การพัฒนาทักษะการนำเสนองานของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจ โดยใช้วิธีการสอนแบบเน้นการปฏิบัติ

Enhancing Presentation Skills of Business English Students through a Performance-Based Approach

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บทคัดย่อ

วัตถุประสงค์ของการศึกษาครั้งนี้เพื่อพัฒนาทักษะการนำเสนองานของนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจ โดยใช้วิธีการสอนแบบเน้นการปฏิบัติ กลุ่มตัวอย่างประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจชั้นปีที่ 3 วิทยาลัยนานาชาติ มหาวิทยาลัยราชภัฏเชียงใหม่ จำนวน 40 คน ประกอบด้วยนักศึกษาไทย 32 คน นักศึกษาจีน 3 คน นักศึกษาญี่ปุ่น 2 คน นักศึกษาพม่า 2 คนและนักศึกษาเขมร 1 คน โดยใช้วิธีการเลือกกลุ่มตัวอย่างแบบเจาะจง กลุ่มตัวอย่างทั้งหมดลงทะเบียนเรียนในรายวิชาภาษาอังกฤษเพื่อการนำเสนอ ในภาคเรียนที่ 2 ปีการศึกษา 2560 มีการทดสอบก่อนและหลังการเรียนการสอน 6 บท ในระหว่างภาคการศึกษานักศึกษาแต่ละคนต้องนำเสนองานจำนวน 4 ครั้งนอกเหนือจากการสอบก่อนและหลังการเรียนการสอน และมีการสร้างเกณฑ์การให้คะแนนการนำเสนอของนักศึกษาด้วย ข้อมูลที่ได้นำมาวิเคราะห์ทางสถิติเพื่อหาค่าเฉลี่ย และส่วนเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐาน

ผลการศึกษา พบว่า ค่าเฉลี่ยคะแนนทดสอบก่อนเรียนเท่ากับ 13.89 โดยมีค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานเท่ากับ 4.566 ส่วนค่าเฉลี่ยคะแนนทดสอบหลังเรียนเท่ากับ 21.45 โดยมีค่าเบี่ยงเบนมาตรฐานเท่ากับ 3.366 ผลการศึกษาชี้ให้เห็นว่าวิธีการสอนดังกล่าวมีประสิทธิภาพและสามารถพัฒนาทักษะการนำเสนองานของนักศึกษาได้อย่างมีนัยสำคัญทางสถิติ ที่ 0.01 ผลการสัมภาษณ์ พบว่า วิธีการสอนดังกล่าว มีความเป็นระบบระเบียบ ช่วยให้นักศึกษาได้สร้างความคิด ประเมินและปรับปรุงการนำเสนอของตนเอง และทำให้เป็นคนใฝ่รู้ในการหาข้อมูลที่สำคัญมาสนับสนุนหัวข้อการนำเสนอของตนเอง

คำสำคัญ: ทักษะการนำเสนอ วิธีการสอนแบบเน้นปฏิบัติ นักศึกษาวิชาเอกภาษาอังกฤษธุรกิจที่เรียนภาษาอังกฤษเป็นภาษาต่างประเทศ

Abstract

The objective of this investigation was to enhance the presentation skills of EFL Business English students through a performance-based approach. A purposive sampling method was utilized in order to select 40 third-year international students majoring in Business English. This sample consisted of 32 Thai students, 3 Chinese, 2 Japanese, 2 Burmese and 1 Cambodian student, respectively. The participants were enrolled in the "English for Business Presentation" course in the second semester of 2016 academic year. Pre- and post-test assessments were conducted prior and following a six-unit instruction as a means for intervention. Each student was required to perform four presentations, in addition to their pre- and post-test presentations. The rubric was established as a guideline for assessing and scoring the students. The data were then statistically analyzed for mean and standard deviation.

The study findings revealed that the mean of the pre-test scores was 13.89 with a standard deviation of 4.566, while that of the post-test was 21.45 with a standard deviation of 3.366. The results indicated that this teaching approach was indeed effective and able to enhance the participants' presentation skills, with the statistical significance level of 0.01. The interview results revealed that the approach is methodic and systematic, facilitating the students to formulate ideas, to assess and improve their performance, and to be inquisitive in searching for relevant information to support their presentation topics.

