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Academic English Presentation Skills of Graduate Students Using CHULA MOOC Blended Learning

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Abstract

Blended learning environments appear in many forms and include a variety of models with differing instructional resources. Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) are one of the primary asynchronous learning management systems used to teach the English language. This study's objectives were to identify student learning achievement in a blended learning course incorporating a MOOC in terms of learners' (1) knowledge of the English language for presentations and (2) presentation skills. Thirteen graduate students of multiple disciplines participated in this study. Pre- and post-tests of content knowledge were administered, and a non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank t-test was used to compare pretest and posttest scores. An analytical rubric was used to assess/evaluate learners' presentation skills. The findings were that 1) the post-test scores were significantly higher than the pretest scores at the p = 0.001 level, and 2) as regards presentation skills, among seven components tested, the highest average scores were for visual and introduction components, while scores for delivery and pronunciation components were the lowest. To conclude, the blended learning model developed in this case study proved valuable in enhancing knowledge of the English language for presentations. Nonetheless, rehearsal and other methods like self-reflection based on video recordings should be integrated to strengthen their delivery and pronunciation.

INTRODUCTION

Oral presentations in English pose a significant challenge, particularly for students who are non-native speakers of the language. One main challenge is the complexity of the task itself, which requires proficiency across multiple dimensions of communication. A well-executed presentation demands more than just linguistic accuracy; it requires the ability to structure a coherent and compelling narrative, deliver the content with impact, and enhance the message with visually appealing aids. For Thai students in particular, additional challenges often include a lack of opportunity to use English in everyday life, a lack of learning motivation, and the pervasiveness of curricular and pedagogical principles which concentrate on teacher-led classroom instruction at the expense of interaction and communication (Ulla, 2018).

At Thai universities, an English academic presentation course is often a required part of graduate study. When designing such courses, it is important to integrate content knowledge and skills targeting four main elements of a successful presentation: story messages, verbal messages, visual messages, and physical messages (Powell, 2010). When designing these courses, instructors should create favorable learning environments through appropriate teaching methods. In particular, instructors are encouraged to motivate learners, ensuring they find English language classes interesting (Bernaus et al., 2009). As Thai postgraduate students often lack the range of skills necessary in mastering English academic presentations (Bankowski, 2010), teaching how to give academic presentations in English requires pedagogical design which develops content knowledge while also furthering learners' English language skills. Integrating online environments into course design can help to address this challenge (Kawinkoonlasate, 2021). This approach aligns with the broader shift in the educational sphere, where the transformative impact of instructional technology on the educational landscape has ushered in a new era of learning, characterized by increased accessibility, flexibility, and modernity.

As we transition from traditional face-to-face instruction to innovative online modalities, the way teachers impart knowledge and students engage with educational content has undergone a profound metamorphosis. This evolution, as highlighted by the U.S. Department of Education (2017), is driven by the imperative to make information more accessible and transform it into actionable knowledge. Harasim (2000) highlights five significant changes that encapsulate this shifting learning process, ranging from the transition from instruction to presentation, to the adoption of networked facilities and real-time learning experiences. Building on this foundation of accessible and flexible learning, the introduction of Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) has emerged as a natural progression in the educational domain, extending the reach of distance learning on a global scale.

Moreover, there have been many unforeseen circumstances, including the Coronavirus pandemic, which have driven schools and universities to adopt online classes. Consequently, new learning methods have become necessary to help continue students' learning. At the same time, MOOCs have become widely available and their use has been increasingly encouraged to facilitate learning. These developments have also prompted shifts from teacher-centered approaches to learning to more student-centered approaches (Alsalhi et al., 2019).

There are seven providers of MOOCs in Thailand, with government and universities both involved in their development (Karnasuta, 2018). CHULA MOOC is one provider. It was launched in 2017 to commemorate the 100th anniversary of Chulalongkorn University. The main objective of CHULA MOOC is to offer a learning platform to all with the concept of Anyone Can Learn. Course subject areas include business, communications, engineering, languages, management, technology, health and sciences.

