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Finding A Balance in Self-Imposed and Other-Imposed Prophecies for The Fear of Oral Presentations

Noor Hanim Rahmat[1], Mazlen Arepin[2], Sharifah Amani Syed Abdul Rahman[3], D Rohayu Mohd Yunos[4], Eliyas S. Mohandas[5], Ira Syaqira Sukimin[6], Zarina Razlan[7]

[1,3,4]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor, Kampus Pasir Gudang, [2]Faculty of Education, Universiti Teknologi MARA Kampus Puncak Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, [5]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia, [6,7]Akademi Pengajian Bahasa, Universiti Teknologi MARA Cawangan Johor, Kampus Segamat
Email: noorh763@uitm.edu.my, jasmazlen@uitm.edu.my, shari348@uitm.edu.my, droha932@uitm.edu.my, eliyas9154@uitm.edu.my, irasyaqira@uitm.edu.my, zarina1260@uitm.edu.my

Abstract
Oral presentation skills is needed beyond the language classroom, and also beyond universities. Nevertheless, language instructors are the one responsible to teach learners good oral presentation skills. Interestingly, all other non-language courses would have some form of component of oral presentation assessment at the end of their course; hence, proving how important oral presentation skills are. Having good presentation skills enable students to function successfully in the future surrounding. Some students need good oral presentation skills for their future academic encounters, while many need it for their work environment. Perhaps it is the importance of having good presentation skills that is making many learners fear learning this skill. Fear of oral presentation can originate from many factors. This quantitative study is done to investigate the causes of fear in oral presentation among undergraduates. 56 respondents from a chosen public university in Malaysia participated in this study. The instrument used is a survey. Findings show that presenters manifest the cycle of fear when it comes to oral presentation. In addition to that, the findings also indicated that in order to "get out" of the cycle of fear for oral presentation, presenters need to learn to hide their nervousness and not reveal that they are afraid.
Keywords: Oral Presentation, Language Classroom, Self-Imposed Prophecies, Other-Imposed Prophecies.

Introduction

Background of Study

Oral presentation skills is needed beyond the language classroom, and also beyond universities. Nevertheless, language instructors are the one responsible to teach learners good oral presentation skills. In the language class, oral presentation skills are categorised under one of the four main skills-that is, speaking. Language users are tested for their presentation skills at the end of the language course. Bulca & Safaei (2013) reported that among all the four language skills, speaking has always been the most challenging one since it is not only a productive skill but also it requires instant coding and response to continue its presence. What is more fascinating, it is difficult for most people to make public speeches even in their native languages as they fear public speaking.

Interestingly, all other non-language courses would have some form of component of oral presentation assessment at the end of their course; hence, proving how important oral presentation skills are. According to Zivkovic (2014), having good presentation skills enable students to function successfully in the future surrounding. Some students need good oral presentation skills for their future academic encounters, while many need it for their work environment.

Perhaps it is the importance of having good presentation skills that is making many learners fear learning this skill. According to Rahmat (2019), fear of oral presentation can originate from many factors. Some learners' fear originates from themselves. Bulca & Safaei (2013) found that some presenters do not have the self-confidence. Some fear the audience, while others have poorly prepared texts and they fear if they are understood. So, looks like presenters fear may stem from the audience they are to face. This fear may lead to more problems in their preparation and in the end their fear is made "valid" when they have to face the audience with not well planned presentation scripts. This becomes a cycle of fear. This study explores the cycle of fear for oral presentation among language learners in a higher institution of learning. Specifically, this study is done to answer the following questions;

● How do self-imposed prophecies influence the fear of oral presentation?
● How do other-imposed prophecies influence the fear of oral presentation?

Literature Review

Self-Fulfilling Prophecy and Fear of Oral Presentation

Fear can be seen as belonging in a cycle. Figure 1 shows the classic model of self-fulfilling prophecy by (Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968). The fear can be seen as having two big categories; (a) self-imposed prophecies and (b) other-imposed prophecies. The fear can begin from any part of the cycle. Let's take an example of a presenter who do not have self-confidence to present (our beliefs about ourselves). This beliefs then would influence the presenter outlook on the presentation assignment; perhaps the text preparation was not done well (our actions towards others). Badly prepared presentation would turn-off the audience in many ways (others beliefs about us). Finally, the content of the presentation was not well-understood or well-received (others actions towards us).
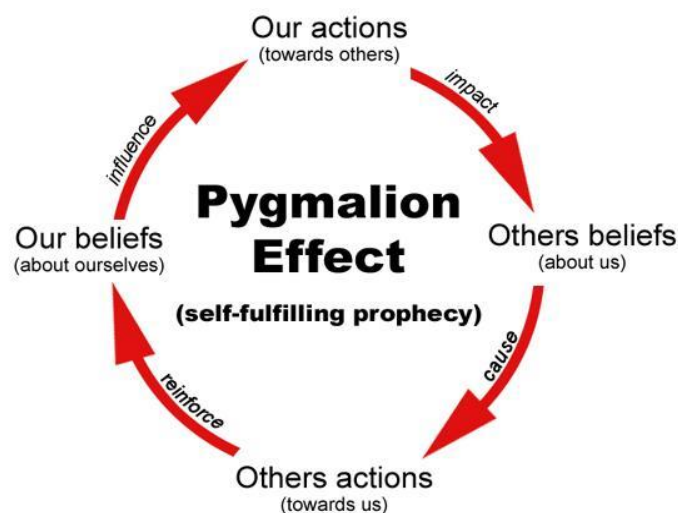
Figure 1 Self-Fulfilling Prophecy (source: Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968)

