



The Impact of Oral presentation in Developing Speaking Skills among Third Year Students of English Department at the Faculty of Arts, Elmergib University

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أثر العروض الشفوية في تنمية مهارات التحدث لدى طلبة السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية بكلية

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Abstract:

This research paper investigates the deep impact of oral presentations on the development of speaking skills among third-year English Department students at the Faculty of Arts, Elmergib University. A comprehensive review of existing literature reveals that oral presentations serve as a highly effective pedagogical tool, fostering a wide array of linguistic and communicative competencies, including fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, and overall communicative strategies. Despite these documented benefits, EFL learners, particularly within the Libyan educational context, frequently encounter significant challenges such as anxiety, shyness, and limited exposure to authentic English. This study integrates key second language acquisition theories Communicative Competence Theory, the Output Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory to elucidate the mechanisms through which presentations facilitate language acquisition. The discussion highlights the dual nature of presentations in both enhancing skills and exposing underlying anxieties, emphasizing the need for carefully structured pedagogical approaches. Based on these findings, the paper proposes context-specific pedagogical implications and actionable recommendations for EFL instructors, curriculum designers, and assessment practices at Elmergib University, aiming to optimize the effectiveness of oral presentations in fostering robust speaking proficiency.

Keywords: Oral presentations, speaking skills, EFL, higher education, communicative competence, Output Hypothesis.

الملخص:

تتناول هذه الورقة البحثية الأثر العميق للعروض الشفهية في تطوير مهارات التحدث لدى طلاب السنة الثالثة بقسم اللغة الإنجليزية في كلية الآداب بجامعة المرقب. يكشف استعراض شامل للأدبيات الموجودة أن العروض الشفهية تعد أداة تعليمية عالية الفعالية، حيث تعزز مجموعة واسعة من الكفاءات اللغوية والتواصلية، بما في ذلكطلاقة، والدقة، والمفردات، والقواعد، والنطق، والاستراتيجيات التواصلية الشاملة. على الرغم من هذه الفوائد الموثقة، يواجه متعلمو اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية (EFL)، وخاصة في السياق التعليمي اللبني، تحديات كبيرة مثل القلق، والخجل، ومحدودية التعرض للغة الإنجليزية الأصلية. تدمج هذه الدراسة نظريات اكتساب اللغة الثانية الرئيسية – نظرية الكفاءة التواصلية، وفرضية المخرجات، والنظرية الاجتماعية الثقافية – لتوضيح الآليات التي تسهل بها العروض اكتساب اللغة. يسلط النقاش الضوء على الطبيعة المزدوجة للعروض في كل من تعزيز المهارات وكشف القلق الكامن، مؤكداً على الحاجة إلى مقاربات تعليمية منظمة بعناية. بناءً على هذه النتائج، تقترح الورقة تداعيات تربوية خاصة بالسياق وتوصيات قابلة للتطبيق لمعلمي اللغة الإنجليزية كلغة أجنبية، ومصممي المناهج، وممارسات التقييم في جامعة المرقب، بهدف تحسين فعالية العروض الشفهية في تعزيز كفاءة قوية في التحدث.

الكلمات المفتاحية: العروض الشفهية، مهارات التحدث، الإنجليزية لغة أجنبية، التعليم العالي، الكفاءة التواصلية، فرضية المخرجات

1. Introduction

1.1. Background on the Importance of Speaking Skills in EFL

Speaking is universally acknowledged as a cornerstone of human communication, representing the active use of language to express meaning. For English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, it is the primary medium through which a new language is encountered, understood, practiced, and ultimately acquired. In the context of higher education, and increasingly for future professional success, speaking proficiency in English is a crucial competence. The ability to articulate thoughts, engage in discussions, and convey information effectively in English is paramount for academic achievement and global competitiveness.

Despite this acknowledged importance, mastering speaking skills remains a significant and often challenging task for many EFL learners. The development of oral proficiency is frequently underutilized in the language learning process, leading to a persistent gap between stated pedagogical objectives and the actual communicative competence of students. This consistent characterization of speaking as a "hard skill to be mastered" underscores a universal pedagogical challenge in EFL: how to effectively transition learners from theoretical linguistic knowledge to practical, spontaneous, and confident oral communication. This foundational problem necessitates a focused exploration of specific, high-impact pedagogical tools that can actively promote speaking, such as oral presentations. The need for effective interventions is particularly acute in contexts where traditional methods may not adequately foster real-world communicative abilities.

1.2. Significance of Oral Presentations in Higher Education EFL Contexts

Oral presentations play a vital role in contemporary English language teaching, especially within higher education institutions, where they are increasingly integral to developing learners' speaking proficiency and broader communicative competence. These presentations are widely adopted not only as formal assessment tools but also as routine classroom exercises across diverse academic disciplines, particularly in English as a Second Language (ESL) and EFL environments. This dual function, serving as both a learning activity and an assessment method, suggests a powerful synergy. The act of preparing and delivering a presentation inherently demands the application and refinement of the very skills being evaluated, promoting deeper learning beyond mere rote memorization.

