

A Study on Students' Perceptions of their Experiences in Making Oral Presentation

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Abstract

The study is concerned with students' perceptions of their experiences in making oral presentation test at the university of computer studies, Thaton (UCST). The research aims to examine students' attitudes towards making oral presentations by identifying benefits obtained and the challenges faced regarding the three perspectives: personal traits, deficiency in presentation skills, and apprehension of peers and teacher. The participants of the study were 85 fifth-year students from three sections and six teachers. A four-point Likert Scale questionnaire composed with 35 items and semi-structured interview were carried out to collect the data for analysis. The results obtained were described in percentages. The findings showed that students experienced a medium level of difficulties in conducting oral presentation. Analysis of qualitative data indicated students' challenges such as stress and lack of practice in oral presentation skills. This study recommends that students need more exposure and experience of presentation skills in university.

Keywords: perception, experiences, difficulties, oral presentation

1. Introduction

Making oral presentation or public speaking is a critical activity for students to become an active and independent learner in language learning. To be a successful presenter, students need to be proficient many skills and techniques such as way to organize ideas, the ability to use language, the capacity to speak fluently and the use of body language appropriately.

Generally, distributing impressive presentations is completely challenging for the fifth year students at UCST. While making oral presentation, students tried to effort to perform their abilities in the target language. As a result, some students encountered obstacles and they were unsatisfied their outcomes in demonstration. Students' problems which cause low efficiency in oral presentation motivate the author to implement the study

on the fifth-year students opinions of their experiences regarding challenges and difficulties in making oral presentation.

Many researches have revealed the clarifications initiating low efficiency of students in oral presentation. There are several factors that impact on students' oral commentary presentation. This study investigated students' experiences that they faced while making oral presentation by focusing on three key factors containing: personal traits or personal characters, deficiency in presentation skills, and apprehension of peers and teacher. A review of the literature is presented next and this is followed by the methodology section which includes research design, participants, and instrument. The findings and discussion of the research conducted is also described.

2. Literature Review

In an EFL context, an oral presentation refers to a kind of speechmaking where students present a prepared talk on particular topic in English to the class with the assistance of visual aids by individually or in groups (Sundrarajun and Kiely, 2010). Oral presentations are essentially student-centred language tasks. In most cases, when students are approached to make oral presentations in class, they can choose what they have to manage in their presentations also as how they are going to present their themes to the audience. Consider the group presentation as an example. During a process-oriented learning, students are frequently engaged and they work together to arrange for his or her oral presentations. They are asked to answer unexpected questions in follow-up stages in some classroom settings. Both these arranged and spontaneous language output is conceivably useful for students to create capability in English.

The other benefit of oral presentations is that students can practice the four skills of English (i.e. reading, writing, listening and speaking) in a coordinated way. More frequently, students need to

recognize the spoken components of oral presentations to speak out of while presenting. Simultaneously, the audience can practice listening skills and communicate well to the presenters because of the communicative nature of oral presentations. Besides, students have to organize extensive English readings to research aiding materials for topics in the oral presentation preparation. Then, they also reproduce relevant information in their PowerPoint slides. During a summary, the implementation of oral presentations helps bridge “the gap between language study and language use”. Oral presentations have more improvements than merely promoting English competence.

In fact, students may encounter difficulties and challenges when they prepare for and deliver their oral presentations. For instance, research indicates that creating English public speaking is linguistically challenging for learners who are non-native speakers of English (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). Research also suggests that public speaking is psychologically challenging for learners, causing anxiety, nervousness, and lack of confidence.

Moreover, some researchers argued that students frequently experience anxiety in oral presentation (Chuang, 2009; Alwi and Sidhu, 2013). One of the most problems students encounter in oral presentation was anxiety or fear of speaking and it can obstruct EFL students’ creation and accomplishment (Al-Nouh; Abdul-Kareem and Taqi, 2015). In addition, a few studies inquired about the explanations causing students’ nervousness, practically like absence of vocabulary, while others suggested methods to manage these troubles, for instance, selecting a common topic and rehearsing a lot.

Furthermore, many studies proposed to inquire the clarifications of initiating students’ low efficiency in oral presentations. These are often grouped under three categories. First, personal traits like shyness, fear of facing an audience, self-confidence, and physical appearance. Personal traits or personal characteristics of students were the realistic causing their panic at the time of public speaking (Elliott and Chong, 2004). The other major reasons for students’ lack of enthusiasm to demonstrate (e.g., negative evaluations, hard questions, humiliating feedback, etc.) are the audience and the teacher or instructor. Finally, the next important aspect of students’ feelings of hysteria (e.g., studying, preparing, arranging, rehearsing, and performing) is deficiency in presentation skills.

3. Methodology

A mixed-method approach using quantitative and qualitative data was employed.

3.1. Participants

This study was conducted at the university of computer studies, Thaton. The investigation was led among 85 students who are on fifth year of studies in 2019-2020 academic year. 37 are male students and 48 are female students out of the total number of 85.

3.2. Instruments

A 35-item questionnaire with a four-point Likert-type Scale (1=strongly disagree, 2= disagree, 3=agree, and 4=strongly agree) was adapted from the researchers (Al-Nouh; Abdul-Kareem and Taqi, 2015) after an extensive review of the literature on oral presentations. It consisted of three sections: the first category consisted of 13 items and aimed to depict the participants’ personal traits, the second portion consisted of 13 items and was taken up to investigate presentation skills of participants, and the last section was formed the impact of audience and teacher on participants’ oral presentations and consisted of 9 items. The answers of respondents choosing for “Strongly disagree” and “Disagree” are listed under the heading “Disagree”, and answers “Strongly agree” and “Agree” as “Agree.”