Why do people fear oral presentations? Many researchers have presented their views on the reasons why people fear oral presentations. Naser & Isa (2021) felt that even students who are doing well fear oral presentations. In addition to that Grieve, Woodley, Hunt & McKay (2021) reported six themes for this fear. They are fear of being judged, physical symptoms, uncertainty about the topic, negative effect on university experience, practice and preparation, and more practical support needed. Next, Kho & Ting (2021) found that the audience factor caused the greatest oral presentation fear. Presenters were reported to be affected by negative expressions seen on the audience members' faces. The factors that cause a moderate level of oral presentation apprehension were also preparation, language ability, personality traits, and confidence. Aliyu et al (2019) found that there are five levels of speaking anxiety. The levels are psychological anxiety, fear of making grammatical mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, English classroom speaking anxiety, social-environmental factors, and perception factor. In addition to that, students' speaking anxiety is mostly due to fear of negative evaluation and social-environmental factor.

Past Studies
The study by Konchaib & Munpanya (2021) was done to (i) measure and identify students' strengths and weaknesses in oral presentation skills, (ii) examine students' perceptions of rating their presentation performances, and (iii) investigate students' attitudes towards their oral presentation experiences. The participants were 47 Thai third-year undergraduate students in the English for International Communication Program. Research instruments were the teacher assessment form and a student self-assessment questionnaire, including a scoring rubric and self-reflection questions. Means, standard deviations, and Paired Sample T-Test were used to analyze oral presentation performance levels from self- and teacher assessments. Coding and categorizing were also used to analyze responses from self-reflection questions. Findings found that students' positive attitudes towards their presentation experiences, showing their efforts to practice and prepare the presentation, solve problems related to setting and environment, affective factors, and working memory while delivering presentations helped reduce their fear.
Next, Grieve et al (2021) conducted a qualitative study to explore the fears experienced and strategies used by students who fear public speaking, including oral presentations. The study was also done to determine whether their fear affected their experience of higher education.

A qualitative survey comprising four open-ended questions was completed by 46 undergraduate and postgraduate students with a fear of public speaking from the University of the West of England (UWE), Bristol. Thematic analysis was used to identify the following six themes, namely: fear of being judged, physical symptoms, uncertainty about the topic, negative effect on university experience, practice and preparation, and more practical support needed. This survey provides further evidence that higher education institutions should acknowledge public speaking fear among some students and provide more support in oral presentation assessments.

The study by Naser & Isa (2021) was aimed to identify the level of public speaking anxiety and the correlation between students' public speaking anxiety in oral presentation class and English-speaking classroom performance among UiTM Shah Alam undergraduates. 150 students from UiTM Shah Alam were selected randomly for this study. Items from the Public speaking classroom anxiety scale (PSCAS) questionnaire were adapted to measure students' level of anxiety in speaking English. Inferential statistics (Pearson correlation) was used to analyse the correlation between students' public speaking anxiety in oral presentation class and English-speaking classroom performance. The findings showed that majority of respondents experienced a moderate level of anxiety. However, it is prevalent that despite having good academic results, most respondents had speaking anxiety during public speaking presentations.

Kho & Ting (2021) investigated the causes of oral communication apprehension among polytechnic students when performing oral presentations. The specific objectives of the study were: (a) to compare the communication apprehension level associated with five factors and (b) to find out if there were relationships among the five factors, namely, personality traits, preparation level, audience factor, language proficiency, and confidence level. Communication apprehension data was obtained from 373 students in a polytechnic college using a 23-item Likert-scale questionnaire. The results showed that the audience factor caused the greatest oral communication apprehension, as respondents reported being affected by negative expressions seen on the audience members' faces. The factors causing a moderate level of oral presentation apprehension were preparation, language ability, personality traits, and confidence.

The study by Rahmat (2020) explored foreign language classroom anxiety among undergraduates. The study used the instrument on Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety . There were 7 items on demographic profile, 8 items for communication apprehension, 5 items for fear of test anxiety. There were also 9 items of fear of negative evaluation, and items on fear of language classes. Findings reveal that the communication apprehension that students portray, can snowball to learners fearing taking test and getting negative evaluation and then this fear may extend to fearing the foreign language classes.

Gufriyansyah and Khairani (2019) explored the level of public speaking anxiety on 97 students (54 psychology students, and 43 medical students). Data were collected with PRPSA (Personal Report of Public Speaking Anxiety) to identify the categories of public speaking anxiety. It was known that 47.4% of students had low public speaking anxiety, 48.5% in moderate category of public speaking anxiety, and only 4.1% in the high category of public speaking anxiety. Then, 54 psychology students were investigated of their public speaking anxiety based on listener's characteristic. Result showed that there was the difference of public speaking anxiety based

on listener's characteristic on psychology students, the students who spoke in front of the listeners with higher educational level were more anxious than those who spoke in front of the listeners with lower educational level.

Aliyu et al (2019) conducted a study for a period of 12 weeks using a pre-post quasi-experimental research design. An intact class of 16 undergraduates in a stylistic class in north-eastern Nigeria was selected for the study. A questionnaire and semi-structured interviews were used to collect data for the study. Findings reveal that the students' anxiety levels significantly reduced in all the five levels of speaking anxiety, psychological anxiety, fear of making grammatical mistakes, fear of negative evaluation, English classroom speaking anxiety, social-environmental factors, and perception factor. The findings also show that the students' speaking anxiety is mostly due to fear of negative evaluation and social-environmental factor. The study makes some recommendations for teachers to help students to overcome speaking anxiety through classroom interactions and oral presentation.