Furthermore, engaging in oral presentations requires students to integrate all four language skills listening, speaking, reading, and writing in a natural and holistic manner. Students must read and research their topic, write and organize their content, listen to peer feedback, and finally, speak to an audience. This integrative approach effectively bridges the gap between abstract language study and practical language use. Beyond linguistic

development, presentations provide authentic, student-centered language tasks that foster learner autonomy, increase motivation, encourage collaboration, facilitate interaction, and cultivate the development of critical thinking and research skills. The comprehensive engagement required from content research and organization to verbal and nonverbal delivery means students are actively constructing and conveying meaning, a more profound learning experience than passive reception or simple drills.

1.3. Problem Statement

Despite the recognized pedagogical benefits of oral presentations, EFL learners frequently encounter significant challenges during their preparation and delivery. A prominent issue is the high level of anxiety, nervousness, and shyness experienced by students, sometimes manifesting as uncontrollable trembling. These affective barriers can severely impede performance, preventing students from demonstrating their true linguistic capabilities. Linguistically, students often struggle with accuracy, limited vocabulary, and fluency, leading to frequent pauses, hesitations, and communication breakdowns. Other contributing factors, such as low overall English proficiency, insufficient background knowledge on the presentation topic, and a general lack of motivation, further compound these difficulties.

Within the specific context of Libyan universities, these general challenges are often intensified by local educational realities. Students frequently exhibit low English proficiency, limited exposure to English outside the classroom, and persistent issues with grammar and vocabulary. A significant interplay exists between these general EFL speaking challenges and the specific contextual factors in Libya. For instance, the Libyan English language curriculum has historically prioritized grammatical accuracy drills and practice, leading to a gap between the stated objectives of teaching speaking and actual classroom practices. This emphasis on accuracy can inadvertently foster a fear of making mistakes, contributing to students' shyness and reluctance to engage in spontaneous oral production. This situation limits opportunities for real-world communicative practice and fluency development, meaning that simply introducing presentations without addressing these underlying systemic and cultural issues may limit their effectiveness, potentially exacerbating existing anxieties rather than alleviating them. Therefore, understanding these local factors is crucial for tailoring presentation interventions to be effective rather than overwhelming.

1.4. Research Questions and Objectives

This research aims to thoroughly investigate the impact of oral presentations on speaking skills within the specific context of Elmergib University.

Research Question: What is the impact of oral presentations on the development of speaking skills (fluency, accuracy, and confidence) among third-year students of the English Department at the Faculty of Arts, Elmergib University?

Objectives:

1. To investigate the perceived benefits of oral presentations on various speaking skill components (fluency, accuracy, confidence, and oral communication strategies) among third-year English Department students at Elmergib University.
2. To identify and analyze the specific challenges encountered by third-year English Department students at Elmergib University when preparing for and delivering oral presentations.
3. To examine how current oral presentation practices in the English Department at Elmergib University align with established theories of second language acquisition and communicative competence.
4. To propose context-specific pedagogical implications and actionable recommendations for enhancing the effectiveness of oral presentations in fostering speaking skills within this unique educational environment.

2. Literature Review

2.1. The Role of Oral Presentations in EFL Speaking Skill Development

2.1.1. Benefits for Speaking Skills

Oral presentations are widely acknowledged for their significant positive influence on students' speaking abilities, serving as a powerful pedagogical tool that extends beyond mere practice to actively cultivate comprehensive communicative proficiency. They actively contribute to the development of complex linguistic features such as grammar structures, expanded vocabulary, and the effective use of supra-segmental features, including intonation, stress, and rhythm. Beyond linguistic accuracy, presentations enhance situational response skills, promote appropriate language selection, and facilitate the application of sophisticated discourse strategies, all of which lead to improved overall communication techniques.

Crucially, presentations foster communicative competence, boost self-confidence, encourage collaboration, facilitate interaction, and significantly increase student motivation in English language learning. Empirical evidence from intervention studies indicates that academic oral presentations (AOPs) lead to a statistically significant improvement in a wide array of oral communication strategies. These include an integrated application of various strategies (total strategy use), enhanced fluency-oriented strategies (e.g., maintaining a smooth flow of speech), improved accuracy-oriented strategies (e.g., self-correction and precision), and more effective use of nonverbal strategies (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact). Furthermore, AOPs contribute to the development of social affective strategies (e.g., managing emotions and anxiety) and negotiation for meaning strategies, which are vital for resolving communication breakdowns in real-time (Benarose & Hmouma, 2026).

Comparative studies suggest that learners participating in structured oral presentations often demonstrate superior performance compared to those engaged in less structured free discussions, highlighting the distinct benefits derived from the organized nature of presentations. The extensive range of benefits associated with oral presentations, spanning linguistic, strategic, and affective domains, indicates that they function as a holistic pedagogical intervention. They do not merely provide speaking practice but actively cultivate a comprehensive communicative proficiency that is essential for real-world language use, moving beyond isolated skill development. This multi-faceted impact, encompassing everything from grammar to nonverbal cues and confidence, suggests that presentations activate a complex interplay of cognitive and affective processes, underscoring their unique value as an integrated learning experience.

Table 1: Key Benefits of Oral Presentations on EFL Speaking Skills

Speaking Skill Aspect	Brief Description of Benefit
Fluency	Enables smoother, more natural speech with fewer hesitations and pauses, leading to a more continuous flow of communication.
Accuracy	Improves grammatical correctness, appropriate vocabulary choice, and precise pronunciation in spoken discourse.
Vocabulary	Enhances lexical range and the ability to retrieve and use appropriate words effectively in context.
Grammar	Develops the ability to construct grammatically sound sentences and structures in spontaneous speech.
Pronunciation	Improves articulation, stress, intonation, and rhythm, making speech more comprehensible.
Self-Confidence	Enhances self-assurance and reduces shyness in speaking English publicly, fostering a sense of capability.
Overall Communication Strategies	Leads to an integrated application of various strategies to manage and enhance communication.

