

Oral Presentation Performance and Strategies Employed by Students in an International Classroom Context

Bunyarat Duklim¹ and Sita Musigrungsit²

¹M.A.(Teaching English as An International Language), Academic,
Educational Services Division, Pattani Campus,
E-mail: Bunyarat.d@psu.ac.th

²Ed.D. (Applied Educational Studies), Lecturer,
Faculty of Liberal Arts,
Prince of Songkla University

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Abstract

The study aims at identifying differences between oral presentation performances of students with different language proficiency. With purposive sampling, the study was conducted with 55 students enrolled in English for the International Program at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani campus. They were of mixed ability and composed of both Thai and international students from Cambodia, China, Guinea, Ghana and Liberia. Throughout the study, they were asked to give two group-oral presentations on given topics in the classroom. Each presentation was evaluated by two evaluators: the researcher and the lecturer of the course. In addition, how the students

used oral presentation strategies was also investigated through class observation. The study addressed the following questions: 1) Are there any differences in the oral presentation performance between students with high and low English proficiency skills? 2) Are there any differences in oral presentation strategies employed by these two groups? The findings revealed that the students with high English proficiency earned a higher oral presentation mean score (41.86) than lower English proficiency students (33.05) with a significant difference at the level of 0.01 ($p < .01$) with the t value of 4.203. For the high proficiency group, the highest mean score was among the items in a non-verbal category including eye contact, gesture and visuals aids (4.37) and the lowest mean score in a structure category focusing on how to deliver and organize the oral presentation (3.86). On the other hand, the students with low English proficiency earned the highest mean score in the timing category focusing on time management (4.13) and the lowest mean score in the structure category (3.08). It can be noticed that both groups earned the lowest mean score in the structure category.

Keywords: Oral presentation performances, oral presentation strategies, English proficiency

กฤตกรรมและกลยุทธ์การนำเสนอผลงาน แบบปากเปล่า โดยนักศึกษาในบริบท ห้องเรียนนานาชาติ

บุญรัตน์ ดุกหลิม¹ และ สิตา มุสิกรังษี²

¹ศศ.ม (การสอนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษานานาชาติ) นักวิชาการอุดมศึกษา
กองบริการการศึกษาวិทยาเขตปัตตานี

E-mail: bunyarat.d@psu.ac.th

²กศ.ด. (ศึกษาศาสตร์ประยุกต์) อาจารย์

คณะศิลปศาสตร์

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บทคัดย่อ

การศึกษานี้มุ่งที่จะศึกษาความแตกต่างระหว่าง
กฤตกรรมและกลยุทธ์การนำเสนอปากเปล่าของ
นักศึกษาที่มีระดับทางภาษาแตกต่างกัน โดยเลือก
นักศึกษากลุ่มตัวอย่าง แบบเฉพาะเจาะจงจำนวน 55 คน
ที่ลงทะเบียนเรียนในรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษสำหรับ
หลักสูตรนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยสงขลานครินทร์
วิทยาเขตปัตตานี เนื่องจากนักศึกษากลุ่มนี้มีความ
สามารถทางภาษาหลากหลายและมาจากทั้งในและ
ต่างประเทศ เช่น กัมพูชา จีน กินี กานา และ ไลบีเรีย ใน
การศึกษานี้ นักศึกษาจับกลุ่มนำเสนองานปากเปล่า

2 ครั้งตามหัวข้อที่กำหนดให้ในชั้นเรียน โดยแต่ละครั้งจะมีผู้ประเมิน 2 คน ได้แก่ ผู้วิจัย และ ผู้สอนประจำรายวิชา นอกจากนี้แล้วผู้วิจัย ยังได้มีการสังเกตการใช้กลยุทธ์การนำเสนอปากเปล่าของนักศึกษาด้วย ซึ่งการศึกษาในครั้งนี้ มุ่งตอบคำถามวิจัยดังต่อไปนี้ 1) พฤติกรรมการนำเสนองานแบบปากเปล่าของนักศึกษาที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษแตกต่างกันมีความต่างกันหรือไม่ 2) นักศึกษาทั้ง 2 กลุ่ม ใช้กลยุทธ์ในการนำเสนองานแบบปากเปล่าต่างกันหรือไม่ ผลการวิจัยพบว่า นักศึกษากลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาสูงมีคะแนนเฉลี่ย การนำเสนอ 41.86 คะแนนซึ่งสูงกว่ากลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาต่ำที่ได้ 33.05 คะแนนอย่างมีนัยยะสำคัญทางสถิติที่ระดับ $t=4.203$ นักศึกษากลุ่มที่มีความสามารถทางภาษาสูงมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยสูงสุดในด้านอวัจนภาษาโดยเฉพาะการใช้การสื่อสารทางสายตากับผู้ฟังและการใช้โสตทัศนอุปกรณ์ในการนำเสนอ (4.37) และมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยต่ำสุดในด้านโครงสร้างการนำเสนอ ในทางตรงกันข้ามนักศึกษาที่มีระดับทางภาษาต่ำมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยสูงสุดด้านการจัดการเวลา (4.13) และมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยต่ำสุดด้านโครงสร้างการนำเสนอ (3.08) เป็นที่สังเกตได้ว่าทั้ง 2 กลุ่มมีคะแนนเฉลี่ยด้านโครงสร้างการนำเสนอต่ำสุด