 Tian & Mahmud (2018) investigated the factors contributing to academic oral presentation anxiety, explore the differences between English majors and non-English majors in their strategy employment for academic oral presentations, examine the relationship between academic oral presentation anxiety and strategy employment, and compare the differences in oral communication strategy employment between high-anxiety and low-anxiety students. A total of sixty-one participants participated in this study by answering two questionnaires: Results showed that the three major sources of anxiety related to content of presentation, oral proficiency, and delivery skill. Moreover, a significant difference was found in the use of Social Affective strategies between English majors and non-English majors. Besides, negative significant correlations were found in the use of Message Abandonment strategies and Attempt to Think in English strategies. Furthermore, a statistically significant difference was found in the use of Message Abandonment strategies between high-anxiety and low anxiety-students.

Finally, the study by Raja (2017) was done to analyze the reasons behind the anxiety level in undergraduate students of a public speaking class and recommend strategies to overcome this fear. This quantitative study was done on a sample of 50 students using convenience sampling technique from a reputable private sector business school in Karachi. The findings showed that students who fear public speaking can perform well if they use certain strategies to fight their fears. 75% participants admitted their fear of public speaking and 95% participants agreed that if proper counselling, instruction and coaching is provided, this fear can be overcome. Research revealed that exposure to virtual environment can facilitate student confidence and enables them to face audience irrespective of the size.

Conceptual Framework
This study is rooted from the self-fulfilling by Rosenthal & Jacobson (1968) and the categories of fear of oral presentation by (Yaman & Kavasoglu, 2013). Figure 2 presents the conceptual framework of the study. Fear of oral presentation can be traced from self-impose prophecies and also others-imposed prophecies. Self-imposed prophecies are developed when the fear of oral presentations actually came from the presenters themselves ; that is, internal factors. Next, others-imposed prophecies came from the environment that the presenters are in; that is the external factors.
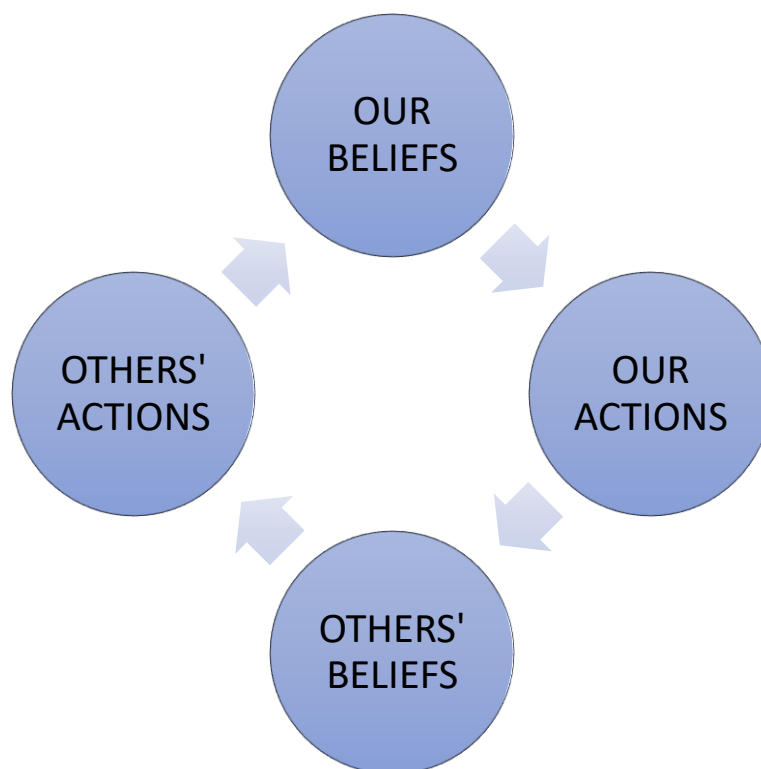
Figure 2- Conceptual Framework of the Study:
Self-Imposed and Others-Imposed Prophecies in Oral Presentation
(source: Rosenthal & Jacobson,1968; Yaman & Kavasoğlu , 2013)

Methodology

This quantitative study is done to investigate the causes of fear in oral presentation among undergraduates. 56 respondents from a chosen public university in Malaysia participated in this study. the instrument used is a survey adapted from Yaman & Kavasoğlu (2013). The survey has three sections. Section A is the items on demographic profile. Section B has 8 items on external factors while section C has 7 items on internal factors.

Table 1
Distribution of Items in Survey

SECTION	CONSTRUCT	NO OF ITEMS
B	EXTERNAL FACTORS	8
C	INTERNAL FACTORS	7
TOTAL NO. OF ITEMS		15

An analysis of the instrument revealed a Cronbach Alpha of .857; thus showing a high external reliability of the instrument. Data is then analysed using SPSS version 26 to reveal the mean scores to facilitate the answering of the two research questions.

