STUDENTS’ FEAR TOWARDS IMPROMPTU SPEECH ACTIVITIES IN SPEAKING CLASS AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF SATYA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

THESIS
Partial in Submitted Fulfillment of the Requirement for the Degree of Sarjana Pendidikan

Andries Hinnani Tamonob
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ENGLISH DEPARTMENT
FACULTY OF LANGUAGE AND LITERATURE
SATYA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY
SALATIGA
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STUDENTS’ FEAR TOWARDS IMPROMPTU SPEECH ACTIVITIES IN SPEAKING CLASS AT THE ENGLISH DEPARTMENT OF SATYA WACANA CHRISTIAN UNIVERSITY

Andries Hinnani Tamonob

Abstract

There are two conditions of speech activities in a speaking class at the English Department of Satya Wacana Christian University. They are planned and unplanned speaking. An impromptu speech is one of the unplanned speaking activities. It is why delivering an impromptu speech is one of the most challenging and difficult speaking activities (Jeng, 2007) because the presenter doesn’t have much time to prepare what will be said in front of the class. It creates fear and panic for students. The purpose of this study was to find out the major causes of the fear that the students face in delivering an impromptu speech in class and how the students overcome their fear. The participants of the study were 53 English Department students of 2011 academic year, Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU) Salatiga, who have passed Public Speaking class. The data in this study were gathered by questionnaire. The result of the study shows that the students’ major fear in delivering an impromptu speech is on emotional aspects. Most of the students feel the increasing heart beat when standing in front of other students and are afraid making an eye contact with other students. The sources of their fear seem to be the lack of knowledge or ideas they have on the topic given. Notes is the students’ favorite strategy to make them more confident and also as the guidance for them to deliver their impromptu speech in front of the class, even though they have limited preparation time.

Key words: speaking, impromptu speech, students’ fear.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Language is the media to transfer information. Speaking which is one of the skills in language is used to send and receive messages from one person to another or group of people by using voice as the media to transfer messages. As stated by Chaney (1998),
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There are two conditions of speech activities in a speaking class at the English Department of Satya Wacana Christian University. They are planned and unplanned speaking. An impromptu speech is one of the unplanned speaking activities. It is why delivering an Impromptu speech is one of the most challenging and difficult speaking activities (Jeng, 2007) because the presenter doesn’t have much time to prepare what will be said in front of the class. It creates fear and panic for students. The purpose of this study was to find out the major causes of the fear that the students face in delivering an impromptu speech in class and how the students overcome their fear. The participants of the study were 53 English Department students of 2011 academic year, Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU) Salatiga, who have passed Public Speaking class. The data in this study were gathered by questionnaire. The result of the study shows that the students’ major fear in delivering an impromptu speech is on emotional aspects. Most of the students feel the increasing heart beat when standing in front of other students and are afraid making an eye contact with other students. The sources of their fear seem to be the lack of knowledge or ideas they have on the topic given. Notes is the students’ favorite strategy to make them more confident and also as the guidance for them to deliver their impromptu speech in front of the class, even though they have limited preparation time.

Key words: speaking, impromptu speech, students’ fear.

INTRODUCTION

Background of the study

Language is the media to transfer information. Speaking which is one of the skills in language is used to send and receive messages from one person to another or group of people by using voice as the media to transfer messages. As stated by Chaney (1998),
speaking is “the process of building and sharing meanings through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols in a variety of contexts”. It means that one who sends the meaning of the message or information should be clear and understood by the listener or interlocutor. It is similar to a teaching and learning process in a classroom situation. The teacher who sends information about the material to students, must be clear and understood by the students. Richards & Schmidt (2002) stated that in language learning, the learners are going to learn what they hear or receive from the teacher.

According to Kurniawati (2011), in general, there are two kinds of conditions in speaking. Those are planned and unplanned speaking conditions. Debate, presentation, and drama are examples of planned speaking activities, which, allow the speaker to prepare things such as pictures or outline to support the performance. Whereas an impromptu speech is an example of an unplanned speaking activities which does not give the speaker sufficient time to prepare for the performance.

Public speaking class at the English Department (ED) of Satya Wacana Christian University (SWCU), Salatiga, has the aims to enable students to present their ideas including abstract ideas in an appropriate sequence & format and by using appropriate language, to enable students to be confident in speaking before an audience in various formal speaking activities, to enable students to be involved in a formal speaking situation (listening to a talk, asking and answering questions, etc), to enable students to engage the audience, to enable students to practice on their critical thinking skills, and to enable them to conduct research on a topic. By learning Public Speaking, students can develop their awareness and proficiency in speaking English as a foreign language. Karr
as cited in Lucas (2009) did a survey on 480 companies and public organizations. The survey ranked the most important part in working for college students after graduated. The result showed that oral communication was on the top of the survey. The fact proves that public speaking is an important part for students to learn for their career development in the future.

One of the activities in public speaking class is impromptu speech. It is usually done by the students in front of the class where the presenter only had three to five minutes to prepare a ten to fifteen minute speech. In respond to the impromptu speech, Hsieh (2006) found that students faced many difficulties such as knowing less vocabulary, getting difficulty to develop the key points, getting difficulty to make the attention-grabber opening statement, and many students said that they didn’t have life experiences related to the topic. Moreover, Shore (2010) also asserted that public speaking students are not given an appropriate time to master the material to present, and if the students have less background knowledge that is related to the topic given, it will create fear and panic. Whereas, impromptu speech can help the students to be familiar in speaking in front of other people in public speaking situation.

