

Public Speaking Instruction: Abridge to Improve English Speaking Competence and Reducing Communication Apprehension

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Abstract

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effect of public speaking instruction on improving students' communicative competence and reducing their communication apprehension in a foreign language setting. Participants in this study were 60 Yemeni English majors at the college of education of the Hadhramout University, Yemen. Objectives and research questions focused on determining whether public speaking instruction makes a difference for students who receive instruction as opposed to students who do not on two concepts: public speech performance and communication apprehension in speaking English. Results of the study illustrate that learners' public speech performance improved and low communication apprehension was shown after one term of instruction and practice of public speaking in favour of the experimental group. In line with previous research, the current study confirms that public speaking instruction has a positive effect on improving students' public speech performance and reducing communication apprehension of English language learners. The study also provides insightful perspective into second language pedagogy and presents suggestions for future research.

Keywords: Public Speaking, Communication Apprehension, communicative competence

1. Introduction

The ability to speak becomes very important in our technological age; however, students are still significantly deficient in their ability to make oral presentations (Sayed, 2005). Delivering an oral presentation, which is a form of public speaking, strikes fear in many students. According to (Brewer, 2001), public speaking is one of the most reported fears in the American public.

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Some students with weak speaking competence may have a greater challenge in delivering oral presentations because of problems with expressive communication skills. They often experience difficulty in determining what to say, remembering how to say it, and saying it aloud in front of others (Nippold, Hesketh, Duthie, & Mansfield, 2005; Scott & Windsor, 2000). Research shows that a course in public speaking can offset this deficiency. According to Hansen (2008), many creative ways can be used for teaching public speaking to help students learn how to speak effectively in front an audience. Among those ways are formal lessons in each phase of public speaking and practicing impromptu speeches in small groups. Consequently, teachers and students must therefore work more efficiently and effectively toward the goal of academic success.

The motivation for this study is the conviction of the importance of public speaking instruction in enhancing communication performance and reducing students' communication apprehension (Alder, 1980). Therefore, the purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of public speaking instruction, (henceforth referred to as PSI), on developing Yemeni university students' communicative competence (henceforth referred to as CC) and reducing communication apprehension (henceforth referred to as CA). Obviously, the focus of this study rests on two key concepts: **public speaking competence and communication apprehension**. In order to orient the reader to the concepts which are investigated in the present study, a brief discussion is given below.

The first concept, i.e. PSI comes from the skills training approach. Specifically, the skills training approach involves training participants how to communicate effectively through both verbal and non-verbal channels, how to conduct research, how to organize thoughts, how to outline ideas, and how to practice speeches (Allen et al., 1989; Heuett et al., 2003; Whitworth & Cochran, 1996).

Second, CA is a key to raise the avoidance of taking part in speaking settings. Researchers in the area of speaking have recommended the involvement of PSI in order to reduce students' CA (Rubin et al. 1997). Teachers in this case should not only provide their students with a repertoire of techniques and knowledge of how to deliver a speech because these techniques alone cannot account for improving students' CC and reducing their CA. Thus, providing students with the appropriate PSI techniques and applying these techniques in delivering speeches in the classroom could enable students to improve their communication performance and reduce their CA.

Furthermore, unless students with weak communication skills receive adequate support and instruction in challenging learning situations, they may typically retreat to passive roles (Wolford Heward, &Alber, 2001).

1.1 Statement of the Problem

All students need practice to develop their oral communication skills fluently and automatically (Rosenshine& Stevens, 1986). One of the purposes of English language teaching in the Yemeni universities is to improve the student's comprehensive ability, especially the oral expression and to encourage them to have adequate opportunities to use the foreign language fluently.

However, it is an irony that the bulk of students in the Yemeni universities are found to have inadequate competence in English speaking skills (Gubaily, 2012). Likewise, Abbad (1988:15) admits that Arab learners of English have many difficulties in communication. Arab learners find it difficult to communicate freely in the target language (English). This may be due to the methods of learning and the learning environment itself, which may be said to be unsuitable for learning a foreign language. Similarly, Zuheer (2008) states that conversational English is rarely heard by Yemeni students in the departments of English. This problem has been confirmed by lecturers who teach oral communication skills. Most of the English majors graduated with poor proficiency in oral communication skills (Zuheer, 2008, Abdullah, and Patil, 2012). Gubaily (2012) further concludes that substantial numbers of students in secondary schools as well as in tertiary levels struggle with communication skills highlight the need for effective classroom techniques to improve students' communication skills in English.

