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Public Speaking Strategies for Improving English Speaking Skills in the EFL College Context*

Nahk Bohk Kim
(Korea Nazarene University)

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This paper aims to analyze the perceptions of Korean students' public speaking anxiety (PSA) and suggest some applicable strategies for enhancing speaking skills in the EFL context. To do this, a survey on PSA was conducted, targeting 34 low-level students for G1 and 83 high-level students for G2 enrolled in an "English Conversation Class". In-depth interviews were conducted with twelve students among enrolled students. Data was analyzed utilizing SPSS 22.0. The results were as follows. Students were more anxious in the pre-speech phase than during-speech phase. Overall, regardless of gender and English proficiency level, students feel nervous and anxious in PS. In addition, some effective and applicable strategies for improving English speaking skills were suggested; eliciting small group or individual students to speak freely in front of the class on certain familiar topics, a more relaxed environment ushered in by the instructor, evading a strong discouragement of mocking peers when they make mistakes, more opportunity to speak in front of students in building close rapport, and impromptu speech activities encouraging high-level students, and utilizing familiar chunks for speaking skills. Finally, implications for building up the value of speech communication skills were highly presented for better PS instruction.

[public speaking/public speaking anxiety/conversation class/strategy]

I. INTRODUCTION

To date, in the era of speech communication, the ability to communicate in public is regarded as a highly desirable skill, whether to further one's career or merely for

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personal use (Humphries, 2011). Regarding the history of public speaking (PS), McCroskey (2009) speaks of the major changes in American public speaking education starting from the late 1940s to the late 1960s. In the 1980s and 1990s, many PS specialists had come to realize that the development of operating classes were not just with students speaking in front of the class but also of teaching skills by means of small groups and interpersonal communication. Again, gradually they recognized that "some students had anxiety and fears about communication other than just giving public speeches." (McCroskey, 2009, p. 160)

In regard to language communication, language learners regard anxiety as one of the most significant socio-affective factors influencing foreign language acquisition (Woodrow, 2006). In general, communication apprehension (CA) can lead to the critical success or detrimental failure of students' foreign language acquisition. Having high CA has been shown to have negative effects on individuals of a variety of cultures (McCroskey, 2009). Therefore, McCroskey, Fayer, and Richmond (1985) have argued that language instructors must address the CA of different types of students in order to facilitate second language acquisition. In light of the positive impact of languauage communication, CA was first developed as a tool to measure public speaking anxiety (PSA) but in the past 50 years it has become one of the most researched constructs in the field of communication (McCroskey, 2009).

Then, how are students being challenged to improve their PS skills outside of the formal classroom? Many US universities recognize the importance of providing students with opportunities to develop their communication skills, and consider that "the incorporation of a basic communication course such as the introductory class to PS is an important advance in curriculum development" (Greene & Walker, 2004, p, 435). This recognition is manifest not only in the United States but in Korean universities as well. The challenge is that contrary to American students, many Korean students do not have many opportunities to communicate their ideas in a public setting because they have grown up in a society and educational system where the value is placed on listening rather than speaking. Therefore, PS which is an aspect of willingness to communicate (WTC) is not only a salient research endeavor but a challenge of getting students prepared to express themselves.

Recently, a number of leaders from many sectors of society such as politicians, businessmen and social workers as well as educators spend much of their time practicing PS, reading books for researching, writing an outline of what they wanted to say, and practicing delivering a speech according to the various types of PS (i.e. informative, persuasive, inspirational etc.). Besides, speech classes in university general education also require students to listen to other speakers' speeches / presentations in various public venues as well as to help them prepare for a wide variety of job interviews effectively.

Considering the above introductory remarks, the idea of introducing such PS courses in Korean universities is the basis of this study which was designed to (1) identify EFL students' perceptions and levels of PSA, and (2) to seek strategies to be applied to EFL conversation classes, finding viable and proactive solutions to overcome such anxiety. Thus, the purpose of this study was to investigate participants' perceptions of PSA and PS, and to analyze the responses of a PS class focusing on the activities of twelve students who participated in a Focus Group Interview (FGI) as a means of investigating the following two research questions:

1) What are the perceptions of EFL university students regarding public speaking anxiety?
2) What are some applicable strategies for public speaking skills in EFL conversation classrooms?

II. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

1. Public Speaking and Public Speaking Anxiety

According to Wikipedia, PS is defined as "the process or act of performing a speech to a live audience. This type of speech is deliberately structured with three general purposes: to inform, to persuade and to entertain." This definition speaks of the different genres of speeches. Therefore, not all speeches are designed, nor ought they be, to inform, persuade and entertain. Rather they can do one of these three or an infinite list of these as well as other possibilities. Nonetheless, it is not unforeseeable that certain speeches in certain contexts might actually do all three although not usually in the formal way most people associate with speaking in public. Traditionally public speakers have addressed audiences most often without much, if any verbal interaction at all, with their respective audiences. Therefore, the speaker takes responsibility for what s/he says and/or does (O'Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2015). A speaker generally delivers a message with a specific purpose to a large group of people. Thus, PS is commonly understood as a single person speaking to a group of people in a formal, face-to-face format (Griffin & Bone, 2014; Trenholm, 2014). And now in our postmodern era, the concept of dialogue is becoming more and more prevalent. That is, PS can be enlarged conversation.

Currently day by day, PS as a group communication type can serve the purpose of transmitting information, telling a story, motivating people to act or a combination of these in an interactional manner. PS can also take the form of a discourse community in which the audience and speaker use discourse to achieve a common goal, like solving

the problem of students who lack WTC in English. Especially, different from only a handful of privileged individuals before, with the development of communications technology, millions of world citizens across the globe can watch the world leaders' speeches on national and international television or view it online or on mobile devices (Coopman & Lull, 2015).

When it comes to public speaking anxiety (PSA) it is a perfectly normal and a situation-specific social anxiety that arises from the real or anticipated enactment of an oral presentation (Antony, 2004). As a result, the root of PSA is the lack of positive PS, feeling different from members of the audience, and uneasiness about being the center of attention. There is an often-cited but probably apocryphal study claiming that PS is the world's most common phobia, more fearsome to people than any other source of anxiety such as the fear of heights, spiders, the dark or even death itself (James, 2002). Students have a comparatively high level of communication apprehension (CA). Studies also reveal that students prefer group discussion as a way of reducing their communicative anxiety (Nahk Bohk Kim, 2017; Zhang & Liu, 2013).

Regarding overcoming PSA, recently Chapman University's Survey on American Fears (2014) revealed that PS is Americans' number one fear for nearly thirty percent of Americans. The key to students conquering their fear of speaking and actually doing well in front of people is ample preparation and practice. Prior to that, however, students need to be motivated. They require the sense that they need and want to improve their PS skills in order to "go deep" into their careers and "seize the day". For example, one might be invited to speak at a friend's wedding, give a eulogy for a deceased loved one, and motivate people to volunteer at a charity event or express sincere condolences to a family in grief.

Ultimately, becoming a well-versed public speaker can enhance the way one is perceived by others, which helps us feel more confident, and even open up unimaginably unlimited doors of opportunity. This all sounds good and well but the challenge, the "mountain", so to speak, is that in order to open these "doors of opportunity", students have to take advantage of the opportunities given to them "to make all-out efforts" to "practice to perfection" (Nahk Bohk Kim, 2017).

2. Conversation Enhancement Skills

Conversation is an integral part of personal interactions between two or more people about something of interest or concern. Increased conversational skills can boost information value and help us experience the enjoyment of participation. Keeping a conversation going is something of an art, and one in which many students now seem to

lack, or are unwilling to show in front of other students. This seems counter-intuitive to having constructive and enjoyable conversations with others which are supposed to be fun. Contrary to communication which is to be heard in more formal dialogue, conversation is simply talking to someone else beginning with but ultimately going beyond small talk,[1] usually informally.

Simply speaking, conversation is spoken on the proverbial "a two-way street," where at least one person, if not the other parties as well, ideally tries to achieve a balance between talking and listening in both directions, though this may not happen at all times by all people in every conversation (Antony, 2004). So trying to ask a question to establish common ground is the "golden rule" of conversation. Bilateral speakers can build rapport in a friendly way by establishing some common grounds, simply smiling and using positive and reinforcing body language with such questions as, "What do you think about…?" or "What are you interested in?" We are told to avoid continuous and controversial topics at our first encounter with other people on the so-called "taboo" topics of politics and religion.

Meanwhile, in a college setting, although students are worried about having conversations in English because they are concernced they will not be able to keep the conversation going, students are eager to improve their conversation and communication skills. They can cover most academic and professional topics, including interviews, presentations like TED talks, discussions and debates to enhance their thinking structure. Discussions on these taboo topics are arguably fundamental to students' success when they meet people from around the world.

