

Investigating oral presentation anxiety of freshmen English major students in a Philippine higher educational institution

Vince Tristan Docena¹, Kent Harvey Buenaventura², Walter Lobingco³, Sheena Manlimos⁴, Joseph Nacionales⁵, Norberto Claridad⁶

Eastern Visayas State University, Tacloban City, Philippines^{1,2,3,4,5,6}

¹Email: vincetristan.docena@evsu.edu.ph

Abstract - The objective of this Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis study is to gain a deeper understanding of how Freshmen English Major Students in a Philippine Higher Educational Institution experience and cope with anxiety related to oral presentations. Semi-structured interviews were carried out using a group of students who struggle with oral presentation anxiety. The interviews are recorded, transcribed, manually coded, and thematically examined. This qualitative study focuses on examining the students' perception of their anxiety, its causes, coping mechanisms, and its impact on their academic performance and well-being. The results reveal five themes for the encountered problems (1) apprehension and distress in oral presentations (2) resource scarcity and readiness deficiency results to constrained engagement (3) the spotlight fears and trembling grip on stage (4) medium hurdles like encountering language disruptions and intrusions (5) the struggles with regards to one's well-being; and six themes for the coping strategies: (1) emotional respite in human connections (2) mental resilience and adaptation (3) the calming rhythm for stress relief (4) harnessing movement and artistry for coping showcases embodied expressions (5) embracing emotional equilibrium through the power of acceptance in coping (6) unique coping strategy and perspective. The findings of this study add to a better understanding of the influence of this anxiety on student progress and assist in designing therapies to help this population's anxiety about oral presentations.

Keywords: student's anxiety; oral presentation anxiety; freshmen English major student; Philippine higher educational institutions; academic performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation anxiety (OPA) is a common phenomenon among students, particularly in higher educational institutions. It refers to the fear or apprehension experienced by individuals when they are required to speak publicly in front of others. In the context of English language learning, oral presentations are often used as a means of assessing students' language proficiency, as well as their ability to communicate effectively and persuasively. In the context of Philippine higher education institutions, investigating the oral presentation anxiety of freshmen English major students is important in understanding the challenges that they face and in developing strategies to support their learning.

Oral presentations have become an important aspect of language teaching, especially in university environments. The goal of teaching students to design effective oral presentations is to prepare them for future professional and academic careers (Živković, 2014). However, oral presentation anxiety (OPA) can be a significant obstacle for students to overcome. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness that can cause physical symptoms such as sweating, restlessness, and rapid heartbeat (National Library of Medicine, n.d.). OPA nourishes feelings of incompetence, reluctance, depression, and threat, which negatively affect students' grades (Liu & Jackson, 2008; Milan, 2019).

Research has shown that OPA is a complex phenomenon that is influenced by various factors, including individual differences, prior experience, and situational variables (Franzoi et al, 2020; Stöber, 2004). For example, students with high levels of trait anxiety tend to experience greater OPA than those with lower levels of trait anxiety (Franzoi et al, 2020). Similarly, students with prior negative experiences with public speaking may be more likely to experience OPA than those without such experiences (Stöber, 2004; Briones et al, 2023). These negative experiences can create negative self-beliefs and reinforce the fear of public speaking, leading to heightened anxiety levels in future public speaking situations. Situational variables also play a role in OPA. For example, the audience size, perceived importance of the presentation, and time constraints are all situational factors that can increase or decrease OPA (Franzoi et al, 2020). Research has shown that larger audience sizes and shorter time frames for presentations can increase OPA levels, while the perceived importance of the presentation can either increase or decrease OPA depending on the individual's level of motivation and investment in the presentation.

In the Philippines, English is highly valued as a second language, and its proficiency is seen as a measure of academic success (Atas, 2015). However, despite the importance placed on English language proficiency, many students still struggle with OPA. Speaking in English is considered the most anxiety-provoking activity in class for second language learners, inducing anxiety or other negative feelings (Chiu et al, 2010; Salim et al, 2017). Several factors contribute to OPA, including lack of preparation, fear of negative evaluation, and past negative experiences (Fernández-Castillo et al, 2019; Wan et al, 2019). A study by Wan et al (2019) found that students who reported higher levels of trait anxiety were more likely to experience presentation anxiety. This fear of public speaking can have a significant impact on a student's academic performance, personal, and social life (Fernández-Castillo et al, 2019; Roig & Ballew, 2020; Bactol et al, 2023).

According to Zhang and Zheng (2020), over 80% of students experience some degree of anxiety when giving presentations, particularly freshmen in higher educational institutions. Therefore, understanding the factors that contribute to OPA among freshmen English major students in Philippine higher educational institutions is crucial. By addressing these factors, language teachers can help students overcome their anxiety and develop effective oral presentation skills, preparing them for their future professional and academic careers. Undoubtedly, Basic (2011) claimed that the acquisition of a second language is affected by speaking anxiety. Specifically, students tend to be reticent and timid, showing hesitation to express their thoughts (Faulin & Soefendi, 2013). Additionally, they display disinterest in showcasing their speaking skills during classroom activities, and they experience low levels of confidence and discomfort while in English classes (Marzuki et al, 2016). This attitude makes

them fearful of interacting with their teachers or peers, reluctant to participate in learning activities, and anxious about group participation (Bastida Jr. & Yapo, 2019). Consequently, the impediment posed by speaking anxiety hinders the students' progress in acquiring and learning their second language.

To address oral presentation anxiety, language teachers must provide students with effective strategies and techniques for designing and delivering presentations. These may include training in public speaking, practicing presentation skills, and providing constructive feedback to students. Additionally, language teachers should create a supportive learning environment that promotes confidence and reduces anxiety. By addressing oral presentation anxiety, students can improve their academic performance and prepare themselves for their future professional and academic careers.

The aim of this study is to find out the major problems faced by freshmen English major students in a Philippine higher educational institution when delivering an oral presentation and give rise to this aspect to provide references to future endeavors. There are loads of reasons why students fear giving an oral presentation, and some of the students just give up on delivering their presentation. It is a typical type of anxiety that can range from mild trepidation to paralyzing fear and terror and fluctuate in intensity. Many people who have this phobia either completely avoid public speaking situations or endure them while trembling and speaking shakily.