Realizing that an impromptu speech is very important for students to prepare students to speak in formal speaking contexts, the writer was interested in conducting a study on ED students about their fear towards impromptu speech activities in a public speaking class. This study was conducted with the following research questions:

1. What are the fears that students face in delivering an impromptu speech in class?
2. How do the students overcome their fear in an impromptu speech presentation?
The result of this study can give suggestions or input for Public Speaking class teacher to help Public Speaking class students to understand how to overcome their fear in order to improve their impromptu speech presentation. This study will help students to realize their fear when facing an impromptu speech situation. It will help students to get some solutions to overcome them. Furthermore, it will prepare them to be ready to speak in formal or unpredicted situations that they may face. Thus, the students can have a speech or a conversation nicely and correctly using the target language. The result also may give students some knowledge about how to teach impromptu speech materials if they become a student-teacher or an English teacher.

**REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE**

In this literature review, the writer wants to discuss about the definition of speaking, definition of fear, what is an impromptu speech, the advantages and disadvantages of impromptu speech activities, types of fear in delivering an impromptu speech, strategies to deliver an impromptu speech, and previous studies about impromptu speech.

**Definition of Speaking**

Speaking is one of the four basic skills in a language, besides writing, listening, and reading. Many experts have defined the definition of speaking. Brown (1994); Burns & Joyce (1997) in Nawshin (2009) states “speaking is an interactive process of constructing meaning that involves producing and receiving and processing information.”
Because it is an interactive process, a speaking process requires one speaker and one or more listeners or interlocutors in order to share information among them about the topic that they are talking. Speaking itself is a productive skill which contains some specific points of language such pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, comprehension, and fluency that the speaker has to master in order to make them able to speak nicely (Harris in Nawshin, 2009).

Another definition of speaking was made by Chaney (1998) in Febriyanti (2011), which states that “speaking is the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of context.” Non-verbal symbols that is used in speaking such as facial expression, gestures, and body language in communication will help the speakers to convey the meaning clearly and to convince more about what the speaker shares. Febriyanti asserts that we speak to build a communication with each other. When we have a better communication, it means that we also have a better understanding of others and ourselves.

According to Wilson (1983) in Sholihin (2013), when we speak to other people, relationship can happen and that relationship is communication. It means that speaking can develop in a relation between the speaker and the listeners or interlocutors. So speaking is an activity which a speaker sends some information to other people as the interlocutors in order to build communication among them.
Definitions of fear

The followings are some definitions of fear from some sources:

- Cambridge Dictionary defines fear as “an unpleasant emotion or thought that we have when we are frightened or worried by something dangerous, painful or bad that is happening or might happen.”

- According to Watson (1970), fear is one of three unlearned emotion besides rage and love.

- Donovan and Henley (1997) states that fear is “one possible emotional reaction individuals may have in response to threatening stimulus.”

- “Fear presents individuals with negative outcomes that they may experience as a result of engaging in the depicted unsafe and/or illegal behavior.” (Lewis, Ioni et al. 2007).

- There are several characteristics of a person if he or she feels fear about something such as heart is beating rapidly, face is flushed with sweat, body is shaking, dizziness, shaky voice, shortness of breath, forget about what the person wants to say are some characteristics of emotional responses to a threatening stimulus according to Catz (2000).

- James-Lange Theory stated that fear can lead to impaired psychological functioning, intellectual errors, and disturb concentration and memory.

From all the definitions of fear above, the writer concludes that fear is an emotional reaction when a person faces unplanned situation that the person can not control that situation. It causes some changes in the person’s physical appearances such as sweating,
faster heart beating, and dizzying. The writer experienced those characteristics when talking to police officers, doing class examination, and delivering unprepared presentation. The emotional feeling of fear appears because the unexpected situations happen, and the fear occurs because the person has never experienced in that situation before.

**What is an impromptu speech?**

According to Oxford Paperback Thesaurus (1994, 2001) as cited in Kaur (2010), ‘impromptu’ means “spontaneously, without preparation, without rehearsal”, with antonym “prepared, rehearsal”. Lucas (2009) described ‘impromptu’ is ‘delivered with little or no immediate preparation’. He emphasized that when someone is asked to deliver a speech, the person doesn’t have preparation time or in other words it is spontaneous.

In speech contest situations, the participants consider an impromptu speech is the most challenging, because it requires the participants to deliver the speech according to the topic given without time preparation (Seleskovitch, 1982; Wood, 2001). Moreover, Dale & Wolf (2006) as cited by Kaur (2010) stated that ‘impromptu’ is “thinking on your feet”. It actually means that the idea of making a speech doesn’t reach the brain because there is no time for the idea to reach our mind. In other words, an impromptu speech is the speech without time for preparation.