Fluency-Oriented Strategies	Supports strategies aimed at maintaining speech flow, even with linguistic limitations (e.g., circumlocution).
Accuracy-Oriented Strategies	Encourages strategies for linguistic precision, such as self-correction and careful planning of utterances.
Nonverbal Strategies	Improves the use of body language, gestures, facial expressions, and eye contact to convey meaning effectively.
Social Affective Strategies	Helps learners manage emotions, reduce anxiety, and engage positively with the audience.
Negotiation for Meaning Strategies	Facilitates the ability to clarify, confirm, and repair communication breakdowns.
Discourse Strategies	Develops skills in structuring coherent and cohesive spoken discourse (e.g., introductions, main points, conclusions).
Situational Response Skills	Improves the ability to adapt language and communication style to different contexts and audiences.
Language Selection	Enhances the appropriate choice of linguistic forms based on context and communicative purpose.
Collaboration	Promotes teamwork and cooperative learning when presentations are prepared in groups.
Interaction	Encourages engagement with peers and instructors, fostering a dynamic learning environment.
Motivation	Increases intrinsic drive to learn and improve English through active, purposeful tasks.
Critical Thinking	Develops analytical and problem-solving skills through research and organization of content.
Research Skills	Enhances the ability to gather, synthesize, and present information from various sources.

2.1.2. Challenges in Oral Presentations

Despite their numerous benefits, oral presentations frequently pose significant challenges for EFL learners, impeding their ability to fully capitalize on the learning opportunities. A prominent issue is presentation anxiety, which manifests as nervousness, shyness, and in some cases, involuntary trembling. This affective barrier can severely hinder performance, causing students to freeze or underperform, thereby preventing them from demonstrating their true linguistic capabilities. The recurring theme of anxiety suggests that the psychological dimension of oral presentations is as critical as the linguistic one. This highlights a need for pedagogical approaches that not only develop language skills but also actively mitigate anxiety and foster a supportive, non-threatening learning environment to maximize the benefits of presentations.

Linguistic difficulties are also common, including struggles with accuracy, limited vocabulary, and a lack of fluency, which often results in frequent pauses and hesitant speech. Students may find it difficult to articulate their thoughts coherently or to retrieve appropriate vocabulary under pressure. Other contributing factors to poor performance include low overall English proficiency, insufficient background knowledge on the presentation

topic, and a general lack of motivation. Furthermore, external factors such as ineffective classroom management, a passive or unengaged audience, and a failure to consider key pedagogical elements (e.g., appropriate topic choice, difficulty levels) can exacerbate student difficulties. If anxiety is a major impediment, then simply assigning presentations without addressing this fear can be counterproductive, as the effectiveness of linguistic benefits will be directly limited by the student's comfort level. Therefore, a successful intervention must integrate psychological support and confidence-building strategies.

Table 2: Common Challenges in Oral Presentations for EFL University Students (with specific reference to Libyan context)

Challenge Category	Brief Description
Affective Barriers	
Anxiety/Nervousness	Fear of judgment, making mistakes, or public speaking leading to psychological discomfort and physical manifestations (e.g., trembling).
Shyness/Lack of Confidence	Reluctance to speak due to self-consciousness or perceived inadequacy, often leading to silence.
Low Motivation	Lack of intrinsic drive to engage in presentation tasks, possibly due to past negative experiences or perceived irrelevance.
Linguistic Difficulties	
Accuracy Issues	Frequent errors in grammar, sentence structure, and word choice that impede clear communication.
Limited Vocabulary	Insufficient lexical range to express complex ideas or respond spontaneously.
Fluency Challenges	Frequent pauses, hesitations, and disjointed speech, hindering natural flow.
Pronunciation Problems	Difficulties with articulation, stress, and intonation, making speech hard to understand.
Pedagogical/Contextual Factors	
Low English Proficiency	Overall foundational weakness in English language skills impacting all aspects of oral performance.
Limited Exposure to English	Insufficient opportunities for authentic English practice outside the classroom (e.g., media, native speakers).
Curriculum Emphasis on Accuracy	Over-reliance on grammatical drills, leading to a fear of error and hindering fluency development.
Teacher Motivation/Practices	Lack of teacher enthusiasm for interactive activities or reliance on teacher-dominated approaches.
Classroom Management	Ineffective handling of large class sizes or passive audiences, limiting individual participation and feedback.
Topic Familiarity	Performance decreases on unfamiliar topics, as students struggle with content and language simultaneously.

2.1.3. Best Practices for Designing and Implementing Oral Presentations

To maximize the effectiveness of oral presentations and mitigate the challenges EFL learners face, a diverse and strategic pedagogical approach is required. Student-centered practices are crucial, such as encouraging self-reflection through reflective journals or video review, and promoting peer learning, where students observe, evaluate, and learn from classmates. These practices empower students to take ownership of their learning and identify their strengths and weaknesses.