Table 2
Reliability Statistics of the Instrument

Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.857	15

Findings
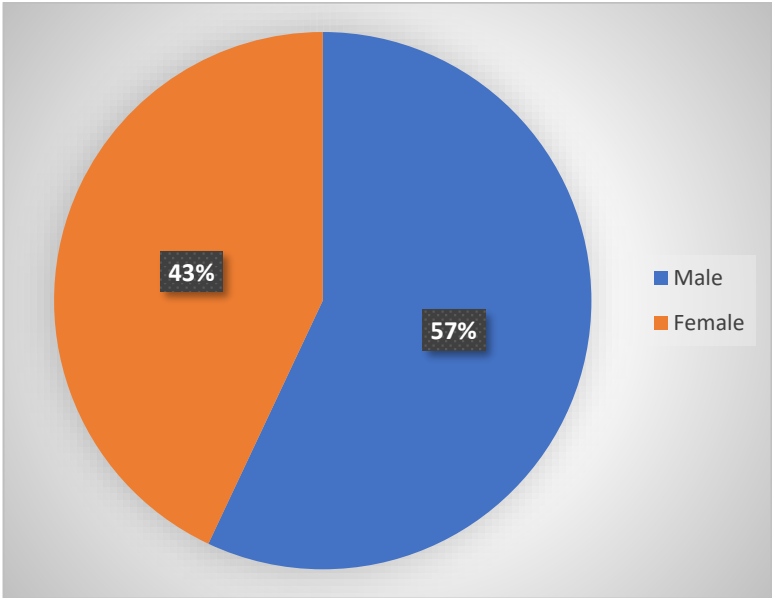Findings for Demographic Profile

Figure 3- Percentage for Gender
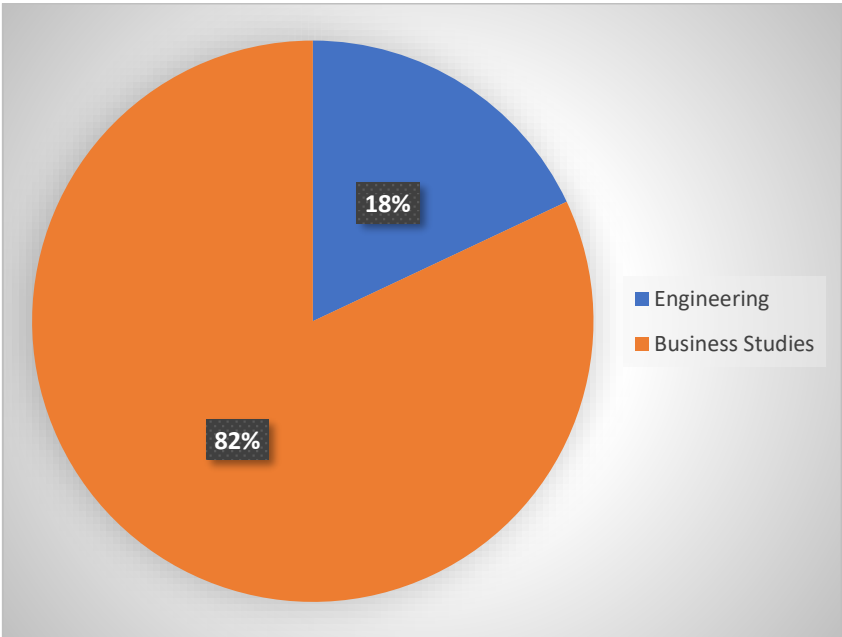Figure 3 shows the percentage for gender. 57% of the respondents are male and 43% are female.

Figure 4- Percentage for Course Taken

Next, figure 4 shows the percentage for course taken by the respondents. 18% are engineering students and 82% are business studies students.

Findings for Self-Imposed Prophecies
This section answers research question 2: How do self-imposed prophecies influence the fear of oral presentation? In the context of this study, self-imposed prophecies refer to (i) our beliefs and (ii) our actions.
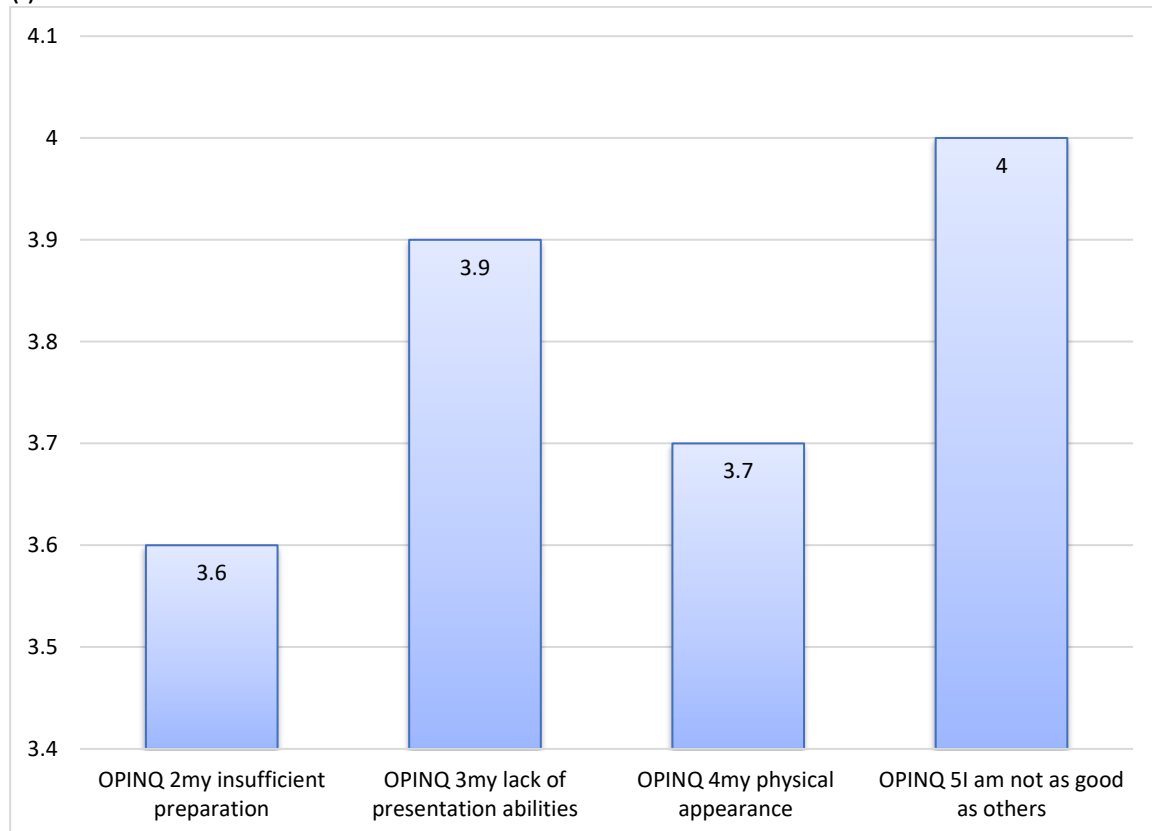
(i)   Our Beliefs