The researchers would also like to know how the students are able to cope with such fear. Students who are inexperienced are most likely to be attacked by anxiety; they are yet to overcome it and discern what it takes to be a speaker. It is not easy to give an oral presentation, especially when the speaker is not used to communicating with someone. The findings of this study are expected to contribute to a better understanding of the oral presentation anxiety experienced by English major students in the Philippines, and to inform the development of interventions and support mechanisms that can help students manage this anxiety more effectively. Specifically, the study aims to answer the following questions: (1) What problems do English major students encounter when delivering oral presentation in class? (2) How do these students cope with anxiety after giving an oral presentation in class?

1.1 Public Speaking and Oral Recitation in the Academe

Public speaking is considered an indispensable skill in today's contemporary society, which is replete with various gatherings, conferences, and networking occasions (Barnard, 2018). It entails delivering a structured speech to a live audience with the aim of informing, entertaining, and persuading them. The facets of public speaking encompass selecting a topic, crafting a speech, and addressing queries from listeners. Typically, public speaking involves a formal and direct address to either an individual or a group. Its purpose can range from conveying information and narrating stories to inspiring action or a combination thereof. In the professional realm, public speaking holds significant prominence, with approximately 70 percent of jobs incorporating some aspect of it. Moreover, public speaking constitutes a crucial language skill that students must master in order to become proficient communicators (Fulcher, 2003, p. 23).

According to Hall, the act of speaking is often overlooked and undervalued, as it is acquired through the process of socialization and communication (Fulcher, 2003). According to Hornby (1987), public speaking involves using language in a regular voice, articulating words, having knowledge and proficiency in a language, expressing oneself verbally, and delivering speeches. In essence, public speaking serves as a means to express emotions and thoughts through language, facilitating interactive communication and the construction of meaning.

Furthermore, it has been noted that individuals may encounter public speaking anxiety in specific circumstances (Bodie, 2010). For instance, when delivering a presentation in front of a live audience, individuals may experience anxiety symptoms such as nervousness, increased heart rate, and sweaty hands, which collectively constitute state anxiety (Westernberg et al, 2009). With repeated negative experiences during these speaking engagements, state anxiety associated with particular situations can progress into a more generalized fear of public speaking, where individuals perceive themselves as consistently anxious in such scenarios (Bodie, 2010; Lipton et al, 2020).

Moreover, oral recitation serves as a classroom exercise where students engage in the memorization of information, retrieval of crucial concepts, and enhancement of cognitive abilities through spoken expression. It is a common experience for students to encounter feelings of anxiety, particularly when participating in oral recitation within the classroom setting. As noted by Cutrone (2009), language-related anxiety stands out as a significant obstacle faced by students. The study found that anxiety levels had a negative impact on oral performance. Specifically, students with high levels of foreign language anxiety demonstrated lower proficiency in speaking the target language. This suggests that foreign language anxiety can be a significant obstacle for language learners, especially in the development of oral skills.

According to a study by Moneva et al (2020) titled "Class size and Students' Anxiety in Oral Recitation," it was found that oral recitation is an effective method to help students memorize information and increase their confidence when speaking in front of the class. When students present in front of their peers, they become the centre of attention, which can lead to feelings of fear and anxiety, resulting in excessive sweating. To overcome this anxiety, students can practice speaking in small groups or with their peers before gradually moving on to larger audiences. In Jagobia National High School, particularly among Junior High School Students, it has been observed that students struggle to fully articulate their thoughts and ideas during oral recitation. The fear of making mistakes prevents them from expressing their viewpoints in class. Furthermore, students experience difficulties in choosing the right words to speak, often leading to excessive sweating and trembling hands when standing in front of the class. Subsequently, they tend to reflect on their performance and engage in self-questioning.

The study conducted by Moneva et al (2020) sheds light on the importance of oral recitation in helping students improve their memory retention and confidence in public speaking. However, the study also highlights the challenges that students face when presenting in front of the class, such as fear, anxiety, excessive sweating, and difficulty expressing their ideas. To overcome these challenges, the study suggests that students practice engaging in conversations among small clusters of individuals or interacting with colleagues and gradually move towards presenting in front of larger audiences. It is important for educators to be aware of these challenges and provide support to students to help them develop their public speaking skills and overcome their fears. Ultimately, by doing so, students can become more confident, expressive, and effective communicators, which can benefit them in their academic and professional lives.

1.2 Students' Oral Communication Anxiety and its Factors

Public speaking is a common activity in many educational institutions, and it can be a source of anxiety for many students. However, there are ways to cope with this anxiety and deliver an effective speech. One technique that students sometimes use is to focus on deep breathing exercises, which can help to calm nerves and regulate breathing patterns. Another technique is to engage in physical activity, such as shaking out your hands or stretching your arms, which can release tension and help to calm the body. By practicing these coping strategies, students can improve their confidence and feel more comfortable speaking in front of others. Oral communication anxiety is a common experience among college students in the Philippines, particularly those studying English as a second language. This type of anxiety can be a hindrance to effective communication and academic performance.

Oral communication refers to the act of conveying information through spoken words, encompassing various types of conversations such as direct interactions or telephone discussions. Speeches, presentations, and discussions are examples of oral communication forms. Additionally, instructional sessions may involve focused group conversations or collaborative exchanges, typically overseen or facilitated by an educator. Encouraging students to engage in verbal discussions enables them to articulate their comprehension of concepts or ideas. While some individuals possess innate speaking abilities, others may require assistance to enhance their communication skills. The fear of public speaking can stem from various factors (Amir et al, 2022).

Anxiety is characterized by feelings of fear, dread, and uneasiness, which can lead to physical symptoms such as sweating, restlessness, tension, and a rapid heartbeat ((National Library of Medicine, n.d.). Communication apprehension refers to the state of fear and uneasiness

that individuals experience when facing communication situations (Del Villar, 2010). It pertains to an individual's level of anxiety or fear associated with real or anticipated communication with others (McCroskey, 1977). Individuals who struggle with communication apprehension anticipate experiencing negative psychological and physical symptoms on the day of a speech, and their inclination is to avoid such situations in order to evade these distressing feelings altogether (Del Villar, 2010). Numerous studies conducted by Amir et al (2022), Bodie (2010), and Roig and Ballew (2020) provide evidence that public speaking anxiety is a common occurrence among students. These studies explore various contributing factors to public speaking anxiety, including the fear of being judged or evaluated, performance anxiety, and lack of confidence.