In order to enhance their conversation skills, students need to establish some appropriate strategies to become better speakers and presenters from the beginning to the end. PS is not just about verbally articulating what we have on our minds but it is also about conveying our thoughts and ideas or even assertions as well in a manner congruent with the type of speech we are giving (O'Hair et al., 2015). Along with that, speakers / presenters show all aspects of their nonverbal cues through such things as appearance, impression, and movements, not to mention verbal cues such as voice, tone, enunciation and volume in a way that captures and keeps the attention of the audience (Nahk Bohk Kim, 2017).

That is, PS is one aspect of communication used to introduce oneself visually in front of a crowd of people, persuade others convincingly, inform someone of something in a

[1] 'Small talk' is, broadly, inconsequential 'chit-chat' about minor or uncontentious issues such as the weather, recent news items or jobs. Some people purport to despise small talk as being unimportant, or trivial, but it serves a useful function of allowing one to build rapport and establish common ground without having to invest too much emotion in the conversation. This may be particularly important for introverts. (https://www.skillsyouneed. com/ips/conversational -skills.html)

concise and comprehensive way, and deliver a wide array of audience adaptation speeches such as wedding speeches, funeral speeches, congratulatory remarks, inspirational remarks at a charity event or an introductory speech (O'Hair et al., 2015). Not only can conversational skills be learned and developed, but it is surprisingly easy to do so, especially in a democracy, one's ability to express one's thoughts on politics, or even the policy of education is vital, going beyond small talk.

Consequently, as students listen to speeches, they are "prone to wander." People in the audience have many things to think about other than the speech they are listening to. When a student is in the audience, however, they can help out the speakers by listening carefully and critically to their fellow students. With many different styles of listening, sometimes we listen for comprehension or listen to receive information. And there are times when we listen critically, to evaluate the speaker's message. In a speaking class, students ought to listen to learn, but also to evaluate the speaker's message. When they sit down, people in the audience will be asked to give the speaker feedback, and feedback requires careful listening. When the teacher asks students in the audience to give feedback to their peer who just spoke in front of the class, those students should keep these things in mind. Consequently, "public speeches are more formal than private conversations; at the same time, public speeches aim to be conversational and personal" (Hemmert, 2008, p. 20).

III. METHOD

1. Participants

The total number of students who participated in this PSA survey was 117 students consisting of a wide variety of majors, 34 low-level students for G1 and 83 high-level for G2 who took a conversation course at a Korean university. For follow-up in-depth interviews, 12 students out of the survey participants of the high level group, 7 male and 5 female students responded to 8 interview questions as part of a FGI regarding the challenges of speaking in front of their peers in English Conversation classes and for the purpose of ascertaining applicable strategies for improving conversation skills in the EFL context. These students were enrolled in from "English Conversation 1 or 2 for low-level group (G1: a TOEIC score less than 500)" to "English Conversation 3 or 4 for high-level group (G2: a TOEIC score more than 500)" during the fall semester of 2017. Table 1 indicates some variables of the survey and interview participants, arranged according to gender, year, and class.

TABLE 1

Summary of Interview Participant Variables (n=12)

Interviewee	Gender	Year	Class
A	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
B	Female	Sophomore	English Conversation 4
C	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
D	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
E	Female	Freshman	English Conversation 4
F	Female	Freshman	English Conversation 4
G	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
H	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
I	Female	Freshman	English Conversation 4
J	Female	Freshman	English Conversation 4
K	Male	Freshman	English Conversation 4
L	Male	Sophomore	English Conversation 4

2. Instruments

1) Questionnaire and interviews

The instrument for this study was a modified questionnaire used to identify PSA through McCroskey's PRPSA[2] which measures students' levels of communication anxiety. Students filled out the questionnaires during the class. To express their thoughts and opinions about PS, the questionnaire included 5-level Likert items (1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree). Additionally, 12 participants playing the role of FGI responded to open-ended interview questions.

Interviews were conducted during the regular class before the final exam in the form of feedback to interview questions with 12 students in order to investigate their perceptions of PS activities and some applicable strategies on how to overcome PSA and to organize better PS curriculum. These 12 interviewees were chosen randomly by the international instructor, an American. The randomly selected student talked one-on-one at the instructor's desk in front of the classroom in most of the classes. In order to balance the interviewees equally between women and men, the instructor only did a random selection with students of that gender.