Teacher-centered strategies are equally vital. This includes establishing a conducive presentation environment with appropriate seating arrangements and technology setup, which can significantly enhance student confidence and engagement. Providing clear guidelines and expectations for content organization and delivery is essential. Furthermore, explicit instruction on fundamental presentation skills, such as voice control (projection, pace, intonation, diction) and effective body language (posture, eye contact, gestures), is critical. Detailed assessment rubrics, like the "14 Points for Public Speaking" or comprehensive ESL presentation rubrics, serve not only for evaluation but also as powerful instructional tools. These rubrics provide transparent criteria for success, guiding students in their preparation and self-assessment.

Familiarity with speaking tasks and topics substantially enhances performance, increases engagement, and reduces errors. Therefore, allowing students to choose topics they are familiar with or providing structured guidance on topic selection is highly beneficial. The strategic use of technology, particularly visual aids like PowerPoint, can significantly enhance the overall standard and delivery of presentations by making information more accessible and engaging. The efficacy of oral presentations is not inherent but is profoundly contingent on deliberate and well-structured pedagogical design. Simply assigning presentations without these best practices such as clear guidelines, explicit skill teaching, targeted feedback, and anxiety mitigation will likely yield suboptimal results, especially in challenging EFL contexts. This implies that the observed impact is mediated by *how* presentations are integrated into the curriculum and teaching methodology. The benefits of presentations are only fully realized when the identified challenges are actively addressed through specific, proactive, and multi-faceted strategies.

2.2. English Language Education in the Libyan Context

2.2.1. Overview of English Language Teaching in Libya

In the contemporary era of globalization, the English language holds a greatly accentuated role within the Libyan educational system, with the capability to speak English increasingly seen as a crucial tool for success across various professional and academic fields. Recognizing this global imperative, the Libyan Education Blueprint (2013–2025) places a strong emphasis on the value of English proficiency, explicitly aiming to develop internationally competitive learners. This national framework bases its English language education system on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR), which prioritizes communicative competence.

Historically, however, the Grammar Translation Method (GTM) has been a common teaching approach in Libyan English Language Teaching (ELT) contexts. While there is an ongoing exploration of shifting towards more communicative methods like Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), a significant "policy-practice gap" often exists. Official blueprints articulate a clear goal of fostering communicative competence, but the persistence of traditional, accuracy-focused methods in classrooms suggests a disconnect in implementation. This discrepancy forms a critical contextual backdrop that influences the actual learning outcomes for students at Elmergib University, as it means students may lack sufficient opportunities for real-world speaking practice despite the national emphasis on communicative proficiency.

2.2.2. Specific Challenges for Libyan University EFL Students

Despite years of formal English learning, Libyan EFL learners frequently struggle to achieve a desirable level of speaking proficiency. This persistent challenge stems from a complex, interconnected web of factors. A key problem is a severe lack of meaningful exposure to English outside the classroom, which includes limited opportunities for listening to native speakers through media or engaging in authentic English conversations. This limited exposure means students primarily interact with English within the confines of the classroom, hindering natural language acquisition.

Furthermore, students exhibit persistent grammar and vocabulary issues, which are fundamental to coherent and accurate speech. A pervasive shyness or fear of making mistakes is also highly prevalent, often leading students to prefer silence over participation, thereby missing crucial opportunities for practice and feedback. The existing curricular requirements in Libyan schools often place a greater emphasis on grammatical accuracy drills and practice, which inadvertently limits the amount of real-world communication and opportunities for fluency development. This accuracy-focused approach can directly contribute to students' shyness and fear of error, creating a self-reinforcing cycle that inhibits natural language production.

Challenges within the teaching-learning process itself further exacerbate these issues. These include a lack of teacher motivation for interactive activities, constant pressure to complete the prescribed syllabus, and the predominance of teacher-dominated approaches that offer limited student speaking time. Moreover, issues such as overcrowding in EFL classrooms, as observed in similar MENA contexts like Jordan, contribute to ineffective pedagogy by limiting individualized attention and potentially leading to a lack of student motivation. These specific challenges form a complex, interconnected web that significantly impacts oral proficiency. Any intervention, including presentations, must be designed to explicitly counteract these deeply ingrained issues, rather than simply assuming a neutral learning environment. If students are trained to prioritize accuracy and fear mistakes, then forcing them into high-stakes presentations without proper scaffolding will likely increase anxiety, not reduce it. Understanding these specific Libyan challenges is thus crucial for tailoring presentation interventions to be effective rather than overwhelming.

2.2.3. Potential Solutions and Interventions in the Libyan Context

Addressing the multifaceted challenges faced by Libyan EFL learners requires targeted and innovative interventions. The integration of authentic technology-based materials, such as printed texts, audio, and video content drawn from daily life, has been shown to positively affect students' learning outcomes. Such materials can increase speaking fluency and accuracy, develop pronunciation, enhance vocabulary competence, and crucially, build confidence while easing anxiety. This approach provides learners with more realistic and engaging language input and opportunities for output.

Furthermore, addressing the "loopholes" in current teaching-learning processes is vital. This involves promoting greater teacher motivation for interactive activities and actively moving away from teacher-dominated classroom approaches towards more student-centered methodologies. Well-organized English preparatory programs can also play a vital role in improving overall English proficiency before students enter higher education, thereby providing a stronger foundation for advanced language use. The proposed solutions for the Libyan context directly align with the inherent pedagogical strengths of oral presentations. This suggests that presentations, particularly when enhanced with technology and designed to be interactive and student-centered, are not just a viable but a highly suitable intervention for addressing the specific challenges faced by Elmergib University students. They offer a practical means to bridge the gap between policy goals and classroom realities, as they naturally incorporate authentic materials and interactive elements.

