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THE USE OF VIDEOTAPING IN IMPROVING STUDENTS' PRESENTATION SKILL IN ENGLISH

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ABSTRACT

This study explores videotaping in improving students' presentational skill in English. It was conducted with 90 students at Thuong Mai University who videotaped their presentations. The analysis of the presentation skill scores; self-assessment and questionnaires for the experimental groups indicates that videotaping is attributed to the sharpening of students' presentation skill on a number of aspects.

Keywords: videos, videotaping, presentation skill, English, assessment.

TÓM TẮT

Phương pháp sử dụng video trong việc nâng cao kỹ năng thuyết trình bằng tiếng Anh

Nghiên cứu này tìm hiểu phương pháp áp dụng video nhằm nâng cao kỹ năng thuyết trình bằng tiếng Anh cho sinh viên. Nghiên cứu được thực hiện với việc áp dụng video thuyết trình cho 90 sinh viên Trường Đại học Thương mại. Dữ liệu từ điểm, phiếu tự đánh giá kỹ năng thuyết trình, và phiếu điều tra cho thấy hình thức thuyết trình sử dụng video có tác dụng nâng cao kỹ năng thuyết trình cho sinh viên trên nhiều phương diện.

Từ khóa: video, quay video, kỹ năng thuyết trình, tiếng Anh, đánh giá.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background to the Study

Presentation is defined as an indispensable tool for students to present their thoughts and ideas effectively and interestingly with a variety of tools and mediums (Comfort, 1995; Gupta, 2008). More importantly, presentation skill renders the job applicants and staffs competitive advantages in the recruitment process and at work. It has become a way to develop competence to communicate ideas with diversity and to create impact (Gupta, 2008, p. 258). Thus, presentation skill is the essential tool for putting forward an idea or a message to an intended audience, and a skill that must be acquired to get a job in the competitive and changing professional world. Educational institutions have been endeavoring to build and enhance this skill for students by requiring them to deliver their presentation on a given topic in classes. In second language learning, presenting in English

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is also a skill that is taught for students, so that they can deliver the message in English and at the same time know how to use English.

The use of video in teaching is not a contemporary practice as it dated back to the early 1960s in foreign language acquisition research and the training of new teachers. There are a multitude of studies in the use of video to improve communication skill, almost all of which contend that video usage contributes to promoting reflection and reflective practice, reducing speaking anxiety which culminate in students' better presentation skill. It is much more effective than other technologies since it facilitates the comprehension of complexity and grasp the immediacy of teaching in the learning context (Brophy, 2004). Besides, this is closely linked with self-direct learning in which students become more autonomous. In a number of studies, students' videotaping a presentation is proved to be effective in harnessing presentation skill in English for students as videos can serve as a precise reflection for students' performance.

1.2. Rationale to the study

The fact that presentations are not aimed at informal spontaneous conversation but rather subject matter oriented, and that presentations are more "writing like" (Comfort, 1995) may trap students in a robotic and ineffective presentation. There is a likelihood that students read from materials, lack body language manifestation, lack interaction with the audience, and the audiences pay scant attention to what the speakers are presenting. Boring and uncharismatic presentations are often reported in EFL classes. Some teachers even said that the students have hardly any rudimentary presentation skill, which seems to be an intractable problem. A number of studies have been done to resolve this problem.

Although in other countries, videotaping students' presentation has been reported to be effective as it has helped students to evaluate their own presentation precisely and make considerable improvement, Vietnam universities have not taken advantage of this method. In Vietnam, only a few educational institutions have used videotaping in improving the student's presentation skill; however, there exists no research into the effectiveness of this method, and how to adopt this one efficaciously. Therefore, the research "The use of videotaping in improving students' presentation skill in English" was conducted to investigate the impact of presentation videotaping and give some suggestions as to how to use this method effectively.

2. Literature review

2.1. Oral Presentations in classroom settings

The most common types of presentation given by Whatley (2001) are: "*informative presentation*" providing information on an event or new products; "*instructional presentation*" giving specific directions or orders; "*arousing presentation*" motivating the audience's emotions to be receptive to presenter's point of view; "*persuasive presentation*" convincing listeners to accept proposal, and offering a solution to a controversy, dispute, or

problem; “*decision-making presentation*” persuading the audience to take the presenter’s suggested action. As regards oral presentations in academia, for low English proficiency, informative presentation is often used, while for higher English proficiency, arousing and persuasive presentations are ubiquitous.