Cultural factors, such as the value placed on group harmony and avoiding conflict, may also contribute to increased anxiety in communication situations (Dela Cruz, 2019). In addition, several studies have found that learner characteristics, such as gender and proficiency level, and previous language learning experience, can significantly impact the development of oral communication anxiety among Filipino college students (Marcial, 2016; Jose & Orbeta, 2013). According to Jose and Orbeta (2013), language anxiety, particularly apprehension, had a direct impact on various aspects of oral performance, including pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Additionally, tension was found to specifically affect grammar. It is worth noting that in certain situations, individuals may be required to give presentations without sufficient time for preparation, leading to uncertainty about the topic. Furthermore, Amir et al (2022) suggest that some individuals' fear of oral presentations can be traced back to their previous educational experiences and may continue to influence their future oral presentation encounters.

Atas (2015), Faulin and Sofendi (2013), and Marzuki et al (2016) highlight the use of drama techniques, cooperative group learning strategies, and interactive storytelling as effective means to reduce speaking anxiety among students.

In conclusion, public speaking can be a challenging experience, and many students struggle with feelings of anxiety and nervousness. However, by learning coping strategies such as deep breathing and physical techniques like shaking out their hands, students can build their confidence and feel more prepared for public speaking activities. Additionally, it's important for students to practice their speeches and seek feedback from peers or teachers to refine their delivery and feel more comfortable with the material. With dedication and perseverance, students can become skilled and confident public speakers, and develop a valuable skill set that will serve them well in a variety of personal and professional contexts.

II. METHOD

2.1 Research Design

This study employed a qualitative research design using Interpretative Phenomenological Analysis to explore the lived experiences of freshman English Major students in a Philippine Higher Educational Institution regarding Oral Presentation Anxiety. This philosophical approach focused on understanding subjective experiences from the perspective of the individual. IPA acknowledged that the experiences were influenced by the interactions with the world and the meanings attributed to those experiences. It emphasized the importance of exploring the unique perspectives of individuals and how they made sense of their experiences (Smith & Nizza, 2022). The goal of IPA is to generate rich, in-depth understanding of participants' experiences rather than generalizing findings to larger populations. The approach is particularly suited to exploring complex and nuanced phenomena, such as mental health issues, trauma, identity formation, or coping strategies (Eatough & Smith, 2017).

2.2 Participants of the Study

A qualitative research study was conducted among Freshmen English major students in a higher educational institution in Tacloban City. The participants were selected from the Bachelor of Arts in English Language course—13 from Section 1-A and also 13 from Section 1-B, for a total of 26 participants—and they were asked to share their experiences and thoughts about oral presentations. The research was conducted through in-depth interviews. The inclusion criteria

for this study were the following: Participants must be Freshmen English major students enrolled at Eastern Visayas State University main campus; must be pursuing the Bachelor of Arts in English Language course; must belong to either Section 1-A or Section 1-B of the English Language course; The study requires an equal representation of participants from both sections, with a target of 13 participants from each section; Participants must have an idea about oral presentations, either through coursework or extracurricular activities; must be willing to share their experiences and thoughts about oral presentations during in-depth interviews. Regrettably, only 9 participants from Section 1-B allowed themselves to be involved with the study and were interviewed. Participants from Section 1-B who allowed themselves to be involved with the study and were interviewed will be included, regardless of the final number (in this case, 9 participants).

This study made use of purposive convenience sampling method. According to Creswell (2014), purposive sampling is a method of selecting participants who possessed certain characteristics or experiences that were important to the research question. Convenience sampling, on the other hand, involved selecting participants who were easily accessible or available to the researcher. Purposive convenience sampling was a combination of these two sampling techniques and involved selecting participants who had specific characteristics and were easily accessible to the researcher. In the context of this study, a possible way to obtain a purposive convenience sample was to recruit participants from a specific course or program that required such presentations and select them based on their willingness or availability to participate. This method would have allowed the researcher to select participants who had experience with oral presentations and were likely to have experienced anxiety during such presentations.

2.3 Data Collection and Analysis

The data collection was carried out through interviews and had a qualitative approach. After contacting the responsible students, the researchers set up a place and time to meet with the participants. The interviews took place in the campus premises, during the participants' ordinary lesson time. When the researchers met with the students and before starting the interviews, the participants were ensured of their anonymity, that the involvement in the study was voluntary, and that they could end their participation at any time. The researchers also gave them a letter of consent to sign that included the contact information if they had any further questions or if they wanted to end their involvement.

All the interviews were performed face-to-face with each participant and took approximately 10 minutes each. The interview questions were formulated in a way that facilitated answers that were in line with the research questions. Since a semi-structured interview was utilized, the researchers needed to be flexible and occasionally added follow-up questions that were related to what the participants had said. To ensure that the researchers gathered everything the participants had to say during the interviews, a mobile phone was used to take audio recordings. This also allowed the researchers to focus on the interviews and not spend time on making notes in the process. The recordings were later manually transcribed with the help of VLC Media Player. The researchers listened to each interview and then transcribed it to be able to analyze the data.

Thematic analysis was a widely used method for analyzing qualitative data in research. The method involved identifying patterns and themes within the data and interpreting their meaning. According to Braun and Clarke (2006) (p. 79), thematic analysis was a method for identifying, analyzing, and reporting patterns within data. Braun and Clarke (2006) had proposed a six-step process for conducting a thematic analysis. The process involved familiarizing the data, generating codes, searching for reoccurring themes within the data, defining and naming the themes, and producing a report. This data analysis tool was suitable for the paper since it included searching for themes and patterns within the collected data. The first step was familiarizing the collected data by reviewing the transcripts from the conducted interview and finding reoccurring themes and patterns within the received data. The second step involved generating codes by identifying parts of the received data and aligning them with the relevant

themes. These codes were then grouped together into potential themes. The third step was the search for reoccurring themes from the coded data. The fourth step involved defining and naming the themes. The themes were then reviewed, refined, and a final set of themes was identified and named. Lastly, a report was produced that outlined the key themes and their relevance to the research. This report had to be well-supported by the gathered data.

