



## Teachers' Perspectives on the Efficacy of Oral Presentation Tasks toward Promoted Linguistic Acquisition

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### ABSTRACT

To unlock language proficiency among learners, speaking is regarded to be an essential and crucial aspect to master, not only for learning purposes but for recognized communication dynamics. Language learning has numerous critical aspects. To be lacking in speaking proficiencies has been noted to impart negatively toward language learning. This paper explores whether oral presentations can be regarded as a vital tool to unlock learner language development. To collect data, qualitative research approaches embedded in a case study design were used. These are methods well known to assist in attaining better understanding in real-life situations. Three English language teachers were perceived relevant since they teach English to first-year university students. Although studies have been conducted on advantages of using oral tasks in a schooling environment, little to nothing is mentioned in the literature about how such tasks can be viable instruments to augment critical thinking and problem-solving skills. Findings suggest that motivated learning and enhanced communication skills were major factors that could lead to enhanced language aptitudes. This paper concludes that for teaching and learning to incorporate oral tasks brings numerous benefits for language learning as well as other subjects underpinning the prescribed curriculum. It is proposed that it is necessary to consider diverse perspectives in discussions related to teaching methods as oral activities are prominent tools for language expansion.

### KEYWORDS

Oral presentation; teaching and learning; language; development.

## INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency is an essential aspect in communication as well as interpretation of given instruction during teaching and learning with the aim of developing diverse career paths. Gutierrez (2009) states that humans spend three thirds of their communication talking, so it is necessary that language proficiency be emphasized at the school level. Learners need to practice the four language skills—speaking, listening, reading, and listening with understanding—to be well-rounded communicators, as defined by Gillies (2019).

Speaking remains the most important language skill through which learners can express their opinions in discussions, share their sentiments, and be able to present with confidence in front of their peers, as humans communicate mostly by talking (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). Oral communication requires proficiency for receivers to be able to process the information and respond without breakdowns in communication. Neupane (2019) notes that dramatization in the classroom enhances learner confidence, creativity and speaking skills. This promotes the idea that “practice makes perfect”—the more teachers give learners expanded opportunities to speak and read, the more learners will gain confidence and cultivate their vocabulary, ultimately improving their language proficiency (Başok & Sayer, 2020; Gazioğlu & Güner, 2021).

Accordingly, oral communication skills are the most challenging of the four language skills (Brooks & Wilson, 2014). The objective to explore the vitality of oral presentations toward unlocking learner language aptitudes is rooted in effective communication skills in language development. During engagements when learners deliver presentations, they become active recipients to information through processes of exchanged ideas and arguments, and, by so doing, grammar and vocabulary are reinforced (Almulla, 2019). For learners to perform well on oral presentations, they need to attain maximum exposure to varying texts, this translating to diversity in writing styles and enhanced language development. Additionally, critical thinking and analysis is attained as learners are expected to support their arguments with valid facts, thereby leading toward promoted cognitive maturity (Chou, 2021).

Because speaking is used most in human communication, more emphasis should be put on practicing speaking with confidence through reading and research activities (Rao, 2019). Group discussions, presentations, and unprepared speech can improve oral communication skills, as suggested by Richards and Rodgers (2014). With oral skill, listening, writing, and reading become fun for both learners and teachers (Guo, 2015).

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Language development has been proven to be highly influenced by how authentic oral presentation tasks are conducted by language teachers (Richter, 2019). As outlined by Abdullah et al. (2012), allowing learners to perceive given tasks as essential elements in language learning and in real-life encounters can lead them to actively participate and use language in an authentic manner. As this practice becomes common in schooling, development toward skills of communication, coupled with fluency, is fostered (Neupane, 2019).

Accordingly, as learners perform assigned tasks in the form of oral or written texts, how worthy learners are given feedback seems to have an impact on their language development (Brown & Abeywickrama, 2019). As noted by Zhang (2009), constructive feedback needs to focus on certain defined areas when a need for improvement has been detected. As learners positively realize and accept their strengths and weaknesses in language learning, there will surely be an improvement in enhanced language skills, especially if such feedback is relayed positively, this being tantamount to a conducive learning environment (Isaacs & Trofimovich, 2017).

