

Glossophobia or Commonly Called as Speech Anxiety Where Mostly Suffer From Strong Fear in Social Performances

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Abstract: *Glossophobia or commonly called as speech anxiety where mostly suffer from strong fear in social performances and even in academic performance. The researchers used in-depth interview. Where the researchers found out that culture have a big impact for being glossophobic. Also being not open-minded and discrimination hinders someone to develop the communication skills. And in order to overcome glossophobia, you must be motivated and inspired. The participant also stated that his goals drove him to fight this kind of fear that made him speak in public thoroughly and express his thoughts through speaking. Therefore, glossophobia is possible to overcome.*

Keywords: glossophobia, anxiety, phobia

1. Introduction

Glossophobia or speech anxiety which is considered as one of the most prevalent world fears, affecting approximately 75% of the population where statistically people mostly fear public speaking than death according to Glossophobia 2001. And it is very important to study this kind of fear for this affects many of the world's leaders, college students and it is clearly stated the public speaking anxiety really affects the student's academics and interpersonal relationship because of the tendency to avoid communication situations and engagement (Edwards and Walker 2007) this greatly limits future employment where public speaking is necessary in meetings/conference that is why it is very valuable to gain deeper understanding about glossophobia to be able to understand and determine what helps and what hinders people's ability to speak comfortably in public. In addition, it is believe that understanding the nature if this anxiety will help in gaining more insights and suggests ways on how to deal with this public speaking anxiety and will give implications and suggestions for the teachers for them to be able to support anxious students to overcome feelings that frighten their speaking proficiency (Horwitz 1986). The researchers also believe that it is relevant to study glossophobia and the ways to overcome it in order for us to improve our speaking skills and for us to break the chain that prevents us to freely state our opinions, speak up for ourselves and engage more in public speaking.

Glossophobia is said to belong in the category of social anxiety together with performance nervousness, communication uneasiness, stage fright and fear of negative inference (Anke, Marcia, Anne, & Westenberg, 2002). People who suffers from forms of communication apprehension, such as public speaking anxiety. Cite a fear of negative evaluation from others (Kant 2000). According to

the study, many college students and the population mostly suffered from this glossophobia which is related to fear or verbal agitation (Louise 2000). Moreover, glossophobia is a type of social phobia that has great social importance, people who suffers from this fear of public speaking face great difficulty in pursuing their career goals and promotion that as a result, they will develop frustration, depression and distress about their personality (Slater & Barker, 2002). Glossophobia or the fear of public speaking is typically known as stage fright, speech anxiety or communication apprehension (CA) (Pearson 2007) where he added that CA is an individual level of fear or anxiety associated with real or anticipated communication with another person or persons and this definition covers fear on the levels of interpersonal relations just like the one-on-one personal interaction as well as public speaking. In addition, researchers came up with the two classes of speech anxiety symptoms as the measurement of the level of anxiety which are the high-speech-anxious and low-speech-anxious where high-speech-anxious people are more threatened by the notion of public speaking, expect to perform negatively and experience greater frustration than low-speech-anxious people (Witt, Brown, Roberts, Weisel, Sawyer, & Behnke, 2006).

The theories in which the study was anchored were the Nonassociative theory (Poulton and Menzies 2002) and the Psychoanalytic theory of phobias (Miller 1948). Where the nonassociative theory claims that every species seems to have certain fears that are part of their development. While psychoanalytic theory of phobias which is largely based on the theory of repression and displacement believes that phobias are the product of unresolved conflicts between the ID and Ego.

The nonassociative theory hypothesizes that the phobia on certain things of each individual may occur even without the direct and indirect experience of the phobic stimulus. Thus, majority will show fear to a set of relevant stimuli from the first encounter and the immediate response favored survival than acquiring the fear from experience. (Stien and Bouwer1997). On the other hand, recent works shows that numerous individuals diagnosed with phobia considered the origins of their fear go back to their first encounter with the stimulus.

