

Evaluating the effectiveness of oral presentations towards students' English speaking ability at Nguyen Tat Thanh University

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Abstract

The purpose of this research is to evaluate the effectiveness of oral presentations to improve the ability to speak English of first-year non-English major students at Nguyen Tat Thanh University. A quasi-experimental design is conducted with two groups, including an experimental group that receives instruction utilizing an oral presentation approach and a control group that receives no intervention. Pre-test and post-test assessments are used to systematically evaluate the impact of oral presentations on students' English speaking ability in terms of grammar, pronunciation, lexical proficiency, fluency, and discourse coherency. The results show the significant improvement of oral presentations compared to traditional teaching method in improving the English speaking skills of first-year non-English major students at Nguyen Tat Thanh University.

Received 01/08/2024
Accepted 20/09/2024
Published 28/10/2024

Keywords

oral presentation skills, speaking skills, first-year non-English major students, improve the ability to speak English

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1 Introduction

English is known as the global language, since it is the most widely spoken throughout the globe, and has been used in many fields such as science, business and communication [1]. However, many students still find it challenging to employ English in their academic work. Many English instructors have utilized a variety of active teaching strategies, but their effectiveness in obtaining desirable learning outcomes still remains a subject of ongoing debate. Traditional methods of teaching English still constrain students' opportunities to use the language effectively [2]. Oral presentations have been widely adopted at Nguyen Tat Thanh University (NTTU) as a popular pedagogical approach to enhance students' English speaking ability, but they have not been thoroughly researched. Therefore, there is a need to improve foreign language teaching programs and practices to practically benefit both

teachers and learners at NTTU and encourage students' motivation to study English.

1.1 Oral Presentations

A promising teaching strategy is the use of oral presentations. By presenting a topic, or a speech in front of the public, students can benefit from this activity. Firstly, this allows them to overcome their language barriers by making a longer speech instead of short conversations in their textbooks [3]. Moreover, the process of preparing for speaking lesson encourages students to develop their thoughts logically and coherently [4]. In addition, oral presentations also provide purpose and contexts of communication, making the process of learning English become meaningful and motivating [5]. A lot of research in ESL/ EFL environments has shown that the combination between oral presentation and teaching curriculum can help learners improve their fluency, precision, and confidence [6].

1.2 Literature Review

1.2.1 Theoretical Framework

Many research has been developed based on many theoretical views on second language acquisition, and speaking ability. Communicative language teaching (CLT) focuses on the significance of using languages and interaction of learners, which helps facilitate the language learning process [7]. According to this framework, making oral presentations is a valuable approach for carrying out meaningful communication, and improving students' speaking skills.

The output in language learning plays an important role as it allows learners to express themselves and experience different identities through language use [8]. This process can significantly contribute to language acquisition.

Oral communication is undoubtedly crucial to succeed in a variety of fields and enable people to accomplish their goals and objectives. This is the process of exchanging information through spoken words and sound [9]. Oral communication is the capacity to communicate concepts and ideas verbally in a way that is understandable to others [10]. This is also a vital skill for everyone in their social and professional development [11]

Mechanisms, and processes of Oral presentations:

- In the preparation stage, students select topics that are relevant and collect information to enhance their understanding and develop their ideas related to the selected topics. Students organize their oral presentations with a clear, logical, and coherent manner to guide their audience through the main points of the topic.

- Regarding the delivery stage, students employ different techniques in their oral presentations, such as body language, eye contact, gestures, storytelling, and variety in tone and pitch, to emphasize their key points, and enhance audience engagement.

- After finishing the oral presentation, post-presentation reflection is conducted. Students receive constructive feedback from their peers and teachers to reflect on their performance and identify specific aspects for improvement. At the same time, presenters should conduct self-assessment to evaluate themselves through different respects such as clarity, the engagement and the adherence of the topics.

1.2.2 Empirical Studies on Oral Presentations

Numerous studies have investigated the use of oral presentations in ESL/EFL classrooms. A study about the effectiveness of oral presentations towards students' speaking ability was conducted by adopting qualitative research methodology. This research focused on first-year students in an ESL classroom and the findings showed increased confidence and the use of diverse vocabulary and grammar, with clear ideas and cohesion, among learners after using oral presentations [12].