An impromptu speech can occur not only when delivering speeches but can also occur in some other situations like debates, discussions, and interviews, Kaur (2010) asserted that in our daily life, we often make impromptu speech in situations such as
talking with our friends, parents, teachers, shopkeepers, etc. It is good because people have prior experience about impromptu speech activities, though they speak in their mother tongue (Jeng-Yih, 2007). When delivering it in the target language, which is English, it would be more difficult to deliver because it is not the first language of the person who delivers the speech. The writer found the consequences that the speaker could not speak smoothly and the listener got confused to catch the idea.

Advantages and disadvantages of an impromptu speech

- The advantages of an impromptu speech

There are some advantages that the students can achieve when delivering an impromptu speech. Students have the opportunity to gain knowledge from their presentation which they can use in the real world situation like interview and presentation (Smith, 2003). Besides, students will be accustomed to speaking in other public speaking situations such as asking something spontaneously to a shopkeeper or flight stewardess. In other words, students will have better public speaking skills in the future. Lucas (2009) believed that the purpose of delivering a speech is that the students are going to gain experience in combining ideas in a short time. He wants to assert that a topic can bring more than one ideas. Therefore students can arrange the ideas into the best order to deliver with the purpose that audiences can achieve the idea that is being delivered.
- The disadvantages of an impromptu speech

Griffin (2011) asserted that an impromptu speech occurs when we want to share our experiences, deliver what we know, and speak about some issue spontaneously about a figure or an idea. It is good if the person masters the material or topic that will be shared. However, because impromptu speech is done spontaneously, there is less preparation for the speaker and it may create nervousness. Impromptu speech doesn’t allow the presenter to prepare, therefore Hsieh (2006) stated the consequences is that the students will stand speechless when delivering an impromptu speech in front of the class because the presenter does not have background knowledge about the topic chosen, and the presenter does not get the preparation time. Lavelle (2003) gave the same idea about the nervousness of students who are speechless in front of the class. It may be caused by the unknown environment, like unknown friends or unfamiliar teacher.

However, Shore (2010) had a different view, saying that some students in a public speaking class have lack of special knowledge like playing the guitar while singing. It is similar to delivering a speech while remembering to use an eye contact and body language while concentrating to what will be said next. It will add their fear to present a certain topic. Whereas, Kaur (2010) believed that gestures can add the excitement of doing an impromptu speech.

According to Katz (2000), Yahya (2013) and Ayden (2008), there are four aspects in public speaking that can affect the performance of the students in presentation, including the performance of delivering an impromptu speech. Those are:
1. Emotional aspects

An experimental study on fear of public speaking using Virtual Environment (VE) by Slater, Pertaub et. al (2006) compared between participants who have public speaking phobia and confident public speakers. The experiment showed that phobic participants acted differently when speaking in front of people and speaking in an empty room. The participants will be trembling or shaking, have dizziness, face becoming hot, perspiration, and unstable heart rate. The same idea was uttered by Kaur (2010). Her study about impromptu speech among undergraduate at University of Malaya, found that the students were lack of confidence when delivering an impromptu speech because they were shy to face others. Furthermore, Kaur found that other students were panicky for no reason. Their hand and feet became frozen as they felt cold and for several students, their feet will be shaking.

2. Fear of negative evaluation

Horwitz et. al (1986) stated that someone feel fear of negative evaluation because in the classroom there are teacher and other students who are fluent speakers. Because there are other better speakers in the classroom, the presenter will feel down and the
presentation will not be delivered nicely. According to Aydin (2008), there are some sources that bring someone to be afraid of negative evaluation such as negative judgment and thought of others, leaving unfavorable impression on others, fear of making verbal and spelling mistakes, disapproval by other students, shortcoming and fault found by others. The fear of negative evaluation is when a foreign language learner is unsure about what the person is saying, the person is not able to create social impression for themselves, and incapable of making the proper social impression (Watson and friend, 1969, as cited in Horwitz et.al.,1986). They added, the fear of negative evaluation is apprehension of other evaluations, avoiding the evaluation situations, and anticipation that other would evaluate negatively. Students can be sensitive to evaluation because besides teacher evaluates them, their classmates could also be evaluators. It is why they will be afraid to deliver an impromptu speech in front of other students.

An unidentified student in Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) as cited in Yahya (2013) said that he likes learning English, but never takes part in speaking activities because his speaking is bad and others will laugh at him. It is an example of being afraid of negative evaluation. Moreover, Jones (2004) pointed out that students are afraid in making mistakes or errors in front of the class, afraid of being awkward, foolish, and incompetent in front of their peers.

3. Language anxiety

process.” Foreign language learners are afraid of language anxiety when specific situation requires learners to use English as a foreign language although the person is not fully competent in speaking English (Gardner and MacIntyre, 1993 cited in Aydin, 2008). Bailey (1983), Hilleson (1996), Jackson (2002), Price (1991) Tsui (1996) and Hsieh (2006), found several causes to students’ language anxiety, such as low English proficiency, lack of practice, competition, and task difficulty, which might vary from context to context. Furthermore, Sato (2003) stated that traditional teaching method that focuses on grammatical accuracy on a written form will create passiveness in a foreign language learning. Hence, students don’t have time to practice speaking.

Some examples of being afraid in language anxiety are the fear of making errors in pronunciation or spelling, find difficulties in elaborating ideas from the main points, fear of forgetting vocabulary related to the topic given, and the fear of getting sensitive topic or issue such as about races, religions, or politics. (Kaur, 2010).