Figure 7-Mean for Our Beliefs

Figure 7 shows the mean for our beliefs. The highest mean (4) is for "am not as good as others". This is followed by a mean of 3.9 for "my lack of presentation abilities", a mean of 3.7 for "my physical appearance " and a mean of 3.6 for "my insufficient preparation".
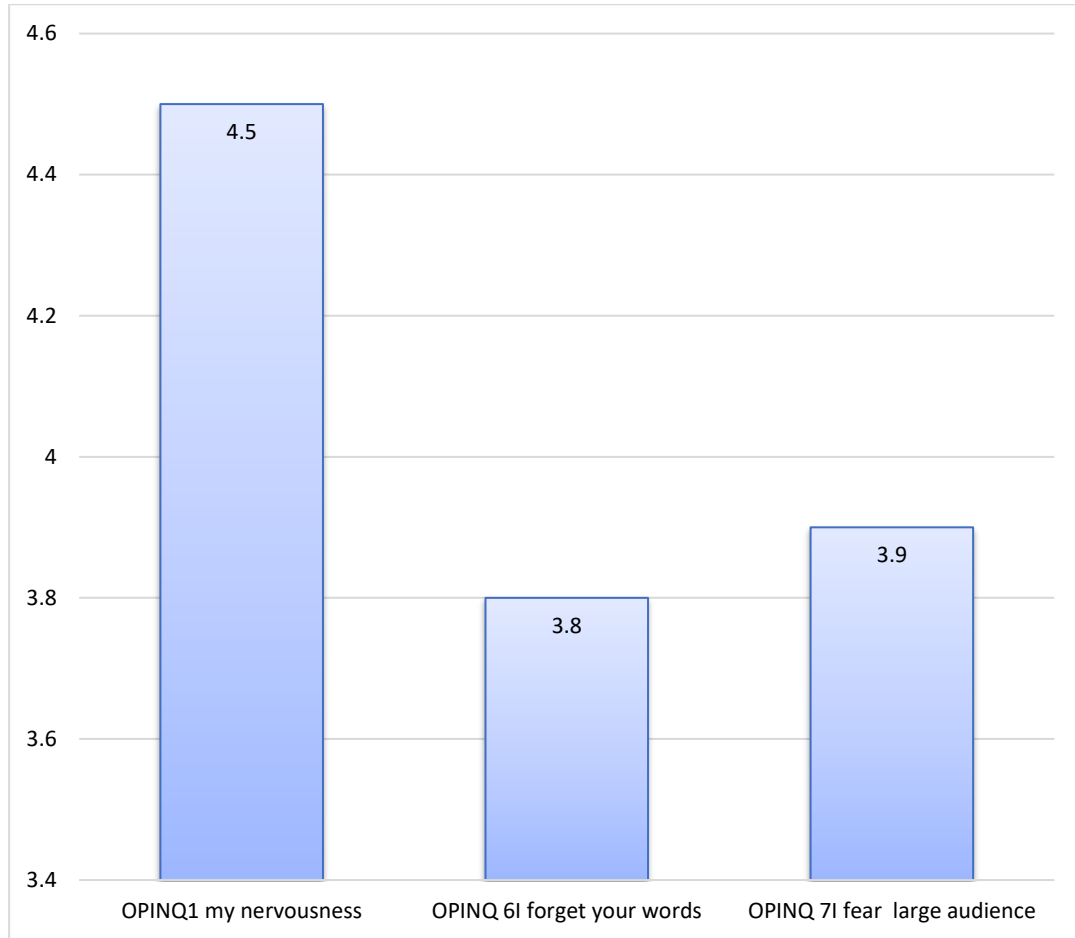
(i)   Our Actions

Figure 8- Mean for Our Actions
Figure 8 presents the mean for our actions. The item "my nervousness" showed a mean of 4.5. The item "fear large audience" has a mean of 3.9 and the item "forget words" had a mean of 3.8.