Keywords: Presentation Skills, Performance-based Approach, EFL Business English Students

Introduction

In a globalized world, the need for a dominant language is evident where ideas and concepts can be exchanged without restrictions, where commerce and trade can be seamlessly conducted, and where information can be conveyed and shared effortlessly amongst various stakeholders. Today's world is heavily relying on accurate, fast and seamless exchange of information in all areas of commerce, communication, exploration, health care and science, as well as in education, which is the focus on this study. The English language has maintained its dominance as an important means for communicating and exchanging concepts, ideas and information. English, as a lingua franca, is estimated to be spoken by 1.5 billion individuals worldwide, 275 million of which are native speakers (Crystal, 2003). English is the most used language in commerce and for communication, and third in terms of number of speakers, following Chinese and Spanish. The use of the English language is particularly paramount in the age of technology, and it is used as the foremost means for exchanging information. The importance of English is undeniable in academics. Non-English speaking countries realize the importance of being competent and having knowledge of this particular language and therefore, invest heavily to ensure their respective populations are gaining mastery in this globally used means of communication.

Knowing and being skillful in English provides a real advantage to job candidates and expands their prospects of getting a head-start in life. Furthermore, language competency offers job seekers a broader set of career options to choose from. Those with advanced language skills have a greater chance to be employed by international companies, which provides them the opportunity to grow professionally and to travel and live abroad, while earning an above-average income. Language proficiency is also advantageous during the job hunting period. Those with language skills appear to have better chances to be selected for job interviews, and may be offered better opportunities for career progression and promotions. Being skillful in languages not only opens up doors and offers a wider range of opportunities in a professional sense, but it also allows individuals to grow personally by being exposed to other cultures and lifestyles (Merrit, 2003).

Effective communication in English and in other world languages is categorized as one of essential 21st century skills. This is the era of knowledge workers. Companies are seeking candidates who possess critical thinking skills, and are able to analyze and solve problems. Organizations seek those who can effectively communicate, exchange and present concepts, ideas and information. Thus, it is critical that today's learners are equipped with such essential skills. Learners should therefore be skillful in problem-solving as well as in communication. They should be able to deliver their thoughts and ideas effectively by utilizing oral, written and nonverbal communication means in a variety of forms and contexts, and for a range of purposes (Numkanisorn, 2018; Trilling & Fadel, 2009).

Performance-based learning is defined as a set of strategies for the acquisition and application of knowledge, required skills and work habits through performing particular tasks, which engage students in a meaningful way (Hibbard, 1996). This learning approach requires students to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities, by enabling them to create their own response and to showcase their abilities and performance (Stanley, 2014). Furthermore, this approach enables them to utilize their existing knowledge and to apply their skills to realistic situations. This approach focuses on involving students in a performance task, which allows them to participate in an activity and also to observe the

end-results. This approach enables learners to make decisions and solve problems based on their own abilities, while learning and developing new strategies on their own throughout the learning process. It also requires higher-order thinking skills of students in evaluating the reliability of information sources, synthesizing information to draw conclusions, or using deductive/inductive reasoning to solve problems (Stanford University of Education, 2011). Additionally, this approach is authentic and is connected to everyday life scenarios, and provides an opportunity for students to use more creative and complex methods to solving problems. Moreover, this style of teaching involves students in the process of evaluation, as well as in integrating tasks, where multiple skill-sets and deeper knowledge are required to solve problems, which in turn assists students to strive for their best in order to improve their overall performance. Finally, since these learning activities and assignments are designed as such to actively involve students in the learning process, they learn how to seek more effective and sensible options and to solve problems on their own, thus, promoting learning autonomy, which is a vital element in cultivating their inquisitiveness for new knowledge and skills.

Objectives of the Study

In the process of implementing this particular performance-based study, with an attempt to improve participants' presentation skills, the objectives of the study were laid out as follows:

1) To integrate a performance-based approach in order to improve presentation skills of the Business English students

2) To determine whether this approach was effective in improving their presentation skills

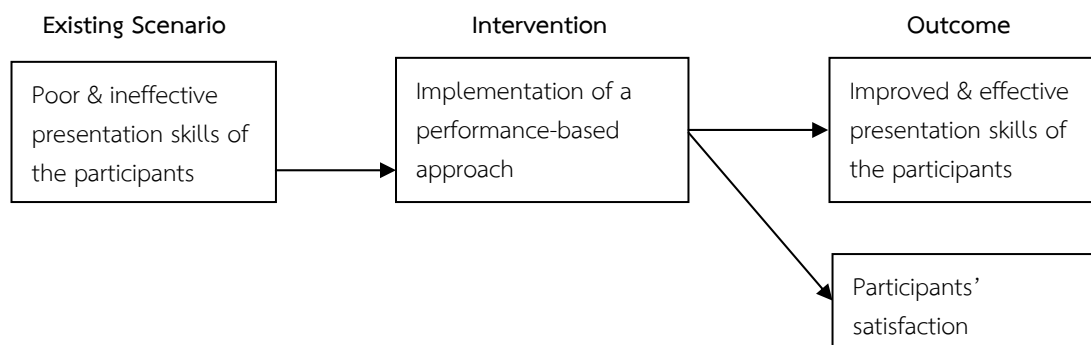3) To examine the opinions of the participants regarding integration of this approach in a classroom setting