Concretely, the first method utilized for this research was that of conducting surveys with the 117 students taking a conversation class. The second method utilized for this research was that of interviewing students. In order for students to understand the questions and to be able to answer the questions accurately, the interview was done in

[2] Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety (PRPSA)'s questionnaire was developed by McCroskey in1970 in order to measure communication-bound anxiety. In this study the items were adopted and partly revised a little from previous contents to compare students' responses.

the form of a short questionnaire where 8 questions were presented to students on paper in both Korean and English. Students were given no strict guidelines on how long their answers needed to be. They were conducted mostly in English so if students had a strong command of English their answers tended to be long, whereas students with a lower English ability tended to answer more briefly with less conviction about the shortcomings of the class related to getting students to speak in front of the class. Students could read the questions that the instructor asked but they did not write down their answers.

The PSA surveys were distributed to students during the class. There were no strict instructions given on the required length for the answers. The interviews were simply one-on-one conversations between one representative student of each class and the instructor. Students' abilities or attitudes were not factors in being selected. This gave the survey a good balance and involved students who were less motivated to speak in class as well as students who were more motivated to speak in class.

3. Data Collection and Analysis

For the first research question, a descriptive analysis of the questionnaire on PSA was utilized to identify enrolled students' perceptions and levels of PSA through modified PRPSA during the class. The collected samples were analyzed in terms of descriptive statistics through the program SPSS 22.0. G1 and G2 were analyzed separately in terms of the second research question, related to English Conversation students, to ascertain applicable strategies for improving speaking skills, twelve students were selected for the FGI in order to identify challenges students encountered in terms of volunteering or being asked to speak in front of their peers in English Conversation classes. The surveys distributed to students were quantitatively administered whereas the interviews at the Korean university where the second part of this study was conducted were administered according to PRPSA utilizing qualitative research methodology.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Students' Perceptions on Public Speaking Anxiety

Regarding PSA analysis, the researcher largely divided the questionnaire items into two parts except for only item 4 about post-speech. In order to identify students' PSA in each group, data was collected via a questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale

(1=strongly agree, 2=agree, 3=neutral, 4=disagree, and 5=strongly disagree). They were completed by G1 and G2 students enrolled in an English Conversation course. In addition, twelve FGI students were interviewed about their perceptions of their own PSA and how to improve their speaking skills through PS activities in the classroom. Pre-speech phrase in Table 2 is about various physical and physiological anxieties during pre-preparation and preparation process. During-speech phrase in Table 3 is about a variety of dimensional nervous feelings which students can experience during the process of delivering a speech from beginning to end.

TABLE 2

Results of the PSA Questionnaire for "Pre-Speech Phase" (*n*: G1=34, G2=83)

PSA Questions	G1		G2	
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
1. While preparing for speaking in front of the class, I feel tense and nervous.	2.45	0.94	2.44	0.99
2. I feel tense when I see the words presentation and speaking (share with the class) on a course outline when enrolled in a class	2.57	1.01	2.53	1.11
5. I get anxious when asked to speak in front of the class.	2.36	0.96	2.82	0.97
7. Although I am nervous just before speaking in front of the class, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.	3.22	0.92	2.86	1.10
8. I look forward to speaking in front of the class.	4.07	0.89	3.85	0.99
9. When the instructor announces a speaking assignment in class, I can feel myself getting tense.	2.83	1.08	2.74	1.02
12. I enjoy preparing to speak in front of the class.	3.94	0.85	3.82	0.97
19. I perspire just before speaking in front of the class.	3.43	1.04	3.56	1.02
21. I experience considerable anxiety while sitting in the room just before I speak in public.	2.58	0.98	2.71	1.12
25. I breathe faster just before speaking in front of the class.	2.72	0.97	2.80	1.01
26. I feel comfortable and relaxed in the hour or so just before speaking in front of the class.	3.61	0.90	3.30	1.14
27. I do poorer speaking in front of the class because I am anxious.	2.69	1.02	2.94	1.07
28. I feel anxious when the teacher announces the date of a speaking assignment.	2.93	0.97	2.74	1.19
31. I have trouble sleeping the night before a speaking test.	3.54	1.04	3.47	1.28
33. I feel anxious while waiting for my turn to speak in front of the class.	2.48	0.89	2.68	1.15

The results of the questionnaires in Table 2 and 3 showed that participants felt more nervous at the pre-speech phase than they did at the during-speech phase in aspects of PSA, regardless of low-and high level students. Just thinking of and preparing speaking

in public, PSA made them more tense, perspiring, and breathing faster (see items 1, 2, 5, 9, 19, and 25). They also gradually felt anxious when they encountered speaking assignments (see items 9 and 28). However, they felt comfortable and calm as time went on (see items 7, and 26). Overall, students had a comparatively high level of PSA and did not long to engage in PS (see items 8, 12 and 33).

