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EXPLORING MALE EXPERIENCES IN PUBLIC SPEAKING ACTIVITIES: INTEGRATED SCHOOLS SETTING

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to examine the public speaking challenges and coping mechanisms of male Senior High School students and to propose an instructional framework to support their communicative development. A qualitative phenomenological design was employed, involving nine male Senior High School students. Data were gathered through in-depth interviews to explore their lived experiences in public speaking and the strategies they used to manage performance-related challenges. Findings revealed that students experienced both situational and internal challenges, including anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, mental block, and difficulties in communication delivery, particularly in impromptu tasks and unfamiliar speaking contexts. To cope, students employed preparation-based strategies such as rehearsal and script use, emotion regulation techniques such as self-regulation and mental calming, and social support strategies including seeking feedback and learning through observation. These strategies enabled them to manage anxiety, maintain focus, and sustain participation in speaking tasks. Based on these findings, the study proposes the Developmental Communicative Speaking Framework (DCSF), a scaffolded and developmentally sequenced instructional model aimed at reducing anxiety and improving communicative competence. It is recommended that this framework be integrated into Oral Communication instruction to provide structured, supportive, and progressive speaking experiences for male students.

KEYWORDS: *Exploring Male Experiences; Public Speaking Activities; Integrated School Setting*

INTRODUCTION

Public speaking competency is a core learning outcome in the Philippine Senior High School (SHS) curriculum, particularly in Oral Communication in Context, which requires learners to engage in speeches, presentations, debates, and other performance-based speaking tasks. These activities develop communication skills essential for higher education, employment, and civic participation. However, despite these objectives, public speaking remains a persistent challenge for many male SHS students, especially in contexts requiring visibility, verbal performance, and public evaluation.

Research indicates that male students' difficulties in public speaking are influenced not only by linguistic demands but also by social expectations and performance pressure. Lintner and Belovecová (2024) found that male students often experience fear of negative evaluation, which leads to avoidance behaviors such as limited participation and hesitation in graded situations. Similarly, Di Bianca and Mahalik (2023) reported that male learners tend to internalize anxiety due to masculine norms discouraging emotional expression, which affects confidence and participation. Wang et al. (2020) highlighted that anxiety and the pressure to perform can limit students' speaking participation, even when they possess adequate knowledge or preparation.

Comparable findings have been observed in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context. Zhang et al. (2023) reported that expectations for male learners to appear confident increase anxiety, leading to hesitation and reduced fluency. Supporting this, Ali and Habib (2025) and Kantar and Kök (2025) found that evaluative speaking tasks heighten fear of making mistakes, resulting in disrupted speech delivery and loss of focus. These studies suggest that male students' challenges are closely linked to emotional regulation and performance pressure rather than linguistic ability alone.

Within the Philippine context, similar patterns are evident. Abel and Velasco (2024) observed that male SHS students often mask anxiety through humor or casual delivery, while Pontillas and Rodrigo (2024) reported hesitation and reduced participation during formal speaking activities. These patterns are also observed at Liboganon Integrated School, where male students show hesitation, limited participation, and discomfort during presentations, particularly in evaluative contexts.

Despite growing research on public speaking anxiety, limited studies focus on the lived experiences and coping mechanisms of male SHS students and how these can inform context-appropriate teaching strategies. Addressing this gap, the present

study examines male students' public speaking challenges and coping mechanisms and proposes a pedagogical innovation to support the gradual development of speaking competence in integrated school settings.

THE STUDY'S OBJECTIVES

The study investigated the public speaking experiences of male Senior High School students in performance-based speaking tasks. Specifically, it sought to:

1. identify the challenges encountered by male Senior High School students in performing public speaking activities;
2. examine the coping mechanisms employed by male Senior High School students to manage public speaking challenges; and
3. propose a pedagogical innovation based on the findings of the study to support the development of public speaking confidence among male learners.

Furthermore, the study sought to gain a deeper understanding of male students' public speaking challenges and coping experiences and to generate insights that may inform instructional practices in Oral Communication in Context within Senior High School settings.

METHODOLOGY

This chapter presents the methodology used to explore the public speaking challenges and coping mechanisms of male Senior High School students in integrated school settings. It discusses the research design, participants, sampling technique, research instrument, data gathering procedure, framework of analysis, and ethical considerations employed in the study.

