

EFFECTIVE ORAL PRESENTATION AMONG UNDERGRADUATES

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ABSTRACT

Success in oral presentation skills contributes to students' success in academic performance as well as their social life. It is important for teachers to know their students' needs and social background in order to encourage them to share information relevant to their interests with their peers to improve their oral presentation skills. This study investigates the factors that affect oral presentation among undergraduates. This quantitative study used Likert scale questionnaire to collect data from 100 undergraduates at a private university in Malaysia (UNITAR International University). The data were analysed using Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) in the form of mean, standard deviation, and variance. The findings of the study showed four primary factors: confidence, nervousness, communication, and presentation skill that effect oral presentation among the undergraduate students. The results of the study demonstrated that the students were very nervous during presentations and they faced lack of self-confidence to speak during the oral presentations. The findings also showed that lack of necessary skills such as communication and presentation skills affected the students' oral presentations in a negative way.

Keywords: oral presentation, English language learning, presentation skill, communication skill, self-confidence

INTRODUCTION

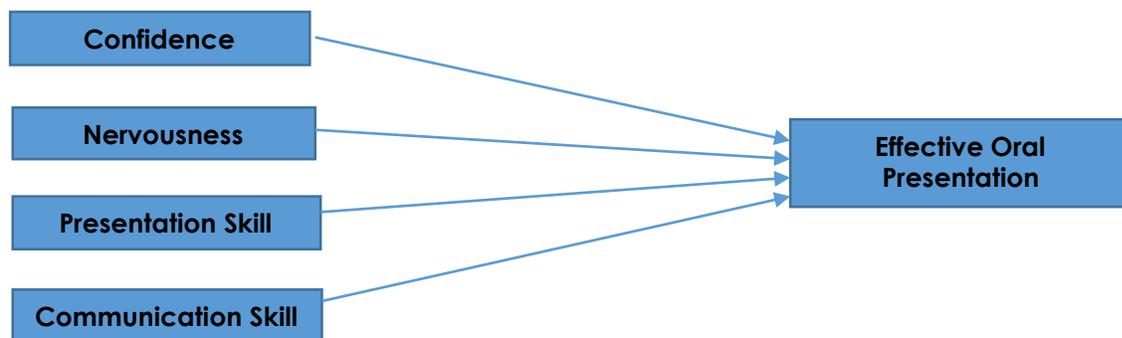
Oral presentations have become part and parcel of most courses offered in institution of higher learning. The importance of oral presentation has been recognized and emphasized widely and many undergraduates' programs require students to make oral presentations as a part of their coursework. The Faculty of Education and Humanities, UNITAR International University emphasizes on presentation skill among students so that they are competent in their verbal skills and presentation of ideas. Developing effective oral presentation is deemed very important in the present era because students who equip themselves with such skills stand to benefit in several ways. Good oral presentation skills will empower students to communicate complex ideas and information in a manner that would be easily understood by the audience. Students will be able to influence the attitude and behaviour of other people.

Furthermore, mastering good presentation skill will also help the students to achieve their career goals but still undergraduates are having trouble in their presentations (Francis, 2010). In classroom situation, it has been observed that most student are not able to deliver effective oral

presentation. Certain causes can influence the students not to deliver an effective oral presentation where they can verbally speak during their presentation. This has created curiosity for researchers to investigate the reasons that make undergraduates not being able to present effectively with the skills that they have. This scenario also takes place among our undergraduates where they are not able to conduct effective presentation and are not well equipped with the skills of oral presentation in full of its effectiveness. This invokes us as researchers to investigate the reasons that have impaired undergraduates' oral presentation skill. Apart from that, previous studies found that there is insufficient knowledge on how students can be taught to communicate appropriately (Bourn, 2011, Danby, & Lee, 2012). In fact, developing presentation skill is very important as it is cultivated through the impact of practice-based learning, where students learn to present by practicing it overcoming the factors that hinder them from giving an effective oral presentation (De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen (2014).

