

Towards an Effective Oral Presentation for EFL Learners Guidelines, Strategies and Recommendations

نحو عرض شفوي فعال لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية: إرشادات واستراتيجيات وتوصيات

Wafa BERKAT ^{1*}

Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef , Algeria – w.berkat@univ-chlef.dz

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Abstract

It has been always compulsory for EFL students to master the communicative skills as well as the correct expression of their thoughts and ideas to be well delivered in the English language. Oral Presentation is a challenging task for both learners to be done and for teachers to be guided and oriented; students in their university environment will face whether at an early or late stage public speaking with the audience, yet, oral presentation remains an action that causes fear, shyness and even sometimes anxiety when students plan to present orally their tasks or talks. Therefore, the present paper will highlight some of the necessities of doing a good oral presentation. This study aims also at providing the advantages of public speaking in fostering EFL communicative competence hoping the all presented tips and strategies help EFL learners to address their oral presentations effectively.

Key Words: Communicative competence, EFL learners, Oral Presentation, Strategies .

الملخص

لطالما كان لزاماً على طلاب اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية إتقان مهارات التواصل والتعبير الصحيح عن أفكارهم لإيصالها بشكل جيد باللغة الإنجليزية. يعتبر العرض الشفوي مهمة صعبة على كل من المتعلمين والمعلمين على حد سواء، فالطالب في بيئته الجامعية سيواجه سواء في مرحلة مبكرة أو متأخرة من حياته الجامعية مشكلة التحدث أمام الجمهور، ومع ذلك يبقى العرض الشفوي من الأعمال التي تسبب الخوف والحجل بل والقلق أحياناً عندما يخطط الطالب لتقديم أعماله أو محاضراته شفهيًا. لذا، فإن هذه الورقة البحثية ستسلط الضوء على بعض ضرورات العرض الشفوي الجيد. تهدف هذه الدراسة أيضًا إلى تقديم مزايا التحدث أمام الجمهور في تعزيز الكفاءة التواصلية في اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على أمل أن تساعد جميع النصائح والاستراتيجيات المقدمة لمتعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية على معالجة عروضهم الشفوية بفعالية .

الكلمات المفتاحية: الكفاءة التواصلية، متعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية ، العرض الشفوي، استراتيجيات .

¹Dr.WafaBerkat , a Lecturer (MCB) at the Faculty of Foreign Languages , Department of English , Hassiba Ben Bouali University of Chlef , Algeria . Email : w.berkat@univ-chlef.dz

1. Introduction

In the process of learning a foreign language, students are exposed to have many opportunities to communicate and talk in the target language. However, one of the academic issues that EFL students may face is that not all of them possess a mastery of oral proficiency and the good techniques of oral presentations about a single or various topics. Promoting students' speaking skill is a fundamental key to students' progress in acquiring the language; speaking in front of class is one technique to improve students' oral skills.

The aim of this research paper is to offer a useful strategies, tips and precise recommendations for a better and an effective oral presentation. The use of oral presentation can help students of English language being able to speak and interact in the target language, an aim that the present study aims to highlight too. What will be given in this paper is useful for both teachers/learners to improve their speaking hence their oral presentation will be improved as well. In This respect, these questions have been raised: What are the main tips of a good oral presentation and to what extent is oral presentation beneficial for them. To hypothesise, oral presentations need certain procedures to be delivered and transferred and mainly it needs to hinder certain obstacles particularly the ones related to psychology and its dimensions as anxiety, stress as well as shyness. Some suggestions will be addressed too to make the best use of oral proficient presentation.

2. Definition of Oral Presentation

Oral presentation is one of the useful means to practice the foreign language as it combines both verbal and non-verbal aspects to deliver thoughts in front of an alive audience. Oral presentations in an EFL context need certain elements to be included in the process as: enthusiasm, proper preparation and efforts. Cook embarked into the attempt of defining the concept as: "an oral activity assigned to students to encourage them to speak and use language in a communicative way". To put it differently Cook defines oral presentation as a task oriented to students where they have to choose a specific topic, then stand to speak confidently.