Research questions

In carrying out the implementation of this approach in a classroom situation, the research questions were outlined as follows:

1) Would this approach enable participants to improve their presentation skills?

2) How effective this approach is in improving the presentation skills of the participants?

3) What were the opinions of the participants regarding the implementation of this approach?

The Conceptual Framework

It was presumed that existing contexts of the participants concerning their presentation skills were poor and ineffective; since this was their initial attempt and exposure to learn and to be involved in an English business presentation, with the expectation that, upon the completion of the course, they would be fully equipped with necessary presentation skills, which could be applied to real-world situations. A performance-based instructional approach was therefore integrated into the learning process with a focus on students' involvement. The instructional activities were centered both around individual and group performances, which required continuous and active interaction, collaboration and participation throughout the learning process. It was anticipated that the ultimate outcome of their active participation would significantly improve their presentation skills and the ability to apply those skills to their daily lives. The conceptual framework of this study is illustrated in the following diagram.

Existing Scenario	Intervention	Outcome
Poor & ineffective presentation skills of the participants	Implementation of a performance-based approach	Improved & effective presentation skills of the participants
		Participants' satisfaction

Research Methodology

The investigation is a one-group post-test comparison with the following study methodologies:

1. Participants:

The participants were composed of 40 students enrolled in the "Business English Presentation" course at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University International College, in the second semester of 2017 academic year. They included students from China, Japan, Cambodia, Myanmar and Thailand. The participants exhibited a diverse set of English language proficiencies, ranging from relatively fair to relatively advanced. None had any previous knowledge in regard to effective presentations, and the majority of them were visibly nervous at the initial stage when presenting in English.

1.1 The Intervention:

1.1.1 The Research Instruments:

1) The pre-test and post-test were designed as such to assess the progress and development of the participants' presentation skills. The pre-test was conducted on the second week of the semester; the first week was allotted for orientation and preparation for their first presentations. The topic of the presentation for each participant was to create a product of their own choosing with a marketing strategy that included the 4Ps, namely: product, price, promotion and place. During their presentations, two English native lecturers were invited to act as special "raters". The presentation rubrics were provided to them in advance. Their scores as well as those from the researcher were then compiled and calculated for the average scores. This was to ensure the validity and reliability of the scores. The post-test was administered on the second week prior to the semester-end; the same special raters were invited in order to observe and assess the participants' performances.

2) A course-book on business English presentation was used throughout the semester as a guideline in order to help improve and sharpen the participants' presentation skills. The course-book consists of six units. The first unit deals with welcoming the audience, introducing oneself and also, how to manage and deal with nervousness while conducting a presentation. The second unit focuses on body language and provides tips for a better presentation, while the third unit is concerned with presentation tools and ways to effectively create and present visuals. The fourth unit provides information about describing and interpreting graphs, charts and trends. The fifth unit discusses ways to conclude a presentation and strategies for an effective conclusion to a presentation. Finally, the last unit deals with handling the question & answer section of a presentation.

3) The group discussion-cum-interview was conducted on the last week of the semester following the post-test. In order to avoid embarrassing and awkward situations and to elicit genuine answers and opinions of the participants,

the class was divided into five groups, with each group consisting of eight members. The group leaders were provided with guided interview questions concerning advantages and disadvantages of the classroom activities, as well as guidelines to improve learning strategies for better presentations. Each group leader was required to record the opinions of respective group members. The findings were then submitted to the researcher for further analysis.

1.1.2 The Rubrics:

For a performance-based assessment, rubrics are essential because they provide students a clear understanding of expectations, communicate specific and immediate feedback, and help them to become self-reliant, self-directed and self-assessing learners (Karkehabadi, 2013). In this investigation, the rubrics were divided into four parts, and each part contained a range of scores from 1 (least) to 5 (most). The total scores were 20 for each presentation. The four parts included non-verbal skills (eye contact, body language and posture), verbal skills (enthusiasm and delivery), content (subject knowledge, organization and mechanics), and visuals (clear and effective presentation).

