

The Role of Students' Classroom Presentations in Developing their Speaking Skills

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Abstract—Believing in the importance of speaking skills as a main key to communicate, this paper examines the advantages of students' classroom presentations develop their speaking skills at Cihan University-Erbil. This study is a descriptive analytical pilot study involving 47 students from the Translation Department. It aims at investigating the outcomes of presentations. A 19-item questionnaire was given to students including three choices. To achieve the validity and reliability of the paper, interviews were conducted with four students. The results show that the presentations can develop students' different aspects of speaking skills.

Keywords—Presentations, Speaking skills, Communication, Translation, Linguistic.

I. INTRODUCTION

Learning every language has the aim of being able to communicate and convey the intended message precisely and accurately. Speaking is an effective form of communication because it helps you survive a foreign language. And as it is said: "If listening is the Cinderella skill in second language learning, then speaking is the overbearing elder sister." (Nunan, 1999).

"Speaking is not the oral production of written language, but involves learners in the mastery of a wide range of subskills, which added together, constitutes an oral competence in the spoken language" (McDonough and Shaw, 2003).

As learners are often concerned with the significance of mastering the art of speaking due to its importance and being a major aspect of learning a second or foreign language, we may deduce that the ability to function in another language is usually described in terms of being able to speak that language. Furthermore, speaking can help to support other language skills, and other skills and subskills can help to strengthen speaking ability. It has been shown, for example, that learning to speak will aid in the development of reading, writing, and listening skills.

Mastering a language necessitates mastery of its four skills (reading, writing, listening, and speaking). Speaking, on the other hand, is a sign of being able to use the language. It is the medium by which students can interact with others to achieve specific objectives or to share their thoughts, intentions, expectations, and perspectives. Furthermore,

people who are fluent in a language are referred to as "speakers." Furthermore, speaking is the most commonly used language ability in almost every situation. Speaking is used twice as often as reading and writing in our correspondence, according to River (1981). Nunan (1999) contends that the ability to carry on a conversation in the target language is a better indicator of language learning progress. Speaking is an important part of second learning and teaching, according to Cora and Knight (2000), because it involves generating, obtaining, and processing information. Since speech is the primary form of human communication, the ability to speak a foreign language means learning the language for the vast majority of people.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Jezhny and Bapir (2007) conducted an investigation into the effect of game activities on the development of speaking. The sample size of their investigation was 78 learners of a primary school. The learners were divided into two groups and two different methods were used. The researchers realized that the group in which the communicative method was used made progress with their speaking skill. The reason behind this progress was the use of activities like games which is used in the communicative method. That is, activities can enhance the speaking skill of ELLs. The present study explores the belief of the participants in this regard.

As Urrutia and Vega were cited in Jezhny and Bapir (2021), their study focused on students' speaking skill. The sample of their study was the 10th grade students (20 girls

and 20 boys) of a public school. They noticed that they were good at writing and listening exercises, but they did not participate in speaking activities because they were afraid of being criticized and humiliated. They came to the conclusion that through activities such as games, learners could overcome fear of speaking and regain confidence. The present study examines whether the participants believe, fear of being criticized and humiliated influences their speaking.

The emergence of some teaching methods is associated with the improvement of the speaking skill. For instance, Communicative Language Teaching is designed to encourage learners to communicate with one another. Ghafur (2009) carried out a study to evaluate Sunrise Programme which has been established based on CLT. The participants of his study were Kurdish learners of the seventh basic grade in 40 Hawler city schools. The sample size of the study was 40 teachers and 375 learners. The findings of this study signals that although this method has its advantages, it is inappropriate to be implemented in Kurdistan region's education system. The study indicates that the speaking skill is the most important skill, yet it cannot be improved due to large class sizes which cause learners not to have equal opportunity to participate in conversations. In brief, this study claims, the implementation of a given method may positively impact speaking proficiency, yet the unsuitable teaching and learning environment can cause problems to the fulfillment of this potential.