Despite the technological innovations and improvements made in the area of teaching communication skills for both secondary and tertiary levels, little studies on the Yemeni contexts appear to have been published on public speaking instruction as a tool to improve students' CC and to reduce their CA. In response to a call by Hansen (2008) regarding the use of PSI in teaching speaking skills, this study was carried out to add to the knowledge in this area by focusing on enhancing students' CC in English and to reduce their CA through introducing PSI in Yemeni University EFL classrooms.

1.2 Significance of the Study

This study was conducted on the premise that students with speaking difficulties would benefit from instruction designed to reduce their CA and improve their CC, and that such instruction would lead to improved general speaking performance. Therefore, the significance of the current study lies in the belief that PSI is important for all students and can promote improvements in speaking skills that are required from EFL students.

Due to the paucity of research on PSI, this study contributed to the field of communication competency and CA, as it was the first of its kind in the Yemeni context. The results of this study could possibly open the door to other scholars, researchers and policymakers to introduce the speech course into the secondary school and university curricula. This would benefit students by providing them with the basic public speaking skills to be successful in the personal, professional, and academic areas of their lives.

1.3 Objectives of the Study

The objectives of the current study were to

- 1- Identify the effect of PSI on improving students' CC.
- 2- Investigate the effect of PSI on students' CA.

1.4 Questions of the Study

Proceeding from the foregoing purposes, the current study was guided by the following research questions:

- 1- To what extent does the effect of PSI improve students' CC in English?
- 2- To what extent does the effect of PSI reduce students' CA?

2. Literature Review

This section deals with the theoretical background related to the scope of this study. Specifically, it deals with the public speaking performance, communication apprehension and some previous studies related to the current study.

2.1 Public Speaking Performance

Public speaking is considered to be of paramount importance to students. Those who equip themselves with effective speaking skills are able to handle magnificently their interpersonal communication problems during their working life. Students of today are leaders of tomorrow. As future leaders they would find themselves in situation where they would have to persuade their subordinates impressively during their interpersonal communications. Generally, people judge and assess a speaker by the way he or she speaks. The first impression would usually be a lasting impression that would be registered in the minds of the people who come into contact with the speaker. A good public speaking skill would enhance employment opportunities and marketability. As a consequence, there is an urgent need for students to improve their public speaking skills.

According to Whitworth and Cochran (1996), "some level of skills training is essential in reducing anxiety because it reduces the ambiguity of the public speaking situation by providing knowledge and techniques necessary for effective public speaking". Public speaking has a significant effect on improving the oral expression skills of students. It can be a dynamic argumentative activity. It is one of the most promising tools to enhance academic achievement known today (Warner, &Bruschke, 2001). Research-based data illustrate that public speaking as an extra-curricular activity in schools improves students' performance at statistically significant levels on speaking tests and increase the student's desire to become a learner (Warner, &Bruschke, 2001). Therefore, underachieving students who were once apprehensive of speaking in public become better academic performers (ibid).

The skills training approach is premised upon the notion that those with high levels of communication apprehension are anxious due to their lack of skill. Research has shown high speech anxiety is linked to poor speech preparation practices (Ayers, 1996, Daly et al., 1995). Allen et al. (1989:58) state that "skills' training assumes that some people have skill deficiencies that must be corrected before they can speak". It is presumed that when a person has acquired the knowledge and techniques needed to speak effectively, his or her level of communication apprehension decreases. Past research has shown that skills training approach is effective in reducing communication apprehension (Ady, 1987; Allen et al. 1989; Heuett et al. 2003; Weissberg &Lamb, 1977; Whitworth & Cochran, 1996).

Specifically, the skills training approach involves training participants how to communicate effectively through both verbal and non-verbal channels, how to conduct research, how to organize thoughts, how to outline ideas, and how to practice speeches (Allen et al., 1989; Heuett et al., 2003; Whitworth & Cochran, 1996). In addition to providing participants with skills and knowledge to speak effectively, the skills training approach also incorporates discussions on fears related to public speaking (Ady, 1987; Weissberg & Lamb, 1977). Correspondingly, basic public speaking course according to Robinson (1997), is the "ideal setting" for the treatment of communication apprehension. He considers it as an "ideal setting" because it has a large enrollment which allows instructors to treat a large number of students at a time, because those enrolled will generally experience some form of communication apprehension and they may be the first time they have been required to speak in public.