Furthermore, another qualitative study was conducted to provide a profound insight into students' speaking skills at a university in Australia [13]. In the class presentations, teachers observed students' speaking skills and paid attention to their vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, and confidence. The findings of this study showed significant improvements in students' ability to express their ideas, use a wide range of vocabulary and grammar and improve their pronunciation in their presentations.

However, some challenges associated with implementing oral presentations have also been identified. All students were not proficient in their oral presentations when they faced anxiety, making them feel uncomfortable in front of the classroom [14]. A qualitative methodology was carried out with 44 students at University Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia. This study showed limitations in techniques, barriers in English knowledge and anxiety when presenting in English [15].

1.2.3 Vietnamese Learners' English Speaking Skills

Research has highlighted the difficulties that Vietnamese learners face in developing English speaking proficiency. By using a pre-test and post-test, the use of oral presentations in a Ha Noi high school significantly improved students' English learning across many aspects, thus proving that oral presentations are valuable for students' development in English speaking skills [16]. Similarly, the implementation of pre-tests and post-tests on a sample of 120 senior university students in Viet Nam also indicated significant advancements in students' pronunciation, self-assurance, grammatical accuracy, and lexical knowledge [17].

However, many Vietnamese students struggle with pronunciation [18]. Specifically, they tend to translate all Vietnamese words to English, resulting in

misunderstanding due to inappropriate contexts. Therefore, most English learners meet many difficulties in English communication skills unless they receive a comprehensive education.

2 Methodology

2.1 Research Design

A quasi-experimental method is used with the positivism paradigm. The researcher employed this method due to three main reasons. The first reason is that the quasi-experimental method allows the researchers to navigate these constraints while still evaluating the effectiveness of interventions. The second reason is that the quasi-experimental method enables the researchers to compare the results between those who employ oral presentations in the experimental group and those who are taught by traditional method in the control group. This comparison helps evaluate the effectiveness of oral presentations towards students' English speaking skills. The third reason is that although the quasi-experimental method does not assign students randomly, it allows control over other variables.

It is apparent that the term "quasi" in quasi-experiment indicates the lack of random assignment. The participants are first-year non-English majored students assigned to groups based on their enrollment in specific courses. This potentially causes some bias related to inherent characteristics. Additionally, due to the absence of random assignment, the findings can be affected by extraneous variables that are different between the groups. This means that while the quasi-experimental design can suggest relationships and impacts, it cannot form a strong causal relationship as effectively as experimental designs.

There were two variables, including an independent variable and a dependent variable. The dependent variable was the students' English speaking ability, whereas the independent variable was presentation skill, evaluated whether presentation skill has an impact on students' English speaking proficiency. The participants were 500 first-year non-English major students at NTTU. They were divided into 2 groups: control group and experimental group. In the control group, students were taught using the Communicative Language Teaching method, while in the experimental

group, learners were taught to employ the oral presentation approach.

After the treatment period (at the end of the semester 1), Students in both groups took a post-test and students in experimental group answered the questionnaires about their attitudes towards oral presentations. The results of the test were collected and analyzed to assess the effectiveness of oral presentations towards students' English speaking proficiency.

2.2 Description of the "Oral Presentation" Lesson Plan for First-Year Non-English Major Students.

The lesson plan includes learning objectives, the structure of the lesson, activities, and assessment criteria.

2.2.1 Learning objectives

- Practice speaking skills, including pronunciation, grammar, and lexical related to the topic.
- Enhance the students' ability to present ideas in coherent, clear, and confident manner.
- Develop crucial skills, including collaboration skills, teamwork skills, communication skills, organizational skills and confidence.
- Improve the ability to structure and use different visual aids in their oral presentations.

2.2.2 Preparation

- The teacher chooses appropriate and relevant topics for students.
- Introduce documents and samples for oral presentations, along with some guiding questions.
- Prepare equipment such as projectors, speakers and microphones.
- Divide students into groups of 5-8 members.
- Each group selects the topics based on the teacher's instructions.
- Students gather information, and develop ideas, as well as structure their oral presentation.

2.2.3 Procedure

a/ Introduction: the teacher introduces and explains the importance of oral presentation approach in teaching speaking skills.

b/ Instruction: the teacher guides students on how to develop an effective oral presentation, teacher can provide examples for clearer illustration.

c/ Teamwork: students work in groups to prepare their presentations while the teacher offers some

recommendations, and suggestions for students in choosing the topics, and developing ideas.

d/ Presentation: each group takes turns presenting to the class, while other groups listen and ask questions related to the topic presented.

e/ Feedbacks: students receive constructive feedbacks on their presentations from teachers, and their peers. Then, they have to assess themselves to evaluate their oral presentations to identify their weaknesses, and strengths for improvement.