In this study, Saldaña's (2016) *Manual Coding for Qualitative Data Analysis* was used. Several coding techniques were elaborated, including process coding, eclectic coding, and axial coding (Saldaña, 2016, p.110, 212, 244).

Coding in qualitative research was comprised of processes that enabled collected data to be assembled, categorized, and thematically sorted, providing an organized platform for the construction of meaning. While qualitative research orientations differed theoretically and operationally relative to managing collected data, each employed a method for organizing it through coding data. Coding methods employed processes that revealed themes embedded in the data, in turn suggesting thematic directionality toward categorizing data through which meaning could be negotiated, codified, and presented. Coding was a key structural operation in qualitative research, enabling data analysis and successive steps to serve the purpose of the study (Williams & Moser, 2019).

Moreover, the ethical considerations that researchers exercised in conducting data collection for their study were crucial to ensure that the rights of participants were respected, and their welfare was protected. Informed consent was one of the primary ethical considerations that was observed, and it entailed providing participants with comprehensive information about the study's purpose, methods, potential risks, and benefits, and allowing them to make a voluntary decision to participate or not. The researchers also ensured that participation in the study was voluntary, and participants were not coerced or compelled to participate.

Confidentiality was another ethical consideration that was observed, and it involved ensuring that participants' information was kept confidential and not disclosed to unauthorized individuals. The researchers took adequate measures to safeguard participant data and ensured that only authorized personnel had access to it. Additionally, anonymity was upheld, and participants' identities remained undisclosed to anyone, including the researchers, to prevent potential harm or repercussions.

Finally, the researchers exercised ethical considerations regarding communicating the results of the study to the participants. They provided clear and concise explanations of the findings, including the limitations, implications, and potential applications of the study. Additionally, they ensured that the results were communicated in a language that was understandable and accessible to all participants. Overall, the researchers' adherence to ethical considerations in data collection helped foster trust, ensured the protection of participants' rights, and promoted the credibility and validity of the study.

III. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the findings of the study around the research questions: the participants' encountered problems when delivering oral presentation, and the ways on how they faced, dealt, and coped with the experienced anxiety after giving oral presentation in class.

3.1 Encountered Problems when Delivering Oral Presentation

The major problems that English major students encountered when delivering oral presentation in class can be categorized into five major themes: (1) apprehension and distress in oral presentations, (2) resource scarcity and readiness deficiency results to constrained engagement, (3) the spotlight fears and trembling grip on stage, (4) medium hurdles like encountering language disruptions and intrusions, (5) the struggles with regards to one's well-being.

Apprehension and Distress in Oral Presentations

Based on the feedback provided by our participants, it is evident that anxiety is a prominent challenge that arises during oral presentations. Public speaking anxiety is a common experience among students, as evidenced by the studies conducted by Amir et al (2022); The

person experiencing communication apprehension feels fearful and uneasy about the communication situation he is about to participate in (Del Villar, 2010); Experiencing anxiety in oral presentations is a common phenomenon that many individuals encounter. When faced with the task of speaking in front of an audience, individuals may feel a sense of fear, uneasiness, and apprehension. This anxiety can manifest in various ways, such as increased heart rate, sweating, restlessness, and difficulty in maintaining composure. Communication apprehension, as described by Del Villar (2010), is the experience of feeling fearful and uneasy about participating in communication situations. The participants' accounts align with this concept, as they express their uneasiness and the anxiety build-up they experience when faced with the task of delivering an oral presentation. These findings highlight the psychological impact of communication apprehension and its effect on individuals' performance in this specific context. One significant theme that is highlighted from the participants' responses is the apprehension and distress experienced during oral presentations. The pressure to engage the audience, the fear of public speaking, and the challenges of maintaining composure were commonly reported. These factors can significantly impact an individual's ability to effectively convey their thoughts and engage with their audience. These views are best view in our following response from P1 and P19.

Common problems that I usually encounter during presentations are the anxiety buildup because of the pressure that I feel from the stares of everyone, and I keep on stuttering in front of a huge crowd, such as in class. [P1]

I usually feel a bit tense when I'm speaking in front of my classmates, probably because of how the audience would react to my sentences. [P19]

According to the responses provided regarding apprehension and distress in oral presentations, two of our participants strongly coincide with the findings of Jose and Orbeta (2013). Their research emphasized the influence of language anxiety, particularly in terms of apprehension, on various aspects of oral performance such as pronunciation, grammar, comprehension, fluency, and vocabulary. Furthermore, the participants' accounts also highlighted the impact of tension on fluency. This correlation between the participants' experiences and the research findings underscores the significance of language anxiety in oral presentations (Jose & Orbeta, 2013).

3.2 Resource Scarcity and Readiness Deficiency Results to Constrained Engagement

The theme emerges from the responses of the participants, highlighting the challenges faced by English major students when delivering oral presentations. This theme exposes on the difficulties arising from a lack of adequate resources and insufficient preparedness, which ultimately hinder the students' engagement during their presentations. In the realm of oral presentations, one prominent theme that emerges is the concept of constrained engagement, which encompasses resource scarcity and readiness deficiency. This theme highlights the challenges individuals face when they lack the necessary resources and preparation to effectively engage in oral presentations. The responses provided further validate and exemplify these insights by [P2] and [P6].

For me, if you're not prepared for delivering an oral presentation, oftentimes you commit errors and are not confident to present, but once you're prepared and have enough knowledge about your topic, the effectiveness of delivering such a great presentation is high. [P2]

I have a hard time explaining especially when you are in front of everyone because of nervous and when we can only use English in our oral presentation. For me it is challenging. I don't have any experience right now because I'm just a first year yet. [P6]

At times, presenters may encounter situations where they are not provided with sufficient time to prepare, yet they are still expected to deliver a presentation even when they lack confidence in the topic. This aligns with the notion of readiness deficiency, where individuals may lack the necessary skills, confidence, or preparation to engage effectively.