Recognizing the challenges faced by instructors and students in teaching and learning academic presentation skills, this study aims to address the gaps in existing pedagogical approaches. Accordingly, our course was designed to cover the English language knowledge skills required for academic presentations using a blended learning model, including the integration of a MOOC and face-to-face learning experiences. The course aimed to develop four pivotal

components of oral presentation skills: crafting well-organized content, honing verbal communication, employing appropriate body language, and designing effective visual aids so that the students would comprehensively understand the essential elements for effective presentations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

English academic presentations

In an academic presentation, students must use appropriate language, visuals, and delivery techniques to convey their ideas. Developing these skills requires substantial training (Amiri & Puteh, 2018). English academic presentations can be challenging for shy students (Aksoy-Pekacar et al., 2020) and students whose native language is not English. Previous studies, therefore, have attempted to develop methods for training students to give presentations, including in contexts beyond traditional classroom settings, such as online channels.

In preparation for a presentation, a presenter should ensure they have a thorough and up-to-date understanding of the subject matter. Besides this, factors contributing to successful presentations include confidence and purpose (Hadjikoteva, 2015). Every presentation must be well-organized and provide signposting language to facilitate the audience in following the content. Moreover, an introduction, a main body, and a conclusion should all be included (Papanas et al., 2011). The introduction should grab the audience's attention and also include an outline of the presentation, while the conclusion summarizes the presentation's key points.

Furthermore, presenters should utilize their body language, voice, eye contact, and gestures, known as delivery skills, to their fullest potential to enhance their presentation. These skills are necessary to establish a rapport with the audience and communicate the intended message effectively, thus laying the foundation for an effective oral presentation (Estrin & Monahan, 1975). Collins (2004) discussed the significance of intentional communication, which included the supportive function of visual aids alongside the spoken portions of a presentation. Alongside the supportive function of visuals aids, delivery skills represent an important element to the success of a successful presentation (Collins, 2004). Audience participation can also play an important role in a successful presentation, and presenters should therefore consider strategies to draw in viewers and inspire them to participate actively in the presentation's content (Collins, 2004).

Therefore, building on the foundational understanding that an effective oral presentation in English encompasses the ability to craft a well-structured narrative, deliver content compellingly, and create impactful visual aids, the blended learning course in this study focuses on four central modules: a story message, a verbal message, a physical message, and a visual message. These core components are systematically imparted in the course, to ensure comprehensive coverage of the essential elements of academic presentations.

Massive open online courses

Massive Open Online Courses (MOOCs) have grown in popularity and influence over the past decade. MOOCs can support self-paced and asynchronous learning based on learners' potential and interests. Four principles for maximizing learner support when designing MOOCs are as follows (Hollands & Tirthali, 2014):

1. Give students the freedom to choose their time and place according to their needs.
2. Provide modules or programs in various formats for students to choose from based on their interests, and provide students opportunities to study with a variety of teachers and peers.
3. Ensure that evaluation is consistent with the course activities and use appropriate evaluation methods such as small groups or consulting with an instructor.
4. Encourage active learning, not passive learning.

It is suggested that courses should be available for anyone globally and (often, although certainly not always) free from fees and academic prerequisites. Furthermore, MOOCs should follow principles of effective course design including specific learning objectives, a predetermined structure, and instruction.

The CHULA MOOC platform was launched in 2017 to offer online learning opportunities to high school and university students, as well as other people who are interested in online learning (Karnasuta, 2018). One of its distinguishing features is an individualized learning path, which lays the groundwork for a self-directed and flexible learning experience that aligns with learner autonomy and personalized education principles. This aligns with approaches to language instruction that integrate scaffolding through multimedia resources and collaborative activities and that support students' independent and customized learning journeys (Beltrán, 2017). Similar tools have been designed and used by other institutions and researchers to provide individualized planning and advice to assist MOOC participants. For instance, Alario-Hoyos et al., (2015) designed a tool called MyLearningMentor, through which students could improve their study techniques, work habits, and capacity for self-learning. Jivet (2016) used a similar Learning Tracker to promote self-regulation in MOOC participants; participants who had access to the Learning Tracker were more likely to complete the MOOC and had higher levels of engagement. Moreover, the students reflected that this assisted them in following their weekly lessons and assessment scores. Overall, there is evidence that personalized learning paths and tools enhance learner autonomy, self-regulation, and engagement; these tools are therefore likely to be effective when integrated with the focused and tailored approach of Language MOOCs.