Another questionnaire with open-ended question was completed by the participants towards their attitudes to opinions about various perspective of completing oral presentation to reflect on their experiences of oral presentation test. The questionnaires were handed out at the end of the oral presentation test and the results obtained were described in percentages.

Four teachers at UCST and other two teachers from universities of computer studies were interviewed to collect information regarding their perceptions towards oral presentation. All six teachers belong to the department of English language, and they had over ten years teaching experience. They were selected because they were regularly associated with conducting formal presentation and mentoring students and assigned to assess the oral presentation test to their students. All interviews were conducted by the author and teachers’ consents for the interview were taken verbally. Teachers were interviewed at specified times in agreement with their convenience and availability. All interviews were conducted in English and were recorded in mobile phone, and the author managed to take notes simultaneously. Each interview took between 10-15 minutes.

4. Result Analysis and Discussion

The obtained data were described in percentage by ranking the level of students' perceptions as follow:

Frequency (%)	Criteria
0 - 20	very low (VL)
21 - 40	low (L)
41 - 60	medium (M)
61 - 80	high (H)
81 - 100	very high (VH)

Table1. Sub-constructs, scope, number of statements and an example statement

Sr	Factors	Scope	N	Example from Statement
1.	Personal traits	Consist of personal feelings like anxiety, fear, embarrassment, shy etc.	13	I feel embarrassed when I do an oral presentation in English.
2.	Presentation skill	Use of technology, follow timeline, English Language fluency etc.	13	I have a problem with oral fluency and pronunciation during oral presentation.
3.	Peers and Teacher	Facing peers and teacher, fear of evaluation, speaking in front of class etc.	9	I worry that students will laugh at me when I speak English.

N= Number of statements

Table 1 describes the three key factors and related areas which impact on the students with the example statements.

First, concerning personal characters, the findings of the survey showed that participants' perceptions of the difficulties were at a medium level (52.5%). This indicated that the learners were moderately affected by their personal traits. As a result, nearly 44 of participants accepted that the factor learners' personal characters, which consist of nervousness, self-

confidence level, were seen as barriers for them when demonstrating the presentation.

Second, the students' responses in the presentation skills factor were also at a medium level with a percentage of 55.7. The statistics results illustrated that almost 49 students agreed that they experienced challenges to complete their oral presentation task. The findings stated that the respondents assumed oral presentation quite affect their oral presenting but it helped them to improve language fluency and efficiency.

Finally, regarding the effect of peers and teacher on participants in making oral presentation, results indicated that it is the lowest level (47%) among the three factors. Concerning the results, 40 students believed that they experienced interruptions such as pressure and stress.

In accordance with the quantitative results to the three factors, the most impact factor on their making presentation is "presentation skills" (55.7%). The second one is "personal traits" (52.5%) and the last is "audience and teacher" (47%). It can conclude that students' perceptions of the difficulties in oral presentation was at a medium level.

Concerning with qualitative results, students supposed their challenges such as encountered unrequired stress resulting in poor performance, and inadequacy in training in oral presentation skills.

In addition, students identified the benefits of oral presentation skills they did. They indicated that they enhanced several skills, for instance, self-development, critical thinking and problem solving, time management, team work, academic development, leadership skills, interpersonal and intrapersonal skills.

In accordance with teachers' responses related to attitudes towards oral presentation, 3 teachers supposed that the main difficulties of making oral presentations were deficiency in language command and lack of experience. All teachers supposed that 'presentation skills' is the major obstacle factor for students while making oral presentation. Thus, the perspectives of teachers and responses of students are the same.

Moreover, most teachers also addressed their views for the implementation of a successful oral presentation. It is increasingly important for teachers to learn more about what makes a presentation effective in university and how explicit instruction can help prepare students for the kinds of presentation activities they will require in academic and proficient settings. Another important fact is to ensure that students' background knowledge of their subject area was sufficient to cope with the task. This involved guiding students to ensure they knew how to find information and how to access required resources by giving them training sessions on locating

resources as well as motivating them to have an interest in the topic. Mini oral presentations were frequently used to give an approach to students to rehearse and show a newly acquired skill.

The teachers are also required to discriminate students' actual performance in making oral presentations in order to provide appropriate amount of assistance on every occasion possible. Thus, it has been perceived that university students at undergraduate level get to know about the basic principles of formal presentation as a part of their course requirement from the beginning of their higher studies.

5. Conclusion

To sum up, students had a perceived development in overall speaking, fluency, pronunciation, and communicative competence. They positively acknowledged developing their oral presentation skills after finishing the test.

Although students faced some difficulties while they were making their oral presentation, they experienced their achievement in learning outcomes through an innovative way. This paper has indicated some of the things that teachers should combine various activities with the course. Teachers need to provide more guidance and training for students to practise the presentation skills within a group and as an individual so students can see a peer's presentation modeled before they give their own which will encourage and motivate them to do the task.

As a matter of fact, this project was simply a small study case and had some limitations. It was conducted only in one university with 85 students. Several areas still need investigating to completely understand the perceptions of students concerning with their experiences in the oral presentation including more students from different universities to guarantee representativeness. This study is taken into account useful for teachers in education. It is hoped that an extra research study during this area are going to be conducted widely within the future.

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