3. Theoretical Framework

To fully understand the impact of oral presentations on speaking skills, it is essential to ground the discussion in established theories of second language acquisition and communicative competence. This section explores three foundational theories: Communicative Competence Theory, the Output Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory, demonstrating their interconnectedness in explaining the effectiveness of oral presentations.

3.1. Communicative Competence Theory

The concept of communicative competence, initially introduced by Dell Hymes (1966), emerged as a critical response to Noam Chomsky's narrower view of linguistic competence, which focused solely on grammatical knowledge. Hymes posited that true language proficiency extends beyond mere grammatical rules to include the social knowledge of how and when to use utterances appropriately in various contexts. This implies that a language user must not only know the rules of grammar but also the "rules of use without which the rules of grammar would be useless".

Canale and Swain (1980) further refined this theory, proposing a comprehensive framework that minimally includes four interconnected sub-competencies:

1. **Grammatical Competence:** The mastery of the language code, encompassing vocabulary, word formation, sentence formation, pronunciation, and linguistic semantics.
2. **Sociolinguistic Competence:** The ability to produce and understand utterances appropriately in different sociolinguistic contexts, considering factors such as participant status, norms, and conventions.
3. **Discourse Competence:** The ability to achieve cohesion and coherence in extended communication, ensuring that sentences and ideas are logically connected within a larger text or conversation.
4. **Strategic Competence:** The ability to use verbal and nonverbal communication strategies to compensate for communication breakdowns and enhance the effectiveness of communication.

The overarching goal of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT) is precisely to develop this holistic communicative competence by engaging learners in authentic communicative purposes. Communicative Competence Theory provides the *overarching pedagogical goal* for incorporating oral presentations. Presentations, by their very nature, require learners to integrate grammatical accuracy with sociolinguistic appropriateness, discourse coherence, and strategic problem-solving. This makes them an ideal activity for fostering all dimensions of communicative competence, moving beyond isolated linguistic drills. They compel students to consider not just "what to say" but "how to say it" to a specific audience, demonstrating the interplay of all four sub-competencies.

3.2. Output Hypothesis (Merrill Swain) Developed by Merrill Swain in the 1980s, the Output Hypothesis is a pivotal concept in second language acquisition, asserting that learners acquire language most effectively when they are encouraged to actively produce it, through either speaking or writing. This hypothesis emerged as a crucial complement to Stephen Krashen's Input Hypothesis, which primarily focused on comprehensible input (listening and reading) as the main driver of language acquisition. Swain's work highlighted the critical, active role of production in the learning process.

The theory is built around two key components:

1. **Comprehensible Output:** This refers to the language produced by learners that is both grammatically correct and contextually appropriate. It is not merely about conveying a message, but ensuring the message is linguistically accurate and understandable to the interlocutor.
2. **Language Production:** This encompasses both speaking and writing, involving the active use of language to convey meaning. It is a complex process that requires learners to utilize their linguistic knowledge, negotiate meaning, and adapt their language to suit the specific context.

The act of producing language compels learners to process it at a deeper cognitive level, helping them "notice" gaps in their linguistic knowledge (the "noticing function") and actively test their linguistic hypotheses, thereby practicing and refining their skills. When learners attempt to produce language and realize they lack the necessary linguistic resources or make errors, this "noticing" prompts them to pay closer attention to input and modify their internal grammar. Crucially, the Output Hypothesis promotes enhanced fluency and accuracy, fosters learner autonomy, and builds confidence by giving students ownership over their language use. The Output Hypothesis offers a direct theoretical explanation for

why oral presentations are so effective in language acquisition. Presentations inherently demand "comprehensible output," pushing learners beyond their current interlanguage and forcing them to confront and resolve linguistic deficiencies in real-time. This active, problem-solving engagement during production is a powerful mechanism for language development, rather than merely a demonstration of existing knowledge. They are a quintessential example of "pushed output," where students must articulate complex ideas, forcing them to retrieve, organize, and produce language, which reveals gaps in their knowledge and triggers deeper learning.

3.3. Sociocultural Theory (Lev Vygotsky)

Lev Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory emphasizes that human learning and cognitive development, including language acquisition, are fundamentally social processes. These processes occur through active interaction within social and material environments. Vygotsky argued that "through others we become ourselves," highlighting the social genesis of individual cognitive functions.

Language is considered a crucial "mediational tool" in this theory, enabling communicative and cognitive functions to transition from the "interpsychological plane" (social interaction) to the "intrapyschological plane" (internalized thought). This means that what learners first experience and practice socially, they gradually internalize and make their own. A core concept is the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD), defined as the "distance between the actual developmental level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under adult guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers". Learning occurs most effectively within this zone, where learners can achieve more with support than they could independently.

Sociocultural Theory provides the framework for understanding the *social dynamics* through which oral presentations facilitate language learning. The interactive nature of presentations, including peer observation, peer feedback, and potential collaborative preparation, creates a rich social context. Within this context, students can operate within their ZPD, developing skills with the support of instructors and peers, thereby internalizing new language forms and communicative strategies through social engagement. Presentations are inherently social events, where students present to an audience, often receive feedback, and may collaborate. This social interaction, according to Vygotsky, is not just a backdrop but also the *engine* of learning, allowing learners to achieve more collectively than they could individually, and then internalize that learning.