4. Impromptu speech rules

There are several rules in impromptu speech presentation, such as limited preparation time, and an unpredicted topic for delivering an impromptu speech. Lucas (2009) described impromptu as a speaking activity that is delivered with little or no immediate preparation. The limited time to prepare is a challenge for the presenter to deliver an impromptu presentation. It becomes a problem when the presenter does not finish delivering all of the presenter’s idea within the available time. Furthermore, Some of Kaur’s (2010) participants said that the teacher did not allow them to write down some
notes before delivering an impromptu speech. Other reasons in Kaur’s findings were, the
topic was not familiar but students could not change the topic.

**Strategies to deliver an impromptu speech**

Many researchers have found that delivering an impromptu speech is not an easy case. Jeng (2007) found that an impromptu speech is perhaps the most challenging form of public speaking. Pearson (2006) in Shore (2010) stated that in order to be a good speechmaker, practice is very fundamental. Students should have appropriate time to practice speech using the target language with an expectation that they will have experience in it, with the purpose that when arriving in the class, they are ready to deliver the speech. However, there are still some obstacles for practicing impromptu speech outside the class, such as practice space and audiences.

Students who have less confidence will get more confidence if the student practices, (Hendrix, 2000) and they will be able to speak naturally. Furthermore, Smith & Frymier (2006) found that students who practice with some audiences before class get a higher score when delivering an impromptu speech in the classroom, compared to the students who don’t practice impromptu speech. It is not about the topic chosen, instead it is about students’ confidence and experience in delivering a speech. In the class, teacher should give an appropriate chance for students to practice before assessing them (Kaur, 2010).

Furthermore, in order to make a good impromptu speech, it is not only about practicing itself. Lucas (2009) gave three steps to make a good impromptu speech. Those
steps are, first, state the point that the presenter wants to make, second, support the point with an appropriate statistic or example, and third, summarize the point. If the presenter is nervous when talking in front of the class, he or she should reduce the speed of speech in order to make audiences follow the speech. Whereas, Ablamowicz (2005) created her own strategy for her impromptu speech students. She usually discusses the speech fear problem with her students at the first meeting to create a good relationship between teacher and the students, therefore the students will feel more confidence and comfortable when delivering an impromptu speech.

Lehtonen (1982) as cited in Kaur (2010) added that in order to deliver an impromptu speech with excitement, it will be much better to apply an eye contact and body language with audiences. An impromptu speech is not only about delivering the message or material to the audiences, instead an eye contact and body language usage can create an interesting speech and can convince audiences more. In the same way, Powell (2000) stated that students don’t need to be afraid to read the notes that the presenter makes before delivering the impromptu speech, as long as the speaker keeps the good eye contact with audience.

Previous studies

Kulwindr Kaur (2010) conducted a study on undergraduate students at University of Malaya with the topic “a study of impromptu speeches among undergraduate at the University of Malaya”. She wants to answer questions about the fears that the students face, students’ and lecturers’ view about assessing impromptu speech, the strength and
weaknesses for undergraduate students in doing an impromptu speech, and also the strategies that are given to students to improve their presentation. Kaur used questionnaire and interview for collecting data on students, and using interview for collecting data from students and lecturers. The questionnaire is given to one hundred students, ten students for interview, and eight teachers for interview. The data showed that sixty of one hundred students were nervous and not confident. Some students in her study said that they were not confident because their English was not good, they were shy to face others, and the main points of the speech to deliver were not enough in three minutes. Other data showed that one minute preparation is not enough since they were not familiar with the topic, and they were not allowed to change the topic. There were some recommendations from students to have a better speech. One of those is by showing them the video about good speechmaker people like Larry King, and Oprah Winfrey before they present.

Another study was conducted by Hsieh (2006) at Yuanpei Institute of Science and Technology in Taiwan with the title “problems in preparing for the English Impromptu Speech Contest”. He stated that when students want to deliver an impromptu speech in front of the classroom, many students are frightened because they don’t have good commands of English. His research ranged the problem encountered by students in delivering an impromptu speech into three aspects: 1. Language; 2. Speaking skills; 3. Background knowledge. The result showed that in language, some students had limited understanding to use correct words/ diction, and was wrong in using grammar. Then for speaking skills, some students could not organize the speech, and was difficult to grab
audience’s attention. Moreover, many students did not have certain background knowledge that was related to the topic to present.

THE STUDY

Context of the study

The study took place at Satya Wacana Christian University, Salatiga, a small town in Central Java, Indonesia and specifically at the Faculty of Language and Literature. The students in this faculty are prepared to be a professional English teacher. They are prepared not only being able to speak English communicatively, but also for teaching English one day if they become English teachers. The participants of this study have been familiar with the impromptu speech therefore they could give the sufficient data for this study.

Participants of the research

The participants involved in this study were 53 students from the 2011 academic year from the total 86 students who had passed Public Speaking class. They have experienced delivering an impromptu speech presentation in class, thus the writer hopes to get significant data from the participants.
Research instrument

The questions in the questionnaire sheets were closed-ended questions. The participants did not need much time to fill out the questions, and it saved time to analyze. There were 18 items in the questionnaire about factors causing students to be afraid to an impromptu speech presentation and also some strategies that the students prefer most to decrease their fear of delivering an impromptu speech presentation. The items in the questionnaire were created from experts’ statements.