LITERATURE REVIEW

A study by Ohnishi & Ford (2015) showed that even Ph.D. students have problems with their presentation skills. These researchers used the effect of language to facilitate the students' presentation skills. The medium of instruction does play an important role towards the effective oral presentation among undergraduates. Recent research highlighted that oral presentation is an issue among students and more importance must be given to it on creating a 21st Century Presentation that caters to the modern upcoming society. Students' presentations are also taken into consideration even in the field of mathematics where the focus is on their presentation skill as a locus for developing intellectual authority and mathematical practices (Hee-jeong, Seashore & Gillingham, 2016). Besides, students' oral presentation skill is regarded as a soft skill which is prominent for career opportunity and success in accounting profession (Chandren & Yaacob, 2016). Oral presentation is considered as an important factor that cannot be neglected by undergraduates. This enables us as researchers to seek for the factors and the process that comes with presentation skill among students when it comes to English lessons or even using English as a medium of instruction for communication. Therefore, there is a need to identify more factors on why students are not capable to conduct an effective oral presentation. This study attempts to investigate the factors that influence the effective oral presentations among undergraduates in UNITAR International University.



Independent Variable

Dependent Variable

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the study

METHODOLOGY

A quantitative method was used to investigate the factors that influence effective oral presentation among undergraduates among 100 Malaysian undergraduates at UNITAR International University. The research instrument used for this study was a set of Likert scale questionnaire that comprised of two parts. Part one is related to the demographic information on demographic information. The background questions focused on the students' age, gender, type of education program, and SPM English grade. Part two of the survey questionnaire comprised questions on the student's confidence, nervousness, presentation, and communication, which were derived from the established instrument, influence effective oral presentation. The questions were checked by two experts for the purpose of validity and reliability and were approved to be used for data collection.

The pilot study was conducted using survey questionnaires. The students were asked to answer the questions based on their experience and knowledge in delivering an oral presentation in their classroom. The questionnaires were given to students during their break time and they were guided to answer the questions. Based on their SPM result, it was found that most of them are intermediate in their English proficiency. They were given a time frame of 20 minutes to answer all questions. The students were asked questions on the reasons for not being able to conduct a good oral presentation. This gave the students a good range of choices to select their answers accurately. The students understood and answered all questions.

SPSS was used to analyse the data as it consists of an integrated series of computer programs which enable the users to read data from surveys and other sources, to manipulate them in various ways, and to produce a wide range of statistical analysis and reports, together with documentation. A reliability test was done based on table 1 below, which shows that Cronbach's Alpha score was 0.746, which is considered reliable based on (Pallant & Bailey, 2005). The Cronbach's Alpha coefficient of a scale was above 0.7 which is considered as a reliable data.

RESULTS

The data were analysed using SPSS in order to find out the factors that influence the effective oral presentation among undergraduates. Based on Table 1, it can be seen that most of the students strongly disagreed with having enough self-confidence in conducting an oral presentation. 34 out of 100 students agreed that they lack in confidence during oral presentation. Based on table 2, it can be analysed that, this question scored a mean of 1.7, standard deviation of 0.72, and a variance of 0.52 which indicates the students had different answers toward the question as compared to the other 3 questions.

Table 1. Level of confidence

I have the confidence in conducting an oral presentation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	55.0	55.0	55.0	55%
DISAGREE	16.0	40.0	40.0	85.0
Valid NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	6.0	15.0	15.0	100.0
Total	77.0	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 3, 20 students strongly disagreed on mastering presentation skills in performing oral presentation effectively while 15 of them disagreed on the matter. Most of the students agreed that they have not mastered or acquired presentation skills in making their oral presentation effective. Overall based on table 3, it can be analysed that, this question scored a mean of 1.6, standard deviation of 0.70484 and a variance of 0.497 that indicates the students had a slight difference of answering choice towards the question as compared to the other 3 questions.

Table 2. Level of presentation skill

I have mastered the presentation skill to perform the oral presentation effectively	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY DISAGREE	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
DISAGREE	15	37.5	37.5	87.5

Valid NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	5	12.5	12.5	100.0
Total	40.0	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 4, all students strongly agreed and agreed that they lack in oral communication skills which has an influence on their effective oral communication. Based table 4, it can be concluded that, this statement where the factor of presentation skill scored a mean of 1.45, standard deviation of 0.50383 and a variance of 0.254 that indicates the students had the highest concrete and definite answer towards the question compared to the other 3 questions.