Generally speaking, public speaking needs three stages. Firstly, any speaker needs to prepare a topic carefully. The selected topic should be innovative and attract the other students. Secondly, the speaker needs to elaborate the selected topic with a reasonable structure, a clear and concise language and so on. Thirdly, the speaker needs to answer the others' question in a strong logic way. For the speaker, the above three aspects are the challenges of knowledge, logical thinking, and language skill. From the point of view of the learning process, public speaking is a good way to train and improve students' language skills.

Pearson et al. (2006) state that a student who has prior public speaking training or who was involved in a speech and debate organization will likely obtain a higher grade in the public speaking course. Students seem to become more effective communicators with training and practice. Garside (2002) commented about the importance of students learning communication skills. He states that in order for students to be successful not only in school and work, but in life, they must possess oral communication skills. Many fields outside of communication acknowledge the significance of proficient communication skills as the society enters the information age.

2.2 Communication Apprehension

CA is the most widely researched concept in the field of communication studies.

The most common definition of CA comes originally from McCroskey (1977:78), as “an individual's level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons”. As a construct, CA is measured by McCroskey's (1982) through Personal Report of Communication Apprehension-24 (PRCA-24) scale. The scale measures four different contexts that CA can exist in: interpersonal, meeting, group, and public. Interpersonal CA is the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another individual in a one-on-one interaction. In essence, if someone experiences anxiety while thinking about interacting with another person or during an actual interaction with another person, he or she is said to have interpersonal CA. The second and third types of CA, meeting and group CA, examine the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons during a meeting/classroom environment or in a small group. Each of these types of CA is contextually based to either a meeting or a small group situation. Lastly, public CA is the level of fear or anxiety associated with either real or anticipated communication with another person or persons during a formal speaking situation. The last type of CA is probably the form of CA that is closest aligned with the research conducted in social phobia. However, each of these four contexts is highly related with one another (Beatty, McCroskey, & Heisel, 1998).

CA can be found almost everywhere such as classrooms, schools, universities, organizations, meetings, or even in group discussions. McCroskey (1977) says that the noticeable effects of CA in the classrooms involved at least one form of CA out of the many forms such as in public speaking. The communication apprehensive students' behaviours in avoiding communication are visible in many ways. For example, the students will try to avoid certain classes. If they cannot avoid the class, the anxiety experienced by them may impede them from completing their assignments. McCroskey (1970) & Philips (1968) claim that people who have a high level of CA are those who have anxiety or fear of communicating with others. Thus, they are more likely to avoid communicating with people whenever possible. The fear or anxiety could be due to any of the following reasons: lack of proficiency in the target language, lack of practice, insecurity or any pre-programmed thought pattern. Even those who have high level of proficiency in a language can experience CA. Some people may be good at communicating through writing but they may have problems speaking in front of an audience. Some may be good at interpersonal communication, but may not feel comfortable making presentations and vice versa.

Evidence suggests that the instruction students receive makes a difference (Rubin, Rubin, & Jordan, 1997). This evidence is supported by Rubin, Welch, and Buerkel (1995), that high school students' communication skills improved over a semester particularly in areas where they received instruction. Research also suggests that the instruction students receive in a public speaking course makes a difference in students' CA. Kelly, Duran, and Stewart (1990) found that the skills training students received narrowed their CA or their anxiety when talking to another person. Ellis (1995) also found significant decreases in apprehension and increases in competence for college students during a semester. If students do not receive public speaking instruction, their chances of advancing professionally and successfully in society can be reduced compared to students who do have these competencies.

2.3 Previous Studies

Taylor(2011) conducted a study on the effectiveness of self- and peer-review on communication apprehension and speech performance of undergraduate students. The purpose of this study was to determine if self- and peer-reviews affect communication apprehension and speech performance in undergraduate students. Data were collected from 183 participants who were registered in a public speaking course. A two-way mixed model analysis of variance was used to compare the differences in participants' pretest and posttest scores of the public speaking communication apprehension-Public Speaking Subscale. The results from the data suggested the difference in the post-test scores of the self-review and the peer-review groups were not significant. A two-way mixed model analysis of variance was also conducted to determine if any differences existed in the participants' speech performances on three speeches over time. Students in the peer-review group showed significantly better scores on their speech performance evaluations from speech 1 to speech 3 compared to students in the self-review treatment.