Data collection

The total number of the participants were 53 students who filled out the questions in the questionnaire sheet. The data were collected by using close-ended questionnaire. It consisted of 18 questions in the questionnaire sheet. Those questionnaire sheets were spread to 60 participants of ED students of 2011. There were two participants who asked to fill out the questionnaire through Facebook account. Unfortunately there were 7 questionnaire sheets that the writer did not get back from the participants. Before distributing the questionnaire, piloting was done to ensure that the questionnaire was understandable to do. McKay’s (2006) stated idea of benefit in doing piloting such as to explore potential problems may exist, for example the clarity of the instruction or items that might be difficult or confusing for the participants. Participants for piloting was 15 students of 2011 academic year. After doing the piloting, the writer spread the questionnaire sheets to students of 2011 who usually spend their free time around F building at Satya Wacana Christian University.
Data analysis

There were total 18 items in the questionnaire sheet related to the fear that the students face in delivering an impromptu speech and how they overcome the fear. First, the data in questionnaire were counted to know the total number of the participants’ choice (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, strongly agree). Then the number were divided into percentages to know their major causes of the fear (Malcom, 2004 in Nugrahenny:129). After that the result were explained descriptively to find the answer for the research questions (Kaur, 2010).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section discusses the research findings in attempts to answer the research questions. The first research question is “What are the fears that students face in delivering an impromptu speech in class?” And the second research question is “How did the students overcome their fear?”

The answer is presented by describing the data descriptively about the major causes of the fear as well as how the students overcome their fear.

The major causes of the fear are categorized into four parts. They are: 1. Emotional aspects; 2. Fear of negative evaluation; 3. Impromptu speech rules; 4. Language anxiety.
1. Students’ Fear in Emotional Aspects

There are 5 items in the questionnaire to analyze this first category of the students fear in delivering an impromptu speech. They are items (1), (2), (4), (7), and (13).

1. I am very confident to deliver an impromptu speech in the classroom.

![Figure 1](image)

The finding for the question 1 presents that 58% of 2011 students have lack of confidence when they deliver an impromptu speech in the classroom. The word ‘impromptu’ means ‘spontaneously delivering a speech.’ Therefore, because it is spontaneous, the presenter of the impromptu speech automatically has less confidence in front of others and it will affect the performance of the speaker. It is apparent that impromptu speech is one of the most challenging situations in a speech contest. (Seleskovitch, 1982; Wood, 2001) It is influenced by some factors such as the time for preparation that will be discussed further on item 3 and item 10.
2. While delivering an impromptu speech, I will be more confident to make an eye contact with other students as the audience.

![Pie chart showing agreement and disagreement on eye contact during impromptu speeches.]

Figure 2

From this data on Question 2, the finding reveals that the average of the students (51%) prefer not to use an eye contact with the audience when the students deliver an impromptu speech. However, 49% of the students tend to use an eye contact with other students as the audience. Most of the students don’t want to make an eye contact with the audience because when they make an eye contact, they will feel nervous. Kaur (2010) noted that the students were shy to face others and some students were panicky without any specific reason. In contrast, it was shown by Lehtonen (1982) as cited in Kaur (2010) that an impromptu speech with a good eye contact improves an excitement in the presentation, creates an interesting circumstance in the classroom, and the presenter is able to convince the audience more about the substance of the impromptu speech presentation.
The data from this figure 2 explains that making an eye contact with the audience is one big factor that students hardly apply because it can make them nervous in delivering a good impromptu speech in class.

4. I feel my heart beat faster during my impromptu speech presentation.

![Figure 3](image)

The data from this question shows an absolute result which is almost all of the students (81%) positively agree that when they deliver an impromptu speech presentation in the classroom, their heart beats faster than before. It is clear that an impromptu speech is very challenging for the students. The increasing of someone’s heart beat signifies that the person is afraid of something. In this case, an impromptu speech is not an easy case for the students.

19% of the students don’t agree with the statement. They don’t feel the increasing of their heart beat when delivering an impromptu speech because they have the background knowledge and experience. Shore (2010) discovered that the students’ lack of background knowledge about the presentation topic will create fear and panic when
they deliver an impromptu speech. Furthermore, Kaur’s studies (2010) found that since the students’ heart beats faster, several physical appearances automatically occur. For example the students’ hand and feet could become frozen and as they feel cold, the students’ hand and feet shake a lot.

7. My feet shake a lot when I deliver an impromptu speech.

![Pie chart showing survey results for feet shaking during impromptu speeches.]

As figure. 4 shows, 83% of the students don’t agree that their feet shake a lot when they deliver an impromptu speech in front of other students and teacher. The presenters of the impromptu speech try to control their physical appearance as good as they can so that the impromptu speech presentation looks convincingly. Whereas 17% of the students agree that their feet shakes a lot when they deliver an impromptu speech in front of the class. According to Lavelle (2003), students who are very nervous will be speechless when delivering an impromptu speech in class and their feet will shakes a lot. Lavelle describes some factors that affects students’ nervousness, those are the unknown friends and unknown teacher.
The correlation between figure 3 and 4 is interesting because as Kaur stated that when someone’s heart beats faster, some physical appearances may occur, including the shaking of their feet. However, although 81% of the students feel their heart beats faster during the impromptu speech presentation, figure 4 shows that only 17% of the students feel their feet shake. In this case, most of the students can control their physical appearance in their impromptu speech presentation in order to have a good presentation.