3.3 The Spotlight Fears and Trembling Grip on Stage

The theme explores the significant anxiety and fear experienced by individuals when they are the centre of attention during a presentation or performance. This phenomenon is commonly known as stage fright or performance anxiety their bodies can react in ways that intensify their anxiety. Physical symptoms such as trembling hands, a racing heart, dry mouth, and sweaty palms are commonly reported by individuals experiencing stage fright.

The fear of speaking in front of an audience can have a significant impact on individuals, hindering their ability to effectively communicate their thoughts and ideas. The study conducted by Amir et al (2022) highlights how the fear of oral presentations can be traced back to past experiences in previous educational institutions, which further exacerbates anxiety in future presentation scenarios. Various factors contribute to the anxiety experienced during oral presentations. These views are best view in our following response from **P4** and **P7**.

My main problem is stage fright, and that's why I can't explain clearly what I'm presenting; big time, especially since we are all about impromptu speeches. Since I'm not yet used to presenting in front of a large audience, I find it difficult to engage with them. [P4]

Usually, the problem that I encounter when we have oral presentation is when getting a stage fright like your hands will be tremble and palpitate and you feel cold. The moment when you are in front of everyone there are instances that you tend to forget what you wanted to explain in front of everyone. [P7]

The responses from participants **P4** and **P7** highlight a clear correlation between their experiences and the symptoms associated with stage fright during oral presentations. Both participants express difficulties in delivering their presentations due to stage fright, leading to challenges in expressing themselves clearly and engaging with the audience. These experiences align with the common physical symptoms often associated with stage fright, such as trembling hands, palpitations, and feeling cold.

Participant 4 acknowledges that their main problem is stage fright, which directly affects their ability to explain their presentation clearly. The fear and anxiety associated with stage fright can hinder one's cognitive abilities, making it challenging to articulate thoughts and ideas effectively. The anxiety-induced trembling hands and palpitations can further exacerbate the difficulty in maintaining composure and delivering a coherent presentation.

Similarly, **Participant 7** also emphasizes the impact of stage fright during oral presentations. They specifically mention trembling hands, palpitations, and feeling cold as symptoms experienced when standing in front of an audience. These physical manifestations of anxiety often coincide with cognitive disruptions, leading to difficulties in remembering and expressing the intended content of the presentation.

The correlation between the participants' experiences and the physical symptoms of stage fright supports the existing literature on public speaking anxiety. Research studies, such as those by Bodie (2010), have highlighted the physiological and psychological effects of stage fright on individuals during public speaking engagements. The symptoms reported by participants align with the common manifestations of stage fright, including trembling hands, increased heart rate, and cognitive impairments.

3.4 Medium Hurdles like Encountering Language Disruptions and Intrusions

Language disruptions refer to difficulties or interruptions in the flow of speech caused by language-related issues. Participants may struggle with finding the right words, constructing coherent sentences, or maintaining fluency in the target language. This can hinder their ability to express themselves clearly and impact the overall effectiveness of their presentations. As Basic (2011) suggests, speaking anxiety can act as an obstacle to second language learning, leading to language disruptions during oral communication.

Intrusions, on the other hand, pertain to external factors that interrupt or distract individuals during their presentations. These can include interruptions from the audience, technical difficulties, or environmental distractions. Such intrusions can disrupt the speaker's

concentration and impede their ability to convey their message effectively. Participants' difficulty in engaging with the audience, as mentioned in the responses, might be influenced by these intrusions. This is relevant to participants [P3], [P13], and [P20].

Actually, the problem is when the topic is difficult, there's a time limitation, and the audience is distracted from other things. You need to gain the attention of your audience, and if your voice is not loud or audible in how you deliver your presentation, it will be really hard for you to gain their attention. That's the main problem. [P3]

Uhm... the problems that I encounter is... I get nervous you know... uhmm of course when I get nervous all I can hear is my heart beat, and every time I recite or present, I get mental blocked, which I forgot on what was I saying, that feeling when a word is at the edge of your tongue but you can't get it together on what the actual word was and then the sometimes words mixed up and it makes me stutter from it. [P13]

I'm still having a hard time pronouncing some words. One of our major subjects, gave us a task called "Round Table Discussion". Then, during that time, when it's my turn to discuss/report the topic that was given to me, I have a minute to ask my classmates if they know, or if they have any ideas about regional languages but then, no one answer me. [P20]

The participants' responses highlight various challenges and factors that contribute to difficulties in delivering effective oral presentations. These include the complexity of the topic, time limitations, distractions from the audience, voice projection and clarity, fear of making mistakes, and language proficiency issues. These concerns align with the literature on oral presentation anxiety and the factors that influence its impact. Starting with the complexity of the topic and time limitations, participants express how these factors add pressure and make it challenging to deliver their presentations effectively. Research by Atas (2015) emphasizes the importance of preparation and suggests that insufficient time for preparation can increase anxiety and hinder the ability to present clearly. The presence of distractions from the audience is also mentioned as a significant concern. Participants note that distractions, such as classmates laughing or making jokes, contribute to anxiety and a sense of worry and embarrassment. This aligns with findings from studies by McCroskey (1977) and Bastida and Yapo (2019), which indicate that audience behaviors and reactions can have a significant impact on speakers' anxiety levels and overall performance.

The participants' remarks on voice projection and clarity shed light on the role of effective communication in gaining the attention of the audience. Bodie (2010) discusses the physical symptoms associated with public speaking anxiety, including voice trembling and inaudibility. The participants' observation of classmates' inaudible voices due to shyness and nervousness reinforces the link between anxiety and voice-related difficulties during presentations. Further, language proficiency and pronunciation issues also emerge as significant hurdles. Participants express concerns about not being knowledgeable or fluent enough in English, which is the medium language for their presentations. References such as Liu and Jackson (2008) and Salim, Subramaniam, and Termizi (2017) explore foreign language anxiety and its impact on communication apprehension, indicating that language proficiency plays a crucial role in oral presentation performance. Lastly, participants highlight the importance of support and cooperation from classmates in alleviating anxiety and fear of making mistakes. This resonates with the research by Faulin and Sofendi (2013), which emphasizes the positive impact of cooperative group learning strategies on reducing speaking anxiety.