Findings for Other-Imposed Prophecies
This section presents data to answer research question 1: How do other-imposed prophecies influence the fear of oral presentation? In the context of this study, other-imposed prophecies refer to (i) other's beliefs and (ii) others' actions.
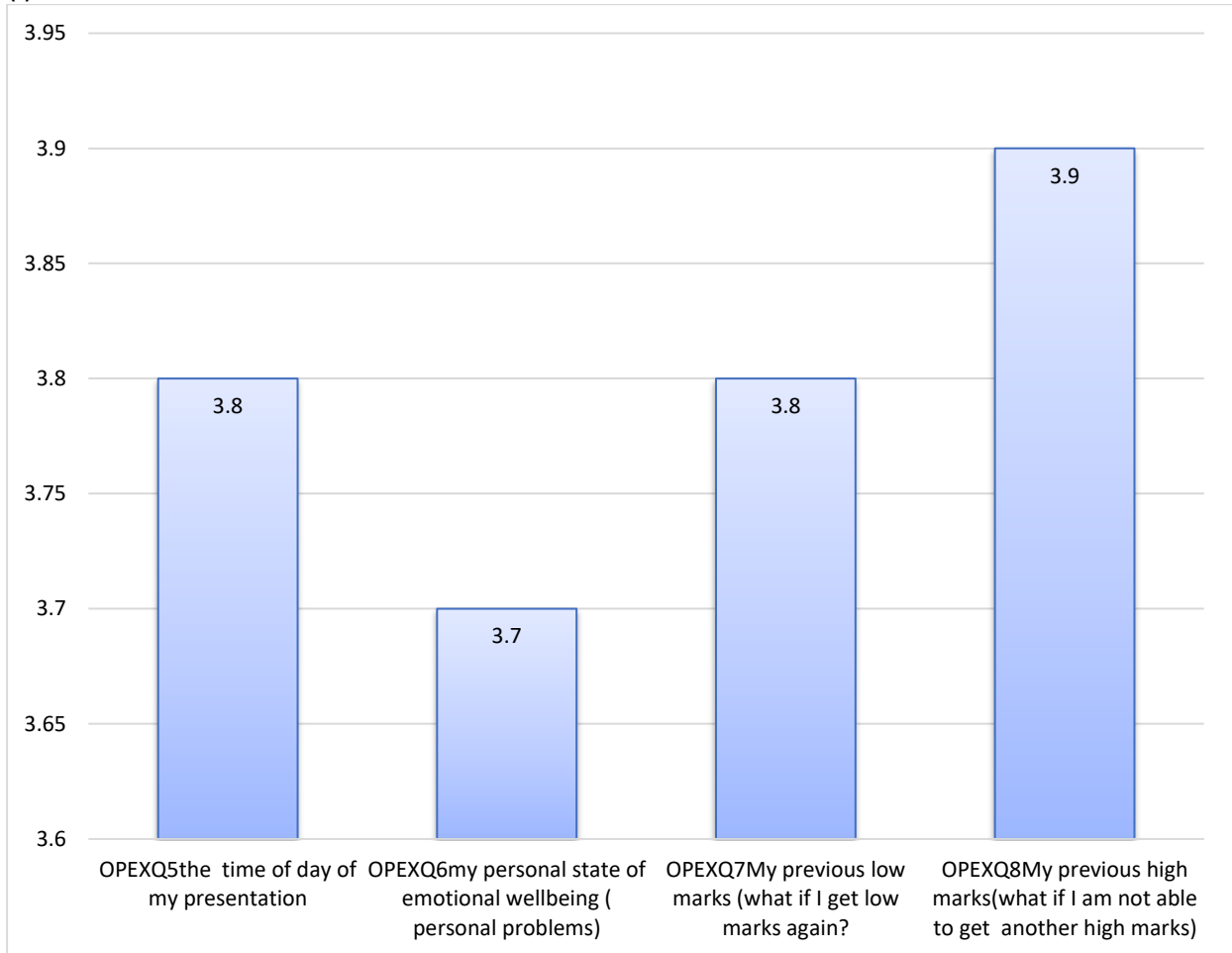
(i)   Others' Beliefs

