group		16	22.9
	Only prepare for the word or PowerPoint of the presentation and don't have to present		18	25.7
Do you need to look at the note while presenting?	70	Yes	39	55.7
		No	31	44.3
		Total	70	100.0

It could be seen clearly that part of the people has minimum practices, which leads to the dependence on high English skills, forcing them to become the main presenter of a group. 54.3% of the 70 responders prefer to understand their research in English while the rest prefer to translate into Vietnamese first. However, 35.7% of 70 people practice presenting with their group 1-3 times and a combination of 38.6% practice 4 or more times with their teammates. In addition, 18 people prefer none because all. This leads to distributing presentations unequal, reflected by only 15.7% among all separate equally. 25 respondents will devolve responsibility to the person with highest English skills, 16 ones will let the leader to speak more, and 18 people prepare for the presentation without presenting.

● Strategies used by non-English majors at K45 HLU in the process of improving knowledge of English to prepare for presentation

Table 2. Strategies used by non-English majors at K45 HLU in the process of improving knowledge of English to prepare for presentation

	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Interpretation
1. I have learned new words in order to improve my knowledge of vocabulary	70	2.53	1.432	Low
2. I have practiced speaking in front of the mirror	70	2.56	1.400	Low
3. New vocabulary has naturally emerged into my memory in the process of preparing for the presentation	70	2.66	1.382	Neutral
4. I have learned new interesting technical terms for law profession	70	2.66	1.403	Neutral
Valid N (listwise)	70			

As suggested in the above tables, in the process of improving knowledge of English, the third strategy:" New vocabulary has naturally emerged into my memory in the process of preparing for the presentation" and the fourth strategy:" I have learned new interesting technical terms for law profession" were two strategies usually used by K45 students from both Studies with M = 2.66. Strategy 2:" I have practiced speaking in front of the mirror" came in the second in the using frequency as this option had the means of 2.56. The last strategy was rarely utilized by participants, particularly in Strategy 1:" I have learned new words in order to improve my knowledge of vocabulary" – the option with the smallest means of 2.53. The responses for all the options were very varied with the Std. Deviations above 1.0. On the contrary, Strategy 1:" I have learned new words in order to improve my knowledge of vocabulary" was the most popular among all options for K46 respondents. It could be explained as to why the mention Strategy 1 was well-liked because by learning "new words in order to improve my knowledge of vocabulary", people will not also learn its precise meaning, spelling, alternate definitions, and find much more useful information about it but also can make their vocabulary grow exponentially.

● Aspects of vocabulary concentrated on by non-English majors at HLU in the process of preparing for group presentation in English

Table 3. Aspects of vocabulary concentrated on by non-English majors at HLU in the process of preparing for group presentation in English

		Frequency	**Percent**
What aspects of new vocabulary do you focus on the most when preparing for group presentation in English?	Meaning	9	12.9
	Context	8	11.4
	Collocation	8	11.4
	Pronunciation/Spelling	9	12.9
	Culture Background	9	12.9
	Grammar	6	8.6
	Vietnamese equivalents	8	11.4
	All of the above	4	5.7
	None of the above	4	5.7
	Other(s)	5	7.1
	Total	70	100.0

The tables from the second to the last describe the emphasis of non-majors at HLU on various areas of vocabulary. Overall, it is expected that respondents' responses will be distributed equitably. Looking more closely at the table, three components continue to have the largest percentage at 12.9 %, while 8 people vote for everything/none of them. Below the top three aspects, Context, Collocation, and Vietnamese equivalent received 8 votes apiece, for a total of 11.4 %. Aside from that, Grammar received only 8.6 % of the vote, while Others received 7.1 % of the vote out of 70 respondents.

• Strategies applied by non-English majors at HLU in the process of delivering presentation in a group

Table 4. Strategies applied by non-English majors at HLU in the process of delivering presentation in a group

	N	**Mean**	**Std. Deviation**	**Interpretation**
1. We worked in harmony	70	2.73	1.382	Neutral
2. We decided as a group	70	2.87	1.340	Neutral
3. We found chance to talk, interact with classmates we do not communicate much except for this study.	70	2.70	1.376	Neutral
4. We warned our classmates who did not participate in the group work properly.	70	2.97	1.285	Neutral
5. We listened to other groups' presentations quietly.	70	2.97	1.404	Neutral
6. We distributed tasks within the group.	70	2.94	1.403	Neutral
7.All group members performed the assigned tasks.	70	2.96	1.279	Neutral
8. We helped each other learn.	70	2.90	1.426	Neutral
9. We solved the problems occurred among friends by talking and negotiating.	70	2.71	1.395	Neutral
10. All members contributed when making decisions.	70	2.73	1.403	Neutral
11. We asked questions to our teacher where necessary.	70	2.76	1.256	Neutral
12. We completed our tasks on time.	70	2.76	1.345	Neutral
Valid N (listwise)	70			