Pribyl et al. (2001) conducted a study to test the effectiveness of a skills-based program as a method for reducing anxiety during public speaking. Twenty-five Japanese college sophomores were exposed to a systematic approach for developing a presentation that was theoretically linked to mechanisms to reduce communication apprehension (CA). Students gave four presentations that were graded by both teacher and peer evaluation. Results indicated that the experimental group reported a significantly greater drop in public speaking anxiety than did a control group of 86 students.

Castillo (2010) conducted a study to assess the effectiveness of public speaking instruction on students' cognitive learning, skill development, and communication apprehension. Participants in this study included 140 undergraduate students at a university in the South-western United States. Hypotheses and research questions focused on determining whether public speaking instruction makes a difference for students who receive instruction as opposed to students who do not on three learning outcomes: cognitive, behavioural, and affective. Results of the study are discussed. Conclusions, limitations, and topics for further research are addressed.

Johnson (2012) conducted a study to examine the effect of previous public speaking instruction, public speaking extra-curricular activity, gender, and self-esteem on public speaking anxiety for students in a college-level public speaking course. Results indicated students with prior instruction or public speaking extra-curricular experience had lower levels of public speaking anxiety. No significant difference was found with regard to gender and self-esteem as moderators on previous public speaking instruction.

3. Methodology

This section deals with the design of the study. It gives a concise sketch about participants, treatment, research instruments and ends with the statistical methods used in analysing the data of this study.

3.1 Design of the Study

The design of the study was quasi-experimental with a non-equivalent group pre-test post-test (Baker, Pistrang & Elliot, 2002). True experiment is more desirable than quasi-experiment, and viewed as the highest standard in the evaluation of interventions. However, the conditions of true experimental cannot always be achieved in educational settings. Therefore, most studies in educational settings are quasi-experiments rather than true experiments, given that randomisation of the participants in educational settings, particularly in classroom experiments, is not easily achievable. Instead, quasi-experimental procedures in naturalistic settings are an alternative to true experimental designs. Snow cited in Borg and Gall (1989) has argued that fully randomised experimental designs often lack ecological validity due to non-authentic environments in which studies are carried out.

Therefore, the current study lends itself to a quasi-experimental design with a non-equivalent control group pre-test post-test. It includes one independent (experimental) variable and two dependent variables. The independent variable is the effect of public speaking instruction proposed for this study versus the regular speaking course. The dependent variables are the mean scores of the pre- and post-communication apprehension and public speaking performance between the experimental and the control groups measuring through questionnaires. The respondents in this study were formed into two intact classes. One class was used as an experimental group and the other as a control group. Because the purpose of this study is to provide findings that are closer to the students' classroom settings, the quasi-experimental pre-test-post-test non-equivalent groups design served this purpose well.

3.2 Participants

There were 60 participants who were students at the fourth level at the college of Education and Arts- Seiyun, Department of English- Hadhramout University in the academic year 2012/2013. All of the students are Yemenis; they were between 23-24 years old at the time of conducting this study. Their religion is Islam and all of them are speaking Arabic language as their mother tongue.

3.3 Treatment

This study was conducted in the College of Education and Arts at Hadhramout University- located in Hadhramout Governorate, Yemen. Participants in both the experimental and control groups were given pre-PRCA and post-PRCA and pre-SPCC and post SPCC before and after the treatment. However, the control group did not participate in a speech class and thus was not exposed to the independent variable of informative speech. Instead they were taught by the regular way of teaching speaking followed in the college. During the treatment, each student in the experimental group was subjected to deliver a public informative speech in front of the audience.

The public speaking course is designed in such a way as to encourage students to overcome fear of speaking in public and to enjoy it at the same time. The content of the course was developed for the university students.

Therefore, this study was limited to only one term in which the public speaking course was offered only once per week in a three-hour session (48 hours in the term) taught by an instructor who is a university professor of English and has good experience in teaching this course for several years. The course book of public speaking instruction was based on the prescribed book called (The arts of public speaking) by Lucas (2009).