Oral presentation is another form of oral communicative competence. According to Baker¹(2000), it is just like a formal conversation, speaking to a group as a natural task (115). Its purpose generally relies on to inform and to convince. Mandaldefines the latter as: "Presentations are speech that is usually given in a business, technical, professional, or scientific environment" (8)².

Oral presentation can be done either individually or collectively in groups. It is of different types depending on the topic you choose, its types can be listed as follows: To start with, *Controlled Oral Presentation*, a type where EFL learners are guided by an instructor , teacher and a facilitator , its purpose is mainly for students to gain self-confidence and feel at ease. Second type is, *Guided Oral Presentation*, students possess certain previous prerequisites, so what is needed is guidance while presenting. Thirdly, *Free Oral Presentation*, in here freedom covers the choice of topic, the duration of time, the freedom of practice and hence a discussion will be opened just after while they finish their presentation.

3. Speaking Skill vs. Oral Presentation

Speaking is one of the language four skills; it is used for communication and exchange information. Brown and Yule (1983) said³ " speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc." Suryani&Argawati (2018)⁴cited what Brown (2007) stated speaking is a communicative process , it includes word productions , grammar rules , words pronunciations , words stress as well as words ups and downs and even words choices according to a given situation. Students are exposed to develop their speaking skill in order to master their speech in any given oral presentation. Oral presentation fosters the speaking skill whereas there is not an oral presentation without speaking.

4. The Relevance of Oral Presentation in Enhancing EFL Communicative Competence

Hedge (2000) believes that the ability to communicate is the most important objective to achieve while learning a foreign language. Students are in need of practice to learn the target language .Oral presentation is the remedy and the clue in such cases; it enables students to engage into debate, participate and demonstrate their communicative competences. Oral presentations are of the most effective way ''to get the student's attention, encourage curiosity, create challenges“(Hutchinson and Waters, 1987)⁵. According to Girard & Trapp (2011)⁶ the potential benefits of students' oral presentations include: greater class interaction and participation, increased interest in learning, new perspectives not covered otherwise, improvement in communication and presentation skills. Oral presentations represent an opportunity for developing real-world communications as well as leadership skills (King, 2002).

Among the many advantages of designing oral presentations for students are (King, 2002)⁷:

- ✓ Linking language study with language in use.
- ✓ Exercise the four skills naturally
- ✓ Encourage students to gather, ask and construct knowledge
- ✓ Enhance team work and spirit.
- ✓ Support students to being active and autonomous learners.

Students' oral presentations have become an important course in most of colleges and universities. Despite the advantages of integrating oral presentation within various curricula, still some students find it difficult to do and work on (Girard & Trapp, 2011). Such a case dictates the urgent need of orientation and guidance for EFL, they believe that it is beneficial in all sides including personal and professional one.

5. Speech Anxiety

Speaking in public may cause speech anxiety; it can be noticed in the tones and voices of the speaker and presenter. Anxiety is considered as a natural reaction towards any huge audience. Public fear can be overcome if teachers interfere to make them learn that they are not alone when debate is in progress, they will feel comfortable (King 2002, p. 404- 405). One important element that is very advisable whenever speakers present their oral presentation is what King (2002) claims “teacher should constantly remind students of the importance of using communicative English in their presentations and keeping the audience in mind when they prepare.” (405) , that is to say King (2002) is addressing EFL students not to memorize or not to read as what generally EFL students do, yet, instead , it is better to get engaged into an interactive communication to attract more audience’s attention.

Jennifer Hennings and Lindsay Schauer(2008)⁸ form another angle suggested these tips to conquer fear and anxiety while presenting an oral presentation.