13. I feel more confident if I speak in an empty room rather than speaking in front of many students.

![Pie chart showing responses to question 13.](image)

Figure 5

Figure 5, however, shows that 75% of the students agree if they are more confident if they speak in an empty room without any audience. It proves that most of the students have emotional aspects, or some public speaking phobia. This data is consistent with the findings of the previous studies by Slater, Pertaub et. al (2006) which stated that phobic students acted differently when they delivered an impromptu speech in front of others. They concluded that phobic students would be trembling or shaking and would
have dizziness, perspiration, and unstable heart rate which is similar to the finding on figure. 3.

In addition, Kurtus (2001) stated that it happens because the presenter of the impromptu speech is embarrassed if they look foolish or stupid in front of his classmates and the teacher. It is why most of the students is more confident if they deliver an impromptu speech in an empty room.

2. Students’ Fear in Negative Evaluation

There is 1 item in the questionnaire to analyze the second category in order to answer the research question 1. It is item number 8.

8. I am afraid if the students laugh at me because my speaking is not very good.

![Figure 6](image)

In this data, the researcher found that more than half of the students (55%) are afraid if other students as the audience laugh at them. When the audience laugh at the presenter, they think that their presentation is not good or not correct, whether to
convince the audience or to deliver the substance of the presentation successfully. In contrast, 45% of the students answer that they are not afraid if the audience laugh at them. They are actually enthusiastic to deliver their impromptu speech without being afraid of making mistakes.

Ayden (2008) defined some sources that cause someone to be afraid of negative evaluation such as negative thought of others about the presenter’s performance, unfavorable impression from the audience, and disapproval by other students. Actually more than half of the participants don’t want to be judged negatively because it will reduce their motivation to speak. Furthermore, Tsiplakides & Keramida (2009) as cited in Yahya (2013) showed that many students don’t want to participate in class, including being active in an impromptu speech because their speaking is not good and they are afraid when other students laugh at them.

3. Students’ fear in the Impromptu Speech Rules

To find out the participants’ answer about their fear of impromptu speech rules, there are 5 items in the questionnaire to find out the students’ answers for this category. The items are number (3), (10), (11), (12), (16).
3. I think the time given to deliver an impromptu speech is enough for me to deliver my impromptu speech in front of the class.

The findings in this figure 7 reveal that almost half of the students (49%) who have experienced in an impromptu speech presentation don’t agree about the time for delivering an impromptu speech. For them, the total time for delivering the impromptu speech is not enough for them to utter all their thought. Approximately the total time for the students to deliver an impromptu speech in class is 10 – 15 minutes. The students who need more than 15 minutes to deliver their impromptu speech usually have a broad background knowledge about the topic given. Therefore the presenter of the impromptu speech presentation need much time to deliver all of the idea in that particular topic. Lucas (2009) describes an impromptu speech as a speaking activity that is delivered with a little time preparation. It is why 51% of the students are likely to finish their impromptu speech before the time is up. For example, if the presenter is interested in politics and he/she gets the topic related to politics, the presentation of the impromptu speech is likely to be more than 15 minutes. In contrast, if the presenter is unfamiliar about politics and
he/she gets the topic related to politics, the presenter is likely to finish the impromptu speech under the time given.

10. I need more than 5 minutes to prepare what I need to say in an impromptu speech presentation.

![Figure 8: Survey Results]

In figure 8, 66% of the students positively agree that they need much time to prepare all the ideas and substances for their impromptu speech. The finding indicates that most of the students get an unfamiliar topic related to their background knowledge. Therefore, they need many references to help them build their ideas to deliver in an impromptu speech presentation. On the other side, 34% of the students don’t need much time to prepare their impromptu speech presentation. It is likely that they know a lot about the topic that they get for the presentation.

An impromptu speech presentation is delivered without time for preparation. In other words, students should be ready to deliver their impromptu speech spontaneously (Lucas, 2009). Moreover, because an impromptu speech does not allow the presenter to prepare, Hsieh (2006) stated that some students who don’t have experience in an impromptu speech presentation will stand speechless in front of the class. The risk is that others will judge the presenter negative as shown in figure 6.
11. I don’t need any notes as guidance to deliver my impromptu speech.

Based on the finding in Figure. 9, 27% of the students agree that they don’t need any notes to deliver their impromptu speech. Besides they have limited time to create notes, they also get confused about what to write in the notes. In the finding, 73% of the students need notes as the guidance to deliver their impromptu speech. Students who use notes on their presentation believe that the notes will direct them to deliver their impromptu speech nicely.

The topic in an impromptu speech presentation is taken randomly, therefore the students only have several minutes to prepare notes if they need it. Most of the participants (73%) are likely to create notes before delivering their impromptu speech. Lucas (2009) suggested that the students have to use the limited preparation time to make notes by making a simple outline in a piece of paper. It is very helpful for the students to make a good impromptu speech presentation and to help them reduce their confidence problem.
12. I can change the topic for presentation if I get an unfamiliar or uninteresting topic.