MOOCs that help teach languages, known as LMOOCs, have become increasingly common in recent years, as highlighted by Jitpaisarnwattana et al. (2019). LMOOCs can offer a rich environment where tremendous amounts of data can be captured and analyzed using Learning Analytics and Educational Data Mining techniques, opening new avenues for research with potential implications for language learning. Alongside these benefits, however, there can be drawbacks to using MOOCs. One example is the considerable drop-out rates because learners have to manage their learning and rely on self-discipline (Jitpaisarnwattana et al., 2019).

Blended learning

According to Bonk et al. (2008), blended learning is the integrated combination of traditional learning with web-based online approaches. A variety of media, tools, and pedagogic approaches can be employed in an e-learning environment. Proponents of blended learning argue that it combines the advantages of technology and autonomous learning with those of face-to-face interaction learning, promotes better learning outcomes, and enhances student-student and student-teacher interaction (Alsahi et al., 2019; Mayer & Clark, 2003; Yousef et al., 2014).

Characteristics of blended learning are as follows (Cronje, 2020):

- Blended learning combines different types of learning-based technology to achieve educational goals.
- Blended learning integrates different teaching methods based on multiple theories, such as constructivism and behavioral theory.
- Blended learning programs include in-person classroom time and individual study online through e-learning and the Internet.

Models of blended learning

Bryan and Volchenkova (2016) identified six original blended learning models.

1. the face-to-face driven model, in which classroom learning is supplemented with online learning;
2. the rotation model, in which students rotate between working online and other classroom-based modalities;
3. the flex model, in which students study mainly online according to an individually customized schedule, and face-to-face support is provided by the teacher as needed;
4. the online lab model, in which students supplement their traditional studies by taking an additional online course on campus;
5. the self-blend model, in which students supplement their traditional studies by taking another online course off-campus;
6. the enriched virtual model, where learning is mainly online with occasional visits to a brick-and-mortar setting for face-to-face tuition.

However, Staker and Horn (2012) considered Model 1 insufficiently different from Models 2 and 3 and merged Models 4 and 5. Thus, they retained the rotation, flex, self-blend, and enriched virtual models. In addition, they formulated a model in which primary content is acquired through online study at a location and time of students' choice, while brick-and-mortar classroom time is dedicated for discussion, evaluation, and higher-order assessment. These two learning environments are referred to as *asynchronous* and *synchronous* learning environments, respectively.

According to Chaeruman (2017), the five main steps in constructing blended learning are:

Step 1. Formulating Learning Outcomes. Formulating learning outcomes in online learning involves establishing clear, measurable, and student-centered goals to steer course design and assessment, ensuring an effective, engaging, and relevant educational experience.
Step 2. Mapping and Organizing Learning Materials. Learning material is determined and classified into subjects, sub-topics, and subject matter according to predetermined learning outcomes.
Step 3. Selecting and Defining Synchronous and Asynchronous Learning Activities. An effort is made to determine whether specific outcomes, subjects, or sub-topics will be achieved through asynchronous or synchronous learning strategies. In this step, the criteria for selecting and determining the relevant learning strategy are developed as a guide.
Step 4. Designing Asynchronous Learning Activities. This stage consists of two steps:
1) compiling an outline of the design of asynchronous learning activities, and
2) arranging the asynchronous learning flow for each activity.
Step 5. Designing Synchronous Learning Activities. This stage consists of two steps:
1) compiling an outline for the design of synchronous learning activities, and
2) arranging the asynchronous learning flow for each activity.

Moreover, Carman (2005) introduced five key conditions for blended learning:

Condition 1. Synchronous Learning. Live events, such as learning events in "Virtual Classrooms," are a type of "synchronous" learning where learners participate in classes at the same time by creating virtual versions of real-world events or situations.
Condition 2. Online Content. Content available online, such as interactive learning, internet-based learning, or CD-ROM media training, offers learners an online availability according to learners' readiness or self-paced learning styles.
Condition 3. Participation in Learning. Students can communicate information with others using online media systems such as e-mail, Facebook groups, and blogs.
Condition 4. Evaluation. To improve students' learning, a range of methods should be used to evaluate students' learning progress, including pre-assessment, self-paced evaluation, and post-assessment.
Condition 5. High-quality resources. Learning materials should be of high quality and targeted towards achieving the learning outcomes.

