
The Peculiarities And Importance Of Public Speaking

Public speaking is a skill that every person has whether they have mastered it or they lack the skill due to anxiety and anxiousness, we all have gone through it at one point in our lives. When you have good public speaking skills, it can be beneficial and essential when communicating your thoughts and ideas to a group. The purpose of this study is to evaluate the effectiveness of awareness training to reduce nervous habits when speaking in public. Targeting nervous habits that people display when speaking in public can direct us in a way to decrease the habit or change it. The researchers used 4 students at the University of South Florida. Karen who wants to avoid the use of verbal fillers such as “um” and “uh”. Jasmine who wants to better communicate and to decrease the use of verbal fillers, swaying, poor eye contact, and awkward hand gestures. Tyler wants to stop using verbal fillers such as “like” and to have better eye contact with the audience. Lastly, Michelle says she is terrified to speak in public and wants to manager her nerves and the use of verbal fillers.

Dependant Variable

The dependent variables included: filled pauses, tongue clicks, and the inappropriate use of the word “like”. Filled pauses are an occurrence of a word such as “uh” and “um” that had no meaning in the sentence. Tongue clicks was defined by the researchers as a clicking sound the speaker made in his/her mouth with the tongue that could be heard steps away. The word like was defined as the use of the word when it “...did not follow grammatical, semantic, or syntactical form.” It could also be used right before describing someone or something. In order to see these habits happen, the participants met in a conference room and had their speech examined by video recording. With the use of frequency with 15 second intervals on each the targeted behaviors.

Independent Variable

The participants were given a choice to choose one topic out of three which included: My First Job, If I Could Be Born in Any Decade, and My Favorite Vacation. They were then given 10 minutes to take notes on what they wanted to say and then given 5 minutes to deliver their speech. The recorder(PI) video taped the speech as well as sitting and watching the speech. During awareness training the recorder showed the participants their recording of their target behavior as part of response detection. The participant would deliver their speech fully until all of the target behaviors were identified. 33% of each session had treatment fidelity. Participants needed to complete each speech with 100% of their target behavior used. The recordings were scored based on the implemented steps. In booster sessions, participants would deliver their speech over again until the target behaviors decreased to 80%.

“This study used a multiple baseline design across participants. Each participant experienced a baseline and post awareness training phase”(Spieler & Miltenberger).

“Karen’s habit behaviors in baseline averaged 12.9 per min and decreased to an average of 2.0 per min in post-AT assessment. Jasmine’s habit behaviors in baseline averaged 7.1 per min and decreased to an average of 2.2 per min in post-AT assessment. Tyler’s habit behavior

decreased from an average of 6.7 per min in baseline to an average of 1.6 per min in post-AT assessment. Michelle's habit behaviors decreased from an average of 9.3 per min in baseline to an average of 1.7 per min in post-AT assessment" (Spieler & Miltenberger). All of the participants took part in filled pauses and the use of the word like having the highest frequency in baseline and post-AT

This study showed a decrease in each participant's targeted behavior during the post-AT. Although we did see a decrease in the habit's, we also saw an increase in anxiety and nervous behavior before delivering their speeches. A limitation of the study is to give the participants a topic related to their studies rather than having them choose something more general. This study determined that awareness training was not effective standing alone, which is why they had to also incorporate booster sessions to target the habit behaviors. I think this study did correctly target the behaviors, but in awareness training is where I did not see an effectiveness. The participants raised their own hand when a habit was used, and they then would rewatch themselves on the video recording to see how often they used the habit behavior. I think them just watching and using frequency to notice when it is being used can work just as effectively. Having the use of a video recording is very effective because the participant and the researchers can easily see how often a habit is used and how that can affect their speaking skills.