Another study, relevant to the speaking skill, was conducted by Hamza and Ting (2009) in Malaysia. The participants of their study were 33 students and three English teachers. The students, through a questionnaire, were asked to express their ideas on group work activities and its role in developing the speaking skill. The three teachers were interviewed as well. Based on the findings of this study, the students enjoyed group work activities and made progress with their speaking skill. The three teachers were of the opinion that team work could be considerably beneficial. This might be due to the fact that learners have more confidence and less worried in small-group discussions. Thus, the researchers claim that group work activities which are interesting and appropriate to the level of learners can improve the speaking skill. The recent study also examines the knowledge of the participants in this respect.

III. IMPORTANCE OF SPEAKING

Rao (2017) thinks that correspondence assumes a fundamental part in getting achievement in all fields in the present worldwide world. Language is utilized as an instrument for correspondence. Wonderful correspondence is not workable for individuals without utilizing a language. In addition, individuals cannot accomplish their points, destinations, and objectives without utilizing appropriate language to impart. Accordingly, there is a requirement for a language to speak with others the individuals who live from one side of the planet to the other. As English is viewed as the global language and it is spoken everywhere on the

world, it effectively communicates with individuals who live in various locales, states, nations, and main lands of the world.

Having the speaking ability means having the main expertise to master second language learning. According to Brown and Yuke (1983), speaking is the ability that the understudies will be decided on most, in actuality, circumstances. Notwithstanding its significance, instructing talking abilities have been underestimated and the greater part of the EFL/ESL instructors has been proceeding with their educating of talking abilities similarly as retention of discoursed or reiteration of drills. All things considered, the advanced world requests for the necessity of relational abilities for the students and the English instructors need to show the ELLs the required abilities so they will improve their capacities in talking and perform well, in actuality, circumstances. In the present EFL/ESL showing climate, oral abilities are totally ignored while employability relies more on correspondence than innovation. As exceptionally less need has been given to the significant components of language such as phonological, morphological, semantic, and syntactic angles, it has become a significant obstacle for the ELLs to secure the talking abilities among the students of English. Up until now, more focus has been given to perusing and composing abilities. In the wake of understanding the significance of oral relational abilities, more accentuation is currently laid on fostering the talking abilities of the students to seek after their investigations effectively and dominate in their fields once they finish their schooling. Besides, English is the language of getting openings for work and getting accomplishment to accomplish the ideal objectives throughout everyday life.

IV. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This section aims at describing the research methodology (qualitative and quantitative), the data collection methods, and the procedure of the research, accompanied by the validity and reliability of the instruments. Questionnaire and interviews are used as collecting data tools techniques.

A. Research Methodology Rational

To achieve the analysis of quantitative and qualitative data in this study, the researcher has used mixed methods. Because it is difficult to get a full and precise insight of the learners with only one method, also to increase the data validity (Dornyei, 2007). The research questions of the study are:

1. What are the most influential advantages of oral presentations that improve speaking skill?
2. To which extent do these advantages have an impact on one another? In other words, are the factors interrelated?

B. Study Hypothesis

This study hypothesizes that classroom presentations can develop the speaking skills. The skills have main and subsidiary components. Furthermore, linguistic and non-linguistic components have been taken into consideration.

C. Study Tools

The quantitative data were collected by an electronic structured questionnaire. The questionnaire aimed at discovering the views of the students who had presentations during the academic year. Since it was an electronic questionnaire, percentages and number of participants were provided.

The questionnaire was distributed to 47 students from the Department of Translation at Cihan University-Erbil. The participants had already presented different topics during the academic year (2020–2021) more than 3 times. They are 13 males and 37 females. They are all 2nd, 3rd, and 4th year students. Three options were given (agree = 3, neutral = 2, and disagree = 1).

Four in-depth (open) interviews were conducted with other students to obtain the qualitative data. Four questions were included. This method (qualitative) was incorporated into the study with the intend to get a deeper understanding of the responses of the questionnaire. The responses of the interviews, along with the questionnaire ones, were analyzed.