Potential benefits of blended learning

There are several pedagogical benefits of blended learning, including flexibility, accessibility, and feasibility (Al Musawi, 2011). Blended learning offers flexibility through self-learning modules that may be completed by the student at their pace to enhance or substitute classroom instruction. Moreover, it provides accessibility through the combination of various delivery methods with instructor-led instruction. This extends the student's access and choices to learn content from any location between synchronous learning sessions. Lastly, it supports feasibility. That is to say, while it is sometimes expensive to produce Web-based content of high quality, these costs can be significantly lower than the costs of facilities and transportation when classes are held in brick-and-mortar locations.

In summary, blended learning caters to a wide range of learning styles, including synchronous and asynchronous, and can facilitate an active learning environment for learners to achieve their learning goals.

Research objectives

1. To identify students' learning achievement in knowledge of the English language for presentations
2. To identify students' learning achievement in presentation skills

Research framework

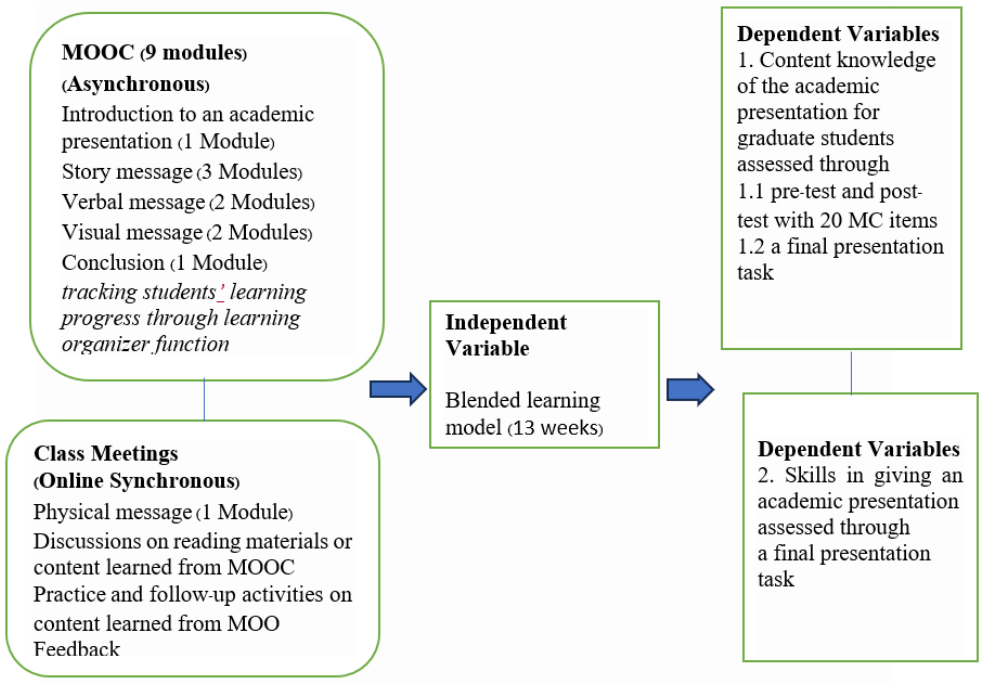

Figure 1 Research framework— blended learning model with MOOC and class meetings as independent variables and content knowledge and skills as dependent variables

Research methods

Research design

In the current study, which was carried out during the COVID-19 pandemic, a sixteen-week academic presentations course was delivered through a combination of asynchronous MOOC lessons and synchronous online classes involving discussions, practice, and feedback (Bootchuy et al., 2018). The blended design was chosen for this course because circumstances such as the lock-down and health-related concerns did not allow in-person lessons. Therefore, redesigning how to deliver content for the online environment was necessary, and the use of the MOOC was chosen because of its potential to benefit students (Arima et al., 2021).

The rationale for integrating MOOC-based blended learning in this study is rooted in the advantages offered by the CHULA MOOC platform, particularly its learning tracker. CHULA MOOC provides a learning progress tracker, known as a learning path, presenting a significant advantage by enabling students to track their progress through the course. In the present study, the learning path did not only track progress; it also provided constructive pathways that helped students navigate their learning. The learning path gave students a weekly lesson plan, including pre-class activities like videos, readings, and quizzes, all represented by easy-to-understand universal icons. This structured guidance was crucial in the blended learning environment, ensuring that students were aware of their learning plan and would be able to follow it easily.