Presentation assignments have two principal objectives, serving as an interactive activity in which students can apply the literacy skill and presenting their personal interpretation of the text with the audience formally. Presentation assignments usually follow the same pattern in which students or teachers chose relevant topics, followed by students conducting information search, comprehension of the text and culminating in a speech in front of the audience in class.

Presentation skill is considered a means to achieve learner-centered learning or learning by doing, as students are empowered to do more task of a teacher, creating and delivering the information by themselves. They learn better as they must surmount difficulties in the process of making the presentation. Students become more self-directed as they have to practice unaided speaking, collecting, comprehending, synthesizing and constructing information, which is the core of a learner-center approach. Presentations encourage the students work hard by reducing the teacher’s talking time and increasing the student’s talking time.

In the realm of English teaching as a second or foreign language, presentation assignments not only contribute to the improvement of English competence for students themselves but they also benefit the audience students. Presentations provide good listening practice for other students, and they also feel more at ease asking questions than they feel with the teachers as the presence of teacher often inhibits conversations. Sometimes, ingenious and original comments and questions spring from other students, which is attributed to the free and more meaningful discussions in the target language.

In summary, there are so many benefits associated with presentation skills and presentation assignments that the use of presentations are the cornerstone in the improvement of students’ English proficiency and subject matter knowledge.

2.2. Presentation assessment

Although presentation assessment includes a number of criteria, it is a common scene that most students overlook almost all of them and only attach great importance to content. As Gupta (2008) claims, “While hard work and good ideas are essential for your success, your ability to express those ideas effectively is equally important” (p. 258). The content refers to the organization and coherence of the content, and the delivery of the text or the performance of the text includes verbal aspects (volume, speed, intonation, articulation and enunciation) and nonverbal ones (appearance, facial expression, body language, gestures, eye contact). In order to have a charismatic presentation, preparation is a necessity and is also included in the assessment. It is assessed by students’ punctuality and readiness in

performing the presentation as well as the integration of technology and visual aids in their presentation (Jane King, p.417- 418).

All in all, there might be some differences in the presentation rubrics, scholars and researchers all conjoin to some main aspects as the content, performance or delivery, and preparation. The adoption or adaptation of any of the available presentation rubrics should be based on a specific teaching context. For instance, if the students are weak at performance, more detailed rubrics should be used for performance, and performance should be given more weight to so as to arouse students of their weaknesses and hence improve their presentation skill.

Presentation assessment applied in this study

As presentations cover different aspects, the assessment applied in this study includes the key ones as preparation, content, delivery, group work and question and answer (Q&A) section. Given the context of Vietnam where students are weak at performance, more weight is attached to the delivery of the presentation (3 points of a 10-point scale). Also, as the link between group members has not been paid much attention, group work is also lent 2 points in the assessment.

Preparation (punctuality, technology, visual aid) (1point)

Content (organization, coherence) (3 points)

Delivery (Verbal and Nonverbal aspects) (3 points)

Group work (2 point)

Q&A section (1 point)

2.3. Factors affecting students' oral presentation

A number of factors can influence the outcome of a presentation. However, some prominent elements are speaking anxiety, students' proficiency, and teacher's speech anxiety, group boredom and limited performance.

Language anxiety is "the feeling of tension and apprehension specifically associated with second language texts, including speaking, listening, and learning" (MacIntyre & Gardner, 1994). Anxiety is often categorized into two categories: (a) facilitating and debilitating and (b) trait and state anxiety Dörnyei (2005). There is often a fallacy that anxiety cause detrimental influence on performance. It is indeed has redeeming features which is reflected by facilitating anxiety. Facilitating anxiety helps students to be more focused on the task and thus perform it better. Facilitating anxiety is considered to be helpful for students, whereas debilitating anxiety is regarded as being harmful and impeding performance and achievement.

