

# SOME SUGGESTIONS TO IMPROVE ENGLISH PRESENTATION SKILL FOR THE 3<sup>RD</sup>- YEAR- STUDENTS OF FACULTY OF FOREIGN LANGUAGES- HUNG YEN UNIVERSITY OF TECHNOLOGY AND EDUCATION

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Received: 01/08/2023

Revised: 19/02/2024

Accepted: 27/02/2024

DOI: 10.59266/houjs.2024.363

**Abstract:** *Presentation is one of the most important skills for language learners and other professions in general. To make a successful and effective presentation, students need to practice many language skills and master public speaking skills. This research was conducted by asking survey questions and interviews to find out students' attitudes toward presentation skills, the difficulties students encounter and suggest methods to help students present more effectively and confidently in order to have good results in studying and effectiveness in future work. Because the implementation time is limited and the FFL, UTEHY has different training facilities, we only conducted research on the 3rd year English major students in My Hao campus. From the above difficulties and challenges that students are facing, we offer suggestions to help students make better presentations such as improving vocabulary, developing an attractive and coherent topic, mastering speaking speed and voice, using body languages naturally and exploiting visual aid from power point, mind map, posters, painting etc.*

**Keywords:** *presentation skill, 3<sup>rd</sup> -year students, strategies, difficulties, suggestions.*

## **I. Introduction**

Presentation skill is a very important skill, so there is a need to have effective methods to present English better. However, in fact, not everyone knows about effective methods when practicing English presentation. If learners can master the method that suits them, they can save a lot of time and improve their presentation skills. Moreover, the methods also create a habit of using English anytime

and anywhere. And more importantly, presentation skill is an indispensable factor in each person's study and work.

The study highlights the importance of practicing English presentation as a study skill at university. Its findings are thought to be useful for learners of English at UTEHY, particularly the third-year English major students in the FFL - UTEHY to be aware of the learners' current presentation practice and the essential role

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of effective method of presentation skill. The researcher of the study hopes that the suggestions for improving presentation skills can help the learners learn more effectively and they can know clearly how to practice effective English skill.

### **Research Questions**

The research seeks the answers to the following questions:

1. *What is the current situation in terms of third-year English major students' presentation at UTEHY?*

2. *What are the learners' difficulties in presentation skill?*

3. *What have been done and should be done to improve learners' presentation skill?*

## **II. Literature Review**

### **2.1. Definition of presentation**

Presentation skills are an extremely important skill in language learning and future work for students in particular and everyone in general. The definition of presentation skills is very diverse and rich with many different perspectives and uses of words. However, it is generally believed that it is a way of conveying information, messages, and meanings in language through speaking in front of a large number of people, possibly with the help of devices such as pictures, photos, videos, and sounds. music, technology, so on.

According to Bygate (1987) defined presentation as the production of auditory signals to produce different verbal responses in listeners. It is regarded as combining sounds systematically to form meaningful sentences by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Besides of that, we can see the different point of view from Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined presentation as an interactive process of making meaning that includes

producing, receiving, and processing information. Among many views such as that of Eckard and Kearny (1981), Florez (1999), Howarth (2001), and Abd El Fattah Torky (2006) for its sufficient and detailed definition: "presentation as a two-way process including a true communication of opinions, information, or emotions. This above view regards the spoken texts as the collaboration between two or more persons in the shared time and the shared context."

In short, through the above definitions, I understand that presentation is the exchange of information between two or more people in different contexts.

### **2.2. Presentation and its importance.**

According to Bygate (1987) defined presentation as the production of auditory signals to produce different verbal responses in listeners. It is regarded as combining sounds systematically to form meaningful sentences by using verbal and non-verbal symbols in different contexts. Besides of that, we can see the different point of view from Brown (1994) and Burns and Joyce (1997) defined presentation as an interactive process of making meaning that includes producing, receiving, and processing information. Among many views such as that of Eckard and Kearny (1981), Florez (1999), Howarth (2001), and Abd El Fattah Torky (2006) for its sufficient and detailed definition: "presentation as a two-way process including a true communication of opinions, information, or emotions. This above view regards the spoken texts as the collaboration between two or more persons in the shared time and the shared context."