Students felt nervous prior to and during the time they gave a speech, and sometimes even after their speeches were already delivered like N. Kim's research (2017). Table 3 shows that speaking in front of the class makes students nervous, jumbled and be in constant fear (see items 3, 6 and 13). Their fear of giving a speech was most evidenced by trembling hands, beating heart and helpless feeling (see items 10, 20, 22, 29, 30 and 32). However, with time students felt less anxious and more relaxed regarding their speeches (see items 11, 16, 17 and 24), even though they continued to make mistakes while giving speeches.

TABLE 3

Results of PSA Questionnaire for "During-Speech Phase" (*n:* G1=34, G2=83)

PSA Questions	G1		G2	
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*
3. My thoughts become confused and jumbled when I speak in English in front of the class.	2.58	0.96	2.56	1.05
6. I have no fear of speaking in front of the class.	3.99	0.90	3.56	1.11
10. My hands tremble when I am speaking in front of the class.	3.33	1.03	3.15	1.13
11. I feel relaxed while speaking in front of the class.	4.00	0.80	3.77	0.99
13. I am in constant fear of forgetting what I prepared to say when I speak in front of others.	2.69	1.06	2.53	0.90
14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I do not know when I have to speak in front of the whole class.	2.60	0.96	2.68	1.04
15. I face the prospect of speaking in front of the class with confidence.	3.57	1.03	3.36	0.98
16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while speaking in front of the class.	3.54	0.94	3.21	0.84
17. My mind is clear when speaking in front of the class.	3.40	0.90	3.44	0.93
18. I do not dread speaking in front of the class.	3.66	0.99	3.26	1.07
20. My heart beats very fast as I start a speech.	2.43	0.93	2.65	0.85
22. Certain parts of my body feel very tense and rigid while speaking in front of the class.	3.02	1.00	2.94	1.13
23. Realizing that only a little time remains when speaking in public makes me very tense and anxious.	2.80	1.04	2.68	1.12

24. While speaking in front of the class, I know I can control my feelings of tension and stress.	3.35	0.76	3.15	0.90
29. When I make a mistake while speaking before class, I find it hard to concentrate on what I want to say next.	2.57	0.90	2.68	1.04
30. During an important presentation I experience a feeling of helplessness building up inside me.	3.20	0.96	2.79	1.17
32. My heart beats very fast while I speak in front of the class.	2.50	0.85	2.82	1.03
34. While speaking in front of the class, I get so nervous I forget facts I really know.	2.67	0.88	2.91	1.11

TABLE 4

Significant Results of the PSA Questionnaire for G1 and G2

PSA Questions	G1		G2		t	*Sig.*
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*		
5. I get anxious when I am asked to speak in front of the class.	2.36	0.96	2.82	0.97	-2.35	0.02
6. I have no fear of speaking in front of the class.	3.99	0.90	3.56	1.11	2.18	0.03
18. I do not dread speaking in front of the class.	3.66	0.99	3.26	1.07	2.08	0.04

Only 3 factors contained items 5, 6, and 18 in Table 4 show a significant difference between G1 and G2 in the level of 0.5. This implies that the level of English proficiency does not have any huge impact on PSA. That is, regardless of the English proficiency level, most students suffer from PSA.

As for male and female, the overall results of two-way ANOVA analysis significantly differ among 8 items out of 34 items. Interestingly enough, only post-speech item 4 shows a significant difference between male and female students. Table 5 shows significant differences among items 7, 12 and 31 in a Pre-speech phase, also items 14, 15, 16 and 17 in a During-speech phase, respectively.