- Face out what causes fear.
- Take a deep breath.
- Get ready before you speak
- Practice.
- Get enough sleep or rest and have a good and energetic meal.
- Visit the space ahead of time.
- Play the Worst Case Scenario game; guess that the worst situations will happen then think about remedial solutions.
- Take the pressure off yourself to become an effective speaker
- Visit an Oral Communication Tutor (OCT)! Teachers can embark into the task. (6)

6. Tips and Strategies

Oral presentations require certain tips and strategies to be well delivered and well presented. The following discussion will exhibit these guidelines. To begin with, arrange a plan; presenters need to organize their thoughts, ideas and information in a proper and chronological way. Preparation comes first so that viewers enjoy the presentation and add more rationale to their presented data.

The important components of spoken presentations are the following:

- Introduction,
- The main body (Methodology , Findings),
- Conclusion (Debate).

In the **Introduction**– Greet your audience then present yourself, declare the purpose of your presentation, introduce your presentations and its layout. Make sure that good introduction attracts more audience and gains much attention. In **The main body**, let your audience know about your ideas, use visual aids. In the **Conclusion**– Deduce your talk , present a brief

summary of what has been stated before and then open the door for questions ,further comments and additions to enrich the discussion of your topic and the target theme .

An effective oral presentation pays attention to the next stated details. Identify the audience , your talk depends on who are your attendees (experts , specialists, non-specialists and so on) , each audience requires a certain oral presentations, some presentations need to be presented in depth whereas others not. Determine the aims of presentation, where speakers have to persuade, to teach and to inform and to exchange knowledge about a specific topic.

Shape the presentation, organize and select very well the presentation's arguments respecting the allotted time. Introduce suitable visual aids as projectors, laptops, videos, PPT slides , microphones , laser pointers , in this respect Turk believes :

“Even the simplest visual aid can provide a grasp of the structure and direction of the argument, which will help the listeners to understand and remember”(1985).⁹

Prepare a closing summary where you manage an effective conclusion. While the delivery of any given talk is in progress, makes sure to face the audience and have a good eye contact with them, use gestures, dress a formal outfit. Be professional and speak in an clear and audible tone of voice. Make pauses regularly and make sure to transform nervousness into challenges. Drive your listeners' attention by asking question to confirm that they are following the oral presentation. Focus on key words by putting stress on them. Respond to questions politely with such a good humour if necessary.

7. The 'Dos' and 'Don'ts' for an Effective Oral Presentation.

Rachel Dbeis (2013) dictates the following¹⁰ to perfect your oral talk:

- Don't read, it is an oral presentation not a reading session!
- Do smile very often at the audience; it will lead to a comfortable connection with you
- Use few visual aids not too much ones or a brief presentation but don't fill those with lot of sentences or endless animations.
- Do enjoy yourself; the audience will more likely to enjoy your presentation if you portray it with affection and determination!
- Take good presenters you admire as models but always be yourself.

8. Recommended Tips

The following table will summarize the main checklist of an effective oral presentation:

Aspect	Explanation
Review the Instructor's Criteria	- Consider the length of your presentation - The instructor of your tutor (topic title , individual or group work)
Choose Your Topic	Think about the topic selection and narrow down to be precise and concise.
Consider Your Audience	To whom the talk will be addressed .
Gather Information	Become familiar with the topic to show mastery.
Organize Ideas	Outline your main ideas , show your quotes and information in a proper way.
Prepare Notes and Visuals	Visuals may include video, pictures ,hand-outs, PowerPoint slides, and whiteboard notes.
Practice	Practice in front of mirror or to a closer people to build confidence and receive feedback from them.
The Presentation	- Begin with an ice-breaker - Make a good use of eye contact. - Don't forget to smile

Title: Oral Presentation Tips according to (Scott Turner and Chris Lindsay)¹¹

9. Conclusion

To conclude, oral presentation is another sphere of contact and communication. It needs certain conditions to achieve its goals, if the oral presentation is well structured and well planned, it will be therefore both beneficial and enjoyable for EFL learners. It is a practice and a platform that offers for EFL learners a great extent of oral proficiency and even to have a great sense of self-confidence to face audience in public. It can be also useful to overcome difficulties in the speaking skill. A good oral presentation requires aspects as a proper preparation, an attractive introduction and a rich debate by the end of data's delivery.

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