3.4 Research Instruments

Considering the purpose and scope of the study, two research instruments were used to collect the data of this study. The first research instrument was students' perceived communicative competence (SPCC) administered before and after the experiment for both the control group and the experimental group. The second instrument is PRCA-24 adopted from McCroskey (1982). It was administered before and after the experiment to both the control and experimental groups.

3.4.1 Speaking Competence

Defined as the act of speaking naturally and effectively in a variety of public speaking settings and was measured by the Self Perceived Communication Competence (SPCC) scale. It is adopted from McCroskey&McCroskey (1988) and was administered to the participants in the current study to answer the research question pertaining to students' perceptions of their own competence as communicators in different contexts. SPCC was used as in previous research where it yielded reliability estimates above .90. The SPCC also has high face validity in that it is a self-report measure that directly asks the subjects to estimate their own communication competence in 12 contexts on a scale of 0 to 100. The contexts are generated by crossing four types of communication settings (public speaking, talking in meetings, talking in small groups, talking to one other person) with three types of receivers (strangers, acquaintances, and friends). Self-report measures are the more commonly utilized approaches to measuring communication competence (Duran, 1983; McCroskey&McCroskey, 1988; McCroskey& Payne, 1986; Rubin & Rubin, 1985; Spitzberg, 1983; Spitzberg&Cupach, 1984; Weimann, 1977) and have been found to be reliable when used with college student populations (alpha reliability=.92) (Richmond, McCroskey&McCroskey, 1989).

The use of self-report measures is also a legitimate and appropriate research strategy within the discipline of communication (McCroskey&McCroskey, 1988, p. 109). Chronbach's alpha reliability in this study ranged from .68 to .90 for each of the four contexts: speaking in interpersonal conversations, .70; speaking in groups, .69; speaking in meetings, .72; speaking in public, .82; speaking to strangers, .90; speaking to acquaintances, .88; and speaking to friends, .84 with a combined total reliability of .92 (M=2.18, SD =.83). The following benchmark, by Richmond, McCroskey&McCroskey (1989), is used in this study to show whether the results concerned the communicative competence are high, moderate or low.

Public	> 86 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Meeting	> 85 High SPCC	< 51 Low SPCC
Group	> 90 High SPCC	< 61 Low SPCC
Dyad	> 93 High SPCC	< 68 Low SPCC
Stranger	> 79 High SPCC	< 31 Low SPCC
Acquaintance	> 92 High SPCC	< 62 Low SPCC
Friend	> 99 High SPCC	< 76 Low SPCC
Total	> 87 High SPCC	< 59 Low SPCC

3.4.2PRCA

Participants were given the Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA) instrument written in English language adopted from McCroskey (1982). It was chosen because of the overwhelming evidence regarding its reliability and validity (McCroskey, 1997). The PRCA -24 was used to measure communication apprehension since it is well known for its reliability and construct validity (Levine &McCroskey, 1990). The PRCA-24 is a 24 item scale used to assess communication apprehension across context, groups, meetings, interpersonal, and public speaking. The Likert-type scale has five options namely: strongly agree, agree, neutral, disagree, and strongly disagree. Total overall scores range from 24 to 120, with sub scores ranging from 6 to 30. Scores ranging from 81 to 120 indicate high levels of communication apprehension. Scores ranging from 51 to 80 indicate moderate level of communication apprehension. Scores ranging from 24 to 50 indicate low levels of communication apprehension (McCroskey, 1982). The reliability of the public speaking sub-scale of the PRCA was .90 in this study.

3.6 Statistical Methods

Multiple phases of data collection were performed throughout the study. Quantitative methods were employed to answer the research questions. To address the research questions previously stated, descriptive statistics were used to summarize the mean score and standard deviations as well as the inferential statistics by using a paired sample t-test of the pre and post CA and public speaking performance of both the control and experimental groups.

4. Results

4.1 Students' Communicative Competence

To answer the first research question: "To what extent does the public speaking instruction improve students' communication competence?", the results of the pre-test and the post-test of SPCC of both the experimental and the control groups were presented and analyzed. Descriptive statistics as well as the inferential analysis were used to analyze the results of this study.

Experimental Group

The students' responses in the experimental group in terms of the overall mean scores of the SPCC items as well as the sub-scales identified, public, meeting, group, and dyad along with the relationship with stranger, acquaintance and friend were examined. Inferential statistics for overall questionnaire results are provided.