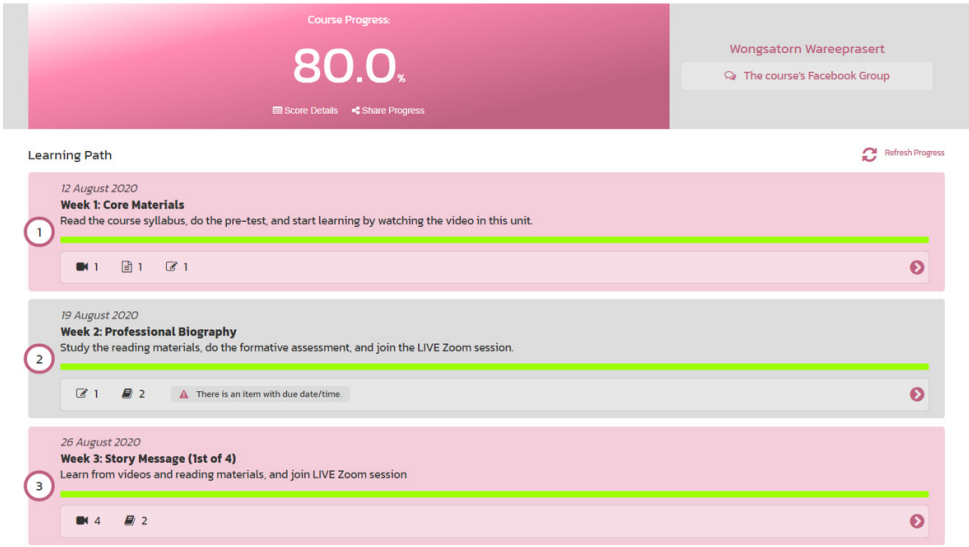

Figure 2 Learning Path—a learning tracking system available on CHULA MOOC

Participants

The participant group in this study comprised a small but diverse cohort. They were thirteen graduate students from different faculties in sciences and humanities at Chulalongkorn University. They were Master's degree and Ph.D. students. All participants were enrolled in the Academic Presentation for Graduate Students course. This course aims to bolster their skills in presenting academic subject effectively, a required capability for graduate-level education and academic communication.

Data collection tools and process

There were two sets of data collection tools. At the beginning of the term, the participants were given a pretest that consisted of 20 multiple-choice questions, and at the end of the course, they took a posttest, which included the same questions as the pretest in a different order, to examine their learning achievement.

The duration of the study was sixteen weeks. The sixteen-week course consisted of four main

modules: story message, verbal message, visual message, and physical message. Each week, the participants were instructed to complete the materials before class, depending on their pacing and time availability. In other words, the students could study the materials at their convenience. In addition, synchronous Zoom meetings were held regularly, with 13 sessions altogether. During these sessions, the material presented in the MOOC was further discussed and elaborated on, and students completed practice tasks and group activities. After concluding each module, students completed a formative assessment. At the end of the course, students gave a solo oral presentation in English in person. These presentations were evaluated using ana analytical rubric with seven components.

Table 1

Lesson Plan—a MOOC blended learning content, outputs, and indicators

WKS	Content	MOOC Blended Learning	Outputs	Indicators
1	Course Syllabus An introduction to presentation components	1. Course Overview MOOC Ep. 1 (6.60) 2. Online Pre-test CHULA MOOC	Online Quiz	Basic knowledge about giving a presentation in English
2	Professional Biography	Active Learning ZOOM Meeting	Biography	Write 120-150- word Professional biography
3	Story Message Make it interesting right from the start	CHULA MOOC 1. MOOC Ep. 2.1 (8.52) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz	Identify critical components of the introduction of the presentation
4	Story Message An introduction	CHULA MOOC 1. MOOC Ep. 2.2 (8.00) ZOOM Meeting	Create a video	Give an introduction; submit a video on YouTube.
5	Story Message Make it well-organized in the body part	CHULA MOOC 1. Make it well-organized in the body part MOOC Ep. 3 (7.52) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz	Give the right language for the body part of an academic presentation
6	Story Message Make it memorable in the end A Conclusion	CHULA MOOC 1. Make it memorable in the end MOOC Ep. 4 (8.34) ZOOM Meeting	Online practice	Identify the main components of the conclusion of the presentation
7	Verbal Message Stress in words and chunks in sentences	CHULA MOOC Stress in words and chunks in sentences MOOC Ep. 5 (12.59) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz	Say the words with appropriate word stress
8	Verbal Message Speak with techniques Repetition, softening, and chucking	CHULA MOOC Speak with techniques MOOC Ep. 6 (14.19) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz	Use the right technique when giving a presentation