คำสำคัญ:

พฤติกรรมการนำเสนองานปากเปล่า, กลยุทธ์การนำเสนองานปากเปล่า, ความสามารถทางภาษาอังกฤษ

Introduction

An oral presentation is one of the most effective assignments for students in school, college or university. It has gradually become part of course requirements in many educational levels. With reference to the Basic Education Core Curriculum (Ministry of Education, 2008), all learning areas require high school students to verbally express the knowledge gained from course assignments by means of both individual and group presentations. At the tertiary level, courses such as English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes aim at preparing students with skills needed to become successful in giving academic and business presentations (Chou, 2011; Miles, 2009; Tsai, 2010; Yu & Cadman, 2009). In the areas of complicated science such as science and engineering, undergraduates are required to carry out technical oral presentations in their second or third year of study (Radzuan & Kaur, 2011; Suwa, Miyahara, & Ishimatsu, 2012). Therefore, students need to retain not only content or subject knowledge, but also important skills for completing effective presentations.

Oral presentations can help fluency and accuracy improvement as well as increasing confidence. Through the process of oral presentations, students gain more practice in selecting and narrowing a topic, gathering information from different sources, organizing and supporting ideas. In addition to expressing main ideas, creating questions, working within a deadline, and preparing audio and/or visual aids, students also have a chance to differentiate between many types of oral presentations, and how to conduct them in different situations. Not only knowing how to speak properly in public or in front of the

class, but preparing how to discuss and answer questions is also significantly required for students (Meloni & Thompson, 1980). Moreover, giving an oral presentation provides a positive atmosphere in the classroom and also strengthens academic skills. To deliver effective presentations, students need both understanding of the content and the knowledge of presentation conductivity in a well-structured manner.

Fallows and Steven (2000) stated that it is necessary for students to enhance their English skills. Since English plays an important role in the employment world, it is challenging for the students to learn how to be proficient in English. They need to be employable and possess the following abilities: problem solving, managing information, presenting information and communicating with people. Students are expected to succeed in these skills in order to enter the workforce. An effective oral presentation is highly recommended for employees in terms of success and promotion.

King (2012) explained that universities should have academic curricula involving oral presentations and should teach students how to prepare and deliver an oral presentation effectively. An oral presentation provides real experiences and stimulates the students to gain more confidence when they give an oral presentation in public. Thus, instructors should encourage students to practice oral presentations in front of the class in order to enhance their speaking ability and help them to improve competencies and become proficient. When they have an opportunity to study oral presentation techniques, they can master and gain more knowledge and learn to interact with people accurately and effectively.

Considering the effects of oral presentations on the students' proficiency, it appears that students with different proficiency levels tend to acquire language differently. High English proficiency students are students who master and acquire language rapidly (Nakatani, 2006; Chen, 2009, Chuanchaisit & Prapphal, 2009). They are good at every skill and speaking seems to be an outstanding one. They are likely to speak fluently while paying more attention to grammar and word order. They feel more comfortable when they speak as opposed to other skills. On the other hand, Wannaruk, 2003; Nakatani, 2006; Chen, 2009 and Kavasoglu 2011 proposed that low proficiency students are more likely to use message desertion, such as giving up on communicating a message, or topic avoidance. However, the results of these studies indicated that high proficiency students are more likely to communicate effectively to enhance their English proficiency whereas low proficiency students tried to communicate with people but they lacked communication skills.

Effective presentations require presenters to understand the aim, to be able to analyze the audiences, to deliver smooth flow of ideas, and to lead an appropriate and organized structure as well as the language style of the presentation. It is essential for presenters to use appropriate strategies and make the audience feel part of the presentation in order to achieve the aim (Grand, 2010). It is important for successful presentations to meet the expectations of the audience. In addition, the presented ideas should be properly organized following a specific logical or chronological order, from general to specific, known to unknown, cause-effect, problem-solution, and the like (Storz et al., 2002). When giving presentations, presenters should also use proper

styles of verbal and nonverbal language and structure the presentations following a specific order, generally with an introduction, a body and a conclusion (Grand, n.d.; Storz et al., 2002; Williams, 2008).