Table 1: Mean-Scores and Standard Deviations of the Experimental Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of CC

	Pre-test	Std deviation	Post-test	Std deviation
Total SPCC Context	56.87	2.22	81.60	2.81
Public	57.40	4.35	81.65	4.22
Meeting	56.72	3.68	81.66	4.05
Group	56.12	3.82	80.86	4.34
Dyad	57.25	4.76	80.46	3.96
Relationship				
Stranger	57.03	2.90	82.85	4.04
Acquaintance	57.11	4.89	81.01	3.38
Friend	56.46	2.97	81.67	3.96
*SPCC scores range from 0.00 to 100.00. The higher the SPCC score, the greater the competence.				

As Table 1 shows, the overall mean score of the speaking performance in the pre-test was 56.87 with a standard deviation of 2.22 for the experimental group, and in the post-test the overall mean score for the experimental group was 81.60 with standard deviation of 2.81, indicating a moderate improvement in students' CC according to the benchmark of Richmond, McCroskey&McCroskey (1989). The mean scores in the pre-test of the sub-scales identified, public, meeting, group, dyad, stranger, acquaintance, and friend were 57.40, 56.72, 56.12, 57.25, 57.03, 57.11, and 56.46 respectively, indicating low in students' CC. Whereas the mean scores in the post-test of the sub-scales identified, public, meeting, group, dyad, stranger, acquaintance, and friend were 81.65; 81.66; 80.86; 80.46; 82.85; 81.01; and 81.67 respectively, indicating high improvement in students' CC after the treatment.

To determine the effects of the PSI on improving CC, a paired sample t- test was conducted. As depicted in Table 2, a statistical significant difference was found at (t- value -43.134) with $p .000 > 0.05$ on the overall mean scores. The results indicate that t-value has a statistical significant result between the pre-and post-tests of SPCC in favour of the experimental group.

Table 2: Paired Samples T-Test of the Experimental Group in the Pre- and Post CC Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
experimental group pre- and post-tests	2.47333E1	3.14065	57340	-25.90607	-23.56059	-43.134	29	.000

Control Group

The students' responses in the control group in terms of the overall items of the SPCC as well as the sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking along with the relationship with stranger, acquaintance and friend were examined. Inferential statistics for overall questionnaire results were provided.

Table 3: Mean-Scores and Standard Deviations of the Control Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of CC

	Pre-test	Std deviation	Post-test	Std deviation
Total SPCC	56.32	2.08	55.92	2.17
Public	55.95	4.46	56.26	3.52
Meeting	56.27	3.90	56.15	4.37
Group	57.36	4.18	55.70	3.79
Dyad	55.68	4.65	55.56	3.39
Relationship				
Stranger	56.10	3.66	55.30	4.11
Acquaintance	56.09	4.79	56.17	3.24
Friend	56.76	3.65	56.28	3.67
*SPCC scores range from 0.00 to 100.00. The higher the SPCC score, the greater the competence.				

As Table 3 shows, the overall mean score of the speaking performance in the pre-test was 56.32 with a standard deviation of 2.08 for the control group, and the overall mean scores in the post-test for the control group was 55.92 with standard deviation of 2.17. The mean scores in the pre-test of the sub-scales identified, public, meeting, group, dyad, stranger, acquaintance, and friend were 55.95; 56.27; 57.36; 55.68; 56.10; 56.09; and 56.76 respectively. Whereas the mean scores in the post-test of the sub-scales identified, public, meeting, group, dyad, stranger, acquaintance, and friend were 56.26; 56.15; 55.70; 55.56; 55.30; 56.17 and 56.28 respectively, indicating low improvement in students' CC in all categories before and after the treatment.

As a contrast to the significant gain in the experimental group ($p > .05$), there was no significant difference identified in the control group in terms of students' CC at ($p > .05$). The t-value is (.811) with $p = .424 > 0.05$. Table 4 shows that the control group performed almost the same in both the pre-test and the post test on the CC after they were exposed to traditional instruction in learning speaking skills. The result indicates that the t-value has no statistical significant result between the pre-and post-test of the control group.

Table 4: Paired Samples t-test of the Control Group in the pre- and Post CC Test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Pair 1 Overall pre-test and Post-test	.40000	2.70274	.49345	-.60922	1.40922	.811	29	.424

4.2 Communication Apprehension

To answer the second research question: "to what extent does the public speaking instruction reduce students' communication apprehension?", the results of the pre-test and the post-test of CA of both the experimental and control groups are presented and analyzed. Descriptive statistics and inferential analysis were used to analyze the results of this study.

