RESEARCH ARTICLE

STUDENTS' ORAL PRESENTATION: PERSONALITY TRAITS, DIFFICULTIES, AND SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

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ABSTRACT

This study was an investigation of students' oral presentation with regard to their personality traits and difficulties and how these variables relate to their speaking proficiency. Descriptive research method was used wherein the first set of respondents composed of 40 graduating Bachelor of Arts in English Language (AB-EL) students answered a questionnaire on personality traits in conducting oral presentation and a speaking proficiency test. Results showed that personality traits affect moderately the performance of the students when it comes to oral presentation. Also, the respondents fall under "competent users" in their speaking proficiency. Findings further revealed that personality traits really affect the respondents' capability to present well in front of the audience, and that there is a significant relationship between the respondents' personality traits when they do oral presentations and their speaking proficiency. Also, the direction of the relationship is positive which means that the variables increase together. The second set of respondents composed of 40 First Year Bachelor of Arts in English Language Studies (ABELS) students were made to answer a questionnaire on oral presentation difficulties and a speaking proficiency test. Results revealed that majority of the respondents are generally "moderate" in having difficulties in conducting oral presentation and were "competent users" of the English language. However, the study further showed that the oral presentation difficulties are statistically not related to the speaking proficiency of the respondents. This research suggests that students engage themselves more in oral activities and exercises to train themselves to enhance their confidence when it comes to oral presentation. Moreover, this study recommends that students build a strong rapport and friendly relationship among themselves and their mentors to make the classroom environment more relaxing and conducive to learning.

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INTRODUCTION

In the academic English courses, oral presentation can be considered as an integral part for developing the language proficiency of second language learners. Giving an oral presentation is believed to be "an important element in delivering positive learning experiences" (Alshare and Hindi, 2004). Rajoo (2010) argued that "oral presentation skills will empower students to communicate complex ideas and information in a manner that would be easily understood by the audience." Students often feel frustrated and intimidated each time oral presentations are assigned to them, especially when they are dealing with research matters and communication skills required for a successful presentation (King, 2002). Leary (2005) stated that personality is "the system of enduring inner characteristics of individuals that contribute to consistency in their thoughts, feelings and behavior."

Speaking proficiency is the main aim for English language learners to achieve since it is fundamental to human communication. However, one of the major problems in foreign language teaching is how to prepare learners to speak the target language (Fraioui, 2016). For foreign language learners, it is very important to practice the language in real communication situations in which they will learn how to express their opinions and views in order to develop their oral performance. The graduating AB-EL and the Freshmen ABELS students who are the respondents of this study might have been studying English since their first day in school, but when it comes to oral presentation, many of them would find such kind of oral activity more complicated than some other tasks related specifically to speaking proficiency.

Objectives of the Study: Generally, this study aimed at providing more insights into the students' personality traits and difficulties in their oral presentations and how these variables relate to their speaking proficiency.

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Specifically, the study aimed to:

- Determine the respondents' personality traits and difficulties in oral presentation;
- Determine the respondents' speaking proficiency; and
- Determine the relationship between the respondents' personality traits and difficulties in oral presentation and their speaking proficiency.

This study is based on Stephen Krashen's (1977) Affective Filter Hypothesis which states that one obstacle that manifests itself during language acquisition is the affective filter; that is, a 'screen' influenced by emotional variables that can prevent learning. The learner's emotional state or attitudes are seen as an adjustable filter that freely passes, impedes, or blocks input necessary to acquisition. The theory behind this study is that the motivational variables behind language proficiency have something to do with the respondents' personality trait. Researchers and educators have been preoccupied trying to emphasize the role of oral presentation in students' academic careers, especially at undergraduate levels (Liow, 2008; Wolfe, 2008; and Munby, 2011). The majority of these studies were devoted to ways of conducting proper oral presentations (El Enein, 2011). Some studies lifted the benefits of oral presentation such as helping instructors cater to students' learning styles, practice speaking, and providing students with deep understanding of the presentation topic, and providing independent, critical learning to facilitate cooperative learning (Al-Issa and Al-Qubtan, 2011 and Munby, 2011). Other studies were concerned with listing the difficulties that students usually face in oral presentation such as feeling nervous (Chuang, 2009; El Enein, 2011; and Alwi and Sidhu, 2013). The studies of Zuhibi (2011) and Fazeli (2011) proved a significant relationship between personality traits and FL proficiency as well as achievement scores. According to Almadian and Yadgari (2011), the personality trait of extroversion-introversion could influence the learner's oral performance. Furthermore, Czerwionka (2009) and Gan (2008) stated that extroverts are more likely to achieve fluency in the target language while introverts are more likely to achieve success in areas of language learning other than fluency.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Descriptive research method was used in this study since its aim was to evaluate the respondents' personality traits and their difficulties in oral presentation and how these variables relate to their speaking proficiency. In this study, the researchers used a survey questionnaire adopted from Vitasari *et al.* (2010) to gather data on the respondents' personality traits with regard to their oral presentation. Another survey questionnaire adopted from Al Nouh, *et al.* (2015) elicited for the respondents' oral presentation difficulties. To test the respondents' oral skills, a speaking proficiency test adopted from IELTS (International English Language Testing System) was used. The data gathered were analyzed using descriptive statistics. The Pearson correlation method was used to determine the relationship between respondents' personality traits in oral presentation and their speaking proficiency. The Spearman's Rho correlation method was used to determine their oral presentation difficulties in relation to their speaking proficiency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Among the graduating AB-EL students, results showed that the respondents' personality traits moderately affect their performance in oral presentation at 55%. They were also *competent users* reaching at 60% in their speaking proficiency test scores. Statistically speaking, there is a significant relationship between the respondents' personality traits in oral presentation and their speaking proficiency. Kitano (2001) found out that students who do oral presentation but affected by their personality traits can improve themselves by making themselves motivated to participate in oral activities to enhance their self-confidence. On the other hand, among the ABELS students, results showed that 60% of the students tend to agree to some difficulties in conducting oral presentation. The most common causes of oral presentation difficulties faced by the students were from psychological perspectives. Overall, majority of the respondents (75%) showed that they have a *moderate* level of difficulty in conducting oral presentation, 10% *high* difficulty, 13% showed *low* difficulty and 3% have *extremely high* level of difficulty. Moreover, based on the results provided, the First Year ABELS students were *competent users* reaching the average of 55% in their speaking proficiency test scores. Lastly, results showed that there is no significant relationship between the respondents' level of oral presentation difficulties and their speaking proficiency. However, it was supported by Krashen's Theory of Affective Filter Hypothesis (Dulay and Burt, 1997) that the student's performance can also be affected by non-linguistic variables such as their fear and also their motivation, self-confidence, anxiety, nervousness and boredom. So, result accounts upon the individual's variation in the student's competence.

Conclusion and Recommendation

Students will be able to view oral presentation in a positive way by dealing it through facing and conquering their fears. As Morita (2000) mentioned, oral presentation is a "frequent, highly routinized part of classroom life" in higher education settings. Furthermore, students' difficulty in their oral presentation does not necessarily follow that they are not good in speaking, and that there are just some other factors that can affect their oral presentation. This study suggests that through developing the students' skill in oral presentation and their speaking proficiency, they will be able to produce confidently an effective and more knowledgeable presentation in which the input from the speakers will be heavier and the listeners' output will be based in what the speakers trying to convey. This study also recommends that instructors must design strategies that could make the students talk to exercise their speaking ability and to enhance more student participation in the class. It is highly recommended for the mentors to develop necessary teaching adjustments, so as to fit their teaching to the students' speaking potentials and capabilities.

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