3.5 The Struggles with Regards to One's Well-Being

Several studies in the provided references highlight the challenges individuals face during oral presentations, which can have implications for their well-being. For example, Chiu et al (2010) and Wan et al (2019) discuss the role of anxiety, both trait anxiety and state anxiety, in oral presentations among college students. Anxiety can lead to physiological symptoms such as increased heart rate, trembling, and mental blocks, as described by participants in their responses.

These symptoms can contribute to feelings of distress and may negatively impact individuals' overall well-being.

The struggle to gain the attention and engagement of the audience, as mentioned by some participants, can also influence well-being. Del Villar (2010) and Milan (2019) discuss the importance of effective communication skills and strategies to capture and maintain the audience's attention during presentations. Difficulties in achieving this can lead to feelings of frustration, self-consciousness, and embarrassment, which can impact individuals' well-being.

Moreover, Bastida and Yapo (2019) highlight the influence of oral communication apprehension on senior high school students, indicating that fear and nervousness can hinder effective communication and contribute to a decline in overall well-being. On the positive side, some participants mentioned the importance of a supportive learning environment and the role it plays in alleviating anxiety and improving well-being during oral presentations. References such as Faulin and Sofendi (2013) and Marzuki et al (2016) emphasize the benefits of cooperative group learning strategies and interactive storytelling in reducing anxiety and enhancing confidence, thus positively impacting individuals' well-being. Best viewed from participants [P8], [P21], [P14], [P16], [P17] and [P18].

So, the main problem I usually encounter in our oral presentation is when you feel that you are nervous, you forget all you study before your oral presentation and sometimes you distracted to everyone and lastly you cannot deliver properly your report. [P8]

If I am asked to speak or deliver an oral presentation without much time to prepare, I will struggle because I will not be confident enough to articulate the intended information or message which will result for me to waver or stutter in between words, and the worst thing is that I will overthink a lot of what those people who are listening to me will think of me, and I even sometimes think that they are making fun of me in the back of their minds, which is why I refuse to talk most of the time, especially if I am not really familiar with what is asked of me. [P21]

During the commencement of my presentation, to me.... it was kind of a challenge to engage with my audience due to my timidity.....We all know that it is hard to transcend timidity. But, as time goes by and the presentation flows subtly, I gradually adapt to the environment... [P14]

One of my issues while giving an oral presentation is nervousness because I find public speaking to be uncomfortable. Based on my personal experience giving oral presentations, I have experienced these uncomfortable feelings.... which have caused me to talk slowly and have had problems pronouncing some words. Standing in front of a large audience can be an intimidating experience.... As soon as I stepped onto the stage, my mind went blank. I couldn't remember the points I had prepared.... and my anxiety level began to rise. [P16]

I usually get anxiety when it comes to oral presentation... especially in front of a wide audience. It pressures me and I overthink about it a lot on what might people think. I, personally know how to construct a sentence in English, fluently with no grammatical mistakes. But whenever I speak in front... those things become a barricade to every oral presentation I conduct. [P17]

It is a huge challenge for me, rather it grew to having a trauma by experience.... Our brains have transferred that ancient fear of being watched onto public speaking, fear of making mistakes, inability to remember scripts and lack of self-confidence in giving feedback to the audience, because I'm also not confident with my whole oral presentation. [P18]

These struggles encompass various aspects such as anxiety, lack of confidence, difficulty engaging with the audience, fear of making mistakes, and the impact of previous negative experiences. Firstly, several participants expressed experiencing nervousness and anxiety during oral presentations, which can significantly affect their well-being. This aligns with the findings of studies by Chiu et al (2010), Wan et al (2019), and Bastida and Yapo (2019), which highlight the influence of anxiety and oral communication apprehension on individuals' overall well-being.

The feeling of being nervous can lead to forgetting information, wavering or stuttering in speech, overthinking others' opinions, and a lack of confidence, as mentioned by participants.

Another struggle that participants mentioned is the difficulty in engaging with the audience. This can be attributed to timidity, lack of confidence, and the fear of being judged or laughed at. The participants' experiences resonate with the importance of effective communication skills discussed in references such as Del Villar (2010) and Milan (2019). These references emphasize the need to capture and maintain the audience's attention during presentations, which can positively impact individuals' well-being by reducing feelings of self-consciousness and embarrassment.

Moreover, some participants highlighted the impact of negative experiences and trauma related to oral presentations. These experiences can lead to a decline in confidence, fear of making mistakes, and difficulty remembering information. Faulin and Sofendi (2013) and Marzuki et al (2016) provide insights into the benefits of a supportive learning environment and cooperative group learning strategies in reducing anxiety and improving overall well-being.

Overall, the participants' responses demonstrate a correlation between struggles during oral presentations and their impact on individuals' well-being. Anxiety, lack of confidence, difficulty engaging with the audience, fear of making mistakes, and the influence of past negative experiences all contribute to the challenges faced. The provided references support these correlations by highlighting the role of anxiety, communication skills, and a supportive learning environment in promoting well-being during oral presentations. It is important to address these struggles to create a supportive and inclusive environment that fosters individuals' well-being and helps them overcome their challenges during oral presentations.

3.6 Ways on How Students Cope with Anxiety after Giving an Oral Presentation

The participants were asked to narrate their coping methods and experiences with anxiety after giving an oral presentation in class. It resulted to the emergence of six themes: (1) emotional respite in human connections; (2) mental resilience and adaptation; (3) the calming rhythm for stress relief; (4) harnessing movement and artistry for coping showcases embodied expressions; (5) embracing emotional equilibrium through the power of acceptance in coping; (6) unique coping strategy and perspective.

