Assessment Practices for Oral Presentations: Insights from ESL Instructors

Nur Syamimi Zahari[1], Hawa Syamsina Md. Supie[1,*], Zulaikha Khairuddin[1] & Zurina Khairuddin[2]

[1]Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia

[2]Faculty of Languages and Communication, Universiti Sultan Zainal Abidin, Kampus Gong Badak, Terengganu, 21300 Kuala Terengganu, Malaysia

*Correspondence: Academy of Language Studies, Universiti Teknologi MARA, 40450, Shah Alam, Selangor, Malaysia. Tel: 60-3-5544-2400

Abstract

Assessment practices offer learners the opportunity to practise and prepare for the actual assessments. Coupled with feedback, this practice is intended to assist them in improving their speaking skills particularly in the language. Providing feedback to the learners for assessment practices has become a vital element in the newly revised course like English for Oral Presentation. Instructors are required to evaluate learners' assessment practices and provide feedback for the speaking activities to give room for the learners to improve their oral presentations. However, this new structure of the course has impacted the instructors in many ways as they need to wholeheartedly commit to the practices submitted by the learners. This somehow leads to unnecessary stress among the instructors as they need to adhere to the deadlines given. Therefore, this study investigates the perceptions of the instructors on the assessment practices in an oral presentation course and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved. Qualitative research methodology was employed with purposive sampling technique being utilised in choosing the participants for the interview. After gaining consent from the participants, interview sessions were conducted, recorded and transcribed. The data were then analysed utilising thematic analysis. The findings reported that the instructors were positive towards the impacts of the newly revised course of the oral presentation as learners have improved their presentation skills, enhanced their self-confidence and integrated other skills upon completing the practices. This study provides insights for the betterment of the implementation of the English for oral presentation course.

Keywords: assessment practices, oral presentations, feedback, assessment feedback, higher education

1. Introduction

Speaking skills need to be learned and mastered by learners for them to survive in authentic communication settings (Giang, 2022) such as daily conversations or workplace interactions. In the context of higher education, learners are involved in a lot of oral presentations where they could practise their speaking skills and they are required to fulfil many tasks on various topics. This implies that tertiary education is where learners could develop and enhance their oral presentations skills (Sahan et al., 2022) as oral presentation courses are commonly offered by Malaysian local universities. Oral presentation courses focus on both content (e.g. oral communication theory, the structure of the presentations) and the skills (e.g. the importance of verbal and non-verbal communication skills) (Murillo-Zamorano & Montaner, 2017) assisting and enhancing the learners' ability to present in a correct manner within the appropriate contexts in delivering their ideas. This is because speaking skill is one of the essentially demanded skills by future employers (Cuic Tankovic et al., 2023; Nik Ismail Azlan et al., 2022; Ting et al., 2017). However, presenting in front of a lot of people or in public may lead to the issue where learners may feel nervous, anxious and intimidated (Smith & Saddano, 2011). Hence, local universities have to prepare and equip the learners with the right skills for authentic communication in the real world in order for them to participate in daily communication and work interaction confidently and competently.

Oral presentation is a skill requiring more detailed and complex preparations since it has to comply with some characteristics and conditions to meet its objectives (Ahmad Taufik Hidayah & Mohd Nazri, 2019). The three characteristics of a good oral presentation are stated by Choo, Yee and Yeoh (2006) as highly structured, uses a more formal language and needs a certain method of delivery. To meet the expectation of the society, local universities are suggested to incorporate oral presentation to be one of the components to be assessed (Sahan et al., 2022) as it may help learners to see the importance of learning, mastering and improving their oral presentation skills. Abdelmajdid and Mohd Radzuan (2019) posited how oral presentation assessment could help learners to be more confident, more creative and critical in making decisions. They also assert that oral presentation assessment could promote active learning in classrooms.

Oral presentations can be conducted as both activities and assessments in a particular course. Oral presentations can be either formative or summative assessments (Magin & Helmore, 2001). This decision should be made by the faculty management as the course belongs to the faculty and instructors' role is to follow the requirements and instructions from the management. Oral presentations can be made as formative assessment where instructors are expected to give feedback for learners to improve their skills (Man et al., 2022; Murillo-Zamorano & Montaner, 2017). The feedback should focus on the specificity of the content (Goodman, Wood, & Hendrickx 2004; Shute 2008; Govaerts, Van de Wiel, & Van der Vleuten, 2013, as cited in Van Ginkel et. al, 2017) and learners' presentation skills (Zainuddin & Che'Lah, 2022). Van Ginkel et al. (2017) also postulated that feedback delivered by the instructors are valued more as the instructors are held in high regard in terms of experience and expertise. Once learners receive feedback from the instructors, learners may feel the need to do better for the upcoming assessment (Wang et al., 2018; Zainuddin & Che'Lah, 2022).

Without receiving feedback from the instructors, learners are likely to feel demotivated to continue submitting oral presentation practices. Thus, the purpose of this current study is to identify the instructors' perceptions towards the implementation of oral presentation as part of the assessments in a course and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved.