After reading several journals and researches, the researchers found out that there's really a need to study glossophobia and how to overcome it because as what is stated above, glossophobia may affect the academic performances of the students, causes the degradation of the people's credibility in public speaking and many more. Also the researchers believe that overcoming glossophobia will help transform people to become globally competent ones. Because glossophobia is one of those who hinders us to speak up, stand for ourselves and prove our worth. It also prevent us from connecting into the world for the researchers believe that language connects the world and if you know the language but is afraid to speak up, how could you possibly connect and gain lots of opportunities not just internationally but also in the local areas. So this study aims to understand glossophobia, determine the factors that cause such anxiety and terminate the causes in order to overcome this fear of public speaking.

1.1 Objectives

This study determines how learners overcome glossophobia. In particular, it sought answers to the following questions:

- 1) What causes the participant to be glossophobic?
- 2) What coping mechanisms are used by the participants in overcoming glossophobia?
- 3) What insights the participants can share in dealing with glossophobia?

1.2 Significance

The findings of this study will redound to the benefit of the society considering that glossophobia approximately affects 75% of the population, Glossophobia (2001). The results will give insights to those glossophobic individuals on how to overcome such fear of speaking. On the other hand, the society will also be educated about this type of phobia to avoid negative judgments and discriminations but rather give them the ideas on how to help glossophobic individuals. And for the future researchers, this research will leave them an open door for further studies related to this topic.

1.3 Theoretical Lens

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Definition

- **Phobia:** an extreme or irrational fear or aversion to something.
- **Glossophobia:** The fear of public speaking or of speaking in general.
- **Social anxiety:** The fear of social situations that involve interaction with the other people. Fear and anxiety of being negatively judged and evaluated by other people.
- **Speaking proficiency:** Is the ability of an individual to speak or perform in a language.
- **Degradation:** The condition or process of degrading or being degraded (reduced in quality; inferior)

2. Methodology

2.1 Research design

This study used the qualitative-single case study method. The researcher used the method to have an insight to the experience of the participant in overcoming glossophobia. The researcher selected a qualitative method in order to obtain first-hand information and experience pertaining to how the participant experience speaking anxiety that comes with this action. According to Kvale (2007) in regard to implementing a qualitative method, the reason for this choice is to acquire both a factual and meaning level from the participant, listening to their descriptions and explanations of their meanings and between the lines of the subject.

2.2 Research Participant

The researchers discovered the different coping mechanisms used by the participant in overcoming glossophobia. The researchers inquired about the difficulties that the participant experienced in dealing and overcoming speech anxiety. The participant was born on and totally experienced speech anxiety but really determined in overcoming it. Overcoming this kind of anxiety is not just to become a better speaker but can also improve your personality and character. The participant is very well known to me, a somewhat close friend therefore, anonymity is not issue here. The researchers also gathered confirmatory information from the two people who knew him very well since then.

2.3 Research Instrument

Interview

The researchers conducted an in-depth interview with the participant to collect relevant and reliable information and gather sought answer to the information needed. The interview was anchored to three research questions.

The research questions focused on what are the coping mechanisms in overcoming glossophobia, what causes the participant to be glossophobic and the insights that can be share in dealing glossophobia. Before conducting the interview, the researchers produced an open-ended type of interview questions to lead the researchers in interviewing with the participant. The interview guide questions were validated by an expert in the research field.

The researchers also conducted a phone interview with the two people who knew him very well in order to gather additional information and gain affirmation to the participant's answers to avoid fallacy. The questions where focused on the affirmation of the answers of the participant to the research questions.

3. Results

The purpose of this study was to determine the cause of becoming glossophobic, to know the coping mechanism in overcoming glossophobia and the insights of the participant in becoming and overcoming glossophobia. For the purposes of audit trail, codes were included in the verbatim answers of the participant. G stood for Glossophobic; R for response; and L for line and the numbers showed the sequence of the answers.

3.1 Causes of becoming glossophobic

Mr. Perfect developed his fear of public speaking because during his childhood, he was forbidden to entertain visitors in their home.