Figure 5- Mean for Others' Beliefs

The mean for other-imposed prophecy is presented in figure 5. The highest mean (3.9) is for "previous high marks(what if I am not able to get another high mark". This is followed by a mean of 3.8 for two items and they are "time of day of my presentation" and "previous low marks (what if I get low marks again?".
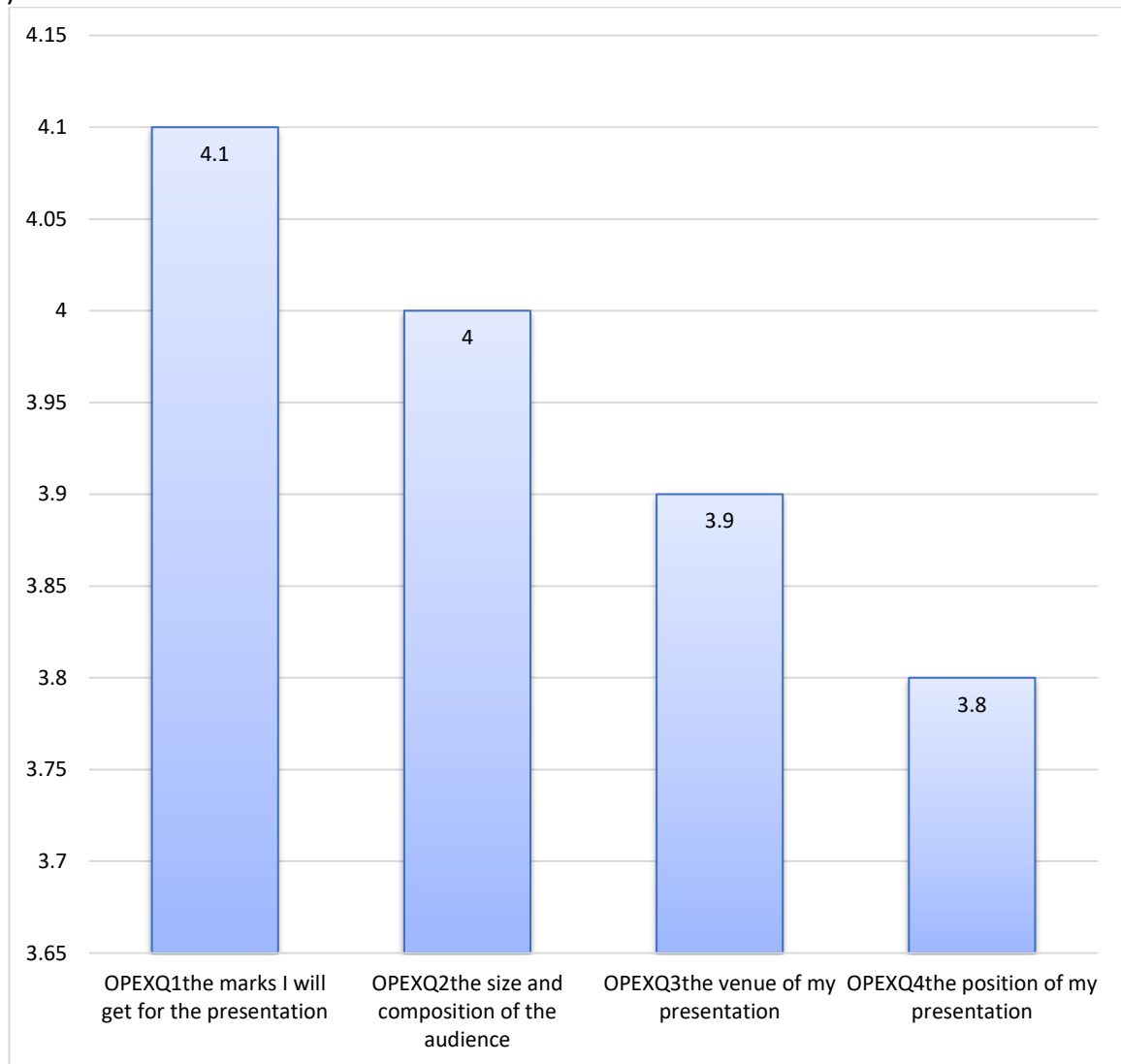
(ii)   Others' Actions

Figure 6- Mean for Others' Actions

Figure 6 shows the mean for others' actions. The highest mean of 4.1 is for "the marks I will get for the presentation" . Next, the item "the size and composition of the audience" revealed a mean of 4. Next, respondents reported a mean of 3.9 for "venue of the presentation" and a mean of 3.8 for "position of presentation".

Conclusion
Summary of Findings and Discussions
In order to summarise the findings, there is a need to recap the conceptual framework for this study. Fear of oral presentation is seen as a cycle. It all begins with our beliefs about the oral presentation assignment/activity. This beliefs will be manifested into our actions. When others' have the opportunity to observe our actions, they then form their own beliefs about our oral presentation ability. Finally, the beliefs of others will in turn influence their actions. In the classroom setting, the belief of others (others' beliefs) can be manifested in the form of the evaluation of the presenters ability.
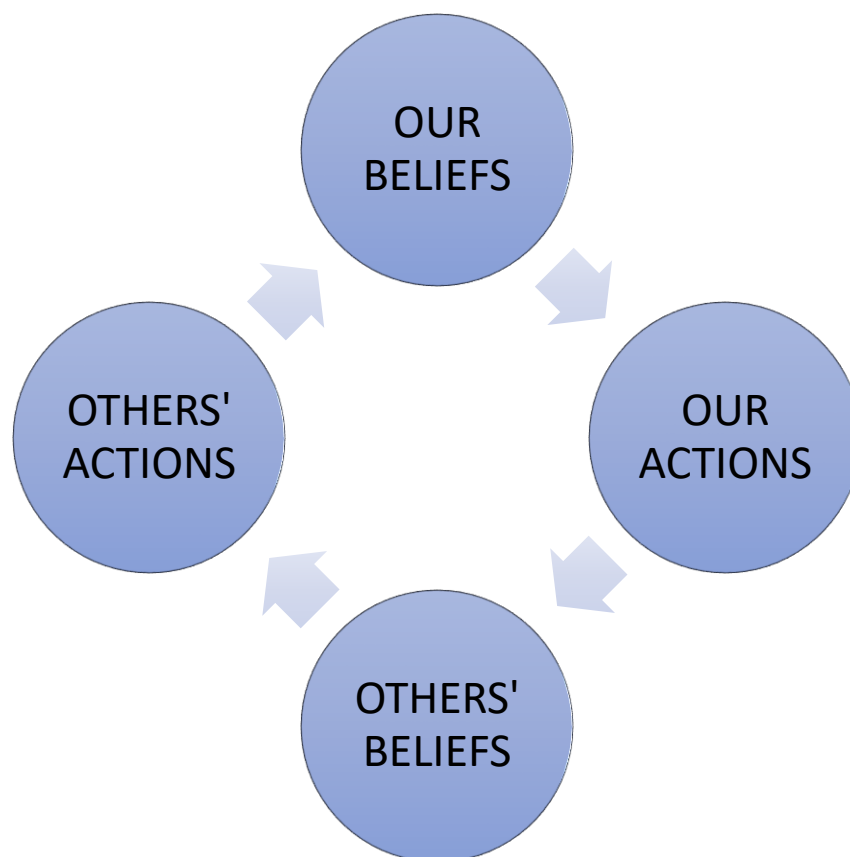
Figure 2- Conceptual Framework of the Study:
Self-Imposed and Others-Imposed Prophecies in Oral Presentation
(source: Rosenthal & Jacobson, 1968; Yaman & Kavasoglu , 2013)