1.1 Statement of Problem

English for Oral Presentation is one of the courses offered in one local university in Malaysia. The main objective of this course is to expose learners with the English language speaking skills. Before English for Oral Presentation course was amended, the outline of the course listed two assessments which were Informative Speech and Persuasive Speech, and for both assessments, learners have to submit the outlines of their speeches and were asked to rehearse their speeches on their own. Then, a little bit of amendments happened the following semester where there were four assessments namely Introduction for Informative speech, Informative speech, Pitch Session, and Persuasive speech, and on top of the four assessments, learners were required to complete 27 activities within 10 weeks as part of their practices to prepare for the assessments. There were no marks given to the completed activities by learners. Nonetheless, instructors were expected to provide feedback to learners for both activities and assessments. During online and distance learning, learners must submit their activities and assessments via online platforms such as YouTube, Google Drive, ~~Google Sheet~~ or Google Classroom while instructors as the assessors would grade the submissions and provide online feedback.

However, due to online learning, instructors faced and experienced challenges too. It can be observed that instructors' workloads piled up due to preparation time to plan the lessons and learners' engagement towards the lesson were likely to be lesser (Taufiq-Hail et al., 2022). As a result, there was a need to conduct examinations as learners did not perform well in the formative assessment. All these issues and challenges could affect the process of teaching and learning of English proficiency skills including speaking skills, specifically oral presentation skills. To help and guide learners to learn and master oral presentation skills, instructors' views on learners' learning issues specifically in learning oral presentation skills are needed. This study focused only on the instructors' perceptions towards the structure of the current assessments and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved.

1.2 Research Objectives

1.2.1 To investigate the perceptions of instructors on the assessment practices of the English for Oral Presentation course.

1.2.2 To determine instructors' perceptions on the improvement of the English for Oral Presentation course.

1.3 Literature Review

Assessment is a crucial part of teaching and learning process concerning whether learning has taken place. In other words, assessments serve as evidence on the mastery of skills, knowledge, and competencies for learners' learning but also the challenges they may face in

their learning. According to Lee et al. (2010), learners were found to perceive to not have the power in their assessment as instructors were the authority in determining their marks. Learners perceived that they should accept the marks given to them without questioning the instructors as they believed that they were not entitled to do so in the assessment practices. According to Schafer (1991), assessment practices have a significant impact on learners' learning. This is maybe because learners could improve their performance once they know their own weaknesses. Hence, instructors were encouraged to focus and give extra attention on assessment practices in supporting learners' learning (Yan & Cheng, 2015).

Assessment practices conducted in a course could enhance learners' learning experience (Kitula et. al, 2018; To & Carless, 2016). According to Ibarra-Sáiz and Rodríguez-Gómez (2015), it is important for assessment to be conducted well because failure to do so could result in poor performance by learners. To assess learners effectively, instructors need to be well-equipped with the knowledge and skills to assess (e.g: utilising appropriate techniques and methods) (Xu & Brown, 2016). In other words, the assessments and evaluation made by the instructors could determine whether learners achieve the objectives or not. Sambell (2016) suggested that appropriate and suitable assessments were needed to be implemented to ensure the course learning outcomes were achieved. Relevant knowledge and skills on assessing learners would allow instructors to make informed decisions on the teaching and learning process.

Universities in Malaysia mostly have decided on the assessment practices to be conducted for a particular course including the type and number of assessments for learners, the weightage and the administration of the assessment in their institutions (Lyamtane & Ogoti, 2018). This decision is usually decided by the management as the course belongs to the faculty which leads to instructors following the management's instructions. Matovu and Madziah Zubairi (2014) reported that instructors perceive some assessments were conducted poorly and that some of them did not possess the appropriate competency to assess learners. This could be considered as an issue as it would affect the learners' grades. Alkharusi (2008) reported that instructors possessed inconsistent assessment competencies and practices while Postareff et al. (2007) found that instructors' assessment practices were at different levels depending on their experiences. These inconsistencies could result in bias and unfairness issues towards the learners' performance in a course where the grade obtained by learners might not be their real performance. In fact, the instructors' perceptions towards the assessment may influence learners' performance (Brown & Remesal, 2012).

Instructors were encouraged to plan and structure their own lesson plans with the help of the management providing all the guidelines and instructions, but instructors felt that they did not have enough training to develop their teaching skills (Cheema et al., 2022). In other words, the management of faculties might need to consider sending their instructors for training before or whenever they make any changes to their course syllabus. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, the changes in assessments is a must since the medium for teaching and learning have been converted to online learning where both instructors and learners meet virtually. Due to this, Panadero et al. (2022) discovered that the structure of assessments had changed, instructors have become more flexible in terms of evaluating the assessments, and feedback

from instructors was more frequent for learners at secondary and tertiary education.

In teaching oral presentation skills, instructors do face issues and challenges. Gula (2022) found that the issues experienced by instructors in teaching oral presentation skills during COVID-19 pandemic were their lack of motivation, modifications in terms of lesson plans (e.g: learning activities), poor internet connection and assurance whether the learners understand the lessons or not. These issues are quite crucial to be discussed as they might affect the process of teaching and learning for both parties, instructors and learners. Other than that, instructors perceived that learners were not able to grasp the oral presentation skills was due to their lack of English proficiency, lack of exposure in using English for the purpose of communication, lack of vocabulary, fear of wrong pronunciation and grammatical errors (Iqbal et al., 2019) as these issues may lead to challenges in their teaching process. These issues need to be considered by the instructors to ensure that at the end of the course, learners will be able to master the minimum requirements of oral presentation skills and the instructors themselves could achieve the objectives and aims of their lessons. Therefore, this study is conducted to investigate the perceptions of the instructors in dealing with the reviewed and revised version of the assessment within the oral presentation course and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved.