Table 3. Level of communication skill

I lack in communication skill that could hinder the effectiveness of my oral presentation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	22	55.0	55.0	55.0
AGREE	18	45.0	45.0	100.0
Total	40	100.0	100.0	

Based on Table 5, most of the students agreed on feeling nervous during an oral presentation. This question scored a mean of 1.5, standard deviation of 0.6360 and a variance of 0.404 that indicates the students had a mere difference of answers towards the question compared to the other 3 questions.

Table 4. Level of nervousness

I feel nervous to speak during an oral presentation	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
STRONGLY AGREE	20	50.0	50.0	50.0
AGREE	17	42.5	42.5	92.5
Valid NEITHER AGREE NOR DISAGREE	3	7.5	7.5	100.0

Total	40	100.0	100.0
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The findings of this research showed that 85% of the students strongly disagreed on having the confidence to conduct an oral presentation. They agreed that confidence have a significant influence on their level of effective oral presentation. To justify further, the question had a variance of 0.523 which indicates that the students had similar and concrete answers to the question regarding not having enough confidence to conduct an effective oral presentation. Apart from that, 87.5% of the students strongly disagreed on having good presentation skills to perform an oral presentation effectively. To justify further the question had a variance of 0.723 where the students has a slight choice of answers but most of them concluded that they have not mastered their presentation skill which leads their oral presentation to be less effective.

On the other hand, 100% of the students strongly agreed and agreed on lacking communication skill that effects their effective oral presentation. All students. To justify further, the question had a variance of only 0.254 which illustrates that the students had concrete answers to the question. Communication skills have been the most evident factor that influence students' level of effective oral presentation. Besides, 92 % of the students strongly agreed and agreed on the influence of sense of nervousness on their speaking skills during an oral presentation. The factor of nervousness has been a problem for the students as it influences their level of effective oral presentation. Most of the students have faced the problem of nervousness in speaking during their oral presentations. The findings of this research showed that the factors influencing the level of effective oral presentation are confidence, communication skill, presentation skill, and nervousness. Based on a research conducted by Kakepoto, Habil, Omar and Said, (2012) on engineering student and their oral presentation, students lack skills in oral presentation because of their confidence and nervousness which support the findings of this research that students' oral presentation can be influenced by their confidence and nervousness. In addition, this research managed to provide extra factors of communication and presentation skills as significant factors that influence the level of effective oral presentation. In short, the findings of this study revealed important factors which play crucial roles on students' oral presentations. These factors are lack of confidence, being nervous, and lack of communication and presentation skills that hinder the students from performing an effective oral presentation.

Furthermore, researchers (Bugarcic, Colthorpe, Zimbardi, Su and Jackson, 2014) stated that communication skill is a problem for students during oral presentation which is in line with the results of this study. Ohnishi and Ford (2015) found that one has to adopt an oral presentation through the use of language as communication to provide the content and informing the audience while keeping in mind that an oral presentation is less suitable for transferring large amounts of information. This shows that communication skill helps students to perform their oral presentation better. The findings of this study showed that the students from Faculty of Education and Humanities at UNITAR International University have problems in terms of their confidence, nervousness, communication skill, and presentation skill as these factors influence their level of effective oral presentations. It might be a risk for students if they do not grasp and occupy themselves with a basic and strong foundation in oral presentation.

CONCLUSION

This study investigated the factors that influence effective oral presentation among undergraduates. The findings of the study showed that 85% of the students strongly disagreed that confidence plays an important role in order to perform a good oral presentation while 87.5% of them strongly disagreed on having mastered presentation skills to perform an oral presentation effectively. In addition, 92 % of the students strongly agreed that being nervous to speak during an oral presentation will affect the process of presentation in a negative way. The final factor that had troubled the respondents the most, were communication skills as 100% of the students strongly agreed on lacking the skills of communication affects their oral presentation. Therefore, based on the findings of this research, nervousness, presentation skill, communication skill, and confidence are the primary factors influence effective oral presentation. In future, more studies should be conducted on problems and factors that influence students' level of oral presentation with a bigger sample size in order to find solutions to the existing challenges. On the other hand, qualitative research using observation checklists can be carried out in order to explore students' challenges regarding oral presentation skills deeply.

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