Self-Imposed Prophecies
A summary of the data showed that the respondents felt inferior compared to others. This inferiority complex may be manifested into them not making sufficient preparation for the presentation. The cycle in figure 2 then snowballs to self-actions. The lack of self-confidence can be shown in their nervousness (our actions). This finding is in accordance with the findings by Konchaib & Munpanya (2021) who also found that presenters who feared oral presentation needed to be more positive. They also felt that the affective factors played an important role in the way the presenters see themselves (our beliefs)

Other Imposed Prophecies
With reference to figure 2 again, the cycle continues to others beliefs. A summary of the analyse data for this study. As mentioned, due to the actions shown by the presenter, presenters reported being worried of their previous marks. They are also bothered by the time of the day of their presentation (environment factor). The study by Aliyu et al (2019) also reported that presenters feared the negative evaluation given by the audience. In addition to that, the studies by Konchaib & Munpanya (2021) and also Aliyu, Korau & Basiru (2019) also reported that presenters fear the setting and the environment of the oral presentation.
Next, a summary of mean scores for others' actions show the presenters also fear the size and composition of the audience, apart from just the venue and the position of the presentation. This finding is in accordance with the study by Kho & Ting (2021) and also Rahmat (2020) who

also found that presenters are affected by negative expressions seen on the audience members' faces.

A summary of mean for all types of prophecies revealed the highest mean (4.1) is for our actions. This shows that the most influential fear that presenters face is the manifestation of their own fear. Almost all presenters fear oral presentation. Almost all are nervous to face oral presentations. However, not all display the fear through their actions (our actions). Displaying the fear will cause the fear to get into the cycle of more.
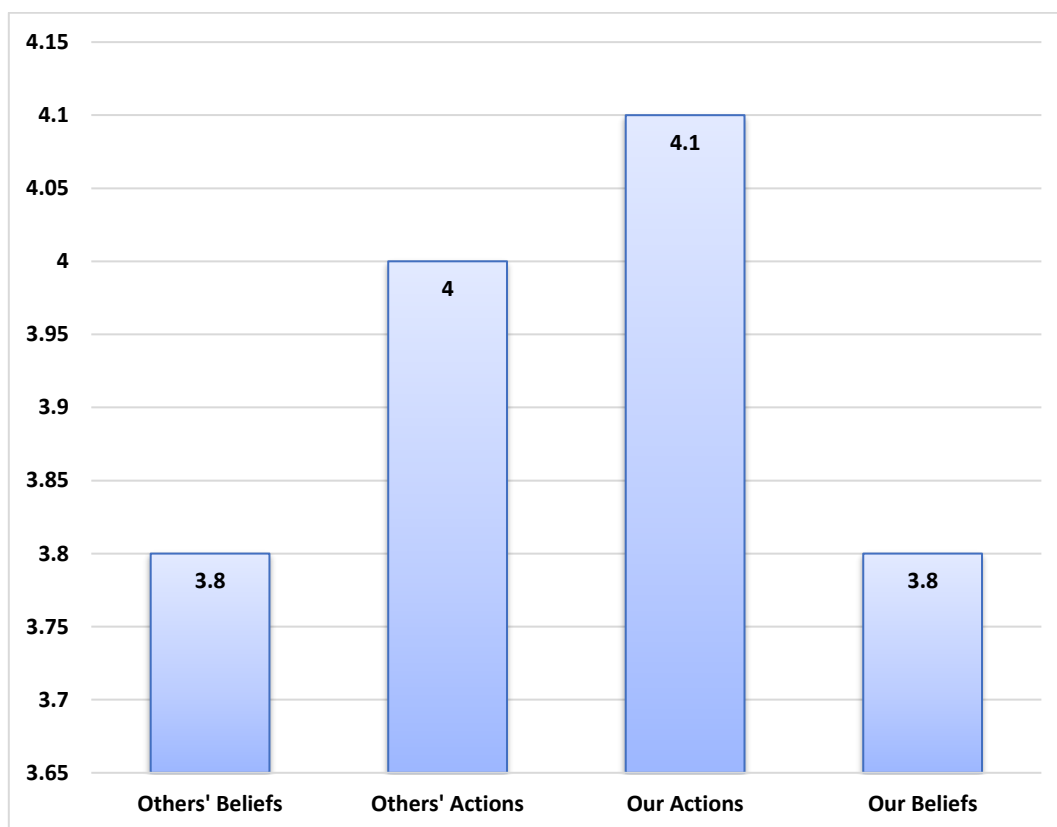

Figure 7- Summary of Mean for Both Self and Others Imposed Prophecies.

Pedagogical Implications and Future Research

The findings in this study indicated that in order to "get out" of the cycle of fear for oral presentation, presenters need to learn to hide their nervousness and not reveal that they are afraid. Perhaps , instructors teaching oral presentation should include a topic of "how to overcome fear" or even "how to deal with nervousness" as part of the course of oral presentation. Bulca & Safaei (2013) suggest that instructors teach the strategies that both minimize stage fright, and prepare manuscripts with organized content for their speech. As for the strategies, the study suggests ice-breaker mini-presentations throughout the semester in order to encourage the learners to familiarize themselves with speech making before audience.

It is suggested that future researchers explore what presenters do (and why they do it) when they are nervous. Future research could also look into bets practices by presenters to overcome oral presentation fear.

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