Another beauty of presentation tasks conducted orally is that peer interaction is heightened. Harmawan and Amri (2018) state that learners can perceive these interactions as motivating factors that positively affect their language development, especially in cases where there is infusion of an additional language in the curriculum offered. For learners to interpret interactions with peers as a significant adventure, prospects in language development become eminent. Collaborations conducted in a positive stance are therefore liable toward enhanced language development (Arbain & Nur, 2017).

Although numerous studies have been conducted with regards to language development, literature indicates little to no consideration of how oral tasks can be regarded as a vital instrument to augment critical thinking and problem-solving skills among learners (Faridah et al., 2020). Therefore, there was a need to conduct this investigation as oral tasks are perceived as essential to unlocking information analysis and critical thinking skills during processes of teaching and learning; moreover, such tasks are considered promoters of information synthesis (Effiong, 2016). Nevertheless, some authors oppose the use of oral activities. Tsegaye (2020) argues that activities conducted in an oral manner devour much time, specifically where enrollment quotas are high, depriving some learners of full participation due to time constraints. The greatest concern is that learners are confined to non-equal opportunities, and this is parallel to the advocated learner-centered and learner-paced form of education (Asih & Wikanengsih, 2018).

Reinforcing this investigation is the Comprehension Hypothesis Theory (Krashen, 2008), in which humans acquire language when they understand what they read or hear. Stated by Krashen (2008), language development occurs subconsciously through listening and reading while a person is not aware of the process. Vocabulary is accumulated while reading is stored subconsciously and used when speaking. Educationally, this implies that sentence construction skills and creativity are acquired through reading and comprehending with text as well as through discussions, thus gradually enhancing one's language proficiency (Loftin et al., 2010). This theory denotes that for language acquisition to be effective, it is when one notices a gap in one's own language competence due to lack of understanding of language aspects like speaking or conversation. In this theory, the concern is about acquiring a second language. The more there is some new input as a step ahead for the newly obtained information, the more that linguistic competence is achieved (Alsoraihi, 2019).

This theory supports the idea that oral practice improves language proficiency. The Input Hypothesis Theory is relevant to the study as it implies that humans acquire language subconsciously by interacting with the given text, be it written or orally assessed (Brooks & Wilson, 2015). It is implied that listening to other learners reading and presenting prepared and unprepared speech can also assist in language acquisition.

## **METHODOLOGY**

Research methodology, according to Jackson et al. (2018), relates to orderly and systemic approaches and methods used when conducting research with intentions to gather information that becomes significant only when structured and systematized. A qualitative research approach was regarded viable for this investigation as it aided discovering and comprehending meaning from the study participants (Kumar, 2016). As in McKenney and Reeves (2018), a case study design as an overall strategy was embedded in this research approach to outline the extent to which this investigation was directed. This phenomenological method assisted in exploring whether oral presentations can be considered as dynamic tools that can help unlock language development among learners.

### **Sampling**

It is essential for researchers to identify relevant subjects through a sampling technique considered appropriate for data to be generated. For this research, three English language teachers were purposively sampled as relevant participants. These teachers ranged from ages 40-55 and have offered English language modules for more than 10 years. Participants were sampled from a population of the language teachers in this institution of higher learning, with characteristics of having served as English language teachers for a number of years, specifically to first-year university students. With their real-life experiences as they have taught students from cultural locations with diverse linguistic constituencies, this cohort was identified as the best sample to share their experiences (Creswell, 2015).

### **Research Instruments**

For this investigation, semi-structured interviews were considered suitable because they allow for in-depth discussion (Freedman, 2014). The interview schedule was composed of open-ended questions related to the subject. Questions were centered around oral presentation impacts on language expansion. As discussions between authors and participants became robust, there arose a need to ask follow-up questions.

### **Ethical Considerations**

It is ethical to ensure that research participants' rights are taken care of. To observe this vital aspect, informed consent was obtained from participants, and assurance was given that confidentiality would be maintained in all respects. As these ethical issues were outlined, all teachers indicated their willingness to be involved in the interviews.