TABLE 5

Significant Results of the PSA Questionnaire for Male and Female

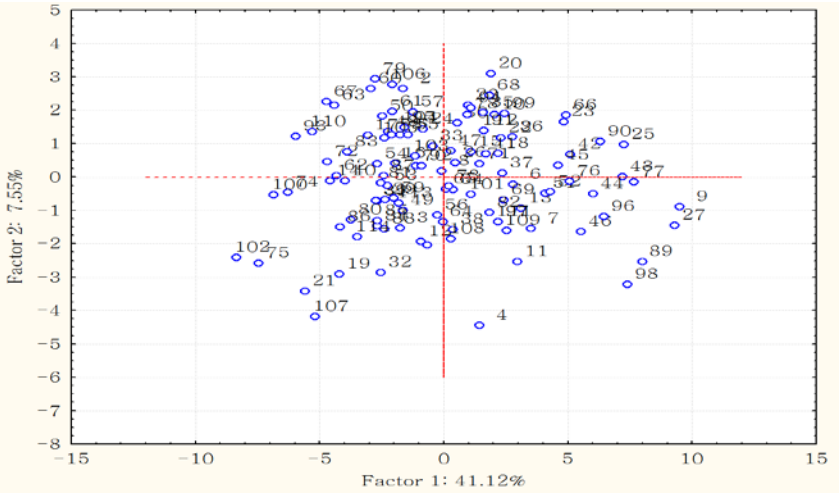
PSA Questions	Male		Female		t	*Sig.*
	Mean	*SD*	*Mean*	*SD*		
4. Right after speaking in front of the class I feel that I have had a pleasant experience.	2.62	0.82	3.10	0.86	-2.55	0.01
7. Although I am nervous just before speaking in front of the class, I soon settle down after starting and feel calm and comfortable.	2.91	1.00	3.37	0.92	-2.57	0.01

12. I enjoy preparing to speak in front of the class.	3.74	0.92	4.12	0.79	-2.33	0.02
14. I get anxious if someone asks me something about my topic that I do not know when I have to speak in front of the whole class.	2.85	0.93	2.31	0.97	3.02	0.00
15. I face the prospect of speaking in front of the class with confidence.	3.30	1.08	3.76	0.86	-0.50	0.01
16. I feel that I am in complete possession of myself while speaking in front of the class.	3.14	0.86	3.84	0.86	-4.42	0.00
17. My mind is clear when speaking in front of the class.	3.21	0.92	3.69	0.81	-2.91	0.04
31. I have trouble falling asleep the night before a speaking test.	3.73	0.97	3.25	1.23	2.32	0.02

Meanwhile, Figure 1 reveal that two dimension ordination of students' responses to 34 questions using factor analysis. Numerals indicate student number, from 1 to 34 for G1 and from 35 to 117 for G2 of high-level students. More specifically, in order to determine whether students between groups responded differently, factor analysis was conducted according to Statistica (H. No & H. Jeong, 2002).

FIGURE 1

Factor Analysis of Responses between Groups



As shown in Figure 1, students' responses reveal that there is no distinct difference between the two groups (G1 and G2), showing mixed distribution on the whole, except for a few numbers. That is, the results of factor analysis disclose that most students stand

at the central part, showing similar responses except for the low-level student numbers 4, 9, 19, 21, 27, and 32, and high-level student numbers 75, 89, 98, 102, and 107 which are a little apart from the center. Considering these results, teachers need to not only design the conversation framework to overcome PSA for the whole class but touch individually on the language proficiency according to the difference level. Generally speaking, regardless of gender and English proficiency level, students feel nervous and anxious in PS.

2. Applicable Strategies for PS Skills in the EFL Contexts

Based on the analysis from the open-ended questionnaire and interviews, the researcher identified the following several applicable strategies for PS skills. Table 6 indicated that participants enrolled in conversation class responded to interview questions. Students were expected to answer eight questions. As for the first, second, and third questions, most students referred to either shyness or a lack of confidence, even alluding to Korean culture being a cause of them not wanting to "stick out." Some students stated that the issue is related to English itself, such as vocabulary or grammar, whereas other students argued that it is unrelated to English. They said that students do not have an opportunity to speak in front of their peers in English and that they do not know each other well. A vast majority of students are extremely afraid of being judged by others. They have little experience with speaking in English and also they are afraid of saying the wrong answer.

TABLE 6

Students' Responses to Interview Questions

Items	Students' Major Responses
1. Do you think speaking English in front of the class is difficult? Why or why not?	Shyness & nervousness and not enough experience, couldn't process their thoughts in English, English education focusing on reading and listening, no confidence, worried about making mistakes, not adjusted to speaking to each other in public, awkward environment, awkward environment
2. Why do you think students are hesitant to speak (especially presentations) in English in front of other students?	Feeling of being ashamed and embarrassed, difficulty expressing themselves in English, incomplete preparation, overwhelmed by lots of people, not good pronunciation, lack of familiarity with one another, worried about making mistakes, not familiar with using English in public
3. What would be the worst thing that could happen if you made mistakes while speaking in English in front of your peers?	Awkward environment, shyness and feeling of being embarrassed and humiliated, laughing and teasing, confidence loss, stopping the flow of speaking, face turning red, unable to concentrate on what I want to say, valuable experience, ashamed and nervous, become more comfortable with English