Oral presentations are frequently considered as a challenge for ESL or EFL students due to several factors; for example, native language barriers, unfamiliarity with genre-related structures of the target language, and lack of verbal communication skills. When it comes to delivering oral presentations in a non-native language, students frequently do not perform as well as in their mother tongue. Radzuan and Kaur (2011), for example, found that a main concern among Malaysian engineering students in Undergraduate Research Project (URP) was the lack of English language proficiency needed in giving oral presentations. Zareva (2009) also explained that in L2 academic settings, the presenters were anxious about the content and excluded their peers from negotiating the information.

Giving successful presentations, students need not only to understand the content but also the structure and suitable forms of the target language used in the organization of specific oral presentations. Suwa, Miyahara and Ishimatsu (2012) trained Malaysian Mechanical Engineering undergraduates to deliver technical presentations in Japanese by using several techniques to develop their presentation skills through the practice-discussion-modification cycle. Certain improvements of oral presentation delivery process were discovered, and the learners also found the presentation practice sessions beneficial.

Several studies in the Thai EFL context also revealed that there were oral presentation improvements after being trained and receiving treatments by regularly delivering oral presentations-learning by doing-

with guidance on how to provide an effective one (e.g. Choksunsup, Rujikietgumjorn, & Griffith, 2010; Miyata, 2003; Mosby, 2008; Nantachaipan, 2004; Wiboonwachariyakun, 2004).

According to the importance and roles of oral presentation in terms of both studying and working, oral presentation performance and strategies were investigated in this study. The focuses were on the differences of oral presentation performance and strategies of students with different English proficiency.

Objective of The Study

This study aims to

1. identify differences between oral presentation performances of high and low English proficiency students
2. determine the oral presentation strategies used by these two groups of students.

Research Questions

Based on the objectives presented above, there are two questions being addressed in the study:

1. Are there any differences in the oral presentation performance between students with high and low English proficiency?
2. Are there any differences in oral presentation strategies employed by these two groups?

Literature Review

There are four relevant aspects discussed in order: oral presentation, oral presentation in ELT, effective oral presentation and oral presentation strategies.

1. Oral Presentation

Oral presentation plays an important role in teaching English and also can improve communication skills. Oral presentations given by students in front of the class are considered as one of the most common techniques of student-centered classroom activities (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010; Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; King, 2002; Truong & Storch, 2007).

According to Piccinini (2010), fluency, accuracy and confidence can be enhanced by oral presentations. Throughout the process of giving an oral presentation, the students gain more practice in selecting and narrowing topics, getting information from different types of sources, learning how to organize and support ideas, stating the main ideas, creating questions, practicing to work within the deadlines, setting up audios and/or visual aids, speaking in a formal way in front of groups of people, raising discussions, and answering questions (Meloni & Thompson, 1980)

It has been observed that oral presentations are part of a positive classroom atmosphere in order to strengthen academic skills. Meloni and Thompson (1980) stated that the oral report provides adult students the opportunity to establish an identity as an individual with an interesting background and special knowledge. This leads to a more integrated and spirited class and markedly raises class interest.

Moreover, oral presentations provide numerous benefits for teachers (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Assigned to give an oral presentation, students will have different stories to share and get a chance to express their ideas and feelings about the stories. Teachers can also develop their open-mindedness as they listen to them and

will realize that their students do not just have blank brains waiting to be filled with knowledge (Thornbury & Meddings, 2009).

Students can be considered as a primary resource whom teachers will be interested in what they think or say (Paley, 1986, p. 122). In addition, teachers learn about their students every day from the beginning. This can create an environment of not providing particular right or wrong answers, and the teachers will not be the only ones having all the answers. Therefore, when teachers listen to students, the students can become the teachers at the same time, and conversely these roles can also help teachers learn (Rud, 1995).

Teachers can be changed when they listen to students, and the teachers who do not contribute to change will have no power to change their students (Smith, 1996). Then, the teachers' responsibilities are no longer to teach, yet they can still be accountable for students' learning (Minstrell, 2001). "Since someone must be there to listen, respond, and add a dab of glue to the important words that burst forth" (Paley, 1986, p. 127). Therefore, being responsible indicates an ethical requirement to form an environment which welcomes curious minds, leaves space for doubts, opens for partial knowledge, allows mistakes, embraces personal experiences and motivates movement of thinking.

2. Oral Presentation in ELT

To assign students to give oral presentation in front of the class is one of the effective methods for English teaching. Oral presentations are generally recognized as a means of communication. Mandel (2000) considered an oral presentation as a form of speech event given in a business, professional, technical or scientific environment. Eggleston

(2003) stated that a broad meaning of oral presentation is when a person meets another person whom he/she has met, and he added that every time speeches are asked to be given in front of one or more people with purposes of describing, educating, persuading or passing on information it means this person has a presentation.