Nowadays, some students are afraid of presentations so they always avoid presentation in English. That has caused students to become less and more confident in their language skills. According to

Brown and Yuke (1983) say, "Presentation is the skill that the students will be judged upon most in real life situations". So, practicing presentation is very important to be able to present successfully.

In the present modern world, everything is linked with presentation skills. Presentation is the most important skill because it is one of the abilities that is needed to perform a conversation. As stated by Rivers (1981) studied language use outside of a classroom situation and understood that presentation is used twice as much as reading and writing combined. As claimed by Ferial (2012), Pourhosein Gilakjani (2016) states that presentation has enormous implications for the interactions between people when they present anywhere and every day.

Presentation helps learners develop their vocabulary and grammar skills and then improve their writing skills. Students can express their feelings, ideas; tell stories; request; to talk, discuss and demonstrate the different functions of the language. Presentation is of great importance outside of the classroom. As a result, language presenters have more opportunities to find jobs in different organizations and companies. These claims have been supported by Baker and Westrup (2003), who say that learners who present English well can have better study opportunities, get good jobs and get promoted.

Previous studies have approved that people cannot learn a language without much opportunity for repetition. Oral language interaction and the opportunity to create language during meaningful tasks provide practice that is critical to language content. As maintained by Krashen (1988) examined the relationship between listening and presentation skills. He claims that when students present, their speech provides evidence that they have acquired the language.

Furthermore, when students learn English, presentation is important to support their language use. Presentation skills allow individuals create sentences for real communication, in other words, they really like to present in language to achieve specific goals (McDonough & Shaw, 1993).

To conclude, from the above statements, I see that presentation plays a particularly important role because it is attached to daily life and work. Besides, presentation also is a vital part of the language development of learners.

### ***2.3. Techniques for effective practice English presentation***

In modern society, to meet everyone's requirements to learn English, techniques are increasingly plentiful. Some of the techniques used effectively are keeping everything simple, outlining the main ideas, having a good start, using visual aids in a presentation, rehearsing, controlling voice and intonation and relaxing. Among of them, rehearsing is very important to help you to practice and be confident to speak in public.

As stated by Ladousse (1987), simulation is a broader, complex, verbose concept and is relatively inflexible; while rehearsing is quite simple, concise, and flexible. According to Scarcella and Oxford (1992), simulation of real-world situations but role-play is an activity that participants represent and experience. Simulation is a situation in which the students play a natural role, i.e., a role that they sometimes have in real life (e.g., buying foods, drinks or booking a hotel). In a role-play, the students play a part they do not play in real life (e.g., Prime Minister, managing director of an MNC or a famous singer). Ladousse (1987) supports this idea; he writes that

simulations always include an element of rehearsing.

From the above points of view, when applying 2 simulation and rehearsing techniques, students will understand each specific communication context. Thus, students can not only grasp the content and develop better skills.

#### ***2.4. Criteria for an English presentation***

Presentation skills help learners present and exchange information. Presentation skills are very important for future use, so how well they are done will largely affect the effectiveness of communication in the future. Therefore, presentation skills must meet the following criteria to be considered good, as stated by Harris and McCann (1994), then, divide assessment into three categories, namely formal assessment, informal assessment, and self-assessment. Besides of that, Brown (1994) explains further that a good performance of presentation can be assessed so long as the learners consider the factors as follows:

a. Applying the structures of grammar accurately.

b. Using gestures or body language, including facial expression.

c. Producing the correct pronunciation which involves the sounds, stress patterns, rhythmic structures, and intonations of the language.

d. Applying strategies to enhance comprehensibility, such as emphasizing key words, rephrasing, or checking for listener comprehension.

e. Choosing the suitable vocabulary (word choice) that is understandable and appropriate for the audience, the topic being discussed, and the setting in which the speech act occurs.

f. Assessing characteristics of the target audience, including shared knowledge or shared points of reference, status and power relations of participants, interest levels, or differences in perspectives.

g. Paying attention to the success of the interaction and adjusting components of speech such as vocabulary, rate of speech, and complexity of grammar structures to maximize listener comprehension and involvement.