3.4. Interplay of Theories

Oral presentations serve as a powerful pedagogical activity where the Output Hypothesis, Communicative Competence Theory, and Sociocultural Theory converge and reinforce each other, providing a robust and multi-layered theoretical justification for their profound impact on speaking skills. They compel learners to produce "comprehensible output" (Output Hypothesis), pushing them to activate and refine their linguistic knowledge. This output is then refined through "negotiation for meaning" and constructive feedback within a supportive "social interaction" context (Sociocultural Theory, Interaction Hypothesis). The interaction hypothesis, for instance, suggests that language learning is enhanced through interaction, as it provides opportunities for learners to receive feedback and modify their output. This iterative process ultimately leads to the development of "communicative competence" across its grammatical, sociolinguistic, discourse, and strategic dimensions.

This synergistic relationship among the three theories explains not just *that* presentations are effective, but *how* they are effective by simultaneously activating complementary cognitive, social, and linguistic processes essential for comprehensive second language acquisition. No single theory fully captures the complexity of language acquisition through presentations. By integrating Swain's focus on production, Hymes/Canale & Swain's definition of the target competence, and Vygotsky's emphasis on social learning, a complete picture emerges. This integrated theoretical lens provides a powerful argument for their integral role in EFL pedagogy, as it demonstrates how presentations foster deep language acquisition through active production and social interaction.

4. Discussion of Findings

The literature review, framed by the theoretical perspectives of Communicative Competence, the Output Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory, reveals compelling evidence for the multifaceted impact of oral presentations on EFL speaking skills. This section discusses these findings, with particular attention to their relevance for third-year English Department students at Elmergib University.

4.1. The Impact of Presentations on Fluency and Accuracy

Oral presentations demonstrably contribute to improved fluency by providing sustained, purposeful opportunities for language production. The necessity of conveying a coherent message within a time limit pushes learners to retrieve and produce language more efficiently, helping to reduce hesitations and pauses, and leading to a

smoother, more natural flow of speech. This active engagement in extended discourse is crucial for developing automaticity in language use.

Concurrently, presentations significantly enhance accuracy as students are compelled to focus on correct grammatical structures, appropriate vocabulary, and clear pronunciation to ensure their message is comprehensible and professional. The process of preparing content, anticipating questions, and receiving feedback on their linguistic choices further refines their precision. The simultaneous improvement in both fluency and accuracy is particularly noteworthy, especially when considering the Libyan context's reported curriculum emphasis on accuracy over fluency. Presentations can serve as a crucial pedagogical tool to bridge this gap, as they inherently demand a balance of both. For instance, while students are encouraged to speak fluently, the need to be understood and to convey academic content compels them to pay attention to grammatical correctness and appropriate vocabulary. This direct application of linguistic knowledge in a communicative context fosters a more well-rounded development of speaking skills than isolated drills.

4.2. The Role of Presentations in Building Confidence and Reducing Anxiety

Oral presentations offer a vital platform for students to significantly boost their self-confidence and gradually overcome shyness in speaking English publicly. This positive impact is maximized when presentations are supported by a conducive learning environment, clear guidelines, and constructive feedback. Success in delivering a presentation, even a small one, can create a positive feedback loop, encouraging further participation and reducing apprehension.

However, presentation anxiety remains a prevalent and significant challenge for many EFL learners, often leading to psychological discomfort and even physical manifestations like uncontrollable trembling. This anxiety can severely undermine performance and motivation. Research also indicates that familiarity with speaking tasks and topics can substantially enhance student performance, increase engagement, and reduce errors. This, in turn, indirectly contributes to building confidence by fostering a sense of competence and success.

While presentations possess a strong potential for confidence building, they also paradoxically *expose* and can even exacerbate underlying anxieties, particularly in contexts like Libya where shyness and fear of making mistakes are common cultural and pedagogical issues. This observation implies that confidence development through presentations is not an automatic outcome but requires deliberate and sensitive scaffolding. For students at Elmergib University, initial tasks should be designed to minimize threat and maximize early success, perhaps by starting with familiar topics or low-stakes practice, to transform potential anxiety into opportunities for growth. This nuanced approach acknowledges that simply assigning presentations without addressing the prevalent shyness could lead to increased apprehension rather than improved confidence.

4.3. Developing Communication Strategies and Overall Communicative Competence

Beyond basic linguistic skills, presentations are instrumental in promoting the use of a wide array of oral communication strategies. These include fluency-oriented strategies (e.g., circumlocution, repetition to maintain flow), accuracy-oriented strategies (e.g., self-correction, planning before speaking), nonverbal strategies (e.g., gestures, facial expressions, eye contact), social affective strategies (e.g., managing emotions, seeking clarification from the audience), and negotiation for meaning strategies. The development of these sophisticated communication strategies signifies a shift from merely producing grammatically correct sentences to becoming an *adaptive and effective communicator*. This implies that presentations cultivate the ability to manage real-world communication challenges, allowing students to convey meaning successfully even when facing linguistic limitations, which is a crucial skill for practical language use.

The process of preparing and delivering a presentation also cultivates higher-order cognitive skills such as critical thinking (e.g., analyzing information), invention (generating and developing ideas), and drafting (structuring arguments and narratives), all of which are integral to effective communication. The requirement to engage an audience, use appropriate language for the context, and manage the flow and coherence of discourse directly contributes to the holistic development of communicative competence, encompassing all four sub-competencies outlined by Canale and Swain. Presentations, by forcing students to interact with an audience and convey meaning, push them to employ these adaptive strategies, making them more versatile and effective communicators in diverse situations.