Emotional Respite in Human Connections

Based on the participants response, that there are ways on how to cope the anxiety after giving an oral presentation. Emotional Respite in Human Connections refers to finding solace, comfort and relief from emotional stress or burdens through interactions with other people. It suggests that human connections, such as relationships, friendships, or even simple conversations, have the power to provide a temporary escape from negative emotions and offer support and understanding. The study conducted by Moneva et al (2020) sheds light on the importance of oral recitation in helping students improve their memory retention and confidence in public speaking. However, the study also highlights the challenges that students face when presenting in front of the class, such as fear, anxiety, excessive sweating, and difficulty expressing their ideas. To overcome these challenges, the study suggests that students practice speaking in small groups or with peers and gradually move towards presenting in front of larger audiences. It is important for educators to be aware of these challenges and provide support to students to help them develop their public speaking skills and overcome their fears. Ultimately, by doing so, students can become more confident, expressive, and effective communicators, which can benefit them in their academic and professional lives. These opinions are best expressed in our answer to **P1**, **P2**, and **P15**.

So, for me, the technique that I usually use is talking to myself or talking with my friends. In that way, it gives me that ease feeling that provides me comfort after having anxiety due to oral presentations. Thus, in presenting, there is a different approach for different kinds of audience, which sometimes triggers anxiety. To overcome this, I just make myself comfortable by pretending that they already know me and that I am just talking with my friends, while of course also observing formality. [P1]

One of the techniques that I have is to just calm myself down and talk to my friends where I'm comfortable. This usually happens to me, and there are times when, if you're not ready, being nervous is indeed inevitable and you will feel the pressure, but at the end of your presentation, you will realize how well you have done your presentation. [P2]

Lately, I've been trying to engage in social interactions with different people, hoping to reduce the discomfort I feel when presenting my oral presentation in class. Holding a position of leadership, such as class president requires me to communicate effectively with their peers, and teachers. By regularly speaking in front of others, I can become more comfortable with public speaking and improve my ability.... to articulate my thoughts clearly and persuasively. [P15]

Emotional respite in human connections offers insight into the transformative power of relationships. It highlights the value of support, understanding, shared experience, and the emotional release that can be found through meaningful connections. These insights emphasize the importance of nurturing and prioritizing interpersonal relationships as an integral part of our emotional well-being.

3.7 Mental Resilience and Adaptation

Building resilience, adapting cognitive patterns, regulating emotions, employing adaptive coping strategies, embracing flexibility, and prioritizing self-care, individuals can develop the skills and mindset necessary to effectively navigate and cope with anxiety. In a study conducted by Moneva et al (2020) entitled "Class size and Students' Anxiety in Oral Recitation", it was stated that one of the methods in helping students memorize information and boost their confidence in standing in front of the class is oral recitation. When students start to perform in front of the class, they find themselves the focus of the attention, as they have to address and connect themselves to their classmates and teacher. In presenting in front of the class, they feel and experience emotions like fear and anxiety that lead to excessive sweating. Students can overcome this anxiety in oral recitation by practicing speaking in small groups or with peers and then moving to larger audience size. In Jagobia National High School, especially among Junior High School Students, it has been observed during oral recitation that the students cannot fully express their thoughts and ideas in presenting their point of view on a certain topic. Students are most afraid to present their thoughts in class because they are afraid to commit mistakes. Students who do oral recitation have trouble choosing a word to speak. Students have excessive sweating, and their palm is shivering like they are afraid of standing in front of the class. Afterward, they think about what they did, and they keep focusing on it and asking themselves. These opinions are best expressed in our answer to **P9** and **P21**.

After the oral presentation to overcome my anxiety or the experience I had, I break it down to myself what other problems that I encountered and try to create or formulate ideas on how I will be able to make a solution and it so that I will be able to use those techniques in my next oral presentation." [P9]

Taking deep breaths and visualizing a peaceful scene are two of the most common relaxation techniques I use. And accepting the fact that I cannot perform all tasks perfectly or in the manner in which I desire, and then proceed or begin to think optimistically. I take a lot of deep breaths and try to think optimistically. And I can say that it is extremely useful and saves me a lot of time." [P21]

Mental resilience and adaptation provide valuable insights and strategies for managing anxiety. By acknowledging anxiety, developing coping mechanisms, engaging in cognitive restructuring, embracing uncertainty, seeking support, practicing self-care, fostering flexibility, and learning from experience, individuals can effectively navigate and reduce the impact of anxiety on their well-being.

3.8 The Calming Rhythm for Stress Relief

The theme emerges from the responses of the participants, highlighting the challenges faced by freshmen English major students when delivering oral presentations. These themes utilize to induce a state of relaxation, reduces stress, and promote a sense of calmness. It involves engaging in rhythmic practices or adopting repetitive actions that have a soothing effect on the

mind and body, helping to alleviate the negative effects of stress. The responses provided further validate and exemplify these insights by **P6** and **P16**.

The common technique I usually do to make myself comfortable after having an anxiety in our oral presentation is I just take a deep breath and doing some inhale and exhale. I just continue what I'm doing in front of everyone even though it's difficult, as long as I present it in front of them. [P6]

I usually take deep breathing. In my situation.... taking a deep breath can help me feel less uneasy after experiencing anxiety... in every stage of an oral presentation in class. It also helps me concentrate more on giving my speech and... even after the event. First, I took a few deep breaths and focused on my breathing... inhaling deeply through my nose and exhaling slowly through my mouth. This helped to calm my nerves and slow down my racing thoughts. [P16]

The calming rhythm for stress relief offers valuable insights into the mind-body connection, regulation of the nervous system, reduction of stress hormones, distraction from negative thoughts, promotion of flow state, and enhancement of self-regulation. By incorporating rhythmic practices into daily life, individuals can effectively manage stress, promote relaxation, and cultivate a greater sense of well-being.

3.9 Harnessing Movement and Artistry for Coping Showcases Embodied Expressions

It refers to utilizing physical movement and artistic forms of expression as a means to cope with and manage anxiety. It involves using the body's movements and creative outlets to explore, express, and regulate anxious emotions, promoting a sense of calm, self-awareness, and emotional well-being. Anxiety is a feeling of fear, dread, and uneasiness. It might cause you to sweat, feel restless and tense, and have a rapid heartbeat. It can be a normal reaction to stress (National Library of Medicine, n.d.). The person experiencing communication apprehension feels fearful and uneasy about the communication situation he is about to participate in (Del Villar, 2010). In addition, public speaking anxiety can be experienced in a particular setting (Bodie, 2010), for example, when giving a presentation in front of an audience. Such public speaking situations can elicit an immediate state of anxiety (state anxiety), which is characterized by nervousness, a rapid heartbeat, and sweaty hands (Westernberg et al, 2009). The responses provided further validate and exemplify these insights by **P13** and **P15**.