Speaking has been generally recognized as the most anxiety provoking skill associated with foreign language learning. Students report that speaking the target language in front of their peers is the most anxiety-provoking thing in language learning. Moreover, the anxiety experienced when speaking in a second/foreign language seems to

be more debilitating than that in speaking tasks in the first language. In a foreign or second language, a speaker has to do more jobs such as finding pertinent lexis, creating appropriate syntactic structures, and uttering and a comprehensible accent, thinking and organizing and expressing ideas simultaneously.

Anxiety stems from different sources, both objectively and subjectively. “Trait anxiety” refers to the students having anxiety as one of their characteristics. State anxiety is experienced in certain situations, hence situational, while trait anxiety is taken as an inherent characteristic of the individual. “Speaking-in-class anxiety” is acknowledged to be situational occurring only on certain occasions in which speaking is concerned. State anxiety is considered, by many researchers, to be more detrimental to learners than situational anxiety. Anxiety is commonly from the requirements of the context and the social and cultural environment. Language anxiety may be a result as well as a cause of insufficient command of the target language or extrinsic motivators (Schwartz, 1972; cited in Scovel, 1991, p. 16), such as different social and cultural environments, particularly the environments where the first and second learning takes place.

Group boredom is also a trigger to speech anxiety. The audience do not pay attention to machine-like and dull presenters who only reads rapidly, or monotonously at the same tone, voice and pace, or those with long pauses and massive hesitations. As the audience’s attention wanders, the presenters feel less confident. Teachers should set a strict rule about the use of materials while speaking. For instance, they can use note cards as reminders rather than full essay. It should be noted that “the key to effectively using gestures is to know your material so well, to be so well prepared, that your gestures will flow naturally” (Gupta 2008, p.260).

Students’ language proficiency is also a factor attributed to the improvement of presentation skill. It is the ability of an individual to speak or to perform in the target language. High level of language proficiency can facilitate presentation skill and vice versa. Language proficiency is often dissected in terms of accuracy and fluency (Ur, 1996). Accuracy is the correct use of language in terms of vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation while fluency is the ability to keep talking at length. Accuracy and fluency are correlated and essential for the comprehension of the speech. However, in the teaching approach, fluency is often the initial aim in many communicative language courses with students’ low-level proficiency; accuracy is often a delayed aim for the sake of fluency. Therefore, the level of student’s proficiency should determine what should be assessed in the presentation rubric.

The traditional concept of a teacher being a mere transformer of knowledge has been out of date. Scholars, researchers and practitioners all accord that teachers should play a plethora of roles in different teaching stages. They deliver the knowledge, manage classroom, organizing activities, provide tutorials and observe the student. In the same

vein, teachers' awareness of their role in helping students with presentation skill is of great important.

In conclusion, although there are a number of factors influencing the improvement of students' presentation skill, they are interrelated in the development process.

3. Research methodology

3.1. Research questions

This study sought to answer the questions as follows:

1. To what extent does the use of videotaping facilitate students' presentation skill?
2. How can videotaping be used in fostering students' presentation skill?

3.2. Research participants

The study investigated a case of Thuong Mai University, a public university in Vietnam which offers different courses in various fields. Two groups of students were chosen for the research. The experimental group consists of two classes of 90 students (84 female and 6 males), and they were required to videotape their two presentations at 6th and 12th weeks of the 15-week English course namely *English skill 3*. Two other classes of 90 students (85 female and 5 males) were chosen as the control group.

3.3. Data instruments

To reach the aim, the study used scores of three tests (pre-test, mid-term test and post-test), self-assessment, and questionnaires.

- Pre-test, Mid-term test and Post-test: these tests refer to the scores the experimental group got from their presentations, pre-test for their class-fronted presentation scores before the use of presentation videotaping; mid-term test for their first videotaped presentation and post-test for the last videotaped presentation. For control group, mid-term test and post-test refer to the scores they got from their presentations in class.

The three presentations follow the same process – teachers giving students topics and instructions, students submitting their outlines, teachers supervising them for the content and eventually students delivering their presentations either in class or outside class time.

The topics were closely related to the ones they studied for their English skill 3 (which lasted 30 periods and was carried out in 15 weeks).

- Self-assessment was used as a supplement to the test scores. It consists of five sessions to assess five aspects of presentation skill (preparation, quality of content, delivery, group work and Q&A) and each criterion has their own rubrics which are similar to the rubrics that the teacher used to mark their presentation.