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative phenomenological research design to explore the lived experiences of male Senior High School students in relation to classroom public speaking. Phenomenology focuses on understanding how individuals experience a phenomenon and how they interpret those experiences within their natural contexts (Creswell, 1998; van Manen, 2018). Unlike quantitative designs that emphasize measurement and generalization, phenomenology prioritizes depth, meaning, and subjective understanding, making it appropriate for examining complex educational experiences such as public speaking anxiety and coping.

Public speaking in the Senior High School classroom involves emotional responses, cognitive demands, and social evaluation that are not always observable through external behavior alone. Male students may experience anxiety, fear of judgment, and performance pressure that influence their willingness and ability to speak. A phenomenological approach allows these internal experiences to be accessed through participants' own narratives, providing insight into how male students perceive, experience, and manage public speaking demands in classroom settings (Lester, 1999; Wertz, 2023).

The phenomenological design was particularly suitable for this study because it emphasized lived experience rather than comparison or prediction. The study did not aim to compare male and female students or to test the effectiveness of an intervention; instead, it sought to understand how male Senior High School students describe and make sense of their public speaking challenges and coping mechanisms during oral communication activities. This focus reflects phenomenology's aim of describing the essence of a phenomenon as experienced by those directly involved, a principle established in classical phenomenology (Moustakas, 1994; van Manen, 2018) and reaffirmed in recent qualitative methodology (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Wertz, 2023).

Furthermore, classroom public speaking occurs within specific instructional and social contexts such as formal presentations, impromptu speaking tasks, and graded performance situations. These contexts shape how students experience anxiety, confidence, and coping. Phenomenological inquiry is well suited to capturing these context-specific realities, as it enables participants to describe not only what they experience but also how and why those experiences occur within particular classroom environments (Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022).

Participants

The participants of this study were nine (9) male Senior High School students from selected integrated schools in the Division of Tagum City, Davao del Norte. These students had direct experience with classroom public speaking activities such as oral presentations, speeches, recitations, and other performance-based speaking tasks required in the Senior High School curriculum.

In phenomenological research, participant selection is guided by the depth and relevance of lived experience rather than statistical representativeness (Creswell, 1998). This principle continues to be affirmed in recent qualitative methodology emphasizing phenomenology's focus on meaning-making and subjective experience (as cited in Wertz, 2023; Braun & Clarke, 2022). Accordingly, participants were chosen because they had firsthand experience with public speaking demands and were able to reflect meaningfully on the challenges they encountered and the coping mechanisms they employed. Reflective engagement is essential for generating rich phenomenological data (Merriam, 2009, as cited in Hossain et al., 2024).

The integrated school setting provided a natural instructional context in which students are routinely exposed to formal and evaluative oral communication tasks. Examining participants within this context aligns with phenomenological principles that prioritize understanding experiences as they occur in real-world educational environments (van Manen, 2018, as cited in Alhazmi & Kaufmann, 2022).

The number of participants was determined based on phenomenological guidelines that prioritize depth of understanding and thematic saturation over large sample size. While earlier scholars articulated this principle, recent qualitative research reaffirms that small, information-rich samples are appropriate for phenomenological studies (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2022; Wertz, 2023). The sample of nine participants was therefore sufficient to generate meaningful descriptions and recurring themes aligned with the study's purpose.

Sampling Design

The study utilized purposive sampling, a qualitative sampling technique that involves deliberately selecting participants who are most capable of providing relevant and information-rich data. Purposive sampling is appropriate in phenomenological research where participant selection is guided by experiential relevance rather than representativeness (Creswell, 1998), a principle reaffirmed in recent qualitative methodology emphasizing depth and meaning-based sampling (as cited in Braun & Clarke, 2022; Wertz, 2023).

Participants were selected in coordination with Oral Communication teachers who were familiar with students' classroom public speaking performance. Three (3) participants were drawn from each of the three participating integrated schools. This approach ensured that participants had firsthand and sustained exposure to public speaking tasks directly aligned with the study's objectives.

Research Instrument

The primary research instrument used in this study was a semi-structured interview guide designed to elicit participants' experiences with public speaking, the challenges they encountered, and the coping mechanisms they employed during classroom speaking activities. The interview questions were aligned with the study's research questions and were formulated based on relevant literature on public speaking and coping in educational contexts.