Uhm... for me like uhm I rub or shake my hands to reduce feeling of stress and also, breathing helps to release stress. This helps me to clear my mind. The only thing that I can share in my experience is that, of course I feel nervous when I present, or answering questions but I still press on despite the stress, the anxiety I feel during the oral presentation or activities. And then after the presentation, I just shake it off what's in my head. [P13]

Usually, I take a pen and grip it because you know that we are nervous before, during, or after the presentation. It feels like there is a fire burning in ourselves, so I think holding a pen will lessen my anxiety. When I experience anxiety, I always surf the internet and find inspirational quotes that could boost my confidence and inspire me to start new things that would inspire and motivate me to create good and positive things. [P15]

It is important that while embodied expression can be beneficial for managing anxiety, they may not replace professional treatment therapy. It is always advisable to seek guidance from a qualified healthcare professional for comprehensive support in addressing anxiety-related concerns.

4.10 Embracing Emotional Equilibrium Through the Power of Acceptance in Coping

The practice of acknowledging and accepting one's emotions, experiences, and circumstances as a mean of finding a balance and resilience in coping with life challenges. It involves embracing a mindset of acceptance and non-resistance, allowing oneself to fully experience and acknowledge emotions without judgement or the need of control or change them. Is grounded in mindfulness and the understanding that emotions are transient states that arise

and subside naturally. Instead of resisting or clinging to emotions. The responses provided further validate and exemplify these insights by P20.

I do not have techniques. I can't control my emotion and self after having anxiety due to an oral presentation. I just let myself feel that uncomfortable times because minutes later, I know it'll be gone naturally from me. I don't know, I can't. I don't want to remember. [P20]

Embracing emotional equilibrium does not mean resigning oneself to a passive or stagnant state. Instead, it empowers individuals to make choices and take actions from a safe of self-awareness and acceptance. It can be complemented by seeking support from mental health professionals or engaging in other coping strategies that promote overall well-being.

3.11 Unique Coping Strategy and Perspective

It refers to the way an individual interprets and perceives their challenges and stressors. It involves adopting a distinctive mindset or outlook that shapes how they approach and respond to difficult situations. It also involves developing a distinctive set of techniques, beliefs and attitudes that are tailored to one's specific needs, values, and experiences. The responses provided further validate and exemplify these insights by P4 and P22.

This is really not a technique but an advantage; rather, since I am nearsighted and I really can't focus looking at my audience, I use my nearsightedness as an advantage in handling my presentation. Yes, the only thing that's making me nervous is the presence of the teacher. All I do is disregard the opinions of my classmates about my presentation. [P4]

I usually drink coffee and make myself so distant with others to have some peace of mind and to make myself calm. And lastly, I talk to talk. So, during the day that I felt so stress about so something, when I got home, I make myself some coffee and talk to talk to give me strength so move forward because growing up in a Christian family we believe that prayer is the most powerful weapon which we can use to strengthen our faith, to make our everyday life better, and to a weapon for every challenge that comes into our lives. [P22]

That seeking support from professionals, such as therapists or counselors, can also be beneficials in developing coping strategies and gaining new perspectives on challenges. While a unique coping strategy and perspective can be powerful, tool, seeking support from professionals when needed is valuable.

IV. CONCLUSION

Given an oral presentation was intimidating for freshmen students, even for English major courses, especially if they had never done one before. They experienced extreme anxiety and tension due to their overpowering dread of making mistakes or being scrutinized by their peers. Due to lack of preparation brought on by this anxiousness, the presentation became even more challenging. The fear of an oral presentation was also influenced by the topic's difficulty. Effective preparation and presentation of the material was challenging for the student if it was too complex or unfamiliar. For first-year students, the fear of public speaking was also a major barrier. Many students were shy by nature and could find it awkward to speak in front of a large crowd. In addition to these reasons, stage fright and anxiety also played a role in the apprehension of oral presentations. Students experienced anxiety and nervousness when speaking in front of a crowd, which impaired their performance.

The participants overcame their anxiety through practice, repetition, and feedback. By delivering presentations multiple times, they built confidence and became more comfortable. Mock presentations and feedback helped them identify strengths and weaknesses. Some participants coped by gaining knowledge about the topic and improving their English fluency. Being well-prepared and knowledgeable boosted their confidence. They also improved their English skills to overcome the fear of public speaking. After presenting, participants used various coping strategies such as self-talk, breathing techniques, distractions, relaxation, engaging with

others, creative outlets, and reflection. However, one participant struggled to control their emotions after experiencing anxiety. It's important for students to find what works best for them and experiment with different strategies. Practice, preparation, and understanding that stage fright is normal can help overcome anxiety.

By focusing on the content and message of the presentation, rather than the fear of making mistakes, students can deliver effective and engaging presentations. While the fear of oral presentation is a common issue among from the freshmen students majoring in English in a Philippine Higher Educational Institution, it can be managed with proper training, preparation, and knowledge. By gaining knowledge about the topic, becoming more fluent in English, practicing and taking mock presentations, and focusing on the content and message of the presentation, students can overcome their fears and deliver effective and engaging presentations.

The emergent themes covered provide insight on the difficulties and hardships people may experience when it comes to giving oral presentations and how many factors might affect their capacity for successful communication. These themes make it clear that anxiety and worry are normal feelings when giving presentations, and people may feel resource limited and underprepared, which can eventually result in limited engagement. A person's capacity to provide a compelling oral presentation may also be hampered by spotlight phobias, linguistic interruptions, and invasions. These themes also underscore the value of developing one's capacity for adaptability and stress reduction. Making positive and encouraging connections with others, encouraging movement and artistic expression, and cultivating a happy environment can all play a significant part in helping people feel competent and capable of giving effective oral presentations. Individuals can enhance their communication skills and further their personal and professional development by being aware of these emerging themes and taking the required action to address them.

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