In the English language teaching context, oral presentations are broadly considered as one of the most effective tools to help improve speaking and communicating abilities. Lazaraton (2001) proposed several communicative activities used to improve oral proficiency such as group discussions, interviews, debates, games, roles-plays, dramas, and oral presentations. EFL/ESL teachers usually intend to ask the students to do oral presentations as part of classroom activities. In the area of English for Academic Purposes or EAP, Jordan (1997) points out that a lot of students who do not have English as their mother tongue language already have study skills to reach advanced levels in their own languages. Some help is probably needed for these students to transfer the skills into English, or maybe to adapt them to a new academic environment. Therefore, oral presentations are suggested because they are one of the essential vehicles to attain the goals of language learning. Similarly, McGovern (1997) recommended that students can use oral presentations to express themselves in English. Also, teachers will have the opportunities to observe and listen to their students.

According to King (2002), oral presentations are essential and advantageous as they: (a) connect the gaps between language study and the use of language, (b) combine the use of the four language skills in a natural way, (c) support students in gathering, investigating,

forming, and arranging the information, (d) improve teamwork, and (e) help students to become more active and self-directed learners.

3. Effective Oral Presentations

Delivering an effective oral presentation can make the audience understand what the presenter wants to deliver. Proposing an effective oral presentation process, scholars agreed that it is very important that presenters need to understand their presentation targets, know who their audiences are and what the audiences will obtain from the presentations. In addition, the presenters have to present or deliver information clearly and smoothly. Moreover, they must have proper organizational structures and appropriate language styles for the presentations (Anderson, Maclean, & Lynch, 2004; Centre for English Language Communication, n.d.; Grand, n.d.; Griffith Institute for Higher Education, 2004; Storz et al., 2002).

To provide an effective presentation, the presenters may have to follow a process. First of all, the presenters need to define the goals of their presentations; for instance, to propose new projects, to introduce new ideas, to report the progress of projects and other objectives (Centre for English Language Communication, n.d.). The clear objectives of presentations can convince the audiences to agree with the speaker rather than just listening to what is being proposed, introduced or reported.

Second, the presenter should be able to identify and analyze the audience. Charlesworth (2000, cited in Griffith Institute for Higher Education, 2004) shows examples of questions to identify the audience, such as who they will be, and whether they should be approached

formally or informally. The tactics to examine the audiences are such as to realize the average age of an audience, and their educational and intellectual levels. The examples of physical aspects or settings are the size of an audience, and where the presentation will be delivered. Examples of psychological aspects are the satisfaction of the audience towards presenters and topics, and the willingness of the audience to listen and receive a presenter's message. Having clear aims for the presentations, understanding audiences, and preparing settings can be the first steps leading the presenters to successfully prepare presentations.

Oral presentations are commonly used as assignments in second language classes and language tests. The assignments are challenging for language learners and are different from writing assignments where learners can review and rewrite the language. Oral presentations demand online language processing.

According to Piccinini (2010), oral presentations can enhance confidence, fluency, and accuracy. Throughout the process of giving an oral presentation, the students gain more practice in selecting and narrowing the topic down. They get information from different sources, learn how to organize and support ideas (stating the main idea), create questions, practice working within the deadline, set up audio and/or visual aids, speak in a formal way in front of groups of people, raise discussions, and answer questions (Meloni & Thompson, 1980). Assigning students to give in-class oral presentations is thus an effective way to develop their speaking fluency and overall oral competence.

It has been observed that oral presentations contribute to a positive classroom atmosphere. Meloni and Thompson (1980) stated the oral

presentation gives the student the chance to establish her/his individual interests with her/his special background knowledge. This leads them to integrate their knowledge and make their class interesting.

Moreover, oral presentations provide numerous benefits for teachers (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Teachers can be open-minded with the students when they listen to them. Oral presentations engage students to be eager to learn. They will be more active and braver to give an oral presentations and teacher just only facilitate them how to give oral presentation effectively. (Thornbury & Meddings, 2009).

Having outlined the effective oral presentation process, scholars agree that it is very important that presenters need to understand the goals of their presentations, know who their audiences are and what the audiences will obtain from the presentations. In addition, the presenters have to present or deliver information clearly and smoothly. They must have proper organizational structures and appropriate language style (Anderson, Maclean, & Lynch, 2004; Centre for English Language Communication, n.d.; Grand, n.d.; Griffith Institute for Higher Education, 2004; Storz et al., 2002).

