

Attitude and perception of English language program students towards oral presentation in improving their English-speaking skills

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Abstract: Oral presentation enhances English fluency and serves as a critical skill for university students and their future careers. This study explores attitudes and perceptions of oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills among final-year undergraduate English Language Program (ELP) students in Saudi Arabia. An exploratory study design was adopted, targeting all final-year undergraduate ELP students at King Khalid University's (KKU) Muhayil female campus (n=130). A self-structured online questionnaire was distributed via Google Forms, with 119 students responding. Most ELP students reported no fear of oral presentations (73.9%) and could present efficiently (79.8%), though 71.4% experienced difficulties. The majority (87.4%) recognized oral presentations as beneficial for future careers. Over 88% perceived improvements in vocabulary and pronunciation through presentations. Faculty feedback was valued by 74.8% of students. Significantly, 89.1% believed oral presentations improved their English-speaking skills, while 83.2% reported increased confidence in speaking English fluently. KKU ELP students demonstrated positive attitudes toward oral presentations for developing English speaking skills. Saudi universities should continue oral presentation training to enhance students' English proficiency, which is essential for effective communication and career advancement.

Keywords: Attitude, English language, Oral presentation, Perception, Saudi Arabia, Skills.

1. Introduction

In the period of globalization, individuals should have English language proficiency for easy communication since it is a global language [1]. Notably, English is the critical means of communication widely recognized across nations seeking universal understanding and employment [2, 3]. It has been familiar from junior to tertiary education [1]. Likewise, gaining high English language proficiency in Saudi Arabia is believed to be a transformative move for a better future [4]. As the English language is perceived to have commercial value, it is crucial for the Saudi education system and support attracting overseas investments in the Kingdom [5]. Saudi Vision 2030 is determined to transform the nation by developing its youth for an auspicious future and promises to provide better education and training for its residents. In this regard, it is stated that the English language increases job opportunities, and appropriate measures will be considered to teach and enhance students' English language skills at all educational levels [6]. The importance of the English language in the nation resulted in teaching English as a foreign language (EFL) from primary school to higher education and also in the measurable expansion of English language programs (ELPs) in higher education [4]. Most Saudi higher education institutions (HEIs) have an English language department that offers academic programs and courses to students at the institutional level [7].

Besides, the English language has four fundamental skills that individuals should master while learning English. These skills include listening, reading, speaking, and writing [1]. Among those skills, speaking is an ability that individuals should develop well and is vital for effective communication in the English language [8]. English language speaking skills are the most challenging aspect for EFL

students in the Arab World. In Saudi Arabia, EFL students find it difficult to speak fluent English [9]. They face several difficulties while practicing English language speaking skills [10]. A previous study stated that faculty members used oral presentations to improve students' English-speaking abilities [1]. The students will enhance their speaking ability to communicate with others once they are well-learned to perform an excellent oral presentation [8]. Furthermore, oral presentation skills can assist students in speaking English without difficulty and act as crucial proficiencies for university students and upcoming careers [11]. Various studies have revealed the role of oral presentation in improving students' English language speaking ability (1, [12-15]). A previous study concluded that oral presentations positively influenced EFL students' speaking performance, and they supported decreasing the students' speaking anxiety [13]. Another study observed that oral presentations are vital tasks in EFL classrooms since they positively impact the improvement of university students' speaking skills. They enhance students' fluency, vocabulary, pronunciation, and confidence [14]. Besides, several researchers evaluated university students' perceptions and attitudes toward oral presentations Gurbuz and Cabaroglu [16]; Lekawael, et al. [17]; Naelufah, et al. [18]; Amelia [19] and Ho, et al. [20]. Gurbuz and Cabaroglu [16] reported that English preparatory program students positively perceived oral presentations, though they encountered problems. Amelia [19] found that Indonesian EFL students viewed oral presentations as helpful in improving their language skills. Recent studies observed a positive perception of oral presentation among English Education students at the university level, Lekawael, et al. [17] and Naelufah, et al. [18]. Ho, et al. [20] revealed that English major university students in the foreign languages department showed positive attitudes toward oral presentations; however, they faced some obstacles while delivering presentations. In the Saudi Arabian context, a recent study revealed the use of oral presentation for improving the autonomy of English major students of arts and science college students at Qassim University. It captured the students' views through a focus group interview. It concluded that oral presentation demonstrated its efficacy in developing students' autonomy. Furthermore, the oral presentation gave students a drive to acquire English language skills and confidence. It allows students to practice English language skills and encourages them to develop their own identity in learning the English language [21]. Few studies have focused on measuring students' attitudes toward developing English language speaking skills in Saudi universities [6, 22]; however, those still need to reveal their attitudes toward oral presentation in improving English language skills. A study by Alharbi [23] found that EFL students still felt speaking anxiety and needed to use the language efficiently during oral presentations. Those students belonged to the English and translation department of a Saudi university. Based on the literature, no previous studies collectively revealed the Saudi students' attitude and perception toward oral presentation, especially in improving their speaking skills in English. To add to the existing literature, this study intended to uncover the attitude and perception toward oral presentation in improving the English language speaking skills among final-year ELP students in Saudi Arabia.