- Questionnaires: the questionnaire contains 12 questions which investigate the following content:

- The assessment of the students of videotaping in developing each aspect of their presentation skill

- Their difficulties in applying the method of videotaping their presentations and suggestions to improve the application of this method.

3.4. Data collection

The study was conducted from January to April 2016 in the second term of 2016-2017 academic year. The students participating in the research were studying English skill 3 which lasted 30 periods and was carried out in 15 weeks. Each meeting lasted 2 periods, and they studied the integrated skill text book with business related topics. Among the given periods, 24 periods were used for teaching and 6 periods were allocated for group presentations.

The pre-test was the scores of their presentations for English skill 2 in their first term. With the aim of investigating the effectiveness of videotaping in improving students' presentation skill, the author used the same text book and asked the students in experimental group to make two videotaped presentation in 6th (mid-term test) and 12th weeks (post-test). After they handed in the presentation videos, the teacher showed the first videos in the week 8 and the second one in week 14 followed by Q-A sections and feedbacks to students.

Although the presentation topics were assigned by the teacher, they were encouraged to take the initiative in the way to deliver the information, either making it as a meeting, a class discussion or a drama.

Questionnaires and self-assessment were distributed in week 15 to collect information for data analysis in order to answer the research questions. The assessment criteria were the same for pre-test, mid-term test and post-test presentations.

4. Findings and discussions

4.1. Findings

4.1.1. Results of the Pre-test, Midterm-test and Post-test

The results of the Pre-test, Midterm-test and Post-test are presented in the below table.

Table 1. The descriptive statistics for the Pre-test, Midterm-test and Post-test of experimental and control groups

Group	N	Std.		Std. Error Mean	
		Mean	Deviation		
Pre-test	Treatment	90	5.8500	1.11539	.11757
	control	90	6.0389	1.10216	.11618
Midterm test	Treatment	90	6.7889	1.15869	.12214
	control	90	6.2667	1.08927	.11482
Post test	Treatment	90	7.0278	1.12520	.11861
	control	90	6.3556	.94585	.09970

As can be seen from the table, after the two videotaped presentations were delivered, the mean of both groups increased, with the experimental group's presentation scores higher than those for control group. For the pre-test, the two groups scored almost the same at approximately 6, but for the post-test, the experimental group gain around 7.03 whereas the control group obtained approximately 6.36. To decide whether the difference is significant, the independent t-test was employed.

Table 2. The independent t-test for comparing score means in two groups

	Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t-test for Equality of Means				
	F	Sig.	t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)	Mean Difference	Std. Error Difference
Pre-test	.037	.848	-1.143	178	.255	-.18889	.16529
Midterm test	.117	.733	3.115	178	.002	.52222	.16763
Post test	1.540	.216	4.338	178	.000	.67222	.15494

Table 2 shows the result of t-test for comparing the scores between two groups. For the pre-test, since the p-value (0.255) is greater than 0.05, it can be inferred that there was no significant difference of the scores between the experimental and control groups. On the other hand, there is significant difference of the scores between the two groups for the midterm test and post-test as the p-values (0.002 and 0.000 correspondingly) are less than 0.05.

The results implies that video taping presentations is positively correlated with students' presentation skill (effect size r equals 0.23 and 0.13 respectively).

4.2. Students assessment of the presentation videotaping method and suggestions to use this method effectively

To find out the effect of videotaping on each sub-criteria of presentation skills, Likert-scale self-assessment and questionnaire response were utilized. By and large, both instruments produced convergent conclusion about each sub-criteria.

Descriptive statistics of the 5-point Likert scale self-assessment by SPSS supported that the students gained significantly from working with their group members. In the second place was *Nonverbal aspect* with the mean of 4.5689. About 95% of surveyed students chose it to be the prominent benefit of the videotaping method. Improvement on preparation was in the third place and *Verbal* and *Content* developments were the last one, though with quite a high mean of approximately 4. It can be inferred that videotaping has a positive and profound effect on every sub-presentation skills, especially *Group work* and *Non-verbal* manifestation.