4. Oral Presentation Strategies

According to Jacob & Hyman (2010), King (2002), Neese (2015), and Walker (2014), there are numerous strategies which make an effective oral presentation.

Making eye contact and focusing on the audience while speaking for the first time, the presenter can pay more attention to and can judge the audience's reactions to what she/he is saying. Making eye contact with the audience is a very important part of an oral presentation

since the presenter can see the audience's reaction to his/her talk. When the presenter looks into the audience members' eyes, she/he will perhaps see some of the audience sitting in the back nodding because of understanding of what the presenter offered. "Making eye contact is like a silent way of speaking," (Jacob & Hyman, 2010; King, 2002; Walker, 2012).

There are no absolute rules regarding body posture; nonetheless, the presenter should adopt a comfortable and authoritative posture. Using hand gestures is beneficial for a presenter who should always try to keep the gestures moderately clear and concise rather than just waving one's hands around uncontrollably (Jacob & Hyman, 2010; King, 2002; Walker, 2012)

For many students, providing an oral presentation can be a nerve-racking experience and something that they dread having to do. For shy students, in particular, standing up to speak a foreign language in public may seem like major suffering. With this in mind, students should prepare an oral presentation in advance. The presenter should practice at least 10 times because practicing will help the presenter to discover aspects that should be improved. A good oral presentation requires time to prepare. Many presenters present naturally, as if they were talking with the audience and have spent sufficient time for content preparation

Regarding voice projection, it is not a way of shouting, but rather carrying one's voice as far as possible. The failure of one's voice projection is a common problem. Sometimes, the audience cannot hear what the presenter is saying even though their English is highly fluent. Moreover, a big mistake is that presenters always go too fast.

When an audience hears the content for the first time it is unfamiliar for them. Consequently, the presenter should speak slowly and clearly, presenting information with an appropriate voice

Visual aids, like PowerPoint, can facilitate an oral presentation and should be well used. Most of the audience will look at and remember the visual aids when a presenter gives an oral presentation. PowerPoint or handouts are very efficient visual aids that help the audience grasp and comprehend the main points. Using visual aids is necessary to define the main point which can help the audience to remember the main idea of the presentation

The presenter should talk but not read; the audience does not require the presenter to bury their face in the script or read every letter on the screen. Therefore, the presenters should avoid reading from notes and try to focus on the main idea in a relaxed and natural manner. Talking from notes or small pieces of paper should be done when giving an oral presentation, but the presenter might look at notes occasionally (Jacob & Hyman, 2010; King 2014; Neese, 2015; Walker, 2014). One of the techniques that can create a talk-like presentation is the use of rhetorical questions. Rhetorical questions, questions asked by the presenter while the answer is not expected from the audience, have also been used to engage the audience to think about the topic. The presenter can engage the listeners by inviting them to think about what content will be presented. Furthermore, a rhetorical question can convince the audience to agree with the presenter, shown by head nodding. Some presenters ask rhetorical questions to stir emotions, which is better than delivering a one way emotional statement (Dlugan, 2012).

The structure for communication plays a significant role in giving an oral presentation. If the opening and closing of the speech are not mentioned in the interaction or speech, the overall structural organization will be invisible (Heritage & Clayman, 2010). Effective oral presentation opening and closing can attract audience's interest in a speech.

In delivering oral presentations, content is a very important component. Main ideas, objective, introduction, body, and conclusion are included in the content, whereas the latter usually takes note of the speaker's attitude, pronunciation, grammar, use of visual aids, and non-verbal indicators, e.g., gestures, voice, posture, eye-contact (Brown, 2000). Harmers (2001) provoked teachers to observe delivery styles in which gestures are used. Galanes and Adams (2006) describe the style of delivery as an artistic standard, or as a classical canon in speech communication. They refer to Greek and Roman history, when these canons were used as a means of communication. In many language teaching books, the discussion would not be complete without a suggestion of the role of a non-verbal system in enhancing and complementing the verbal part. Because the classroom can be a home for the language of students, a teacher has to be a stimulating host for language-appropriate language production (Henning, 2000; Beck et Al., 2002; Brown, 2000; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002).

Effective use of non-verbal language is important for successful communication. The presenters use eye-contact when delivering the speech. Darn (2004) revealed that "there is a strong connection between the amount of eye-contact people receive and their degree of participation in group communication." From his research on the effect of eye-contact

in English classrooms, Darn (2004) suggested lectures encourage students to make eye-contact when they work together in pairs. It can be started by training students to listen to their friends carefully and use non-verbal communication to respond to their friends.

Weed and Diaz-Rico (2002) illustrated that delivering messages via voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye-contact can make the audience understand the messages easily. Teachers can perceive students' needs as these characteristics are unquestionably connected to emotions. It was suggested that teachers consider many aspects of nonverbal communication which are attributes of a presenter's voice: intonation, rate, stress, volume, and pitch.