1.1.3 The Student-raters

The instruction provided to group leaders was aimed to promote more members' participation in the classroom activities. Furthermore, in this investigation, four students with high level of English proficiency were trained as "student-raters" to assign scores to their classmates for presentations throughout the entire semester. The student-raters team consisted of a Japanese, a Chinese, a Burmese and one Thai student, respectively. Their scores together with those from the researcher were then statistically calculated for the average scores for each rubric. This attempt was to ensure that presentation scores were reliable and fair. When discrepancies arose, meetings between the student raters and the researcher were held in order to discuss the discrepancies. Logical reasoning and arguments were sought in order to explain and to clarify issues. This was to prevent favoritism towards close friends and biases against those they did not favor.

Data collection and analysis

The quantitative data were collected from the pre- and post-tests, as well as those from the four presentations during the semester. The data were then statistically analyzed for arithmetic mean and standard deviation. Regarding the qualitative data, they were collected from group discussion-interviews at the end of the semester. The content analysis was utilized to analyze the data, and the results were presented descriptively.

The Research Findings

1 Results from the pre- and post-test scores

The pre- and post-tests scores by two invited English native lecturers and by the researcher were then statistically calculated to obtain the average score for each rubric. This attempt was intended to ensure that the scores were valid and reliable. The pre- and post-test scores were subsequently analyzed for their mean and standard deviation, as shown in the following tables:

Table 1 Paired Samples Statistics

		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	pre	13.98	40	4.566	.722
	post	21.45	40	3.366	.532

Table 2 Paired Samples Test

		Paired Differences							
		Mean	S.D.	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference		t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	pre - post	-7.475	2.698	.427	-8.338	-6.612	-17.520	39	.000

When the dependent sample test was statistically conducted, it is found that the mean of the pre-test was 13.98 with a standard deviation of 4.566. When the post-test scores were statistically administered, following the classroom implementation of the performance-based approach, the mean was 21.45 with the standard deviation of 3.366. This reveals that the students' post-test scores were more clustered, implicitly indicating that their presentation capabilities were more similar to one another after the implementation of the approach. The result of the t-test indicates that there is a statistically significant difference between the pre- and post-test mean scores at a 0.01 level.

From the interpretation of the statistical analysis' results of the pre- and post-test scores, it can be concluded that implementing the approach to improve presentation skills of these Business English students was indeed effective, as it is numerically indicated by the value of the t-test.

2. Results from the formative scores

The formative scores were derived from the participants' four presentation in the classroom. The presentations were scored by the researcher and the four "student-raters" with high English proficiencies. The student-raters were initially trained to assign scores for each rubric, so that the scores were collectively consistent. Due to the large number of the students in class, only four performances could be conducted. Each student was allotted ten minutes to cover his/her performance during each presentation. At the end of each session, feedback was provided by the researcher in respect to overall best practices and shortcomings of respective presentations. Additionally, recommendations were provided in order to improve performance and to present the material more effectively. The scores from the five student-raters were then calculated for the total average scores for each participant. Again, this attempt was undertaken in order to obtain more valid and reliable scores. The results of the analysis for the formative scores are illustrated in the following table:

Table 3 Formative Scores of Four in-class Performances

	1st	2nd	3rd	4th
Mean	11.63	13.83	15.63	18.05
Standard Deviation	3.56	4.08	4.32	4.65

From Table 3, it can be clearly observed that the mean trends were increasing steadily during the intervention of the approach. This is due the fact that the students learned from the textual units, which were applied to their presentations, and which as a result increased the scores of the evaluation rubrics. The findings revealed that the difference of the mean from the first to fourth presentations was 6.42 with the difference in the standard deviation of 1.09. The result indicates that implementing a performance - based approach was clearly and significantly effective in improving the presentation skills of the students. Additionally, with more practice and active participation in class, they appeared to gradually and visibly gain more confidence in delivering their presentations.