2. Methodology

2.1. Study design and setting

This study adopted an exploratory design and covered the study population of all final-year students (N=130) of the undergraduate ELP in the Muhayil campuses of King Khalid University (KKU), Saudi Arabia. It was conducted during the academic year 2023-24. These students are female and Saudi nationals. It obtained ethical approval from the Institutional Review Board of KKU, Saudi Arabia.

2.2. Questionnaire

A self-structured online questionnaire comprises two sections with 21 items. Section one explores ELP students' attitudes toward oral presentation in improving English speaking skills (8 items). Section two addresses ELP students' perceptions of oral presentation in improving English speaking skills (13 items). The students' responses to each item are measured using a five-point Likert scale: Strongly

Agree (5), Agree (4), Neutral (3), Disagree (2), Strongly Disagree (1). The questionnaire was distributed to the study population (N=130) via Google Forms. Additionally, the target students received information regarding the study objectives, the time required to complete the questionnaire, and assurances of data confidentiality and anonymity. They were requested to respond to the questionnaire after providing informed consent. A predetermined time frame was allocated for responses, and frequent reminders were issued to encourage participation.

2.3. Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS) version 27 (Chicago, IL, USA) at a 5% significance level. The reliability and validity of the questionnaire were measured by the Cronbach's alpha reliability test and confirmatory factor analysis, respectively. Descriptive statistics were used to determine the mean score and cumulative percentage (i.e., Strongly agree-5, Agree-4) of the students' responses toward items.

3. Results

Out of 130 ELP students, 119 responded to the questionnaire. The response rate was 91.53%. The Cronbach's alpha of the attitude and perception sections of the questionnaire was 0.975 and 0.921, respectively. Furthermore, the overall Cronbach's alpha of the questionnaire was 0.974 (Table 1), indicating that the questionnaire is "Excellent" and "reliable" [24, 25]. Besides, the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin value for the overall matrix was 0.945, which indicated that the sample size was adequate for factor analysis. The Bartlett's test of sphericity was significant ($p < 0.05$). Hence, the sample size was sufficient. In factor analysis, the total variance explained through the varimax rotation was 77.901 percent, representing the sum of squared loadings.

Table 1.
Reliability of the Questionnaire.

Variables	Cronbach's alpha	No. of items
Knowledge	0.975	13
Attitude	0.921	8
Overall	0.974	21

Table 2.
Responses concerning ELP students' attitudes toward oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills.

Attitude	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
I know about oral presentations	2 (1.7%)	1 (0.8%)	5 (4.2%)	32 (26.9%)	79 (66.4%)
I like to do an oral presentation	1 (0.8%)	3 (2.5%)	16 (13.4%)	27 (22.7%)	72 (60.5%)
I have no fear of giving an oral presentation	2 (1.7%)	3 (2.5%)	26 (21.8%)	46 (38.7%)	42 (35.3%)
I can do an oral presentation efficiently	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.7%)	21 (17.6%)	30 (25.2%)	65 (54.6%)
I like to use audiovisual aids in my presentation	6 (5.0%)	1 (0.8%)	20 (16.8%)	43 (36.1%)	49 (41.2%)
I felt difficulties in doing oral presentations	3 (2.5%)	4 (3.4%)	27 (22.7%)	41 (34.5%)	44 (37.0%)
The oral presentation offers me the advantages of communicating with others	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.7%)	18 (15.1%)	30 (25.2%)	68 (57.1%)
The oral presentation is beneficial to my future career	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	13 (10.9%)	29 (24.4%)	75 (63.0%)

Table 2 describes ELP students' attitudes toward oral presentations in improving their English language speaking skills. 93.3% knew about oral presentations (mean score = 4.56), and 83.2% liked them (mean score = 3.97). 73.9% had no fear of giving an oral presentation (mean score = 3.21). More than 75% stated that they could deliver an oral presentation effectively (mean score = 3.80), and they liked to use audiovisual aids in their presentations (mean score = 3.45). 71.4% experienced difficulties in giving oral presentations (mean score = 3.13). Over 80% of ELP students agreed that oral presentations

offered them advantages in communicating with others (mean score = 3.85), and that it was beneficial for their future careers (mean score = 4.06) (Table 3).