WKS	Content	MOOC Blended Learning	Outputs	Indicators
9	Verbal Message	ZOOM Meeting	Online practice	1. Read the words and sentences with correct stresses, intonations, and pauses. 2. Read the abstract assigned with correct stresses, intonations, and pauses.
10	Poster presentation session Get to know the poster template	1. Video presentation: Online presentation techniques 2. Video clips: some examples ZOOM Meeting	Completed checklists and some suggestions	Identify essential elements of a poster presentation template.
11	Poster presentation session	ZOOM Meeting	A poster presentation	Give a poster presentation
12	Visual Message Say it right on the screen	CHULA MOOC Say it right on the screen MOOC Ep. 7(10.53)	Online Quiz	Identify appropriate language and design for visual aids.
13	Visual Message Language for graphs and charts	CHULA MOOC Language for graphs and charts MOOC Ep. 8 (18.2) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz	Identify appropriate language and design for visual aids.
14	Visual Message Design it right Powerful design Final Presentation Discussion I	CHULA MOOC Design it right Ep. 9 (3.35) ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz A proposal from a group discussion	Design effective and communicative PowerPoint slides
15	Physical Message Final Presentation Discussion II	ZOOM Meeting	Online Quiz Video Clip	Use a meaningful physical message to engage the audience
16	A solo oral presentation	Classroom	Presentations	Give a presentation on an environmental issue

Materials and tools

1. CHULA MOOC: Basic Presentations in English, which consisted of the pretest and the posttest and three main modules: story message, verbal message, and visual message. Each module consisted of useful language expressions, examples, and exercises. The MOOC used in this study was a pre-existing MOOC taught by three instructors. While taking the pretest and the posttest, the students were requested to turn a camera on, remove any virtual backgrounds, and not to look at any materials. The pretest and the posttest did not affect their grades.

2. Presentation Tips video clips: twenty short video clips of ten to fifteen minutes in length. The video clips aimed to teach functional language needed for academic presentations, such as presentation introductions, attention getters, how to read numbers, and pronunciation.

3. Reading materials: these elaborated on the lessons from CHULA MOOC and included some exercises as well. Firstly, at the beginning of each week, the materials would be uploaded on the platform. Then, students designed their study plan, managed their own time, and completed the tasks in the order of their choice. Later, during class time on Zoom, the teacher would check students' understanding and provide some time for practice. Finally, after each module, a formative assessment would be assigned. Students would get the teacher's feedback and scores a week later.