2. Research Methodology

In this section, the researchers will explain and describe research design, sampling procedures, research instruments, methods of data collection collection and data analysis.

2.1 Research Design

The study employed qualitative approach. In obtaining the data, a few interview sessions were conducted with the instructors who were teaching the course, English for Oral Presentations. Semi-structured interview was chosen as the method of data collection because the researchers would like to investigate the instructors' perceptions towards the assessment practices for oral presentations and their suggestions for improvement. Creswell and Creswell (2018) suggested that interviews could help the researchers to gain and obtain in-depth data for a study. According to Bryman (2016), semi-structured interviews are a set of potential questions to refer to by the researchers (interviewer) and it depends on the participants how they would like to respond. The set of questions provides data and enables the researchers to discover the instructors' perceptions on the assessment practices and their suggestions for the course improvement. Hence, choosing an interview as a method of data collection for this current study would be relevant and appropriate.

In choosing the participants for this study, the researchers utilised purposive sampling technique which requires detailed and elaborated feedback from the participants (Gill, 2020). The participants for this study were the local university instructors who were teaching and assessing English for Oral Presentation course. There were six instructors who taught the course and were chosen to be part of this study. These instructors were chosen based on their number of years of experience in assessing the assignments for the course: two instructors

have less than five years of experience, two have 5-10 years of experience and two have more than 10 years of experience. For the purpose of this study, the participants are identified as the following: L1 (Instructor 1), L2 (Instructor 2), L3 (Instructor 3), L4 (Instructor 4), L5 (Instructor 5), L6 (Instructor 6)**.**

2.2 Methods of Data Collection

Before conducting the study and collecting the data, the researchers have applied for ethics approval from the Research Ethics Committee of the institution and approval from the institution's Research Ethics Committee was received to conduct the study. In collecting the data, the participants were approached to ask whether they were willing to participate in this study. After getting approval from the participants, they were briefed about the objective of the research and their contribution towards the research and the improvement of the course. Before the interviews were conducted, a consent form was given to all participants via Google Form. The participants were guaranteed their anonymity and that the process of this study would not affect them academically or non-academically. They were informed of the retraction upon their consent before the data analysis was conducted. Interviews were conducted via online video meeting with the participants' consent for recordings. The interviews were video-recorded. After obtaining the data, the researchers analysed the data using thematic analysis which is explained in the next section.

2.3 Methods of Data Analysis

After data collection was conducted, the video recordings of the interviews were transcribed verbatim. Thematic analysis (Braun & Clarke, 2006) was adopted when analysing the interview.

Braun and Clarke (2006, p. 16-23) suggested six main phases of data analysis:

     1) Familiarising yourself with your data

     2) Generating initial codes

     3) Searching for themes

     4) Reviewing themes

     5) Defining and naming themes

     6) Producing the report

The findings from the analysis of the interview were interpreted (Creswell, 2014) to investigate the experiences faced by instructors, how they perceived the assessment practices of the course and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved. The findings then were reported according to the research questions.

3. Results and Discussion

This section explains and discusses the findings of the study according to the research

questions on the perceptions of the instructors on the assessment practices and their perceptions on possible improvement to be made on the course.

3.1 What are the Perceptions of Instructors on the Assessment Practices of the English for Oral Presentation Course?

3.1.1 Sufficiency of Oral Practices

The instructors were asked if the number of ten weekly video recordings for assessments are sufficient for the learners to practise the language.

> *L2: But then the 10 activities should be able to help them to get used to speaking, get used to communicating… I think it's a good practice.*

> *L3: Oh, okay, meaning 10 weekly activities, right? Yes, I think there're okay, sufficient, because you know, we need to at least to have like three weeks or four weeks of classes or lecture, you know. So, I think it's sufficient but I'm just okay if the RP decides to extend, you know, or add more… But I'm not sure, you know, about the perception of students lah…They will have a different idea.*

> *L5: Sufficient, yes. To prepare, yes. Assuming that they are making use of the activities-lah, which I think is the concern, because there are so many students and they are relying on each other to give feedback to each other. So it depends on the quality of the group-lah. If the group itself is active and they care about the subject enough to really take the activity seriously, then they can definitely benefit.*

Based on the excerpts above, it can be said that there are two perceptions whether the ten (10) weekly activities were sufficient or not for learners and whether they have enough time to prepare for the activities. L2, L3, and L5 stated that ten (10) weekly activities were sufficient for learners to prepare for their assessments because the learners can benefit from the activities if they really took them seriously, and they can practise to prepare for the real assessments. At the same time, there was ample time for the learners (3-4 weeks) to prepare for the assessments. However, L3 argued that learners may have different views of the matter.