Table 3. Presentation self-assessment of experimental group

	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Team Player Composite	90	4.60	5.00	4.9422	.10111
Delivery-Nonverbal Composite	90	4.00	5.00	4.5689	.42843
Delivery Composite (Non-verbal and Verbal aspects)	90	3.90	4.70	4.3044	.28441
Preparation Composite	90	3.60	4.80	4.2267	.29419
Q&A Composite	90	3.60	4.60	4.1156	.21101
Content Composite	90	3.70	4.50	4.0689	.15929
Delivery-Verbal Composite	90	3.60	4.40	4.0400	.20271
Valid N	90				

The questionnaire responses produced similar ranking order, except for the Q&A and content. Whereas for self-assessment sheet, *Q&A* stands right before *Content*, the questionnaire results showed that they ranked *Q&A* and *Content* similarly with 82.2% cases. Actually, the difference is not so significant, and there is a close relationship between content and Q&A section. If the students master the content, then they are likely to deal well with the questions about the content. The results from the presentation scores and the self-assessment confirmed that videotaping has enhanced the students' presentation skill. Areas of improvement include the better *Non-verbal* manifestation, *Group work* and *Preparation*. A majority of the students in experimental group claimed in the questionnaires that they benefited from oral feedback, rehearsal time and less anxiety as they have chances of redoing it.

As regards the difficulties that the students encountered during the process of making the presentation videos, Table 4 which was generated from questionnaire multi-response questions (tick-all-that-apply question) using SPSS reveals that the two most frequent difficulties confronted the students while making their videos were the place and time for group meeting, and the adaptation of the content. The students responded that they did not possess a professional tool such as a good microphone to videotape them in ear-splitting contexts. Therefore, they tried to find a quieter place at lunch time and try to speak out loud.

Table 4. Students' difficulties in videotaping their presentations

	Responses		Percent of Cases	
	N	Percent		
Difficulties in making the videos ^a	I can't find a quiet place to videotape the presentation	90	28.7%	100.0%
	I find it hard to arrange for group meeting	90	28.7%	100.0%
	I don't know how to adapt the materials	54	17.2%	60.0%
	I don't know how to correct every grammatical mistakes or errors.	50	15.9%	55.6%
	I can't find the materials for the presentation	14	4.5%	15.6%
	It's difficult to use the technology	8	2.5%	8.9%
	I need more time to make the videotaped presentation	8	2.5%	8.9%
	Total	314	314	348.9%

a. Dichotomy group tabulated at value 1.

Although there existed some difficulties in applying this method, 97% of the students claimed that they want to continue this method in the next term.

5. Conclusions, Recommendations and Limitations

5.1. Conclusions and recommendations

From the findings, it can be inferred that presentation videotaping has prominent impacts on students' presentation skill levels. Students when using videos can develop better presentation skill by reducing deliberating anxiety and increasing rehearsal time as well as getting informal feedbacks from their peers. It can have effects on all prominent aspects of presentation, especially group work, and nonverbal aspects, and better voice thanks to an array of rehearsals, oral peer feedbacks and appropriate positive level of anxiety. This solves the repeatedly-reported problem of being dependent on slides in students' presentation.

To optimize the effect of presentation videotaping, and surmount the difficulties for the students, several conditions should be constructed as follows:

- Teachers should give students guides with an armory of languages, grammatical points, and functional language; and tips on how to make acceptable pronunciation, how to

change the written text into utterances before delivering the presentation videos. Requirements and instructions must be given at the first meeting as videotaping takes a long time to prepare. To encourage group-work, teachers should ask students not to make their video by combing individual clips from individual member. They must have face to face meeting to video tape the presentation. Teachers should remind them to consider the camera as their audiences so that they can adjust their posture and eye contact pertinently. This can hinder students from looking down and reading their materials.

- Students should be aware when choosing their group members. They should work with the students who have a similar schedule so that they will not find any difficulties meeting each other as a qualified video presentation requires much more time to make.

- The school board of directors can offer the facilities of the school to adopt this method. For example, they can invest in a room equipped with the recording equipment. Applying this method means more time for the teachers to work off-campus, so several teachers may be reluctant to use such method in teaching. Hence, the board can consider more payment for this application so that they are more willing to adopt this proved-to-be-effective method.

5.2. Limitations

This study only investigated a case in a typical public university, to confirm the results of this study; it is mooted that a similar study can be duplicated for other different universities and at different educational levels.

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