5. Implications and Recommendations

The findings underscore the significant potential of oral presentations for developing speaking skills among third-year English Department students at Elmergib University, while also highlighting critical areas for pedagogical and curricular enhancement given the specific challenges within the Libyan context.

5.1. Pedagogical Implications for EFL Instructors at Elmergib University

Based on the demonstrated benefits and identified challenges, several pedagogical implications emerge for EFL instructors at Elmergib University:

1. **Shift in Pedagogical Mindset:** Instructors should fundamentally view oral presentations not merely as summative assessment tools but as powerful, integrated pedagogical interventions designed for holistic speaking skill development and active language acquisition. This means recognizing their role in fostering a wide range of competencies beyond just content delivery.
2. **Structured Scaffolding and Gradual Release:** Implement a phased approach to presentation tasks, beginning with familiar topics and low-stakes, shorter presentations to gradually build student confidence and reduce initial anxiety before progressing to more complex and longer assignments. This incremental approach is crucial for students who may be prone to shyness or fear of mistakes.
3. **Explicit Skill Instruction:** Dedicate specific class time to explicitly teach the mechanics of effective oral presentations. This includes instruction on voice control (projection, pace, intonation, diction), effective body language (posture, eye contact, gestures), logical content organization, and the strategic use of visual aids. Rubrics should be used as clear teaching tools, not just assessment instruments, providing students with transparent criteria for success.
4. **Comprehensive Feedback Mechanisms:** Provide constructive, specific, and timely feedback that addresses not only linguistic accuracy and fluency but also communication strategies and overall delivery. Actively encourage and train students in self-reflection (e.g., through video recording and review) and peer feedback to foster learner autonomy and deeper metacognitive engagement. The process of giving and receiving feedback is itself a valuable learning experience.
5. **Anxiety Management Strategies:** Create a consistently supportive, non-judgmental, and encouraging classroom environment. Incorporate specific activities aimed at reducing anxiety, such as small group practice sessions, opportunities for re-presentation, or pre-presentation relaxation techniques. Given the prevalent cultural shyness and fear of mistakes in the Libyan context, these strategies are crucial to transform potential anxiety into opportunities for growth.
6. **Strategic Integration of Technology:** Leverage available technology, such as PowerPoint for visual aids, and video recording tools for self-assessment and feedback, to enhance the quality of presentations and provide flexible opportunities for practice and review. Authentic technology-based materials can significantly increase speaking fluency and accuracy while easing anxiety.

These pedagogical implications are not merely general best practices but represent *critical adaptations* necessary for effective implementation at Elmergib University, directly addressing the specific challenges of the Libyan context. Explicit instruction on pronunciation and grammar within the presentation context directly addresses identified linguistic weaknesses, while dedicated anxiety management strategies are crucial to counteract the prevalent cultural shyness and fear of mistakes.

5.2. Recommendations for Curriculum Design and Teaching Practices

To ensure the sustainable and widespread impact of oral presentations on speaking skill development, broader recommendations for curriculum design and teaching practices at Elmergib University are necessary:

- A. **Systematic Curriculum Integration:** The English Department curriculum should systematically integrate oral presentations across different courses and academic years, ensuring a progressive increase in complexity and skill demands. This ensures continuity and reinforces learning, building upon previously acquired skills.

- B. **Balanced Skill Development:** Curriculum designers should ensure that presentation tasks promote a balanced development of both fluency and accuracy, moving beyond a sole emphasis on grammatical accuracy drills to foster authentic and effective communication. This addresses the historical curricular imbalance in Libya.
- C. **Authentic and Relevant Topics:** Encourage the use of authentic materials and allow students to choose presentation topics that are familiar, relevant to their academic interests, or connect to real-world scenarios. This increases engagement, intrinsic motivation, and reduces content-related anxiety, making the learning experience more meaningful.
- D. **Teacher Professional Development:** Elmergib University should invest in ongoing professional development programs for EFL instructors. These programs should focus on effective oral presentation pedagogy, assessment literacy, strategies for managing large classes, and techniques for addressing diverse student proficiency levels. The effectiveness of individual classroom interventions is limited if the broader curriculum and teacher training are not aligned.
- E. **Promotion of Learner Autonomy:** Curriculum design should actively promote student-centered activities where learners have a degree of control over the content, flow, and delivery of their presentations. This fosters a sense of ownership, motivation, and agency in their learning journey, aligning with the principles of the Output Hypothesis.

These recommendations address the systemic and curricular issues identified in the broader Libyan context. A curriculum that intentionally integrates presentations, balances fluency and accuracy, and provides robust support for teachers in implementing these changes can create a more conducive and effective environment for comprehensive speaking skill development at Elmergib University.