> *L4: I feel that it is actually more than enough for them. The ten activities. Ten practices, yes, it's definitely more than enough for them. In fact, some of my students actually, they kind of like, how do I put it yeah? They didn't even submit some of the practices. I believe it's because they felt overwhelming. So that's why they abandoned some.*

> *L6: Last semester it was actually less as compared to the previous semesters, right, and they were asked to send ten activities. I would say personally, this is my personal opinion, I would say ten activities were quite many also to them. I felt that giving two activities would be ample enough for each assessment because coming up with ten, I can see from the student submission whereby towards the end of the semester the few students actually did not submit the activities, whereby I told them what to do, you need, probably they can break their practice. So I would say ten activities for quite many for them.*

However, L4 and L6 stated that the ten (10) weekly activities were more than enough for learners because they mentioned that at the end of the semester, the learners were no longer submitting the activities as the learners might feel overwhelmed with the tasks given. The differences of opinions among the instructors may be because they have different experiences handling the classes, with different types of learners. Chris (2016) suggested that learners need to have a lot of presentation practices and at the same time, the instructors need to ensure that the learning environment is non-threatening.

3.1.2 Applicable Knowledge

The instructors were also elicited on whether the lessons taught in class were really applied by the learners in their oral presentations.

> *L4: Okay, I will say definitely, because whatever that I teach, as in the different parts in a speech, the kind of language that you use, the phrases, and whatnot, and looking out for materials to support their speeches and whatnot, so they do apply in their speeches, basically because they learn how to paraphrase and whatnot, and then they follow the order on how to start off your presentation, what you should include in the introduction part, and then the body of the paragraph, sorry, the body of their speeches, and then they do apply what needs to be included and then having their transitional signals and whatnot, so I feel that based on, I would say most of the students speeches, they do actually apply whatever they have been taught.*

> *L6: Okay, so if we are talking about the knowledge, for example, when we talk about the introduction, whereby they need to have the attention-getter, they need to establish credibility, somehow mentioned their central idea, I think they do have that when it comes to the introduction, I think it would depends on the speeches. When it comes to the informative speech, I think they follow that in informative speech. But probably when it comes to persuasive speech, they might have problems in terms of following Monroe's sequence, but I do think that they apply what we asked them, what we taught them actually to do, and they do, they do. I would say they do have that.*

From the excerpts above, it can be observed that L4 and L6 mentioned that the learners in their classes did apply the skills and theories that they have learned in the classroom. L4 said that the learners managed to apply the paraphrasing knowledge and transitional signals during their presentations and at the same time, they could organise their thoughts accordingly based on the introduction, and body (content). L6 mentioned that the learners applied the knowledge of using the attention getter and established their credibility as presenter during the presentation. L6 also stated that the course should have a structured content such as Monroe's Sequence where the learners could use and apply the knowledge for their presentation. The learners managed to apply and utilise the knowledge based on the lectures given, maybe because the learners were aware and understood the content. This is highly likely due to two-way interactions happening in the class such as question and answer sessions or feedback sessions. The interaction between learners and teachers are important as it could help them to have a goal and could also see a clear direction towards their learning process (Tsang, 2020).

3.1.3 Presentation Skills Improvement

Next, the questions asked to the participants were; whether or not the learners improve on their presentation skills after completing their oral presentation practices.

> *L3: ...essentially, they need to know, you know, the ins and outs, the intricacies of presentation skills, they need to know the requirements, you know, for them to meet or to do an effective presentation... And these are the things that I'm sure, you know, are included in the syllabus. They need to know, you know, for example they need to know, the audience, they need to know the content before they present, not only they need to know the content, they also have to curate them to the understanding of the audience. So, all of these, you know, are just relevant across the board. I think this answers the question.*

> *L5: The only thing I can say is bring it back to face to face classes. I don't, but I'll be honest, I don't think they are presenting without looking at the script. I think all of them to some degree are looking either at a script or ....bullet points and they are very detailed bullet points. I don't think they are rehearsing, I don't think they are being spontaneous at all, unlike what we forced them to do with the previous course? And I know it's hard. It's virtually impossible for us to force them, so that's the constraint.*

Based on the excerpts, it can be explained that the instructors stated that the assessments from the course could help the learners to improve their presentation skills. L3 stated the syllabus should provide the content where the learners need to know their audiences and content before they start presenting because by understanding the content of the presentation, it would help the learners to present better. Other than that, L5 stated that she preferred to conduct and have the presentation during face-to-face class. She said that the learners were highly likely to present while looking at the script especially during online learning, hence, it beats the purpose of the presentation itself.

> *L4: I believe that with the feedback that is being given to them. Okay. So it does help them a lot. For example, normally whenever I have an intervention session with my students, I will highlight to them that don't forget that in your introduction you need to have these items. Okay. This happens, especially when I look at the practices and I see that whatever that's lacking. So I will have the intervention session and highlight it to all of them that they need to, don't forget to include the items that have been left out, so on and so forth. So basically, yeah, the feedback part is important, especially for the course.*

> *L2: There are improvements for certain students lah, for some, ... take our feedback seriously, they would improve.*

> *L1: For my classes lah... You need to give them feedback because they tend to get confused a lot between persuasive and informative speech in the sense that persuasive speech has their own vocab, the terms, and the vocab that we need to use for persuasion. But, you need to give a lot of feedback... Sorry, I gave a lot of feedback to the students so that they do not confuse... So they are not confused the vocab or the*

terms for informative speech.