Table 3.

Mean score and cumulative percentage for ELP students' responses concerning attitude items.

Attitude	Mean \pm Standard deviation	Cumulative percentage (%)
I know about oral presentations	4.51 \pm 0.726	93.3%
I like to do an oral presentation	3.97 \pm 1.061	83.2%
I have no fear of giving an oral presentation	3.21 \pm 1.195	73.9%
I can do an oral presentation efficiently	3.80 \pm 1.103	79.8%
I like to use audiovisual aids in my presentation	3.45 \pm 1.122	77.3%
I felt difficulties in doing oral presentations	3.13 \pm 1.197	71.4%
The oral presentation offers me the advantages of communicating with others	3.85 \pm 1.004	82.4%
The oral presentation is beneficial to my future career	4.06 \pm 0.923	87.4%

Table 4.

Responses concerning ELP students' perception of oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills.

Perception	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly agree
Oral presentation aids me in learning the English language with grammatical rules.	3 (2.5%)	1 (0.8%)	21 (17.7%)	41 (34.5%)	53 (44.5%)
Oral presentation assists me in developing English language vocabulary.	1 (0.8%)	-	13 (10.9%)	43 (36.1%)	62 (52.2%)
Oral presentation helps me to improve my English language pronunciation.	-	-	8 (6.7%)	34 (28.6%)	77 (64.7%)
Oral presentation helps me to acquire the suprasegmental features of the English language, such as rhythm, stress, and intonation.	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	16 (13.4%)	27 (22.7%)	74 (62.2%)
While giving an oral presentation, I can understand other speakers' intentions and answer them correctly.	3 (2.5%)	2 (1.7%)	22 (18.5%)	55 (46.2%)	37 (31.1%)
Oral presentation supports me in delivering my thoughts using suitable language concerning the content, audience, and situation.	3 (2.5%)	5 (4.2%)	21 (17.6%)	49 (41.2%)	41 (34.5%)
Oral presentation teaches me how to open, progress, and close a conversation and create organized verbal content.	1 (0.8%)	2 (1.7%)	19 (16.0%)	38 (31.9%)	59 (49.6%)
Oral presentation helps me in applying verbal and non-verbal tactics to overcome breakdowns in communication.	3 (2.5%)	4 (3.4%)	23 (19.3%)	54 (45.4%)	35 (29.4%)
The faculty encourages me to do oral presentations	4 (3.4%)	2 (1.7%)	22 (18.5%)	60 (50.3%)	31 (26.1%)
I received sufficient guidance from the faculty for doing an oral presentation.	2 (1.7%)	3 (2.5%)	21 (17.6%)	56 (47.1%)	37 (31.1%)
The faculty gave valuable feedback on my oral presentation	3 (2.5%)	7 (5.9%)	20 (16.8%)	55 (46.2%)	34 (28.6%)
Oral presentation helps me to improve my English language speaking skills.	-	1 (0.8%)	12 (10.1%)	44 (37.0%)	62 (52.1%)
Oral presentation helps me boost my confidence in speaking English fluently.	1 (0.8%)	1 (0.8%)	18 (15.1%)	38 (31.9%)	61 (51.4%)

Table 5.
Mean score and cumulative percentage for ELP students' responses concerning perception items

Perception	Mean \pm Standard deviation	Cumulative percentage (%)
Oral presentation aids me in learning the English language with grammatical rules.	4.01 \pm 1.024	79%
Oral presentation assists me in developing English language vocabulary.	4.44 \pm 0.521	88.2%
Oral presentation helps me to improve my English language pronunciation.	4.54 \pm 0.543	93.3%
Oral presentation helps me to acquire the suprasegmental features of the English language, such as rhythm, stress, and intonation.	4.36 \pm 0.075	84.9%
While giving an oral presentation, I can understand other speakers' intentions and answer them correctly.	3.87 \pm 0.092	77.3%
Oral presentation supports me in delivering my thoughts using suitable language concerning the content, audience, and situation.	3.62 \pm 0.108	75.6%
Oral presentation teaches me how to open, progress, and close a conversation and create organized verbal content.	4.06 \pm 0.980	81.5%
Oral presentation helps me in applying verbal and non-verbal tactics to overcome breakdowns in communication.	3.46 \pm 1.170	74.8%
The faculty encourages me to do oral presentations.	3.60 \pm 0.115	76.5%
I received sufficient guidance from the faculty for doing an oral presentation.	3.99 \pm 1.024	78.2%
The faculty gave valuable feedback on my oral presentation.	3.55 \pm 0.121	74.8%
Oral presentation helps me to improve my English language speaking skills.	4.48 \pm 0.596	89.1%
Oral presentation helps me boost my confidence in speaking English fluently.	4.17 \pm 0.086	83.2%