Enright (1986) also explained an ESL teacher's research that showed similar findings with consideration to the significant role of non-verbal communication in ESL teaching. Gebhard (1996) illustrated the connection between teachers' pronunciation feedback and non-verbal communication feedback. Students usually asked the teacher to demonstrate how to pronounce words appropriately. Gebhard (1996) proposed that teachers should encourage students to use non-verbal language when giving oral presentations in front of the class. Through this method, teachers can illustrate non-verbal communication for their students and show the importance of non-verbal communication accompanying language use.

Managing time effectively is also an important strategy for giving oral presentations. In his study Cook (1997) discussed activities and behaviors leading students to waste their time. Most presenters spent their time focused on reading the content on the slides. Presenters need to have good communication techniques by preparing and

practicing before giving an oral presentation in front of the class and this can help them keep to their allocated time. Effective time management does not involve how to manage scheduling techniques, but is related to planning and practicing before giving a speech.

5. Related Studies

Radzuan and Kaur (2011) explore sources of anxiety in individually technical oral English presentations of 44 engineering students at Universiti Malaysia Pahang, Malaysia. The participants were divided into six focus group interviews. The study aimed at investigating the sources of anxiety while giving oral presentations. The results revealed that several main sources of student anxiety were from a mix of reasons: (a) demanding and provocative evaluation panels, (b) limited technical knowledge, and (c) lack of English language proficiency. It was recommended that these students be trained and that they needed oral presentation practice to enhance their oral presentation skills in order to be successful and professional presenters.

A study of the effects and usefulness of cooperative learning strategies in English speaking skill enhancement for presentations was carried out by Chou in 2011. The researcher asked fifty-two French major participants to give oral presentations in groups in the first semester and individually in the second semester. The researcher also utilized questionnaires, interviews and oral assessments for data collection. The results revealed that (a) certain learner strategies had positive impacts on the learners' language performance in both types of presentations, and (b) group presentation had the greatest influence on learners' oral English ability improvement.

Some studies looked into students' oral presentations in other L2s. Suwa, Miyahara and Ishimatsu (2012), for instance, investigated techniques used for technical and presentation skill improvement of Malaysian undergraduate students in a Japanese Associate Degree Program (JAD Program). The student participants received training to give oral Japanese presentations in an experimental course following the practice-discussion-modification cycle. The results revealed certain improvements in the students' oral presentation delivery process as their presentation grades increased up to 7.7%. The majority of the students also found the presentation practice sessions useful, giving them confidence to deliver presentations. It was concluded that the techniques used were applicable to improving technical presentation skills in any language.

The exploration of students' oral presentation skill quality and improvement and their opinions about learners' roles and success in conducting group oral presentations after learning English through an autonomous learning approach was made by Nantachaipan (2004). The participants were 24 students at Payap University, Chiang Mai. Three lesson plans and two questionnaires on the autonomous learning approach were important instruments. The results revealed that (1) the undergraduate learners achieved the autonomous learning lessons, (2) students can improve their oral presentation skills, and (3) the students agreed they became more responsible for their own learning after learning through the autonomous learning lessons.

However, none of the studies reviewed thus far described or explained the improvement by qualitative measures; the studies above primarily compared pre task group planning and subsequent

presentation and also mentioned effective presentations rather the features of the oral presentation performance.

Research Methodology

This section describes the methodology utilized in this study including research participants and settings, data collection procedures, and data analysis.

1. Research Participants and Setting

The participants of the study were 55 first-year Muslim students who were enrolled in the English for International Program at Prince of Songkla University, Pattani Campus. The age of the participants ranged from 19 to 20 years old. They were chosen for this study primarily for two reasons. First, they were studying English for International Program which is a required course for students who study in an international program. Second, this course required them to master four English skills in order to communicate with lecturers, friends and other people. They were both Thai and International students with varying English proficiency. International students were from different countries, namely, Cambodia, China, Guinea, Ghana and Liberia. The participants were classified by their proficiency test scores. In this class, English was the means of delivering lectures. Students were expected to communicate with their lecturers and classmates in English.

2. Research Instruments

2.1 English proficiency test

An in-house English proficiency test was constructed and tested for reliability and validity. The test covers the content required in the English for International program. The index of consistency of the instrument was 0.996. The test consisted of 65 items divided into four

parts: grammar, reading, vocabulary, and listening. The students were divided into low and high proficiency groups based on the scores from the test (low proficiency scored lower than 70% and high proficiency ranged from 70-100%). The English proficiency test scores of students with high and low English proficiency were significantly different at the level of .001.