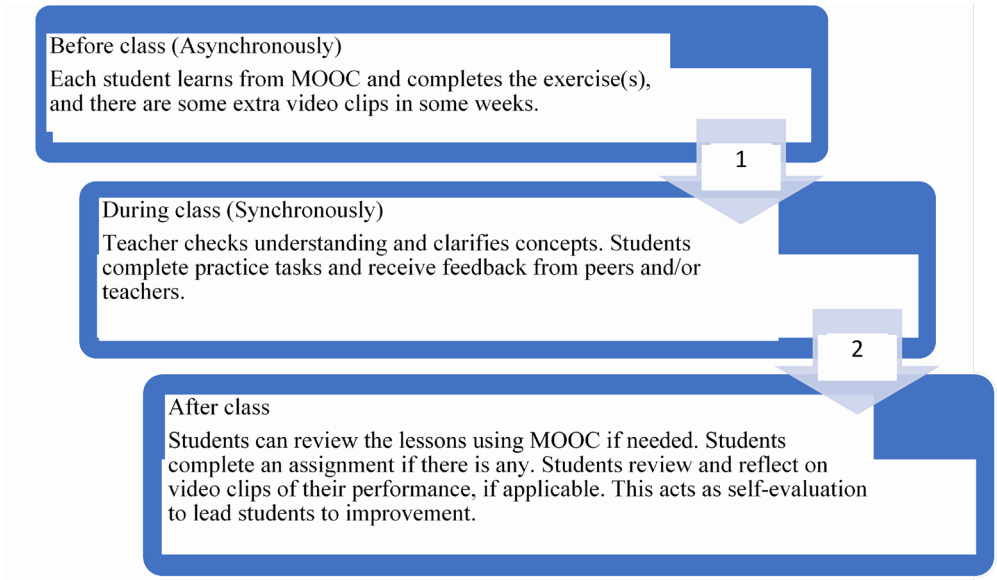

Figure 2 Steps of the blended course design

Data analysis

Quantitative data were collected, and a non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank T-test was used to compare repeated measurements on a single sample group to assess whether there was improvement in their scores.

RESULTS

To determine the gains in knowledge of English language for presentations, a non-parametric Wilcoxon signed-rank T-test was performed on the pretest and posttest scores of the 13 students. It was found that there was a significant difference in the pretest scores and posttest scores ($w = 0.0$; $p < .001$). It indicates that the intervention, namely the MOOC blended learning model, had a positive effect on the students' scores.

Table 2

Learning achievements showing raw scores of the pre-and-post tests

ID	Week 1: Pretest	Week 16: Posttest
001	12	16
002	5	17
003	16	19
004	11	18
005	12	17
006	17	19
007	16	18
008	14	18
009	16	20
010	13	16
011	13	17
012	15	19
013	14	17

To assess learners' presentation skills, an analytical rubric was used. Given instructions that each presentation should take between 10 and 12 minutes, students could select their own topic related to their subject of study. The total score was 20, and it was allocated to seven core components- content (3 out of 20), time management (2 out of 20), delivery, visual design, introduction, body, and pronunciation (3 out of 20 each).

Content: Shows a full understanding of topic Relates to environment to some extend	well-prepared confident informative	1	2	3
Time Limit: Presentation is completed within time limits (10-12 minutes including Q&A session)	Starting finishing		1	2
	1 needs improvement	2 moderate	3 outstanding	
Delivery: •Stands up straight, looks relaxed and confident •Establishes eye contact with everyone in the room during the presentation •Volume is loud enough to be heard by all audience members throughout the presentation; not showing nervousness (body language)				
Visual Appeal & Readability: • PowerPoint is well-organized • PowerPoint does not contain too much text • PowerPoint does not contain errors in spellings • font size and font type are readable and consistent • PowerPoint applies parallel structure of language (visual aids)				
Introduction Components: the introductory part includes… • presenter's name and institution with title of presentation • effective attention-getter • objective of the presentation • outline of the main ideas to be covered • time • question and answer session • link to the body (story message)				
Body Components: the body part includes… • appropriate use of language expression for methodology • appropriate use of language expression for results •presenter uses organized moves in conclusion •presenter explains visual meaningfully •presenter uses links and signposts (story message)				
Pronunciation: • presenter shows ability to use appropriate word stress • presenter shows ability to use sentence intonation • presenter shows ability to use ending sounds • presenter does not sound monotonous or mumble (verbal message)				

Figure 4 Final presentation rubrics (adapted version) including seven core components (https://th.usembassy.gov/lmi-professional-communication-skills-leaders/, 2017)

Table 3

Raw scores of the final presentation evaluation

ID	Content (3 points)	Time management (2 points)	Delivery (3 points)	Visuals (3 points)	Introduction (3 points)	Body (3 points)	Pronunciation (3 points)
001	3	1	1	3	2	2.5	2
002	2	1	1	2	2	2.5	1
003	2	2	2	2	3	2	2
004	3	2	2	3	2	2	1
005	2	2	1	2	3	2	1
006	3	2	2	3	3	2	2
007	3	2	1.5	2	3	2	2
008	2	2	1	2	3	2.5	2
009	2	2	1.5	3	3	2	2
010	2	2	2	3	3	2	1
011	2	1	2	3	3	2	2
012	3	2	2	3	3	3	2
013	2	2	2	3	3	2.5	1