Moreover, L4, L2, and L1 mentioned that the feedback from the instructors would help to improve learners' presentation skills. L1 shared that learners could get confused between the different types of speeches which would require feedback from the instructors and L4 also shared his experience of giving feedback to learners by highlighting what is missing from their presentations and reminding the learners to include them in future presentations. This suggests that instructors feel that feedback needs to be given to learners to improve their skills. The feedback can be given in terms of their presentation skills or language skills. This finding is similar to the research done by Zulhermindra and Hadiarni (2020) who found that the feedback from the instructors via videotaped could help the learners to improve their presentation skills and the learners could also see their progress from time to time. This is important because it would help the learners to feel more confident and motivated to improve their presentation skills.

Besides, oral presentations also enhance learners' self-confidence as they do a lot of oral presentation practices.

> *L3: Generally, I can see some improvements in terms of the confidence, in terms of how they present themselves in front of the camera, right? I can…generally, I can see that the improvement is very visible, you know, I can see that, you know, of course, you know, you do something repeatedly, of course you will naturally get better at it.*

> *L6: Yes. Activities. Yeah, I'd say that activities do help them…….*

> *L4: Well, I do see some differences in some students. Those who really want to improve themselves. So I can see differences. However, I also experienced those who pretty much looks about the same from the very beginning.*

From the excerpts, it can be observed that the instructors could notice some improvement of learners' presentations skills after they have completed their ten weekly activities. L3 mentioned that the learners' level of confidence has improved and their presentation skills have also become more natural. However, L4 could see some changes in certain groups of learners and she also shared how other learners did not improve their presentation skills nor did they deteriorate. Mahdi (2022) and Ahmad et al. (2022) asserted that learners would have improved their presentation skills with the help of tools which could assist learners to boost their level of confidence and motivation leading to the improvement of their competency to do better presentations in the future. Chris (2016) found that learners were able to improve their self-confidence when they do more oral presentation practices within a non-threatening environment.

3.1.4 Other Integrated Skills

As there are other integrated skills taught in preparing the learners to do the oral presentations, instructors were asked if the learners benefited from the practices for the oral presentations.

> *L2: Digital skills are in the sense that they, although they are not allowed to edit kan, but in a way, when they do the presentation, they do their PowerPoints slides, they*

create… That's also helpful kan,, all those… And I think when it comes to communication pun, in a way it's a yes thing because like when they submit their videos and Wiki feedback, in a way, that's communication happen as well to ways which connect the students… So indirectly, professionalism, I think in the sense of leadership skills lah kot for the leaders in charge, how do they interact, how do they delegate the team members "can we do this together?"

L4: I would say that I'm not sure about all of the students, but I would say that I'm sure that some of them actually did apply. For example, they would refer to their friends, they went to look for materials. And of course, it also helped them in their digital literacy skills because I told them to go into our PTAR online library, right? To look for journals and whatnot, for those materials. And then I told them how to go about paraphrasing, for instance. So I share with them the link, like, for example, like to some websites and whatnot. And then, for sample of speeches via YouTube, so they need to go there and familiarise themselves with all these websites and whatnot-lah basically, yeah.

It can be perceived from the excerpts, the instructors thought that the assessments could help the learners to improve their other skills too. L2 also stated that the learners improved in terms of communications skills, and leadership skills as the learners needed to interact with their friends to delegate and complete the tasks together. L4 stated that the learners' paraphrasing skills and skills to search for related and relevant materials have also improved. Both L2 and L4 agreed that the learners' digital skills have improved. This is maybe because the learners can be considered as Gen Z where they are familiar with the use of devices. Moreover, when the learners have proper skills to prepare for their presentations, the learners themselves could perform better as they may think that the learning process was interesting which made them to be more engaged and efficient during the presentation (Shala & Shatr, 2022).

3.1.5 Cross-discipline Relevancy

Oral presentations in the English language are highly likely to be applied across disciplines and courses.

L1: ...if we're not talking about language, we're talking about the presence of presenter, how you present yourself, delivery skills, and maybe they… at some levels, maybe they have… I think it will affect their ethics and professionalism to some point but not that much.

L5: In their life as a student, probably, yes, because I feel like currently the way the course is designed, we are still doing presentations, like normal presentations. Like, if they have another course, it will probably look and feel exactly the same. So as a student, yes, I think it will be helpful for them.

L4: Yeah, definitely. I feel that they will find that this course would be applicable throughout other courses as well. For instance, if, let's say, like, I have students coming from BM, what do you call this, business management faculty. Yeah. So

basically in their courses, I would say that they do a lot of presentations. So I believe that teaching them how to organize their ideas, what to include, what to put and where to find valid resources and whatnot will definitely help them assist them in other courses as well. Yeah.