"I was taught not to interfere in adult's conversation and always stay inside the room whenever there are visitors or visiting relatives."

The confirmer believed that children should not interfere in adults talks as part of the culture at that time. She also confirmed that he will let Mr. Perfect stay in a room whenever there are visitors in their home.

Because of that certain culture, Mr. Perfect wasn't able to gain confidence particularly in speaking for many years.

"And because of that, I became timid for years until High School."

The confirmer affirmed that Mr. Perfect is very timid and even his school performances are usually poor.

For Mr. Perfect, entering school was such a horrible one. Because in school, you really need to speak out, compete for the grade and even to gain more friends and teachers appreciation and also to gain that sense of belongingness.

"It was never easy being always hidden and not being able to talk in front."

The confirmer affirmed that he really does have poor performance during his Elementary days. She was always called by his teacher because of his poor performance at school.

During High School days, it was never easy for him to be there, he started to become inferior. It was a nightmare for him to strive and be able to pass High School because of his condition.

"High School for me, competition is arising among students and to be able to survive is to be able to socialize, to communicate your thoughts and to be able to pull students to believe in yourself and your ability that you should have the power to speak and the ability to influence others through words. And it is never easy for me, I am afraid to face teachers, I cannot speak in front of the crowd, I always stuttered in front of my classmates and always tell me I have to learn to deal with other people.

The confirmer affirmed that Mr. Perfect is such a down to earth individual. He barely talks to them and even stuttered everytime he needs to answer a question. Due to his condition, he was a subject for bullying.

Another confirmer said that during his few weeks in High School, Mr. Perfect is such a loner, he didn't usually participate on oral recitation. His performances are usually low, garnering an average of 71 or 74.

Mr. Perfect also added that, one of the causes that made him glossophobic is that he is not an open-minded person. Because in their community, there are certain things that are not allowed to be mentioned like sex, body organs and a lot more.

"I was really not an open-minded person. Which is in fact I find it difficult to be with or to communicate with other person because I can't easily fit with their conversation, there are a thing that seems to be so unpleasant for me to hear like those sex, body organs and even jokes, that is why I barely talk with people.

One of the researcher affirmed that Mr. perfect is really not an open-minded person. There are times that he can't catch up with the jokes and be disappointed instead, he can't also ride with the topics about human body and sexuality even if it is part of the subject particularly the Understanding the self-wherein he don't want to listen to the topics where something unpleasant to his ears is mentioned.

Another thing that discourage him the most to speak, aside from his culture and not being an open-minded person is that, he is being discriminated by the teachers during his school years because of his low performance.

"I get discriminated because of my timidness and poor performance at school during elementary and high school days and that's the reason also why I don't want to speak because I don't want to get negative comments from the listeners"

The researcher also agreed that Mr. Perfect wants everything to be perfect about him because of his background with getting discriminated during the past years.

3.2 Coping mechanism

Mr. Perfect stated that he was encouraged and inspired in overcoming glossophobia. One of the factors that helped him to overcome from being glossophobic was his profound teachers. He also stated that his goals drove him to develop his speaking ability.

“I was encouraged by my English teachers and I was inspired on becoming a good speaker. I was always amazed and inspired with my profound English teachers with their confidence and the way they talk. Also, my goals drove me in developing my speaking ability.” GR L4-8

In overcoming the challenges of being glossophobic, Mr. Perfect always have the courage to speak and practiced speaking in public. He was able to speak in front of the crowd in a manner that he can thoroughly express his thoughts. He also stated that participating class oral recitation was one of the practices he made.

“I have some into realization that I will never become successful when I don't have courage to speak and being able to speak in the manner that I can thoroughly express my thoughts is to speak. I always participated in class then, especially oral orientation. It is very effective in the sense that I really practiced myself and I have learned to love speaking in public, and I was able to cope with glossophobia.” GR L9-15

3.3 Insights

Mr. Perfect believed that glossophobia or becoming glossophobic is such a serious issue that needs to be dealt with cause if not, it will lead to poor performance specially in academic and the only way to conquer this issue is to face it.