In general, all the statements were employed in medium frequency. According to the results, Strategy 4:" We warned our classmates who did not participate in the group work properly" and Strategy 5:" We listened to other groups' presentations quietly" were two most strategies used while giving presentation in a group with the mean of 2.97, meanwhile Strategy 3:" We found chance to talk, interact with classmates we do not communicate much except for this study" was rarely applied as this option only had a 2.70 mean according to K46 students. Taking the second place in the using frequency of the course was Strategy 7:" All group members performed the assigned tasks" with the mean of 2.96 which mean this strategy was sometimes implemented. Following up in the figure of the participants were Strategies 11: "We asked questions to our teacher where necessary" and Strategies 12: "We completed our tasks on time". The least used Strategy among the options was Strategy 3: "We found chance to talk, interact with classmates we do not communicate much except for this study" with $M = 2.70$ for K45. Deviations for options in Table 5 mostly higher than 1.0 which meant the answers from students were varied.

Recommendations and conclusion

Conclusion of the study

In the presentation by using English as foreign language, the students have to present the proposal before they conduct a study or the result of their thesis after conduct a study. Performing in front of a group of other students is an inextricable part of the students' experience. Yet, speaking in public can unsettle or even frighten some students.

The anxious feeling of a person can be viewed from voice, verbal influence, mouth and throat, facial expressions, arms and hands, and also gross body movements. In overcoming the anxious feeling while delivering a presentation, such strategies proposed in the pertinent ideas can be very valuable for the students, in order to get a better performance. Such as the idea proposed by Asnur [2], those are:

• To keep thinking positively toward the audience, the speech, and their self as a speaker,

• To made good preparation, include the presentation material, power point slide, the appearance, the speech, and the health,

• To rehearse, practice speech by the assistance of the supervisor and colleague as well, include asked to correct the grammar, pronunciation, and performance,

• To keep self-confidence, which can be built through well preparation, positive thinking, good appearance, keep healthy, and smile, and

• To do relaxation before the presentation and during the presentation in relation with Teaching English as Foreign Language (TEFL), lecturers or teachers need to be more concern on the students' linguistics competence especially oral skills.

Speech anxiety has remained one of the most important factors influencing students' anxiety. For that reason, they must implement such a strategy in the teaching and learning processes in order to improve the output of students' linguistic competence. Furthermore, teachers or lecturers may include presentation tasks in their teaching and learning process to familiarize students with the presentation state. To improve students' linguistic competence and reduce students' speech anxiety due to a lack of vocabulary, poor grammar, and incorrect pronunciation, students are encouraged to actively participate in English meeting clubs and speak to native speakers or people who can speak English fluently as often as possible. As a result, it will broaden their vocabulary, improve their grammar, and teach them how to pronounce words directly. Other students or people who want to conduct a presentation or be a presenter can use the strategies discussed above to succeed in presenting their presentation.

Implication of the study

Although this study was carried out with a small number of participants within a short period of time, the findings provide some useful information that can be used by both teacher and stakeholders to improve the quality of English teaching and speaking.

Based on the result of this study, there are a number of suggestions can be made to reduce anxiety in English classrooms. As for the students, they need to get involved to reduce anxiety in classrooms. Students should respect each other in order to create a friendly environment. They should help a lower level students when have a difficulty instead of ridiculing them. This would make them feel comfortable with each other. In addition, anxious students should realize that mistakes are a natural part of language learning. Therefore, it

should not discourage them in speaking English. Due to the limitations of the study, further investigation was necessary to explore the students' anxiety in speaking English. Future similar studies with a larger population or different group of students will be useful to give a better understanding of the issue of speaking anxiety. In addition, this study indicated that classroom activities or methods are also important component in making students feel anxious or not. This issue, however, is not specifically addressed in this present study. Therefore, further investigations about certain approaches or methods that can help reducing anxiety in speaking English are needed.

Limitations of the study

Limitations are impossible to avoid in any research paper, no matter how carefully planned out, this thesis is no exception.

The first limitation is the sample size, this study research is conducted among only 100 non-English majors of Law Studies and Economic Law Studies of K46 which cannot possibly represent all the HLU's non-English major students' opinions. Secondly, the length of the research period is not enough to observe and confirm the change of students if they apply the strategies and recommendations stated, instead, the results rely more on the present opinions of the participants which cannot be proved unless going through a process of implementing.

Recommendations for further studies

The researcher makes some suggestions for further study as follows:

• Further research should be carried out with larger sample size to provide better insights of the practice and opinions on the method.

• Further research should be conducted with a more appropriate period of time in order to fully observe and prove the information provided.

• Further research should pay more attention to the sample profiles such as academic background history or the attitude of students towards the method.

• The researcher hopes that this study's results will assist in the design of more effective ways to reducing anxiety when delivering presentation in group in Hanoi Law University.

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