4. Why are you satisfied with the way this English Conver – sation professor gave speaking tasks regarding the way students interact in front of the whole class?	Need for space for one-on-one conversation, a way of speaking with common interests, a matter of students' will, satisfied and beneficial, students' attitude, talking about current topics, fostering group discussion, create a burden-free conversation environment, giving free-time for team debate, building a closer relationship with fellow students
5. Mark the two items below which you consider to be necessary graded speaking activities for English Conversation classes with a "No. 1" and a "No. 2" in the parentheses next to the corresponding item.	Then write an example and your reason for why you think so. a. One-on-one interview (6); b. Group presentations (2) c. Role-play (2); d. Group discussion (4) e. Speaking activities with no preparation: Free-talking (8) Stressed out for presentation, improving speaking ability through various natural role-playing situations, improving speaking skill on any situation by free talking,
6. What do you think are good methods for getting students to actively participate in speaking activities in public, whether it involves the whole class or groups of students?	Intimate encouraging atmosphere, creating a relaxed atmosphere, ample opportunity to talk, joint conversation with students' speaking taking priority, having opportunity for everyone to speak, group assignment, roleplay & group discussion, triangulated participation, bonding with each other, generous grading, giving rewards for praising, presentation through a game or fun activities
7. How can students overcome their anxiety of speaking in front of other students?	A lot of experience and effort, mock roleplaying presentation through cooperation, can do attitude, frequent practice with a variety of methods with free topics, developing a more comfortable environment, use it in every conversation consciously, constant and sufficient practice, make situations not focused on individuals
8. What do you think are good individual and class methods to develop students' public speaking skills in English Conversation classes?	Attitude for speaking in public, positive modeling for practice, get better acquainted for conversation, more time, regular role play and free talking, make presentation through more comfortable situations, more opportunities to speak in English, do sufficient speaking practice, memorized speaking, practice having conversation with useful expressions during free-talking

Regarding the fourth, fifth, and sixth questions, they were the most difficult questions for students to answer. This could demonstrate that students themselves are dumbfounded in many cases on what they need to do to overcome their fear of speaking in English in front of others, much less what somebody should do to help them on their behalf. It shows that instructors need to have a clear idea on what is needed in order to foster a WTC environment in speaking contexts (Hodis, Bardhan, & Hodis, 2010). In order to reduce the nervousness students expect to play games that give them the opportunity to

speak more naturally in English. As expected, some students find the concept of speaking in front of the whole class ineffective. Students prefer free talking or one-on-one interviews to other methods like group presentations or discussions and role-plays. This is because students tend to be individually minded rather than collective. They prefer to participate in activities which demonstrate their own speaking level.

In regard to preferable methods overcoming PSA and applicable methods concerning question number 7 and 8, students demonstrated a lack of certainty, recommend bonus points, and put the responsibility on students by suggesting that they memorize more words. This suggests general education classes outside of their majors are not going to be taken seriously. Basically students want to play more games and do a variety of activities which foster a more lighthearted environment.

Overall, students' responses to the interview suggest that there are a variety of factors and certain barriers to successfully speaking in public. Most importantly, the American instructor told the researcher, saying the following, "the instructor needs to be a 'Jack of all trades' when it comes to getting students to be successful in communicating in English":

> "The instructor plays a great role as a counselor encouraging students by reminding them that it's okay to make mistakes, as an ambassador in creating a warm environment where students feel safe to speak in front of others, and as a facilitator instigating a variety of activities that are not always necessarily connected directly to the textbook but that gets students to know each other better and to be a provider, giving students ample opportunities to speak with and in front of their peers in such a way that at the end of the semester students can say, "I did it".

Further results are deciphered in order to ascertain some more effective and applicable strategies for improving English speaking skills. Some examples of these kinds of strategies include impromptu speeches, speaking in small groups, eliciting students to speak in front of the class, creating a warm and safe environment where students can perform at their best without any burdens.

On the other hand, informative and persuasive speeches with two speakers are like enlarged conversation in a sense. Through group discussion the classroom debate would be a constructive learning activity. The debates will help improve their critical thinking skills and oral communication ability. In addition, other benefits of such debates include mastering course content, boosting confidence, overcoming stage fright, and improving teamwork skills. Even more, their confidence spreads into all areas of their work.