### **Data Analysis**

When conducting research, one of the uppermost prerequisites is for researchers to gather data relating to research questions, this being done by choosing the most appropriate method as guided by the research approach employed (Galletta, 2013). Semi-structured interviews permitted greater opportunity and scope toward procuring rich data. During the processing of data, listening to verbal descriptions by participants, consistent reading of field notes, and listening to audiotapes helped in gaining a feel for the actualities. As meaningful conclusions were drawn when comparing and clustering together similar and related responses as codes and categories, themes presented as findings of this investigation were formed. For the collected data to have indicated similarities in participant responses, such solidity and consistency of the findings indicates reliability. In the subsequent section, themes are discussed as findings.

### **FINDINGS and DISCUSSION**

Findings to this inquiry are an original source as outlined by English language teacher perspectives with regards to learner performance on the efficacy of oral presentation tasks toward promoted linguistic acquisition. It was determined by findings that motivated learning and enhanced communication skills were major factors that could lead to enhanced language aptitudes.

#### **Motivated Learning**

When interviewed about how they perceived the impact of consistent oral presentations being administered as one of the assessment strategies, Participant 1 reflected:

*Every time after oral presentations have been administered, I ask my learners to tell me new words they have learned. Thereafter, I allow them to analyze the passage by looking at the parts of speech, words used. What surprises me most is that as learners developed love toward this practice, they would request me to give them opportunities to devise their own personal strategies for interacting with the text. They would then proudly suggest alternative words that could have been used in the passage and the possible reasons for the choice of words. This normally becomes a fun exercise with learners engaging and discussing.*

Participant 2 had similar sentiments with regards to how learners displayed eagerness to engage robustly in language learning activities when oral presentations were assigned:

*Concurrently, assigning tasks that require learners to engage in an oral manner with each other in the form of teacher-learner engagements or learners collaborating as pairs or groups, such an activity improves their spelling, thereby leading to improved pronunciation, which is an indicator for motivated learning as they develop confidence and zeal to participate in future oral and academic tasks.*

Participant 3 shared a similar but slightly different view:

*What I observed with most learners in the class where I teach is that at first learners displayed some reluctance to positively interact when expected to present individually in front of*

*their classmates. I assume this reluctance was due to limited language proficiency or maybe shyness. I outline this because standing in front of others to make presentations in an unfamiliar language normally makes most learners to feel somehow uneasy due to lack of confidence. On noting this, I saw it as imperative that there was a need to redefine my teaching and learning strategies. As soon as I permitted group presentations, even the reluctant ones began to loosen up, joining group presentations and successfully engaging with others.*

There are various ways in which motivated learning substantially enhances language aptitudes, as denoted by findings of this investigation. For learners to be prompted to learn an unfamiliar and additional language, persistence could lead to improvement in diverse language aspects like speaking, reading, writing, and vocabulary. The more learners display attitudes of willingness to learn, the more growth prospects in language acquisition are attained. When learners are motivated, their retention memory in all language aspects is escalated. For learners' brains to be stimulated, that is equated to memory retention coupled with academic excellence.

Linking oral presentations to inspired learning, the study findings deduce that some internal factors make a rise to intrinsically motivated learning. Time is therefore invested if curiosity to learn motivates learners. When improvement in language learning has become eminent through consistent engaging with oral presentation tasks, that is regarded a valuable and proficient stance for communication skills to be rooted within learners. Motivation is a powerful indicator toward improved language learning, fluency, and enhanced vocabulary.

### **Enhanced Communication Skills**

When asked about the effect of oral presentation activities toward shaping learner interaction skills, Participant 1 responded:

*As we engage in discussions with learners regarding best practices for language development, one in my class shared with me that oral activities give them a chance to see whether as learners they can read or construct sentences like they have been taught by their English teachers more so that English medium is for assessment. Learners also shared with me that they are able to see whether they can understand the questions in the exams. So, as their English teacher, I conduct reading sessions for them to collect vocabulary, thus encouraging them to note all the words they see for the first time in the comprehended text.*

Participant 2 concurred:

*I suspect that reading as a daily oral activity before engaging in any written task has benefitted my learners with improved proficiency aptitudes. This became eminent as I could then observe that there were prospects of improved confidence to speak in public without fear of the audience.*

Participant 3 echoed similar claims with regards to improved skills of communication when learners are made to robustly embark on tasks aligned with presenting orally:

*What I have been noticing when measuring written tasks against oral activities is that engaging in speaking activities also helps to improve the rest of the learners as they listen to language creativity from others. As I allow for debating and prepared speech activities, it is worth noticing*

*that sentence construction skill has proven to be at its highest peaks compared to when I had little concern for infusing oral activities into my daily lesson planning.*

Responses from participants correspond with the Comprehension Hypothesis Theory that learners pick up language skills from the text that they are presenting whether the teacher provided them with the scripts of the formulated lines (Rao, 2019). This practice was noted to have enhanced sentence construction skills and vocabulary, which makes learners better writers, readers, and speakers. Findings correspond with the theory underpinning this study as it argues that learners acquire language skills if they are allowed time to read on their own and comprehend the text that they are reading (Gutierrez, 2009). When learners display improved language aptitudes, this also denotes improvement in their writing skills when they use sentence construction skills previously picked up subconsciously from reading lessons conducted in class. This also helps with improving pronunciation of words, thus improving fluency in language speaking (Firmansyah & Valatansa, 2019).

As argued by Gillies (2019), and in relation to the insights gained from participants, oral activities in the classroom are a vital tool that improves learner motivation to write and speak with confidence in front of an audience, showcasing language skills subconsciously learned while reading and comprehending, improving their spelling, sentence construction, and the vocabulary they accumulate every day. The Council of Europe (2020) also observed that when one learner is reading and the rest of the class listening while looking at the text, it helps them with pronunciation of words and gives them a chance to assist and correct the reader with some of the words. This implies that oral presentations improve all the language skills, listening, speaking, reading, and writing, improving learners' confidence to be better communicators in their future workplaces.

However, oral presentations have some noted educational implications toward developing language in learners. A vital role of oral presentations is improved language skills, enhanced communication, expanded vocabulary, fluency, and self-attained confidence. Be that as it may, there are some limitations to embarking on oral presentation during teacher-learner collaborations. Anxiety at being expected to display one's own thoughts through presenting orally is likely to deter language development as some may become less willing to participate when spoken activities are administered. Further, for learners to display shyness and reluctance to engage may also result to deteriorating learner academic attainment with a decline in development of learner language skills.

### **Recommendations and Conclusions**

On noting the essence of oral tasks for developing language aptitudes among learners, this paper recommends providing students with assorted topics to be considered for oral presentations in alignment with diverse interests and age-appropriateness. Such aspects could further extend to them attaining prospects to explore other subjects underpinning the prescribed curriculum. Improvement in language skills is equated to academic success as all subjects offered have texts to be comprehended. For collaboration and improved social skills,

feedback from both teachers and students in this exchange should be constructive. This would help to plant confidence and motivation to learn, thus proceeding to improved language skills. It is therefore concluded that teachers are at the core of creating positive and supportive learning environments as means to foster learner language development. At the stage when students have attained improved communications skills, they are perceived as able and equipped to engage with real-life realities and future endeavors.

With the supposition that an inquiry on teachers' perspectives on the efficacy of oral presentation tasks for linguistic acquisition is considered essential, it is worth noting that because there are underlying limitations, this paper provides some practical recommendations and propositions for future research as means to enhance and improve teaching practices.

In relation to generalizability and sample size, participants were nominated from only one specific institution of higher learning located in a particular geographical area. Such factors might therefore impinge on the generalizability of the findings considering that there is a broader teacher and learner population. On top of that, for this investigation to have been administered within stringent time frames is aligned to a limitation of not fully exploring the long-term effects of the impact caused by oral presentation tasks on linguistic acquisition.

Teacher training with diversified assessment methods can be considered a practical recommendation where professional development could integrate oral presentation tasks into language learning curricula as a standalone aspect catered for in the class timetable. Such a strategy would assist toward assessment of this tasks in a more profound manner intended toward maximizing impact on linguistic acquisition. It is further recommended that there is a need for expanded assessment methods including but not limited to self and peer assessments with specific attention on language skills.

Further studies might consider conducting studies gathering student perspectives on their own experiences with regards to oral presentation tasks. Insights on language acquisition could be achieved when opportunities to better understand the way learners perceive tasks and the impact thereof is taken into consideration.

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