1. Can you talk about your experience in oral presentations?
2. How did oral presentations help you improve your speaking skills?
3. What are the advantages and disadvantages of oral presentations?
4. What is the most benefit of oral presentation that improves speaking skills?

The questionnaire and interview items were checked and revised by two assistant professors in the field of applied linguistics. Their feedback was positive.

D. Study Ethics

All participants were informed about the interview and questionnaire aims. Moreover, they were told that their participation was optional and their responses would be kept confidential.

V. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section talks about results and discussion. The questionnaire responses are shown in Table I. The analysis of the interview questions corresponds with questionnaire responses. The interviews are transcribed and italicized.

Item 1 in Table I shows that the majority of participants (74.5%) agree that classroom presentations can improve their pronunciation. In the same way, more than 60% of the participants agreed on items (7, 8, 10, 11, 13, 14, 16, and 18). For example, item 10 shows that 74.1% of the participants agreed on classroom presentations can improve their debating skills. In other words, they help the students listen to the speaker more attentively, decipher the message, understand it, find the suitable answer, and send it through the organs of speaking.

Items 2 and 12 show that participants' responses were close and ranged from 39% to 49% in agreeing and being neutral. To clarify this point, item 2 shows that 48.9% agreed that classroom presentations can improve their linguistic choices.

TABLE I
QUESTIONNAIRE RESPONSES

Item	Agree	Neutral	Disagree
1. Classroom presentations can improve my pronunciation.	74.5%	12.7%	12.8%
2. Classroom presentations can improve my linguistic choices.	48.9%	42.6%	8.5%
3. Classroom presentations can improve my lexical range.	52.2%	32.6%	15.2%
4. Classroom presentations can improve my fluency.	59.6%	29.8%	10.6%
5. Classroom presentations can improve my communication strategies use.	57.4%	29.8%	12.8%
6. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to guess the meaning from the spoken context.	50%	34.8%	15.2%
7. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to response.	60.9%	30.4%	8.7%
8. Classroom presentations can improve my vocabulary items.	76.1%	15.2%	8.7%
9. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to remember and study.	55.5%	28.9%	15.6%
10. Classroom presentations can improve my debating skills.	76.1%	15.2%	8.7%
11. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to explain different concepts and ideas.	60.9%	32.6%	6.5%
12. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to receive corrective direct and indirect feedback about my pronunciation.	39.1%	45.7%	15.2%
13. Classroom presentations can improve my ability to practice the use of some phrases and expressions.	61.4%	20.4%	18.2%
14. Classroom presentations can give me a good chance to practice speaking.	63%	17.4%	19.6%
15. Classroom presentations can motivate me to speak like natives.	60%	28.9%	11.1%
16. Classroom presentations can draw my attention to my mispronounced words and phrases.	61.3%	20.5%	18.2%
17. Classroom presentations can improve my evaluation to my speaking skill.	50%	34.8%	15.2%
18. Classroom presentations can make me revise words and grammar forms that I have difficulty remembering.	68.1%	27.6%	4.3%
19. Do you like to have more classroom presentations in the future?	58.7%	28.3%	13%

On the other hand, 42.6% were neutral. As a result, students can use a variety of tenses, structures, and vocabulary ranges in their talks and discussions. Item 12 shows that 45.7% of the participants were neutral and 39.1% of them agreed that classroom presentations can improve their abilities to receive corrective direct and indirect feedback about their pronunciation. Consequently, students should be more open to get both student and teacher corrective feedback about their pronunciation and speaking in general.

About 50%–60% of the participants agreed on the items (3, 4, 5, 6, 9, 17, and 19). For example, 57.4% of the participants agreed that presentations can improve their communication strategies used. In other words, students need more training to use eye contact, body language, and suitable gestures to be more competent communicators.