Students are evaluated based on the following criteria:

- Content
- Language: grammatical accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, coherence, and pronunciation.
- Presentation skills
- Visual aids

2.3 Setting and Participants

Sample size formula

$$n = \frac{Nz^2 p(1-p)}{d^2 (N-1) + z^2 p(1-p)}$$

N: population (The total number of first-year non-English major students at NTTU is 6,000)

z: value corresponding to the chosen confidence level (if 95 % reliability, z-value is 1.96)

p: estimated percentage of the population. Assuming unknown, $p = 0.5$ %

d: margin of error, desired margin of error is 0.05

n – sample size of the study

Using the formula, we get the following result: $n \approx 361$, for this study, $n = 500$ is chosen

To achieve the set goal, we carried out the study on 500 first-year students from various academic majors at NTTU. Students are from 18 to 20 years old, regardless of region, gender or religion. All students are randomly selected and intentionally selected by the teacher to ensure that the research results are objective. Participants were randomly participated in either the experimental group ($n = 250$) or the control group ($n = 250$). Both experimental group and control group will take the same test at the same period of 6 months (from January to July 2024) at Foreign Language Center. Teachers who participated in this research are not teachers at NTTU to avoid impressions and bias towards some students. The researchers do not participate in both tests of students, and their learning process to avoid bias towards their research.

2.4 Instruments

2.4.1 Speaking Tests

Pre-test, and post-test were designed to evaluate students' speaking ability based on criteria of Cambridge ESOL (an English test from different languages). This included three different parts: first, a short paragraph to introduce oneself, a picture description, and a role-play situation. Each test lasted about 10 minutes for each student, and they were examined, and assessed by qualified examiners who did not directly teach them during the experiment to ensure its credibility. A standardized rubric was used to assess students' speaking proficiency, including grammatical accuracy, fluency, vocabulary, coherence, and pronunciation.

2.4.2 Questionnaires

To collect all data related to students' attitudes towards oral presentations, a questionnaire was designed, and administered to the experimental group after doing the post-test. The questionnaire included 10 questions based on Likert-scale items, and 2 open-ended questions. The Likert-scale items were used to evaluate students' perceptions of the benefits, and challenges when they used oral presentation, while 2 open-ended questions encouraged students to provide personal impressions, and suggestions for improvement.

2.4.3 Data Collection Procedures

All participants completed a speaking test before starting the new semester. After that, the experimental group was assigned to carry out oral presentations during their 12 weeks of the semester. Students prepared 3 topics related to their major, and each oral presentation lasted for about 5 to 7 minutes, followed by a short Question & Answer session.

After completing the oral presentation, students who presented the constructive feedback received from their peers and teachers. At the same time, the control group received CLT, such as group discussion, conversations, and role-play situations. After the invention, all participants took a speaking test. The experimental group also completed a questionnaire about their attitudes towards oral presentations. All data were collected and stored securely for latter analysis.

2.4.5 Data Analysis

SPSS software was used to analyze the quantitative data from students' speaking test. Descriptive statistics, including means and standard deviations, were calculated for pre-test and post-test scores of each



group. To identify statistical significance of between both groups, independent samples t-tests were carried out. In addition, other paired samples t-tests were used to assess the pre-test to post-test the gains within each group. In terms of questionnaire data, it was collected and presented by proportions with Likert-scale

responses. The two open-ended questions were analyzed thematically.

3 Results

3.1 Experimental Group

Table 1 The Results from the Questionnaire about Students' Attitudes Towards Oral Presentations

Skills	Strongly disagree (%)	Disagree (%)	Neutral (%)	Agree (%)	Strongly agree (%)
1/ I effectively use correct grammar in my oral presentations	0	0	3	25	72
2/ My pronunciation during oral presentations is clear and understandable	0	0	3	26	71
3/ I am confident in my ability to use appropriate vocabulary during oral presentations.	0	1	40	36	23
4/ I become more fluent in in English communication after participating in the presentation method?	0	1	8	67	24
5/ I structure my oral presentations logically and coherently.	0	1	8	58	33
6/ Oral presentations help me develop my communication skills.	0	0	1	58	41

More than 90 % of students showed their positive attitudes as all sub-skills improved significantly after using oral presentations, except for the use of appropriate vocabulary which accounted for 59 % of students' positive response, Table 1.