To ensure content validity, the interview guide underwent expert validation prior to data collection. The instrument was reviewed by three (3) external experts, consisting of two Doctors of Education (EdD) and one Doctor of Philosophy (PhD) in English, all with expertise in language education, instructional practice, and qualitative research. The experts evaluated the questions in terms of clarity, relevance, appropriateness to the participants' academic level, and alignment with the study's objectives, as documented in the expert validation sheet attached as Appendix G.

Data Gathering Procedure

Data collection followed a systematic and ethically sound sequence. Ethical clearance was first obtained from the appropriate Research Ethics Review Committee to ensure the protection of participants' rights and welfare, as documented in the Ethics Compliance Certificate (Appendix B). An Endorsement Letter from the Dean (Appendix C) was then issued to formally initiate the research process.

Subsequently, an approved written request was submitted to the Schools Division Superintendent of the Division of Tagum City through the Department of Education (DepEd), as shown in Appendix D. Upon approval, formal letters were addressed to the principals of the selected integrated schools (Appendix E), outlining the study's objectives, scope, and data collection procedures and seeking permission to conduct the research within their institutions.

After securing institutional approval, participant recruitment was carried out in coordination with Oral Communication teachers. Participants were informed of the study's purpose, procedures, and their rights as research participants. Written informed consent was obtained prior to participation, with the signed consent forms attached as Appendix H.

Semi-structured, in-depth interviews were conducted individually at a time and venue convenient to the participants. With consent, interviews were audio-recorded to ensure accurate documentation, and brief field notes were taken. All data were stored securely and used solely for academic purposes.

Data Analysis

The qualitative data from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using reflexive thematic analysis, following the analytic principles described by Braun and Clarke (2022). The analysis began with data organization and repeated review of interview transcripts to develop familiarity with participants' accounts of public speaking experiences. This initial immersion allowed the researcher to identify meaningful patterns related to speaking challenges and coping mechanisms.
As analysis progressed, data segments were systematically examined and compared to refine codes and identify recurring points of similarity and difference across participants' narratives. These initial codes were then organized into broader

thematic groupings that addressed how and why public speaking experiences were meaningful to the participants. Consistent with reflexive thematic analysis, this interpretive process required analytic judgment and reflexivity and resulted in the development of coherent themes representing male Senior High School students' public speaking challenges and coping strategies (Braun & Clarke, 2022; Wertz, 2023).

Ethical Consideration

Ethical protocols were strictly observed when engaging with the selected participants to ensure the protection of their rights, dignity, and well-being throughout the research process. The study upheld social value by aiming to generate insights that may inform public speaking instruction and support male Senior High School students in integrated school settings. Ethical safeguards also addressed participant vulnerability, risk, and benefits and safety, ensuring that the study involved minimal risk and that appropriate measures were in place to protect participants during data collection.

Participants' privacy and confidentiality of information were maintained through secure handling of data and the use of pseudonyms in all research records and reports. Justice and transparency were upheld by ensuring fair participant selection, voluntary participation, and clear communication about the purposes and procedures of the study. Consideration was also given to the adequacy of facilities, as interviews were conducted in quiet and comfortable locations chosen for participants' convenience. Consistent with ethical practice in educational research, the study emphasized community involvement by situating the inquiry within the school context and aiming to produce findings relevant to classroom teaching and learning (British Educational Research Association [BERA], 2024).

Informed consent. Informed consent involves participants' voluntary agreement to take part in a study after receiving clear information about its purpose, procedures, potential risks, and benefits (American Psychological Association [APA], 2020). In this study, informed consent was secured prior to data collection. Participants were provided with written explanations, informed of their right to withdraw at any time without consequence, and given opportunities to ask questions. The signed informed consent forms documenting this process are attached as Appendix H.

Results

This study identified the public speaking challenges, coping mechanisms, and proposed pedagogical innovation for male Senior High School students. The findings revealed three major challenges: psychological, communication competence, and contextual challenges. Psychological challenges included public speaking anxiety, low self-confidence, fear of negative evaluation, and mental block. Participants reported nervousness, fear of mistakes, and difficulty recalling prepared ideas when speaking before an audience. These findings support previous studies showing that public speaking anxiety affects students' confidence, concentration, and speech performance.