Table 4

Average, standard deviation, maximum and minimum scores

Components	Average	Standard Deviation	Maximum	Minimum
Content (3 points)	2.38	0.51	3	2
Time management (2 points)	1.77	0.44	2	1
Delivery (3 points)	1.62	0.46	2	1
Visuals (3 points)	2.62	0.51	3	2
Introduction (3 points)	2.77	0.44	3	2
Body (3 points)	2.23	0.33	3	2
Pronunciation (3 points)	1.62	0.51	2	1

As seen in Table 4, visuals and introduction components had the highest average scores, while delivery and pronunciation had the lowest. The standard deviation was relatively low across all categories, indicating that the scores were fairly consistent among the students. The highest score was 3 for most categories, which was expected as most categories, with the exception of time management, had a maximum possible score of 3 points. The minimum score varied across categories, with some categories having a minimum score of 1 and others a minimum score of 2. The body component showed the most consistency among scores (SD = 0.33), while content, visuals and pronunciation showed more variability (SD = 0.51 for all three components).

DISCUSSION

Careful pedagogical design is essential when implementing blended learning with EFL learners. Specific strategies are required (Olds et al, 2021) given that the environment is different from a traditional classroom and learners' native language is not English.

This study could make valuable contributions for teachers and educational institutions by

showing that integrating MOOCs into a blended learning program has potential benefits for use in presentation courses, and can help develop students' presentation knowledge. Teachers can use the MOOC platform to provide learning materials before class. It also allows students feasibility to learn at any time (Gulatee & Nilsook, 2016), and to review the lessons when needed at their own convenience and learning pace. As Hadjikoteva (2015) points out, it is more challenging to give an academic presentation in a foreign language because the presenter needs to both comprehend the subject and communicate it effectively. In this study, the use of CHULA MOOC for the preparation stage in the blended learning program helped prepare students with useful language for such functions as introducing their presentation, signposting, referring to visual aids, and concluding. However, the blended learning course appeared to be less effective in develop students' delivery skills and pronunciation. The final presentation scores can evidence this. As shown in the delivery skills component, when evaluated regarding their stance, eye contact, movement, hand gestures, and volume, students did not do well. Also, when considering the pronunciation component, for which participants were assessed on their ability to use appropriate word stress, intonation, and proper ending sounds, and to avoid sounding monotonous or mumbling, they did not do well either. The features that most participants did well were the introduction, the body, and the conclusion parts. These three parts deal with organization, useful language expressions, tenses, voices, and signposts.

Therefore, since it appears that the use of MOOCs supports the development of language knowledge, content and organization (in other words, story messages), it is recommended that for further study, activities or different types of platforms be investigated to enhance delivery and pronunciation skills.

The COVID-19 crisis in Thailand has accelerated MOOC learning, encouraging its considerable growth beyond what was originally intended under the Thai Cyber University Project (Theeraroungchaisri & Khlaisang, 2019). Moreover, the pandemic proves that, in times of crisis, Thai Education has no better option but to embrace online technology on an urgent basis. This clearly highlights the centrality of online channels as a medium for learning and instruction alike (Christopoulos & Sprangers, 2021). With respect to learners, blended learning is especially useful for those who are less inclined towards online self-learning and still need interaction with instructors (Feitosa de Moura et al., 2021). In other words, it requires learners to engage in self-directed learning (Zhu & Bonk, 2019), while still retaining opportunities for interaction with instructors.

Therefore, teachers should conduct more face-to-face lessons or integrate any other learning activities to allow students to practice more because although presentation skills are, to a certain extent, a matter of talent, they can be practiced and improved (Papanas et al., 2011). One practice that may be particularly helpful is for students to make video recordings of their presentations. This method can serve as an instructional tool, enabling students to review and refine their delivery and technique.

CONCLUSION

This paper aimed to present an alternative learning method for an academic presentations course using a blended learning approach, and to evaluate students' achievement on the course. The findings indicate that the use of MOOCs in a blended learning context can be effective in promoting academic presentation skill development. However, it is important that consistent training and support is provided to students. The blended learning model employed in this study underscores a flexible and adaptive teaching approach. It also presents an opportunity to examine how such an approach can cater to diverse language activities within the context of academic presentations. As regards the need to improve students' delivery and pronunciation skills, more practice should be provided in these skills, and students should be provided with opportunities for reflection on their performance by recording and reviewing their own presentation. Overall, the integration of MOOCs into a blending learning program can prove highly beneficial in promoting academic presentation skill development in ELT contexts.

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