Table 2 T-test's Results comparing Sub-skills before and after using Oral Presentations

Paired Differences		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference		Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Pre_Pronunciation – Post_Pronunciation	-0.610	0.3950	0.0559	-0.722	-0.050	0.000
Pair 2	Pre_Lexical Resources – Post_Lexical Resources	-0.460	0.3758	0.0530	-0.567	-0.035	0.000
Pair 3	PRE_Grammatical Accuracy – POST_Grammatical Accuracy	-0.520	0.4036	0.057	-0.635	-0.405	0.000
Pair 4	Pre_Fluency – Post Fluency	-0.480	0.3907	0.055	-0.591	-0.369	0.000
Pair 5	Pre_Coherence – Post_Coherence	-0.620	0.4233	0.006	-0.740	-0.500	0.000

The significance value $\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ for all sub-skilled examined in Table 2, including pronunciation, fluency, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary. Therefore, there was a significant difference between before and after applying the presentation method in enhancing all student's sub-skills. This demonstrated the effectiveness of the presentation approach in improving English speaking skills for first-year students.

3.2 Control Group

Table 3 T-test's Results comparing Sub-skills before and after using Traditional Presentations

Paired Differences		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference		Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper	
Pair 1	Pre_Pronunciation – Post_Pronunciation	-0.250	0.253	0.036	-0.322	-0.178	0.000

Pair 2	Pre_Lexical Resources – Post_Lexical Resources	–0.170	0.260	0.037	–0.244	–0.096	0.000
Pair 3	PRE_Grammatical Accuracy – POST_Grammatical Accuracy	–0.160	0.310	0.044	–0.249	–0.072	0.001
Pair 4	Pre_Fluency – Post_Fluency	–0.225	0.320	0.045	–0.316	–0.134	0.000
Pair 5	Pre_Coherence – Post_Coherence	–0.240	0.340	0.048	–0.336	–0.144	0.000

In Table 3, the value $\text{sig} = 0.000 < 0.05$ for all sub-skilled examined, including pronunciation, fluency, coherence, grammar, and vocabulary. Therefore, there was a difference between before and after using traditional method in enhancing all student's sub-skills.

3.3 Comparison the Results between the Experimental Group and Control Group

Table 4 Comparison the Results between the Experimental Group and Control Group

Paired Differences		Paired Differences					t	Sig. (2–tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95 % Confidence Interval of the Difference			
					Lower	Upper		
Pair 1	Pre-Control – Post_Control	–0.210	0.172	0.024	–0.258	–0.160	–8.596	0.000
Pair 2	Pre-Presentation – Post Presentation	–0.540	0.222	0.031	–0.601	–0.474	–17.13	0.000

The results from Table 4 showed that t-statistic = –17.126 indicated that the post-score was significantly higher than the pre-score, with p value of $0.00 < 0.05$, making it a statistically significant result.

Regarding traditional approach in teaching speaking skills, t-statistic = –8.596, it demonstrated that the post-score is significantly higher than the pre-score, and with p value of $0.00 < 0.05$. It is a statistically significant result. From the results above, it could be seen that t-statistic for the control group is –17, indicating that the effect of using oral presentation in experimental group was more significant than the effect on the control group, which had a t-statistic of –8.

3.4 Students attitudes towards oral presentations.

The results showed positive attitudes of students towards oral presentations in the experimental group. Over 72% of learners strongly agreed that their grammar had improved significantly, while the figure for improving pronunciation was also nearly the same, at 71%. While 60% of students strongly agreed that they felt more confident after using oral presentations, compared to 67% of learners who responded that they become more fluent in their English communication, and 58% of students believed that they became logical and coherent in their oral presentations.

At the same time, 41% of learners strongly agreed and 58% of learners agreed that oral presentations help

them develop their communication skills. Two open-ended questions revealed student experience and their impression about the oral presentations. In terms of skill improvement, students felt more confident as they could improve their vocabulary, pronunciation, grammar, fluency in their speaking abilities. Regarding collaborative learning, learners expressed their appreciation for the opportunity to collaborate with their teammates and receive useful feedback from their peers on their oral presentations.

However, it also presented many challenges for students in the process of adapting oral presentations.