Table 4 illustrates ELP students' perceptions of oral presentations in improving English language speaking skills. Over 75% of ELP students perceived that oral presentations aided them in learning English grammar rules (mean score = 4.01) and supported them in delivering their thoughts using appropriate language concerning content, audience, and situation (mean score = 3.87). They can understand other speakers' intents and respond correctly during oral presentations (mean score = 3.62). Furthermore, about 89% stated that oral presentations helped them develop English vocabulary (mean score = 4.44) and improve their English speaking skills (mean score = 4.48). 93.3% reported that oral presentations assisted in enhancing their English pronunciation (mean score = 4.54). 83.2% indicated that oral presentations boosted their confidence in speaking English fluently (mean score = 4.17). Additionally, over 75% of ELP students reported that faculty encouragement (mean score = 3.6) and sufficient guidance (mean score = 3.99) supported their oral presentation skills. 74.8% perceived that faculty provided feedback on their oral presentations (mean score = 3.55) (Table 5).

4. Discussion

This study measured the final-year ELP students' attitude and perception towards oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills. Regarding the ELP students' attitude, most ELP students knew about oral presentation (93.3%) and liked it (83.2%). These findings differ from a previous study, which found that 52.4% of EFL students had no knowledge and skills to do an oral presentation in English; however, they liked it since it improved their pronunciation skills [19]. A recent study found that 85% of students in English education programs liked the oral presentation [17]. A previous study also found that 72% of students liked the idea of oral presentations in an EFL classroom, and 60% felt nervous before giving an oral presentation. Dansieh, et al. [26] observed that 63% of Ghanaian university students felt anxiety when instructed to deliver oral presentations. A recent Saudi-based study also observed that EFL students had a moderate level of anxiety concerning English

language acquisition, predominantly when they wanted to practice the language in an oral presentation. In contrast, this study reported that 73.9% of ELP students did not fear giving an oral presentation. This observation denotes that the remaining 26.1% experienced fear of doing an oral presentation, which requires exploring the causes of fear and providing necessary support to ELP students. Furthermore, 79.8% of ELP students could do an oral presentation efficiently, which varies from a recent study that explained that 90.7% of students belonging to the faculty of foreign languages in Vietnam were able to deliver good oral presentations [27].

Moreover, a study conducted in Malaysia stated that audio-visual aids drew various positive outcomes from EFL students and would improve their speaking skills [28]. In Saudi Arabia, the undergraduate English curriculum endorses the utility of audio-visual aids in EFL classrooms. Sixty percent of undergraduate students in a Saudi university used audio-visual aids in the English language classroom [29]. However, this study observed that 77.3% of EFL students liked to use audio-visual aids in their presentations. Besides, a previous study found that 56% of English department students felt that an oral presentation was challenging since they had low self-confidence. 92% perceived difficulty with the topic, and 64% found difficulty with the audience's reaction to their performance in an oral presentation. Those students felt difficulty doing oral presentations in the EFL classroom due to individual factors, presentation skills, and the audience [1]. In this study, 71.4% of ELP students felt difficulties in doing oral presentations, which indicates the need for a deeper analysis of the difficulties faced by ELP students in doing oral presentations. Such an attempt would aid the instructors in framing and implementing necessary strategies to overcome the students' difficulties with oral presentations and improve their English language speaking skills. Further, more than 80% of ELP students agreed that the oral presentation offered them the advantage of communicating with others and was beneficial to their future careers. In alignment with these findings, Amelia [19] reported that 90% of Indonesian EFL students believed that oral presentations improved their communication skills. Pham, et al. [27] found that 89.7% of students agreed that oral presentations are significant for their career prospects. Previous researchers also stated that oral presentation would develop students' English language speaking skills in communicating with others, and it is crucial for their future careers [8, 11]. From the findings of this study, ELP students demonstrated their attitude toward oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills, with a mean score of more than 3.1 out of 5 for all items. This outcome indicates that ELP students have a positive attitude toward oral presentation.