2.2 Oral presentation rubric

An oral presentation rubric was used to assess the oral presentation performance. The rubric contains ten items of strategy use to be rated on the Likert Scale, 1= Poor, 2 = Not very good, 3 = Ok, 4 = Good, and 5 = Excellent. These ten items were classified into five principal categories including structure, content, verbal language, nonverbal communication, and timing.

2.3 Observation

The researcher observed the presenters from each group closely as to what strategies were employed during their two in-class presentations. The objectives of the observation were to identify the strategies used and assess the students' presentations. The observation focused on the presenters' performance during an oral presentation in such aspects as making eye contact, using body gesture and visual aids. In addition, grammatical correctness of their speech and speaking fluency were also observed. Furthermore, the researcher also observed how the presenter organized their opening and closing and managed time.

3. Data Collection Procedures

Data was collected during the second semester of the 2015 academic year. The study was conducted in the English for International Program class.

The participants were divided into twelve groups based on their English proficiency scores. Four groups were students with high English

proficiency and the other eight groups were students with low English proficiency. Each group consisted of five individuals. All groups were assigned to give oral presentations on two given topics: what are advantages and disadvantage of using the Internet? And, what is your opinion about using cell phones? Each group was asked to give an oral presentation within five to ten minutes. The presentations were scored by the lecturer and the researcher.

4. Data Analysis

To answer research question 1, the two sets of oral presentation performance scores of students with high and low English proficiency were statistically compared in order to determine the differences between these two groups. In addition, to answer the second research question, the researcher used the field notes taken while observing the students giving their oral presentation in class. Oral presentation strategies employed by the two groups were described.

Findings and Discussion

The study showed that students with high English proficiency obtained higher mean scores of total oral presentation and each item affected the overall presentation. Each strategy was different and the results are discussed as follows:

Table 1 shows differences between oral presentation performances of low and high English proficiency students with respect to oral presentation strategies. The presentations were scored by two evaluators. In addition, the researcher observed closely what strategies were employed by both groups of students while presenting. The objectives of the observation were to identify the strategies and assess

the students’ oral presentations.

Findings revealed that students with high and low English proficiency are different in their oral presentation performance as shown in table 1.

Table 1: Oral presentation performance of high and low English proficiency students

Group	mean	S.D.	T	Df	p-value
High (n=9)	41.86	6.025	4.203**	27	.000
Low (n=20)	33.05	4.845			

According to the results shown in Table 1, the overall oral presentation scores of students with high and low English proficiency were 41.86 and 33.05 respectively. The t-test result showed a significant difference at the level of 0.01 ($p<.01$) between the mean scores of the two groups.

Table 2 Oral presentation strategy use of students with high and low English proficiency

Item	Strategies	Researcher + Lecturer				t	p-value
		High		Low			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
	Structure	3.86		3.08			
1	The opening effectively drew the attention and interest of the audience.	3.65	0.68	2.99	0.56	2.281*	0.03
2	The closing summarized the key points and left a final thought with the audience	3.94	0.50	3.16	0.57	3.300**	0.01
3	The presentation was well organized and concise.	4.00	0.80	3.09	0.52	3.346**	0.01
	Content	4.06		3.44			
4	The presentation was informative.	4.06	0.62	3.44	0.36	3.137**	0.01
	Non-verbal	4.37		3.57			
5	The presenter spoke without relying on notes.	4.31	0.65	3.22	0.63	3.960**	0.01
6	The presenter used appropriate, well-designed visual aids.	4.50	0.38	3.91	0.49	2.996**	0.01

Table 2 Oral presentation strategy use of students with high and low English proficiency

Item	Strategies	Researcher + Lecturer				t	p-value
		High		Low			
		Mean	SD	Mean	SD		
7	The presenter used body language appropriately (gesture, eye contact).	4.19	0.70	3.59	0.49	2.417*	0.02
	Verbal	4.19		3.29			
8	The language used in presentation was accurate.	4.31	0.53	3.25	0.66	3.955**	0.01
9	The presenter used language fluently.	4.44	0.42	3.34	0.65	4.304**	0.01
	Timing	4.13		4.13			
10	The speech was delivered within the time assigned.	4.13	0.44	4.13	0.56	0.00	1.000
		4.14	0.48	3.41	0.38	4.079**	0.01

* significant at 0.05 level , ** significant at 0.01 level

Shown in Table 2, the mean scores of strategy use of students with high and low English proficiency were 4.14 and 3.41 respectively. The result of t-test showed that there was a significant difference at the level of 0.01 ($p < .01$) for the level of use ($t = 4.079^{**}$). The highest mean score of students with high English proficiency belonged to the use of non-verbal strategies (Mean=4.37). Structure strategies were scored the least by students with high English proficiency (Mean=3.86). On the other hand, the highest mean score of students with low English proficiency belonged to the use of timing (Mean=4.13). Structure strategies were scored the least by the students in this group (Mean=3.08).