3.5 Summary of Results

Both control and experimental groups revealed improvements from pre-test to post-test, but the results of the experimental group were more pronounced as they accomplished higher scores in specific skills, including pronunciation, vocabulary, fluency, grammar, and coherence.

The result collected from the questionnaire expressed students' positive attitudes towards oral presentations despite some challenges during the presentation process. These findings suggest that oral presentations are effective in improving students' English proficiency in Vietnamese universities.

4 Discussion

4.1 Interpretation of Results



The post-test scores of the experimental group were significantly higher than those in the control group, indicating that oral presentations have positive impacts on learners' English speaking proficiency in many universities in Viet Nam.

The effectiveness of oral presentations is evident from both the pre-test and post-test. The performance of the experimental group surpassed that of the control group, suggesting their comprehensive impacts on many aspects of speaking ability. The data collected from the questionnaire also showed students' positive attitudes towards oral presentations. They appreciated their speaking improvement and overall experience of making presentations.

4.2 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings of this study align with previous research that also examined the effectiveness of oral presentations in ESL/ EFL contexts. The finding also showed the same results for the improvements of students' English speaking skills after using this approach [12, 13]. The positive attitudes are also consistent with many previous studies showing beneficial effects of using oral presentations on learners [13].

However, many studies also indicated many challenges that students face because of their anxiety and a lack presentation skills, making them less proficient in their oral presentations in front of the classroom [14, 15]. While it was found that the lack of experience in organizing the slides, structures, and content, and visual aids is the main challenge of students [9]. This suggests that students from EFL contexts also face similar challenges during making their oral presentations.

4.3 Implications for Teaching Practice

The study's findings are significant and beneficial for many teachers, which is considered as an effective teaching technique development. It also contributes to the development of foreign language teaching programs and practices at many universities for authentic language use.

However, it is important to recognize many challenges that students face during the process of preparing and delivering their oral presentations. Therefore, there is a need for teachers to provide clear guidance for students in terms of anxiety management, presentation techniques, and the use of grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, coherence, and fluency. This would help students improve their oral presentation skills. In addition, the positive attitudes of students play an important role in creating a supportive and active learning environment. Furthermore, peer feedback and collaboration should be encouraged, as it helps their oral presentations become more effective.

5 Conclusion

The primary purpose of this research is to investigate the efficacy of oral presentations in developing students' oral speaking competency at Vietnamese universities, including grammar, pronunciation, lexical proficiency, fluency, and discourse coherency. This study employs a comprehensive strategy that combines qualitative and quantitative methods, including direct observation, survey questionnaires, and pre- and post-test assessments. Although both groups witnessed improvement in English speaking skills, the results revealed that the experimental group outperformed the control group after the post-test. Additionally, data collected from questionnaires showed that students generally had positive attitudes towards oral presentations, and also recognized many benefits of using this approach, despite some challenges in making oral presentations.

The study highlights the significance of integrating oral presentations into language learning and teaching, this approach potentially contributes to students' personal development, and job advancement.

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Đánh giá sự hiệu quả của phương pháp thuyết trình đối với khả năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên Trường Đại học Nguyễn Tất Thành

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Tóm tắt Mục đích của nghiên cứu này là đánh giá hiệu quả của phương pháp thuyết trình trong việc cải thiện khả năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên năm nhất không chuyên tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Nguyễn Tất Thành. Nghiên cứu sử dụng thiết kế bán thực nghiệm với hai nhóm: nhóm thực nghiệm được giảng dạy theo phương pháp thuyết trình và nhóm đối chứng được giảng dạy theo phương pháp không can thiệp. Các bài kiểm tra trước và sau được sử dụng để đánh giá một cách hệ thống tác động của các bài thuyết trình đối với khả năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên, bao gồm ngữ pháp, phát âm, từ vựng, sự lưu loát và tính mạch lạc trong diễn đạt. Kết quả cho thấy có sự cải thiện đáng kể của phương pháp thuyết trình so với phương pháp giảng dạy truyền thống trong việc nâng cao kỹ năng nói tiếng Anh của sinh viên năm nhất không chuyên tiếng Anh tại trường Đại học Nguyễn Tất Thành.

Từ khóa kỹ năng thuyết trình, kỹ năng nói, sinh viên năm nhất không chuyên, cải thiện tiếng Anh.