Experimental Group

The students' responses in the experimental group in terms of the overall items of the PRCA as well as the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were examined.

Table 5: Mean-Scores and Standard Deviations of the Experimental group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of CA

	Pre-test	Std deviation	Post-test	Std deviation
Overall items of PRCA	82.80	5.92	47.83	4.069
Group Discussion	20.93	2.5721	10.10	1.2415
Meeting	20.03	1.8473	12.00	2.1009
Interpersonal	20.63	2.7975	12.53	2.1772
Public speaking	21.20	2.9172	13.20	2.2499

As shown in Table 5, the overall mean score of the PRCA in the pre-test for the experimental group was 82.80, indicating a high level of overall communication apprehension, while the overall mean score of the PRCA in the post-test for the experimental group was 47.83, indicating a low level of overall communication apprehension. The mean scores in the pre-test of the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were 20.93; 20.03; 20.63; and 21.20 respectively. Whereas the mean scores in the post-test of the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were 10.10; 12.00; 12.53; 13.20 respectively. The results suggested there was a main effect from pre-test to post-test. As can be seen in Table 5, scores decreased from pre-test to post-test. PRCA, 24 post-test scores in the experimental group reported lower CA both in the total scores and sub-scores categories.

To determine the effects of the PSI on reducing CA, a paired sample t-test was conducted. As shown in Table 6, a statistical significant difference was found at (t- value -26.855) with $p.000 > 0.05$ on the overall scores. The results indicate that the t-value has a statistical significant result between the pre-and post-test of PRCA 24 of the experimental group.

Table 6: Paired Samples t-Test of the Experimental Group in the Pre- and Post CA

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Experimental post-test and pre-test	-3.49667E1	7.13168	1.30206	-37.62968	-32.30365	-6.855	29	.000

Control Group

The students' responses in the control group in terms of the overall items of the PRCA as well as the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were also examined.

Table 7: Overall Average Mean-Scores and Standard Deviations of the Control Group in the Pre-Test and Post-Test of CA

	Pre-test	Std deviation	Post-test	Std deviation
Overall items of PRCA	81.63 20.06	4.664 2.4344	81.80 20.40	6.288 2.3576
Group Discussion Meeting	20.60	2.1431	20.53	2.2086
Interpersonal	20.87	2.2550	20.23	2.7628
Public speaking	20.10	2.4823	20.63	2.4280

The lower the scores of CA, the lower the CA, The higher the score you obtain, the more apprehension you feel.

As shown in Table 7, the overall mean scores of the control group in the pre-test and the post-test were 81.63 and 81.80 respectively, indicating a high level of communication apprehension before and after the treatment of the traditional method followed in the college in teaching speaking skills. The mean scores in the pre-test of the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were 20.06; 20.60; 20.87; and 20.10 respectively. Whereas the mean scores in the post-test of the four sub-scales identified, group discussion, meeting, interpersonal communication and public speaking were 20.40; 20.53; 20.23; 20.63 respectively, indicating a high level of communication apprehension in all categories before and after the treatment.

To determine the effects of the traditional method in teaching speaking skills, a paired sample t- test was performed on the pre- and post-tests for the control group on all dimensions. As shown in Table 8, the control group experienced no significant reduction in CA at the 0.05 level on the overall scores with (t- value of .137 p., .892).

Table 8: Paired Samples T-Test of the Control Group in the Pre- and Post CA test

	Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
				Lower	Upper			
Control group pre-test and post-test	.16667	6.65962	1.21588	-2.32008	2.65341	.137	29	.892

5. Discussion of the Findings

This section provides a discussion of the findings according to the answers of the two research questions related to this study. This is followed by some suggestions for future studies.

5.1 Communicative Competence

The major findings of the first research question provided tangible support for the effectiveness and efficiency of public speaking instruction. Specifically, students who received only instruction on public speeches performed better on all measures than did their peers in the control group who received the regular instruction of speaking skills. From the results of the questionnaire, it is clear that the majority, if not all of the students, experienced an increase in their learning outcome. Overall, the results of the current study suggest that the use of PSI improved students' CC. This pattern of findings suggests the importance of public speaking courses for university students.