“Glossophobia is a serious issue and it usually lead to poor performance in academic endeavour and the only way to overcome is to face it. Being able to succeed is to be able to talk and influence others and this is a way better than always being silent and afraid to talk.”

Mr. Perfect also added that in order to surpass this issue, you need to look for inspiration and set goals.

“To surpass glossophobia, let your inspiration and goals drive you to overcome it, look for encouragement from teachers and people who are good speakers on how they become a good one.”

4. Discussion

Glossophobia is caused by a certain culture as well as the parenting style. Unlike others, glossophobic individual are afraid to speak in front of the crowd P Rimawan (2018). Where most likely, glossophobics experiences a variety of reactions like pulse rate increases, sweat glands activate, mouth watering and many more JR Steele (2017). But the

researchers found out that culture can cause glossophobia, particularly the culture in the Philippines that children are not allowed to interfere or join with adult talks and are just kept inside the room whenever there are visitors. Because the researchers believed that failure to expose the child into conversation can hinder the development of communication skills as well as the development of self-confidence. In connection with this is the parenting style. An affective atmosphere which parents bring up their kids. Because some of the parents tends to be very strict with their kids and not letting them talk in front of them where children cannot express their opinions and views in the family G Pavithra (July 2019). The fear of speaking can lead an individual to a poor performance at school especially in academics or language subjects. In which, because of glossophobia, students quit oral presentations due to low self-confidence Schunk (1991), and that poor communication skill leads to undermine whole profile of an engineer Riemer (2002), and even avoid courses with oral presentations Tse (2012). Poor academic performance at school means, poor oral communication and poor knowledge Kakepoto (2013). And even Mr. Perfect's school performance was very poor that he usually got an average of 71 or 74.

The researchers also find out that failure to become an open-minded person can lead to difficulty in communicating with other individual because one can't easily catch up with the conversations and also. Discrimination, where adolescents' perceptions of racial discrimination were associated with academic attitudes that school was less important to them and that school performance was less important to future outcomes Neblett Jr, E. W., Philip, C. L., Cogburn, C. D., & Sellers, R. M. (2006). Where it is stated above that Mr. Perfect is being discriminated during elementary and high school days that caused him to be timid and have low performance at school.

Mr. Perfect also stated that in order to overcome glossophobia, you need to practice learn to love speaking, and also find motivations. Because being a good speaker is such a skill that can be learned and practiced D Susniene (2010). On the other hand, Susniene stated that the truth about public speaking, however, it does not have to be stressful. It requires no learning, effort or practice because once you are born as a speaker then you are. Those glossophobics, practicing is very important. Study shows that practicing a speech or practicing yourself to speak is likely to improve speech performance AM Smith (July 2019). Just like what Mr. Perfect did to deal with glossophobia. He engaged himself more to oral recitations in class. The researchers believed that looking for motivation can help in dealing with glossophobia. Like, setting up goals and missions. Trough that, you will be urge to speak up for yourself and express your own opinions, as well as having that inspirational image.

Face it. According to the researchers, the best way to beat glossophobia is to face it. Glossophobics don't need to hide from the world all their lives. Language courses might not be the one for them but staying afraid and quite will never ever make them successful. Practice your speaking skills, find motivations.

5. Conclusion

Majority of people get performance anxiety when they need to make a speech in front of the audiences. The researchers found out that culture has really a big impact to an individual in becoming glossophobic particularly the culture that forbids the child to interfere or to be exposed with adults' conversation and is only allowed to stay inside the room until the talk is over or the visitor left. This culture hinders the child in developing his communication skill that turns the child to be timid that leads to poor performance at school. If a person failed to be an open minded one, he will find difficulty in communicating with other people. Discrimination also hinders someone to gain self-confidence causing someone to be timid and failed to develop their communication skills. The researchers also found out that glossophobia can't be a life-long issue because it can be conquered in many ways.

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