Concerning the ELP students' perception, most ELP students perceived that oral presentation aided them in learning the English language with grammatical rules (79%), improving English language vocabulary (88.2%), and pronunciation (93.3%). Following our findings, Indonesian EFL students perceived that oral presentations had developed their grammar skills in English (95%), new vocabulary (100%), and pronunciation (100%) [19]. Another study found that oral presentation supported EFL students in developing suprasegmental features of the English language (52%). Those students could comprehend other speakers' intentions and respond to them suitably during oral presentations (92%). Furthermore, oral presentations helped them to reveal how to express ideas using suitable language concerning the topic, setting, and audience (100%). It taught them how to initiate, develop, and end a conversation and produce a cohesive spoken text (92%) and also used verbal and non-verbal strategies to repair communication breakdowns (84%) [1]. In the current study, 84.9% perceived that oral presentation helped them acquire the suprasegmental features of the English language, such as rhythm, stress, and intonation. 81.5% believed oral presentation taught them how to open, progress, and close a conversation and create organized verbal content. 77.3% could understand other speakers' intents and answer them correctly while giving an oral presentation. Around 75% felt that oral presentation supported them in delivering their thoughts using suitable language concerning the content, audience, and situation, and applying verbal and non-verbal tactics to overcome breakdowns in communication. These observations indicated that most ELP students obtained positive benefits through oral presentation in improving their English language speaking skills.

Previous literature has found that the instructors' motivational role significantly improved the English oral presentation performance of university EFL students in Bangladesh [30]. Motivation is a psychological factor that influences learners' presentation performance, Ariyanti [31]. Gurbuz and Cabaroglu [16] reported that all EFL students perceived their instructor's guidance and initial instruction as beneficial for their oral presentations. Those students felt they had a better experience with their guided oral presentations. Similarly, in this study, most ELP students perceived that their faculty encouraged them (76.5%) and provided sufficient guidance (78.2%) to perform oral presentations. Additionally, 74.8% perceived that their faculty gave valuable feedback on their oral presentations. This observation aligns with a previous study that concluded that the instructor's feedback positively impacts the quality of EFL students' oral presentations in several facets. Those students had positive attitudes toward the instructor's feedback [32]. Moreover, this study reported that oral presentation helped ELP students improve their English language speaking skills (89.1%). This observation aligns with the findings of Thanh and Tuấn [14], who reported that oral presentations are vital tasks in EFL classrooms since they positively improve EFL students' speaking skills. They also enhance students' pronunciation, vocabulary, confidence, and fluency. Further, Pham, et al. [27] found that 89.1% of students of the Faculty of Foreign Languages at a Vietnamese university expressed that oral presentations assisted them in improving communication skills. 88.5% reported that oral presentations created confidence in their studies and work. Besides, a recent study concluded that EFL students at a Saudi university recorded an overall positive satisfaction with oral presentations and believed that they offered the drive to study English, obtain self-esteem and confidence, and become dynamic learners [21]. Likewise, in this study, 83.2% of ELP students perceived that oral presentations helped them boost their confidence in speaking English fluently. Based on the results, ELP students positively perceived oral presentations as a means of improving their English language speaking skills, with a mean score of more than 3.4 out of 5 for all items.

This study is constrained to the female ELP students of a single public university in Saudi Arabia with a smaller sample size. However, future studies can be conducted across Saudi universities by covering a larger sample size of ELP students, which aids in the generalization of the results. Comparative studies can be conducted between Saudi ELP students and those in other Arabic-speaking nations regarding their attitudes and perceptions towards oral presentation in improving English language speaking skills. Furthermore, the faculty members' roles in enhancing students' oral presentation performance among ELP students can be explored in future research. The challenges faced by ELP students in delivering oral presentations to improve their English language speaking skills can also be further evaluated.

5. Conclusion

ELP students of KKU demonstrated a positive attitude and perception towards oral presentation in improving their English language speaking skills. Most students had no fear and could do an oral presentation efficiently; however, they faced difficulties doing so. Notably, most students agreed that the oral presentation was beneficial to their future careers. Furthermore, they perceived that oral presentation aided them in improving English language vocabulary, pronunciation, and suprasegmental features. They stated that the faculty provided valuable feedback on their oral presentations. Specifically, most ELP students perceived that oral presentation helped them to improve their English language speaking skills and boost their confidence in speaking fluent English. Besides, Saudi universities should constantly emphasize ELP students' English-speaking skills through adequate oral presentation training sessions since English as a foreign language is vital for their effective communication and future careers.

Transparency:

The author confirms that the manuscript is an honest, accurate, and transparent account of the study; that no vital features of the study have been omitted; and that any discrepancies from the study as planned have been explained. This study followed all ethical practices during writing.

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