3. The Interview Results

The group discussion-cum-interview was conducted at the end of the semester prior to the final examination in order to determine the opinions of the students in regard to the implementation of the approach. In order to elicit genuine responses and to avoid embarrassment, the students were divided into five groups with each group consisting of eight members. They were asked by their group leaders to express their opinions regarding the approach, and the leaders recorded these viewpoints and submitted them to the researcher. The findings are summarized as follows:

1) The approach was methodic and systematic and thus, it was simple to understand and follow. For each topic, examples and demonstrations were provided, which helped in facilitating their understanding and in utilizing them in their actual practical performances. The students were able to differentiate between relevant and irrelevant information. They had a better understanding of the type of information that could be used to include and to support their particular assignments, which helped their presentations to be concise, convincing and more interesting.

2) The approach provided every student an opportunity to formulate their own ideas, to develop a step-by-step thinking process, and finally, to use clear and practical guidelines to practice in an actual situation. Moreover, these exercises taught them about temporal discipline in order to keep their presentations within an allotted timeframe. Additionally, the approach helped them become better observers, listeners and speakers, to actively participate in class activities, and finally, to provide one another encouragement, moral support, and to create and maintain a friendly classroom atmosphere.

3) The approach enabled each student to perceive and assess their own improvement throughout the entire course. With an improved performance each time, they strove for a better next. The result was that their performances were improving each time as it is quantitatively evident in their formative scores.

4) The approach encouraged the students to become more inquisitive by searching for relevant information or data to support their topics. This effort generated, cultivated and improved their interpretation, paraphrasing and summarization skills, which are crucial for their studies at a tertiary level, and to ensure that learners' autonomy is actively cultivated and promoted.

5) The approach provided the students necessary skills that could be applied to real-life situations, once they enter the workforce. The presentation skills are one of 21st century essential skills that they ought to possess. The participants in the study appeared to be fundamentally equipped with these skills, had learned about the basic presentation guidelines, and were well aware of characteristics of a good presentation that could be effective both in the classroom and in future workplace.

Discussions

This study was concerned with the implementation of a performance-based instructional approach to enhance presentation skills of Business English students at Chiang Mai Rajabhat University in the second semester of 2016 academic year. The discussion of the findings addresses the objectives and research questions.

The finding of the study revealed that the implementation of the approach was indeed effective to improve presentation skills of the participants. This hypothesis was confirmed by the means, standard deviation and the t-test value of the pre- and post-test scores. The difference of the mean between the pre-test and post-test scores was 7.47, indicating that presentation performances of the participants significantly improved following the intervention. Furthermore, the value of the t-test was interpreted as an indication that the instructional approach was effective in improving the presentation skills.

The steady increase of the means of the formative scores was a clear evidence that the approach was effective during assigned activities and the intervention. This was due to the fact that the participants applied their new knowledge, concerning appropriate aspects and practices of business presentations, to their assignments and practical work, resulting in a substantial increase in their formative scores. As the approach requires the participants to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and problem-solving capabilities, they were able to create their own presentations with necessary characteristics of a good and effective presentation, as it was exhibited throughout their assignments (Stanley, 2014; Lundgaad, 2015).

From the results of the group discussion-cum-interview of the participants, it is revealed that the approach could facilitate better and more effective delivery of presentations, enabling them to gradually improve by learning and practicing along the way. Moreover, they were able to search for relevant information in order to support their topics, so that their presentations could become more convincing and real. The ability to search and incorporate relevant information appeared to nurture their learning autonomy and inquisitiveness for new knowledge and skills, which are crucial for life in the 21st century. Finally, these practices and skills could be applied in real-life situations in other classrooms or in real-world after graduation.

Conclusions

From the findings of this investigation, it can be concluded that the performance-based learning approach is actually able to enhance presentation skills of the participants. This claim is evident by the means of the pre- and post-test as well as the formative scores. Presentation rubrics were utilized as a guideline for assessment, and both teacher and student-raters were involved in the evaluation process in an attempt to make the assessment results more valid and reliable.

A pedagogical implication observed from this investigation is that the approach is strongly recommended to be implemented in a classroom setting, since it promotes active involvement and learning autonomy; inquisitiveness for new knowledge, and application of prior knowledge and skills of learners in order to achieve and complete their learning performances.

Recommendations

1. Pedagogical recommendations

The performance-based approach should be implemented in other courses, particularly listening and speaking courses because it provides students an opportunity to directly get involved in learning activities, which is also the student-centered approach. Moreover, it promotes collaboration among group members making attempts to collectively think and share ideas to improve their assignments and performance. Such a collaborative work also encourages students to establish a good teamwork in a friendly learning environment.

2. Recommendations for further study
It is recommended more studies incorporate the performance-based approach to enhance speaking skills of learners in other course, for instance, public speaking or tourism and hospitality.

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