The responses of the interviewees are transcribed as follows:

A. The First Participant Said

My experience in oral presentation was in the 1st year as a student in the Translation Department, my colleagues, and I had a presentation about phonotactics. The 2nd time, I did a presentation was in the 3rd year about conference interpretation. It gave me the opportunity to speak freely and answering questions while I was feeling well prepared and confident to answer any question regarding the subject. All that helped me improve my speaking skills. I think that advantages of oral presentations are speaking freely and confidently. For me, being used to speak in front of the audience is the greatest benefit of oral presentation so I can improve my self-confidence and can speak accurately in front of a group of people.

B. The Second Participant Said

During the 1st time, I felt shy, but when I continued speaking, I felt everything was okay and it was a nice experience. These presentations could improve my speaking skills to an acceptable level. As an advantage: It is very good to speak fluently and it is good to practice speaking skills. On the other hand, as a disadvantage: When a student feels shy, it's hard for him/her, adding that the time is not enough. One should improve him/herself and develop abilities to speak with confidence.

C. The Third Participant Said

It made me more confident and it helped me to improve my skills in presentations. It helped me a lot, especially my speaking skills because it made my language better. Advantage: As I said before that it helps to improve our skills in speaking and how to present in front of audience. Disadvantage: Sometimes, we feel shy especially for the first time, and we have no time to think about new things to add or to comment. There are too many benefits for the ones who present mainly improving their speaking skills and it is helpful for the audience to improve their listening skills.

D. The Fourth Participant Said

During this semester, I had the chance to stand in front of my classmates and perform three oral presentations. During the first presentation, I remember I was very nervous and stressed since speaking in front of a group was not my thing. I prepared my topic, I studied and read the part that I was going to discuss and talk about. I practiced at home, standing in front of the mirror and talking just as if I was talking in front of a large group. I recorded my voice just to make sure I was pronouncing the words in the right way. The day came, I performed the presentation in a shivery tone. I was talking fast and stammering. I was like a cat on hot bricks. But overall it was good. During the second presentation, I was better because I was so confident and I managed my stress and anxiety. In a nutshell, I can say that I've done the second presentation with flying colors.

I think the level of speaking ability varied from a student to another. Some students might struggle and find it hard to speak while the others may be totally the opposite. Personally, I believe that I have a good speaking ability, the only thing I struggled with was talking fast and that was related to the fluency disorder. It has been always a trouble for me to speak in a fluent way. The only way I fixed this was by practicing because as we all know we have to take the listeners understanding into consideration, due to the fact that not everyone has the same level as mine.

Starting with the advantages which are: Developing the speaking abilities, gaining more confidence, and having time management. Disadvantages, well I can mention many disadvantages regarding what I have faced in my experience with oral presentation. The first disadvantage revolves around me having anxiety and we all know that doing this presentation with anxiety is such a hard job especially when none of the audience have an idea about these disorders so, my colleagues started judging by saying that I did not do the job properly. Second, the misunderstanding and the group poor communication that might happen especially when only one student does the whole work while others are just watching (the lack responsibility).

The practice that I did before performing the seminar was improving my speaking ability more.

VI. CONCLUSION

In the day-to-day life, the non-native English speakers communicating through English are getting harder. In this paper, speaking skills of Cihan University-Erbil students have been evaluated based on classroom presentations. Following are the criteria that have been considered for the evaluation: Pronunciation, linguistics, fluency, synonyms/vocabulary, debating, and expressing ideas. For this evaluation, 47 students participated in the questionnaire and four students have been interviewed for the same purpose. Based on the analysis, classroom presentations can improve the students' ability to present in their foreign language. Item 8 in Table I shows that more than 76% of the participants agreed that classroom presentations give the students a chance to be introduced to new words through the processes of collecting data, preparing, presenting, and discussing.

From the interviews, a conclusion can be drawn about the role of classroom presentations. First, they reduce the shyness of the students and make them speak more confidently and freely. Second, classroom presentations are considered a chance for students to speak in front of the audience. Third, they indirectly improve the students' skills listening skills by having comments, discussions, and Q&A.

Hence, an educator should encourage students to present their work to develop themselves as aforementioned.

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