L3: Yes correct, I agree, I agree, because number one, you know, in other classes, of course there is…these students, they have to present, they have to do some sort of presentation, you know, for other subjects and other classes…So, I think that is the reason why usually this course is introduced for the first degree semester students, so that they know this from the beginning and they can apply this in other classes as well………..So, you know, in this subject, you know, it also teaches students to be presentable, you know, to be confident, to look confident, even though they're not that confident, right?…and to utilise, you know, information that they have because the purpose of presentation is to give information to the audience……. maybe in curricular activities, for example, right? So, they have to do, basically the principles are still applicable.

From the above excerpts, it can be noted that the instructors perceived their learners would be able to use and apply their knowledge from the oral presentation course into their life as a learner. L5, L4 and L3 mentioned that the learners could also use the knowledge from this course into their other courses as they would also have presentations for these other courses too. Other than that, L5 stated that the learners could show their ethics and professionalism during presentations. L1 and L3 mentioned that the learners could utilise the knowledge when they went for their curricular activities as the learners could look more credible and presentable as they have learnt the ethics and professionalism during the oral presentation course. This is maybe because the learners have been informed of the benefits of good presentation skills during their English classes. According to Arwae and Soontornwipast (2022), they discovered that the learners perceived their level of competency of presentation skills is important because it may be the need and the goal for their future career after they have graduated.

3.1.6 Course Relevancy

It is also crucial for a course to be relevant for the learners so that knowledge can be optimised.

L2: I think it's relevant in the sense of… We're talking about activities ke asessments again? Then assessment is very relevant, yes… Informative, we used informative speech all the time. Pitching also, with the current remote learning situation, everything is conducted online. So, even if they were to get an interview, it will be online. So it is helpful, pitching? And then conferences, and then… Now, we are in a way persuading the students to get used to innovation competitions….pitching, right?

L5: Pitching, yes. Informative speech, yes. ……… So I think a better practice for them is to get them to understand more about their field, what's been going on even in informative speech, what's been going on in their field, maybe they can do a bit of

research and represent with good data, what has been going on. Pitches, I don't really mind because pitch is a transferable skill. So if they can pitch a product, they can pitch an idea, they can pitch anything else.

The excerpts demonstrate instructors' opinions towards the relevance of the course for learners' future work. It can be said that both L2 and L4 stated that the assessments in the oral presentation course were relevant and applicable for learners to use and utilise the skills later in the future when they have started working. This is because when the learners have graduated and are employed, they are required to be good at presenting their ideas to the management or the clients, to be able to gauge the audiences' needs and they also need to have good emotional intelligence to handle any unforeseen circumstances during the presentations (Vuković et al., 2022).

3.2 What are Instructors' Perceptions on the Improvement of the English for Oral Presentation Course?

3.2.1 Suggestions for Improvement

The second research objective seeks to find out what could be done in order to improve the course, thus, the instructors' perception on it was identified.

> *L3: Yes, the RP and the team members should make improvements. For example, and this was suggested by my colleague, she basically suggested the use of social media applications such as TikTok or Instagram*
>
> *L5: Pair work or group work? The thing about the workplace is that when they enter later, they will be working in teams. They will not be producing slides alone. They will be producing it with different departments, with different people.*
>
> *L6: Cut down the number of activities…*
>
> *L4: Okay. Personally speaking, I would say that the ten activities still is a lot. The reason being I don't know if it is because of me or what, because I'm kind of a particular person. So whenever I provide feedback, it's very in detail. So it takes a lot of time… so I feel that the practices are kind of like ten is still a little bit too much…*

Based on the excerpts, it can be said that the instructors did have suggestions on ways to improve the course. L3 stated that the course may want to incorporate the use of technology such as social media for learners' assessments submission. L5 mentioned that the assessments can be done as pair or group work instead of individually. L6 and L4 suggested reducing the number of the activities as it may consume a lot of time. It is important to review the existing curriculum and syllabus that the faculty has because the education process changes from time to time making the curriculum review necessary but at the same time during the review, there are a lot of things that need to be put into consideration especially how the reviews and the changes will affect the stakeholders (faculty, educators, learners) (Law, 2022).

4. Conclusion

Despite various approaches proposed by past researchers in assisting learners to master oral presentation skills, there are still difficulties mastering the skill. Hence, the study was conducted with the aim to determine the perceptions of instructors on the implementation of assessment practices and their perceptions on how the assessments can be improved. Based on the findings, it can be concluded that the instructors perceived the assessment practices for the oral presentation course positively. The instructors perceived that the practices are sufficient to prepare the learners for the assessments which helped them to improve their oral presentation after receiving feedback from the instructors. Other than that, the instructors noticed that the learners can only benefit from the weekly activities if they really take them seriously, and they can practise to prepare for the real assessments. The findings of this study have shown that the instructors viewed that learners were able to apply the knowledge learned in the oral presentation classes for their assessments such as paraphrasing techniques, transitional signals and attention getter during the assessments where they applied the knowledge learned in other classes as well, as other courses require oral presentations as part of its assessments. Furthermore, the findings from this study have shown that from the instructors' point of view, the learners have ultimately improved their presentation skills, other integrated skills and enhanced their self-confidence. Therefore, this can be inferred that the instructors considered this course is relevant for the learners to utilise the skills in the short term (presentations in other classes) or long-term (when they have started working).