Figure. 10 provides the data about the flexibility of the teacher to allow students to change the impromptu speech presentation topic. According to the survey, 49% of the students utter disagreement of the statement 12. It means that they cannot change the presentation that they get from the lottery. On the other hand, 51% students agree that they can change the topic for impromptu speech presentation if the topic is unfamiliar or difficult for them. It depends on the teacher’s flexibility. In this case, if the teacher allows the students to change the topic, the teacher wants to see the best performance of the students when delivering impromptu speech with the topic that is mastered by the presenter. Kaur (2010) found that many students is not familiar with certain topic but they can not change the topic. It creates fear for students that impact on their performance of delivering an impromptu speech.
16. The teacher gives us some minutes to practise in class before assessing us.

As figure. 11 shows, most of the students (66%) agree that the teacher gives them opportunities to practice delivering an impromptu speech in front of the class before scoring them. The positive point is that students are likely to be familiar with the atmosphere in front of the class. Moreover, the audience may be familiar to the impromptu speech presenter. Therefore the negative evaluation from the audience will decrease.

In contrast, 34% of the students don’t get any opportunities to practise delivering an impromptu speech in front of other students. They tend to be more afraid in delivering an impromptu speech when they are assessed by the teacher.

4. Students’ Fear in Language Anxiety

Language anxiety is a feeling when a specific situation requires someone to use English to speak.
There are 2 items in the questionnaire to analyze this category. The items are on number (5), (6).

5. I can deliver my impromptu speech well in English although it is not my first language.

The data on the figure. 12 reveals that more than half of the students (57%) agree that they can deliver an impromptu speech nicely without being afraid of using English as a foreign language. Because the students study at the English Department, it is a must for them to use the English language as the media to communicate. More than half of the students have been familiar in using English. Therefore they can deliver an impromptu speech well. People who have prior experience in an impromptu speech situation in their mother tongue will have a good impromptu speech in other languages (Jeng-Yih, 2007).

In contrast, the total of 43% of the students don’t agree with statement 5. They are not fully competent in delivering an impromptu speech in English because English is not their first language. It is likely that the students have low English proficiency, less
practice in speaking English, and the task of delivering an impromptu speech is difficult (Hsieh, 2006).

**6. I hardly use gestures when delivering an impromptu speech because I am thinking what I will say for the next sentences.**

![Bar chart showing agreement levels](image)

As shown on figure 13, 60% of the students agree that they hardly use gestures in delivering their impromptu speech in class because they are focusing more on thinking about the next sentences. Using gestures in a student’s presentation is one of several challenges in an impromptu speech. Moreover, because an impromptu speech is a spontaneous speech presentation, the students are likely not prepared well about what to say in front of the class. Meanwhile, if the students think more on how to use gestures or body language, they will get confused about what sentences to utter. On the other hand, 40% of the students can apply gestures while delivering their impromptu speech. According to Shore (2010), it is a kind of a special knowledge that students have. Shore explained that there are students who have special knowledge on applying more than one activities like playing the guitar while singing. It is similar to delivering an impromptu speech while focusing on using gestures while concentrating to what will be said next,
though Kaur (2010) believed that gestures can add excitement in an impromptu speech presentation.

Students’ Strategies to Overcome Their Fear

To answer research question 2 about how the students overcome their fear, there are 5 statements in the questionnaire to be answered by the students. The students answer the questionnaire by choosing whether the statements strongly agree, agree, disagree, and strongly disagree according to their choice.

The statements are number (9), (14), (15), (17), (18).

9. If I forget some vocabularies when delivering an impromptu speech, I can easily change into other words that have a similar meaning.

According to figure. 14, there are total 70% of the students who agree that changing some vocabulary when they forget the words in their impromptu speech presentation is an easy case for them. It is good that the students can change easily the words that they forget into other words that have a similar meaning. It means that the students have a rich
vocabulary to memorize. However, 30% of the students find difficulties in changing some important words in their impromptu speech presentation when they forget the words. The presentation will not go fluently and it can create panic and nervousness for the students. Kaur (2010) assumed that forgetting vocabulary is one of some factors that causes language anxiety. Other factors are making errors in pronunciation or spelling and finding difficulties in elaborating ideas from the main points.

14. *I always practise delivering an impromptu speech before class with a random topic I got from any sources.*

![Figure 15](image)

The data on figure 15 shows that more than half of the students (52%) agree with statement 14 that they always practise delivering an impromptu speech before coming to class. Surprisingly, 48% of the students seldom practise delivering impromptu speech before class. Actually when the students practise before class using any random topics, they have an opportunity to get the same topics when they present an impromptu speech in the class. Whereas, the students who don’t practise before class are likely to be nervous and speechless in front of the class if the topic is unfamiliar to them. Hendrix (2000) stated that students who have self confidence problem will be more confident in
front of the class if the students practise before class with any topics and moreover, the students will be able to speak naturally.

**15. I get a higher score in an impromptu speech in class when I practise before class.**

![Figure 16](image)

The data in figure 16 shows that 51% of the students agree that they get a higher score in an impromptu speech presentation when they practise before or outside the class. It is the reason why 52% of the students (Figure 15) always practise delivering an impromptu speech before class. They want to be more confident and comfortable when delivering their impromptu speech. Besides, they also want to get the best score from their best performance.