Communication competence challenges involved difficulty in English pronunciation, speech delivery, and verbal expression. Participants shared that pronunciation errors, unclear delivery, and difficulty organizing thoughts reduced their confidence during speaking tasks. These challenges were often worsened by anxiety and fear of being judged. Contextual challenges also emerged, particularly when students faced large or unfamiliar audiences, impromptu tasks, and formal speaking situations. Such conditions increased pressure and made it harder for students to speak clearly and confidently.
The study also found that male students used different coping mechanisms to manage public speaking anxiety. These were grouped into preparation-based strategies, emotion regulation strategies, and social support strategies. Preparation-based strategies included rehearsal, script writing, and content familiarization. Students felt more confident when they practiced repeatedly and organized their speeches beforehand. Emotion regulation strategies included breathing techniques, positive self-talk, and prayer, which helped students calm themselves and reduce nervousness. Social support strategies included seeking help from peers, family members, and teachers, as well as observing effective speakers. These strategies helped students improve their delivery, correct mistakes, and gain confidence.

Based on these findings, the study proposes the **Developmental Communicative Speaking Framework (DCSF)** as a pedagogical innovation. The framework aims to support male Senior High School students through scaffolded, learner-centered, and developmentally appropriate speaking activities. It includes five phases: interactional comfort, structured oral expression, supported performance, gradual public exposure, and authentic communicative performance. Through this framework, students are gradually exposed to speaking tasks, beginning with low-pressure activities and progressing toward more formal and authentic public speaking performances.

The DCSF emphasizes preparation, guided practice, peer support, feedback, and gradual exposure. It also allows differentiated support based on students' readiness, anxiety level, and communication ability. Assessment focuses on communicative growth, participation, clarity, audience engagement, and the use of coping strategies rather than perfect speech delivery alone. Overall, the framework may help Oral Communication and English teachers design supportive speaking activities that reduce anxiety, strengthen confidence, and improve students' public speaking competence.

Summary

This study aimed to explore the public speaking challenges of male Senior High School students, identify their coping mechanisms, and propose an instructional framework to support their communicative development. The following summarizes the key findings:

1. The study revealed that male students experienced interconnected psychological, communicative, and contextual challenges in public speaking. These included anxiety, lack of confidence, fear of negative evaluation, mental block, difficulties in organizing ideas, limited vocabulary, challenges in delivery, and discomfort in impromptu and formal speaking situations. These challenges significantly affected students' performance and participation in oral communication tasks.
2. In response to these challenges, participants employed various coping mechanisms, including preparation-based strategies such as rehearsal, script writing, and content familiarization; emotion regulation strategies such as breathing techniques, positive self-talk, and spiritual coping; and social support strategies such as peer collaboration, guidance from family and teachers, and observational learning. These strategies helped students manage anxiety, improve confidence, and enhance their speaking performance.
3. Drawing from these findings, the study proposed the Developmental Communicative Speaking Framework (DCSF), a scaffolded and developmentally sequenced instructional model designed to support male students' public speaking development. The framework integrates structured preparation, emotional regulation, and social support within guided classroom practice, providing progressive speaking experiences that gradually build confidence, reduce anxiety, and improve communication competence.

Implications

The study yielded the following implications:

1. Male Senior High School students experience public speaking difficulties rooted in psychological, communicative, and contextual factors. These challenges indicate that speaking performance is influenced not only by language skills but also by anxiety, confidence, and classroom conditions, highlighting the need for structured instructional support.
2. Male students cope with public speaking anxiety through preparation, emotion regulation, and social support strategies. This suggests that learners are capable of managing speaking challenges; however, without guided integration, these strategies remain inconsistent and less effective.
3. The findings support the need for a scaffolded and developmentally sequenced approach to public speaking instruction. The proposed Developmental Communicative Speaking Framework (DCSF) provides a structured way to integrate coping strategies within classroom practice, emphasizing gradual exposure, guided participation, and communicative development.

Recommendations

Based on the findings and conclusions of the study, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. Teachers should adopt structured and scaffolded instructional approaches, such as the Developmental Communicative Speaking Framework (DCSF), to support male students in managing public speaking anxiety and developing communication competence.
2. Schools should provide supportive learning environments that encourage gradual exposure to speaking tasks, incorporate peer collaboration, and promote positive feedback to enhance students' confidence and participation.
3. Male students should be encouraged to utilize effective coping strategies, including preparation, self-regulation techniques, and peer support, to improve their public speaking performance and reduce anxiety.
4. Curriculum planners and school administrators should integrate developmentally sequenced speaking activities into Oral Communication and English programs to ensure consistent support for students' communicative development.
5. Future researchers may further validate and refine the proposed framework across different educational contexts, explore its long-term effectiveness, and develop additional instructional materials to support public speaking instruction among diverse learners.

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