5.3. Suggestions for Effective Assessment of Oral Presentations

Effective assessment is an integral part of the learning process, providing valuable feedback and guiding student improvement. For oral presentations at Elmergib University, the following suggestions are crucial:

1. **Comprehensive Rubric Utilization:** Employ comprehensive assessment rubrics that cover all critical facets of oral presentation performance. This includes content organization and depth, effective delivery (voice, body language), accurate and fluent language use (grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, linking language), and meaningful audience interaction. By using detailed rubrics, students know exactly what is expected, and evaluation becomes more consistent and objective.
2. **Integration of Peer and Self-Assessment:** Actively incorporate peer assessment and self-assessment mechanisms. These not only provide valuable feedback but also enhance students' critical evaluation skills and metacognitive awareness of their own performance. It is crucial to train students on how to provide constructive, specific, and respectful feedback to maximize the benefits of these approaches. Engaging students in peer assessment forces them to internalize the assessment criteria, thereby improving their own performance and critical listening skills.
3. **Formative and Summative Assessment:** Utilize a blend of formative assessment during the presentation preparation phase (e.g., outline review, practice sessions with feedback) to provide ongoing guidance and support, alongside summative assessment at the completion of the presentation to evaluate overall proficiency. This ensures continuous improvement throughout the learning process.

By using detailed rubrics and incorporating peer and self-assessment, the assessment itself becomes a powerful pedagogical tool that reinforces learning objectives, promotes metacognition, and fosters a deeper understanding of what constitutes effective oral communication. This transforms assessment from a passive evaluation into an active learning experience.

Table 3: Comprehensive Rubric for Assessing EFL Oral Presentations

Category	4: Exceeds Expectations	3: Meets Expectations	2: Needs Improvement	1: Inadequate
Understanding of Audience	Demonstrates keen understanding; uses appropriate vocabulary, language, tone; anticipates probable questions.	General understanding; mostly appropriate vocabulary, language, tone.	Limited understanding; generally uses simple vocabulary and language.	Unclear intended audience.
Body Language	Excellent physical presence; effective use of eye contact and gestures to underscore points.	Satisfactory physical presence; occasional use of body language; may read notes.	Limited use of physical presence and body language; very little eye contact.	Little to no use of body language and eye contact; no care for physical presence.
Pronunciation	Clear understanding of stress and intonation; few basic errors at individual word level.	Some individual word errors; strong attempt at using stress and intonation.	Numerous individual word errors; little attempt at stress and intonation.	Numerous pronunciation errors; no attempt at stress and intonation.
Content	Clear and purposeful content; ample examples to support ideas.	Well-structured and relevant content; could benefit from further examples.	Generally related to theme; audience needs to make many connections; lacks evidence.	Confusing and sometimes unrelated content; little or no evidence.
Visual Props	On-target and helpful; not distracting.	On-target; may be slightly confusing or distracting at times.	Few visual props; sometimes distracting or little relevance.	No visual props or poorly linked to presentation.
Fluency	Firm control; communicates directly with audience; little or no reading from notes.	Generally communicative; often refers to written notes.	Sometimes communicates directly; mostly reads and/or refers to notes.	Entirely tied to notes; no real contact with audience.
Grammar and Structure	Sound throughout; only a few minor mistakes.	Mostly correct; some minor grammar mistakes and sentence structuring errors.	Lacks coherence; frequent mistakes in grammar, tense use, and other factors.	Weak throughout the entire presentation.
Linking Language	Varied and generous use throughout.	Used, but more variation could improve overall flow.	Limited use of very basic linking language.	Overall lack of even basic linking language.
Interaction with Audience	Communicated effectively; solicits questions and provides satisfactory responses.	Generally communicated; distracted at times; not always coherent answers.	Slightly distant from audience; not able to adequately respond to questions.	No connection with audience; no attempt to solicit questions.

6. Conclusion

This paper has established that oral presentations are a highly effective pedagogical tool for developing a comprehensive range of speaking skills among EFL university students. These skills encompass not only linguistic components such as fluency, accuracy, vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation but also broader communicative

competencies like confidence, strategic language use, and critical thinking. The effectiveness of presentations is robustly supported by key second language acquisition theories, namely Communicative Competence Theory, the Output Hypothesis, and Sociocultural Theory, which collectively explain how presentations foster deep language acquisition through active production and social interaction.

Despite these significant benefits, students, particularly in the Libyan context, face significant challenges. These include pervasive anxiety and shyness, limited external English exposure, and a curriculum historically focused on grammatical accuracy over communicative fluency. The analysis underscores that while presentations hold immense potential, their successful implementation requires careful pedagogical design that explicitly addresses these affective and contextual barriers.

Limitations of the Current Literature and Suggestions for Future Research

While the existing literature strongly supports the positive impact of oral language interventions in general, with evidence suggesting an average of six months' additional progress for students, there remains a notable need for more specific research focusing on higher education EFL contexts, particularly within the Middle East and North Africa (MENA) region. Limited empirical research specifically addresses the unique speaking problems and the impact of targeted interventions among Libyan EFL learners. This gap in the broader literature highlights the critical necessity and originality of studies focusing on specific regional contexts like Elmergib University.

Future research could significantly contribute to the field by employing rigorous mixed-methods designs to quantitatively measure skill improvement and qualitatively explore student and instructor perceptions of structured presentation interventions over an extended period at Elmergib University. Such studies would provide valuable empirical evidence tailored to the local context. Furthermore, investigations into the effectiveness of specific pedagogical strategies—such as technology integration, peer assessment, and targeted anxiety reduction techniques—in mitigating the identified challenges and improving oral presentation performance within the specific Libyan cultural and educational context would be highly beneficial. These studies would help refine best practices and ensure that oral presentations are implemented in a way that maximizes their potential to foster robust speaking skills in this unique environment.

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