Overall, the implementation of this amended course, English for Oral Presentations, has successfully improved the learners' presentation skills, despite the challenges faced by the instructors. Additionally, this oral presentation course can be a platform to improve the learners' language use in their everyday life. Based on the findings of this study, the instructors perceived some improvements for the betterment of the Oral Presentations course. One of the suggestions received was to incorporate the use of technology such as social media for learners' assessments submission. Besides, instead of having presentations individually, it was suggested that the assessments can be done in pairs or as a group work. There were also suggestions to improve on the submission of the practices weekly so that it will not burden both parties - the instructors and the learners. It is recommended that future research to be conducted in other institutions in Malaysia involving different participants such as learners or faculty management adopting quantitative method or mixed method, as this study only focuses on one public university in Malaysia employing qualitative approach with instructors as the participants.

References

Abdelmajdid, B., & Mohd Radzuan, N. R. (2019). Engineering lecturer's perceptions of student self-assessment in enhancing technical oral presentation skills. *Global Journal of Foreign Language Teaching, 9*(4), 193-202. https://doi.org/10.18844/gjflt.v9i4.4324

Alkharusi, H. (2008). Effects of classroom assessment practices on students' achievement goals. *Educational Assessment, 13*(4), 243-266. https://doi.org/10.1080/10627190802602509

Ahmad, S. N., Rahmat, N. H., Shahabani, N. S., & Khairuddin, Z. (2022). Discovering the relationship between communication strategies and fear of oral presentation among university students. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 12*(9), 1185-1212. Retrieved from https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/14859/discovering-the-relationship-between-communication-strategies-and-fear-of-oral-presentation-among-university-students.pdf

Arwae, S., & Soontornwipast, K. (2022). Developing scientific oral presentation competence focusing on question-and-answer sessions of high-ability science students in Thailand. *LEARN Journal: Language Education and Acquisition Research Network, 15*(2), 377-411. Retrieved from https://files.eric.ed.gov/fulltext/EJ1358705.pdf

Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology, 3*(2), 77-101. https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa

Brown, G. T., & Remesal, A. (2012). Prospective teachers' conceptions of assessment: a cross-cultural comparison. *The Spanish Journal of Psychology, 15*(1), 75-89. https://doi.org/10.5209/rev_sjop.2012.v15.n1.37286

Bryman, A. (2016). *Social research methods* (5th ed.). London: Oxford University Press.

Cheema, S., Siddiqui, M., & Massod, S. (2022). Perceptions of teachers about assessment practices at primary level in private schools of Lahore. *Global Educational Studies Review, 7*(2), 263-274. https://doi.org/10.31703/gesr.2022(VII-II).25

Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.

Cuic Tankovic, A., Kapeš, J., & Benazić, D. (2023). Measuring the importance of communication skills in tourism. *Economic Research-Ekonomska Istraživanja, 36*(1), 460-479. https://doi.org/10.1080/1331677X.2022.2077790

Giang, H. T. (2022). Research on training basic listening and speaking skills of English language students by Shadowing method. *International Journal of Mechanical Engineering, 7*(1), 5205-5210. https://kalaharijournals.com/resources/IJME_Vol7.1_503.pdf

Gill, S. L. (2020). Qualitative sampling methods. *Journal of Human Lactation, 36*(4), 579-581. https://doi.org/10.1177/0890334420949218

Gula, L. P. (2022). Challenges encountered by the teachers handling oral speech communication courses in the era of COVID-19 pandemic. *Pakistan Journal of Educational Research, 10*(2), 234-244. https://philarchive.org/archive/GULCEB

Ibarra-Sáiz, M. S., & Rodríguez-Gómez, G. (2015, February 2-4). *EVAPES- DevalSimWeb – A training program for university tutor digital assessment literacy*. [Paper presented]. Second International Conference on Education and Social Sciences, Istanbul, Turkey.

Iqbal, Z., Alvi, E., & Shafi, F. (2019). Prospective teachers' perceptions of oral presentations: An exploration of challenges involved. *Pakistan Journal of Education, 36*(2), 137-163. Rereieved from http://journal.aiou.edu.pk/pjeojs/index.php/PJE/article/view/509/pdf

Kitula, P. R., Kireti, P., & Wambiya, P. (2018). Perceived efficacy of university lecturers in conducting assessment among selected universities in Tanzania. *International Journal of Education and Research*, *6*(6), 121-130. https://www.ijern.com/journal/2018/June-2018/09.pdf

Law, M. Y. (2022). A Review of curriculum change and innovation for higher education. *Journal of Education and Training Studies, 10*(2), 16-23. https://doi.org/10.11114/jets.v10i2.5448

Lyamtane, R. E., & Ogoti, E. (2018). Participation of students in university governance: A case of Mwenge Catholic University, Tanzania. *International Journal of Scientific Research and Management, 6*(3). https://doi.org/10.18535/ijsrm/v6i3.el07

Magin, D., & Helmore, P. (2001). Peer and teacher assessments of oral presentation skills: how reliable are they?. *Studies in Higher Education, 26*(3), 287-298. https://doi.org/10.1080/03075070120076264

Mahdi, D. A. (2022). Improving speaking and presentation skills through interactive multimedia environment for non-native speakers of English. *SAGE Open, 12*(1), 21582440221079811. https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440221079811