The finding provides evidence that 49% students don’t get higher score in an impromptu speech presentation in class because they rarely practice it before or outside the class (48% on Figure 15). Smith and Frymier (2006) found that students who practice before or outside the class, especially who practise with several audience often get higher score when delivering an impromptu speech in the classroom, compared to students who rarely practise before or outside the class.
17. I always create notes before delivering an impromptu speech in class

Figure. 17 presents one of the way about how the students overcome their fear. Creating notes before delivering an impromptu speech is usually done by most of the students in order to have a good impromptu speech presentation. The majority of the students (81%) create notes before coming in front of the class to deliver an impromptu speech. The notes that they make have the function as the guideline to speak in order. Without notes, the presenter get confused about which ideas should be delivered first. Whereas 17% of the students don’t create notes before delivering their impromptu speech. Basically, the students don’t create notes because besides they don’t know some important information about the topic, they also get difficulty to read their notes when they are in front of the class because they are afraid if they don’t make gestures and eye contacts with the audience. Actually Powell (2000) suggests that students don’t have to be afraid to read their notes when they deliver an impromptu speech as long as the presenter keeps a good eye contact with the audience.
On the other hand, students don’t create notes because their teacher does not allow them to do. The teacher is likely to let the students to deliver their impromptu speech orally with a good eye contact and body language, without dividing their focus on looking at their notes. Although Kaur (2010) found that students got difficulties in delivering an impromptu speech when they are not allowed to create notes.

18. In order to reduce my nervousness, I usually reduce the speed of my speech.

Figure 18 shows that most of the students (68%) usually reduce their speaking speed. By doing that, they are trying to reduce their nervousness. When the students are afraid and panic when delivering an impromptu speech in front of the class, their speaking speed is usually getting faster because they want to finish the presentation quickly. In contrast a lower number of students (32%) are likely think that their speaking speed of delivering an impromptu speech in front of the class is not related to the nervousness. Lucas (2009) gave an idea that if the students usually become nervous in front of the class, the person needs to reduce the speed of the speech in order to calm
themselves and to make the audience follow their speech. It can create a good atmosphere for the class in an impromptu speech situation.

CONCLUSION

This study was conducted to find out the students’ major fear in delivering an impromptu speech in the classroom and how the students overcome their fear in delivering an impromptu speech. There are four parts used to know the students’ major fear of delivering an impromptu speech. They are emotional aspects, fear of negative evaluation, impromptu speech rules, and language anxiety.

From the data gathered, it can be concluded that most of the students are nervous in delivering an impromptu speech in front of the class. The fact that 75% of the students agree if they are more confident if they speak in an empty room without any audience proves that they are nervous speaking in front of an audience. They need much time to prepare before delivering an impromptu speech, and they need practice to have a good impromptu speech presentation. Fortunately, the students can control their fear so that some physical changes don’t occur like hand and feet shake, dizziness, speechlessness, and perspiration, though gestures and an eye contact are hardly used by the students when delivering an impromptu speech. Whereas notes and practice are very helpful for them to have a good impromptu speech presentation with less of nervousness.

The findings of this study suggest that although almost all of the students tend to be afraid in delivering an impromptu speech, they should have many opportunities to
practise whether in the class or outside the class. The teacher also has an important role for the students to develop their confidence in speaking in front of many people. The students should know that notes are very helpful for their impromptu speech presentation, therefore it is good if the teacher gives some minutes for the students to search some information and create notes related to the topic for presentation. Teacher also can suggest the students that they use gestures and an eye contact in their impromptu speech presentation in order to make the presentation interesting and convincing.

In this study there are some limitations, like the minimum number of the participants, and there was no observation on students’ impromptu speech presentation. Then, further studies can investigate the students’ grammatical errors in delivering an impromptu speech or even other public speaking presentations or activities in the classroom.
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Andries Hinnani Tamonob
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Dear students, I am a student of the English Department who is doing research for my thesis. This research is conducted to explore students’ fear towards impromptu speech activities and to find out how the students overcome their fear. Please kindly fill the questionnaire below. It will not affect your grade. Many thanks.

Please give a thick (✓) to one of the columns for each number below according to your choice (strongly disagree, disagree, agree, or strongly agree).

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<th>No</th>
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<td>I feel my heart beats faster during my impromptu speech presentation.</td>
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<td>5</td>
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<td>My feet shake a lot when I deliver an impromptu speech.</td>
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<td>8</td>
<td>I am afraid if the students laugh at me because my speaking is not very good.</td>
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<td>9</td>
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<td>I don’t need any notes as guidance to deliver my impromptu speech.</td>
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<td>12</td>
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<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>I feel more confident if I speak in an empty room rather than speaking in front of many students.</td>
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<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>I always practise delivering an impromptu speech before class with a random topic I got from any sources.</td>
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<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>I get a higher score in an impromptu speech in class when I practise before class.</td>
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<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>The teacher gives us some minutes to practise in class before assessing us.</td>
<td></td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>I always create notes before delivering an impromptu speech in class.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>In order to reduce my nervousness, I usually reduce the speed of my speech.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

THE END.

THANK YOU. 😊