Results revealed that students' communication performance scores for those participating in the experimental group were greater than their matched control group students. This finding confirms and extends previous research findings that interventions designed to improve students' CC, particularly those providing explicit instruction, yield gains in speaking ability.

Students with stronger CC tend to be better speakers and having less CA, while students with low CC tend to be weaker speakers and having high CA. The findings from this study are also consistent with research indicating that students who receive PSI make gains in their communicative competence and reduce their communication apprehension (Pribyl et al., 2001 & Taylor, 2011). As revealed by the present study, the PSI was effective than the conventional method of teaching speaking skills used in Hadhramout University. This is in line with the results of some earlier studies such as (Taylor, 2011). Such studies compared the effectiveness of PSI and traditional methods and came out with similar report that PSI was more effective than the traditional methods in the teaching of speaking.

The main advantage of PSI is, unlike the traditional method of instruction, that it provides a natural setting for language learning in which the interaction type in the classroom changes from teacher-to-student to student-to-student, which gives the opportunity to learn and practice the language more intensively and meaningfully. In this research, students improve their speaking skills more in PSI activities by learning from sharing knowledge in realistic communicative contexts for interaction. Therefore, learning speaking through PSI can be said to be in agreement with the views of communicative approaches to language teaching. In public speaking instruction settings, students do not just do the activities in the course material, or practice grammar points and language functions, but while they are practicing these, they have the chances to apply what they learnt in communicative activities in classroom through presenting public speeches, discussions etc... Therefore, increased practice of PSI for the purpose of using it communicatively contributed to the development of speaking skills.

5.2 Communication Apprehension

The second question sought to find out the effect of PSI on reducing students' communication apprehension. Findings support the effectiveness of public speaking instruction in reducing students' communication apprehension. The results imply that students with very low CA are not afraid of expressing themselves in meetings, group discussion, interpersonal and public settings even they speak with strangers. However, students with high CA will attempt to avoid as much as possible any sort of communication either with their peers or teachers. Another interpretation of the results is that students cannot get rid of their CA unless they get to know the guidelines and having an ample practice of how to deliver a speech in English.

Therefore, according to Connell and Borden (1987), a basic public speaking course can be of great benefit in reducing students' CA. The findings of this concept are consistent with previous studies such as Pribyl et al. (2001); Castillo (2010); and Johnson (2012).

6. Suggestions

By implementing the public speaking method, the author found that students' CC in English has been improved to a large degree. It is speculated that the gaps in EFL students communication skills are due in large part to the methods of teaching that exist. These students have to learn communication skills and they must also learn academic skills. The results from the current research suggest that the use of PSI with EFL students can improve their communication skills. The students were able to move throughout the lesson module with ease during the intervention and complete lessons without assistance for a designated amount of time, which suggests that EFL students are able to work and develop their CC and having less CA during their tasks at the end of the treatment. More research is needed to determine long-range effects of the use of PSI. The conclusions from a study like this would have immediate uses and implications for classroom teachers insofar as they would see how effective their PSI is for all of their students, especially those who need it most.

Further research is also suggested for the tertiary level as well as for late elementary and secondary school students in Yemen. Most studies about the use of public speaking were conducted with native students of English, so research with late elementary students, secondary school students or university students in Yemen or in Arab countries would be beneficial for students to develop their speaking performance and reduce their CA. Additional suggestions for future research include lengthening the time of the study, attempting to replicate the study in a way that resembles the current study. With only 60 students, a quantitative analysis was somewhat underpowered. Some power may be taken by the prospective researchers by having a random assignment of groups into experimental and control groups as well as having a mixed design of both the quantitative and qualitative data.

7. Conclusion

Teachers and instructors in both secondary and university levels should consider an optimal EFL learning setting to inspire and boost EFL students' speaking competence. According to this study, the results highlight the effectiveness of public speaking instruction in developing students' speaking competence which consequently reduces the CA among them. Therefore, it is the hope of the researcher that the findings will inspire language teachers to offer in-service training courses on public speaking instruction for existing educators or as part of the pre-teaching training programmes being offered by universities and colleges. In a nutshell, public speaking has been proved as a suitable pedagogical activity for ESL/EFL students to develop their speaking competence and reduce their CA. Since so far little research has been conducted in public speaking on schools and university in Yemen, the results of this study provide an example of using public speaking to improve students' oral CC and reduce their CA.

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