More concretely, on the basis of the illustration of O'Hair et al. (2015), the researcher

of this study formulated a PS framework basically consisting of three-process activities. The first example of this type of activity is video-recording. After practicing the speech several times, students can record their speech as a means of practice. These practice sessions can provide valuable feedback. As students watch their initial recording they can take notes of the things they would like to change. Before recording again, they need to practice several more times until they are comfortable enough with the changes they've incorporated.

The second type of these three-process activities is self-reflection and peer correction. In order to add more creative gestures, students record their presentations for interactional evaluation like Ho Lee's research (2016) suggested in the media-conference English debate. The purpose of this activity is for them to ask themselves what they have learned from the experience of incorporating new ideas. Through group coaching sessions in the evaluation stage of PS classes, they will notice how everyone has to master the same techniques.

One more applicable solution is to use the technique of giving impromptu speeches, especially for advanced students. An impromptu speech is one that requires no previous preparation. The speaker is given the topic seconds before s/he delivers it. This speech requires the speaker to familiarize oneself with the basic format of the speech and organize the contents on a spur-of-the-moment basis.

A recent PS study shows that students who practiced their speeches in front of small audiences received significantly higher evaluations in their classroom speeches than students who did not practice or practiced in different ways (Beebe & Beebee, 2015; Colombo, 2007). Although practicing did not directly produce less speech anxiety, the overall better performance outcomes for those who did practice suggest that even the more anxious students were better able to control their anxiety. This goes along the lines of Kamridah, Yassi, Arafah and Imran's study (2016) that a person's level of anxiety did not become barriers for speaking.

From the innovative teaching approach in terms of improving public speeches, in EFL situations, the combination of words, instead of word by word is beneficial in language use in terms of the basic language components. When students try to learn new lexical items as an unanalyzed unit they should pick up the most common chunks and use them appropriately in class or in free-talking activities at an English café or in speaking as well as in writing (Nahk Bohk Kim & Brent Dirks, 2011; Lewis, 1997; Shinwoong Lee 2015). Their responses seem to imply that they built up confidence in speaking and writing through a variety of trials and errors as well as overcoming their fear of making speaking mistakes

V. CONCLUSION

According to a 2010 survey conducted by the National Association of Colleges and Employers in the United States, communication skills are ranked first among a job candidate's "must have" skills and qualities. To date in Korea, PS is also increasingly becoming an intrinsic part of our daily lives, no matter what our field of study is related to, college students preparing for a job interview, or students making a class presentation. The purpose of this study was to investigate participants' perceptions of PSA and PS, and to search for applicable strategies through responses focusing on the activities of 12 students by investigating the two research questions.

Firstly, "What are the perceptions of EFL university students regarding public speaking anxiety?" Students had a comparatively high level of PSA and did not want to engage in PS with confidence, and felt more anxious in the pre-speech phase than during-speech phase. Regardless of their gender and English proficiency level, students experienced PSA. Anxiety has been regarded as one of the most important socio-affective factor influencing conversation skills. As a result, applicable strategies for improving PS and addressing learners' language anxiety are vital for academic purposes (Humphries, 2011).

Secondly, "What are some applicable strategies for PS skills in EFL conversation classrooms?" There were different ways of coping with PSA and handling PS preparation and delivery strategies based on whether the speakers were EFL speakers or native speakers. EFL students mainly focused on rapport and intimate non-verbal environment rather than linguistic and verbal communication (Nahk Bohk Kim, 2017). As to applicable strategies, an appropriate audience-friendly environment, self-reflection and peer correction through video-recording, sometimes impromptu speeches would be suggested for better enhancing public speeches.

The limitations of this paper include the following. This was carried out at just one Korean university in one English-speaking country with 117 students for PSA survey and twelve interviewees as a preliminary case study. It is limited in terms of generalizing the results of this paper. Despite these limitations, however, the implication in this study is that EFL instructors elaborately design the public speaking curriculum framework for EFL students, connecting verbal communication elements together with nonverbal communication components. In addition, especially for overcoming PSA, teachers need to develop a wide variety of speech communication platforms that are applicable and feasible in the real conversation class. Moreover, further studies are needed to create effective speech communication environments such as comfort zones together with dealing with social anxiety and shyness (McCroskey, 2009) in the EFL context which can address the limitations of this present study.

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Examples in: English

Applicable Language: English

Applicable Levels: Secondary, College & Adults

Nahk-Bohk Kim
Korea Nazarene University
Flight Business English Department

31172 Wolbong-ro 48, Seobuk-gu, Cheonan city
Chungnam, S. Korea
Email: knb2030@kornu.ac.kr

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