Matovu, M., & Madziah Zubairi, A. (2014). Self-perceived assessment competencies and practices among university lecturers. *Journal of Applied Research in Higher Education, 6*(2), 269-284. https://doi.org/10.1108/JARHE-04-2013-0020

Murillo-Zamorano, L. R., & Montanero, M. (2017). Oral presentations in higher education: a comparison of the impact of peer and teacher feedback. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 43*(1), 138-150. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2017.1303032

Nik Ismail Azlan, N. M., Yusuf, N. K., Panah, E., Soopar, A. A., & Norazizan, M. H. (2022). English language needs among services sector employees in Malaysia's new norm. *International Journal of Academic Research in Business and Social Sciences, 12*(9), 1213 – 1225. Retrieved from https://hrmars.com/papers_submitted/14655/english-language-needs-among-services-sector-employees-in-malaysias-new-norm.pdf

Postareff, L., Lindblom-Ylänne, S., & Nevgi, A. (2007). The effect of pedagogical training on

teaching in higher education. *Teaching and Teacher Education*, *23*(5), 557-571. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10734-0079087-z

Sahan, A., Abi, B. K., Wisrance, M. W., & Seran, Y. (2022). Exploring oral presentation performance: Level of mastery and common problems of EFL students from selected university. *REiLA: Journal of Research and Innovation in Language, 4*(3), 335-343. https://doi.org/10.31849/reila.11005

Sambell, K. (2016). Assessment and feedback in higher education: Considerable room for improvement? Student Engagement in Higher Education*, 1*(1). Retrieved from https://193.60.48.124/index.php/raise/article/view/392/350

Schafer, W. D. (1991). Essential assessment skills in professional education of teachers. *Educational Measurement: Issues and Practice, 10*(1), 3-6. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1745-3992.1991.tb00170.x

Shala, L., & Shatri, K. (2022). Evaluating the effect of interactive digital presentations on students' performance during technology class. *Education Research International*, *2022,* 3337313. https://doi.org/10.1155/2022/3337313

Smith, C. M., & Sodano, T. M. (2011). Integrating lecture capture as a teaching strategy to improve student presentation skills through self-assessment. *Active Learning in Higher Education*, *12*(3), 151-162. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787411415082

Taufiq-Hail, G. A. M., Aljahromi, D., Sarea, A., & Kostikova, I. (2021, November). Academic staff perceptions on students' traditional assessment transformations towards online evaluation during COVID-19 pandemic in higher education: A preliminary study from two diverse cultures. In 2021 Sustainable Leadership and Academic Excellence International Conference (SLAE) (pp. 16-25). IEEE. https://doi.org/10.1109/SLAE54202.2021.9686904

Ting, S. H., Marzuki, E., Chuah, K. M., Misieng, J., & Jerome, C. (2017). Employers' views on the importance of English proficiency and communication skill for employability in Malaysia. *Indonesian Journal of Applied Linguistics, 7*(2), 315-327. https://doi.org/10.17509/ijal.v7i2.8132

To, J., & Carless, D. (2016). Making productive use of exemplars: Peer discussion and teacher guidance for positive transfer of strategies. *Journal of Further and Higher Education, 40*(6), 746-764. https://doi.org/10.1080/0309877X.2015.1014317

Tsang, A. (2020). Enhancing learners' awareness of oral presentation (delivery) skills in the context of self-regulated learning. *Active Learning in Higher Education, 21*(1), 39-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1469787417731214

Van Ginkel, S., Gulikers, J., Biemans, H., & Mulder, M. (2017). Fostering oral presentation performance: Does the quality of feedback differ when provided by the teacher, peers or peers guided by tutor?. *Assessment & Evaluation in Higher Education, 42*(6), 953-966. https://doi.org/10.1080/02602938.2016.1212984

Vuković, M., Urošević, S., & Radosavljević, D. (2022). Importance of presentation skills in contemporary business. *BizInfo (Blace) Journal of Economics, Management and Informatics, 13*(1), 87-93. https://doi.org/10.5937/bizinfo2201087V

Wang, B., Yu, S., & Teo, T. (2018). Experienced EFL teachers' beliefs about feedback on student oral presentations. *Asian-Pacific Journal of Second and Foreign Language Education, 3*(1), 1-13. https://doi.org/10.1186/s40862-018-0053-3

Xu, Y., & Brown, G. T. (2016). Teacher assessment literacy in practice: a reconceptualization. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 58*, 149-162. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2016.05.010

Yan, Z., & Cheng, E. C. (2015). Primary teachers' attitudes, intentions, and practice regarding formative assessment. *Teaching and Teacher Education, 45*, 128-136. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.tate.2014.10.002

Zainuddin, K., & Che'Lah, C. F. (2022). Students' perceptions on the implementation of recorded oral presentation. *Journal of Administrative Science, 19*(1), 233-246. https://ir.uitm.edu.my/id/eprint/63215/1/63215.pdf

Zulhermindra, Z., & Hadiarni, H. (2020). Improving students' public speaking skills through the use of videotaped feedback. *Ta'dib, 23*(1), 75-86. https://ojs.iainbatusangkar.ac.id/ojs/index.php/takdib/article/view/2008/1711

Copyrights