Based on the observation, both groups obviously used different strategies when giving oral presentations. The high English proficiency group used effective strategies that made their oral presentations successful. They always interacted with the audience and grabbed their attention, especially by using clear and concise openings. In addition, they summarized the key points and left a final thought with the audience in their impressive closing. The mean score of their use of this strategy group was 3.86. By noticing the audience's gestures and reactions, they could adjust their presentation process accordingly. The students presented not from notes, but by focusing on the main ideas and using hand gestures in a relaxed and natural manner. Moreover, the visual aids were well-designed and effectively used. Also, they spoke at an appropriate volume so the audience could hear and follow their talks easily. The mean score of this strategy use (4.37) was the highest among the five strategy groups. Besides, the language used in their presentations was clear. They used simple comprehensible vocabulary and sentences. They also summarized the content in their

own words and left the audience pondering their final remarks. The mean score of the use of this strategy group was 4.19. In addition, the information from the oral presentation was quite informative. The mean score of this strategy group was 4.06. Throughout the presentation, the Ghanaian and Guinean students wore sunglasses. This style reportedly helped them feel more confident.

The presenters in the low English proficiency group, on the other hand, lacked eye contact. They often read every letter and seldom used hand gestures because they paid more attention to the notes than to the audience. Although the visual aids they used were quite effective (clear letters, clear background and appropriate design) the slides contained too many words with complex sentences. The mean score of their use of this strategy group was 3.57, which was the highest score obtained second only to timing, the scores of which were equal in both groups. Furthermore, there were a number of grammatical mistakes and their language use was unclear and redundant. The mean score of the verbal strategy group was 3.29. Noticeably, their presentations were not well-prepared, rehearsed or organized, which was apparent via their repetition of the same points many times. Moreover, there was no opening and closing in the presentations. They only introduced themselves and said thank you when finishing the presentations. The mean score of this strategy group was 3.08.

Concluding Remarks and Recommendations

In this section, a summary of the research findings is provided, followed by pedagogical implications for language learning and recommendations for further studies.

1. Summary of Research Findings

This study investigated oral presentation performances of students with high and low English proficiency. It revealed that the students in the high English proficiency group performed better than those in the lower group. The mean scores were 4.14 and 3.41 respectively. The students with high English proficiency earned the highest mean score in the non-verbal category. Notably, they used many effective strategies such as making ample eye contact, paying attention to their posture, practicing their presentations, using appropriate voice projection and language, effectively using visual aids and talking without relying on their notes.

The students in the low English proficiency group apparently lacked a mastery of oral presentation skills. They used ineffective oral presentation strategies; they did not show the opening and closing, made no use of eye contact and gestures and always relied on their notes. High English proficiency students, on the other hand, employed rhetorical questions and delivered an attractive opening that grabbed the audience's attention. When delivering the message, those students did not rely on their notes. They always gauged the audience. Besides, their language use was accurate and fluent. They summarized the content in their own simple vocabulary.

Furthermore, it was shown that students with high English proficiency used effective strategies, for example, maintaining appropriate eye contact with the audience. They also talked without relying on notes and delivered their message using their own simple comprehensible language. In addition, the visual aids they used were clear and readable. They spoke English accurately and fluently. On the other hand, most students in the low English proficiency group did

not perform very well. Their performance scores were poor or moderate. They did not employ effective strategies. For example, they always read notes and did not have eye contact with the audience. They rarely prepared for their presentation. In addition, their language use was not clear and was difficult to understand.

2. Implications for Language Pedagogy

The findings of the study carry important implications for instructors who teach a listening and speaking or communication course. It is necessary for Thai students to take courses that teach them how to give oral academic presentations. The awareness of oral presentation strategies should be focused on in classroom teaching. To help students enhance oral academic presentations skills and become more successful in higher education, especially in the international context, the instructors should reconsider how to teach students oral presentation skills. For example, providing courses aimed particularly at developing oral presentation skills in order to ensure that their students can deliver an effective oral presentation. In addition, learning examples of authentic oral presentations will be helpful for students, helping them to master suitable oral presentation strategies and can enhance their ability to deliver effective oral presentations.

3. Recommendations for Further Studies

Further study should acquire more research samples for data analysis. This can lead to a better generalization for other groups of students who study in similar contexts in other universities. In addition, students should be assigned to talk about various topics for greater validity. Further studies may confirm the effectiveness of explicit teaching of oral presentations to help enhance the learner's presentation skills.

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