Such criteria for presentation assessment can clearly be outlined into fluency (speed/amount of hesitation), message (relevance and appropriacy), accuracy (grammatical and lexical errors) and pronunciation (sounds/intonation/stress) (Harris and McCann, 1994). In conclusion, the success of students' performing their presentation skills can be achieved as they cover the requirements above thoroughly.

To us, good presentation that when you can meet the requirements of correct pronunciation such as correct stress, the intonation of words or sentences; proficiency in basic grammar in communication; Fluency is also an important factor in assessing good presentation and not to mention the choice of vocabulary suitable for each particular context.

### **III. Research methodology**

#### ***3.1. The study context***

The study was conducted at the FFL in In FFL - Hung Yen university of technology and education where English is used most. For English major students, English has important meaning in communication and learning.

In the learning process, learners need to perfect skills such as listening, presentation, reading, and writing.

Presentation skills should be developed as a priority because the ability to present well will make communication easier in the study and work in the future, relating closely to speaking skill. To present English fluently, learners must practice presentation anytime, anywhere. However, reality shows that students do not pay attention to regular presentation practice, but they mainly present in class. Therefore, presentation skills have not been developed. This is also the reason for my carrying out this study into learners' situation of practicing presentation to work out how to improve their presentation skills for better learning.

The subjects of the study are about 46 English learners who are currently on their studying time in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the FFL, UTEHY, campus My Hao.

### ***3.2. Participants***

The subjects of the study are about 46 English learners who are currently on their studying time in the 3<sup>rd</sup> year at the FFL, UTEHY, campus My Hao. The learners are 20 years old, both males and females from many different provinces in Vietnam. All of them are on the process of studying at FFL, UTEHY.

### ***3.3. Methods of the study***

This study employed a mixed-method research design, combining both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This survey research uses a quantitative method in which data were collected by means of questionnaires which were designed for the learners. Each questionnaire consists of 12 questions making clear facets of the three research questions. To make the data more valid and reliable, the interview questions were conducted in order to gather further information and to witness the reality in which the students practice presentation.

### ***3.4. Instruments***

The researcher finds it quite easy to summarize, analyze, and report the collected data because group of informants (learners) answer the same questions. In addition, the informants are provided with an opportunity to express their ideas openly.

A questionnaire for learners was delivered to 46 learners at UTEHY to work out three issues of the research: 1) their current situation of presentation, 2) their perception and attitudes towards presentation, and 3) what they have done and should have done to improve their presentation skills.

To conduct the survey, the researcher distributed 46 copies of the questionnaire for learners. Almost of the copies were directly given to learners of 3<sup>rd</sup> year English major students when they were in their break time in class and collected right away.

Additionally, the information obtained from the questionnaires, however, might be subjective and biased. Then, the result of the interview would be compared with the result of the questionnaires. The author acting as the interviewer does not participate in the interviewee's responses and records their responses.

This survey research uses a quantitative method in which data were collected by means of questionnaires which were designed for the learners. The researcher finds it quite easy to summarize, analyze, and report the collected data because group of informants (learners) answer the same questions. In addition, the informants are provided with an opportunity to express their ideas openly. Each questionnaire consists of 12 questions making clear facets of the three research questions.

## IV. Findings and discussion

### 4.1. Findings

#### 4.1.1. Participants' perceptions toward English presentation

According to the survey, each person's English learning time is different (7 years, 10 years, 13 years, ...).

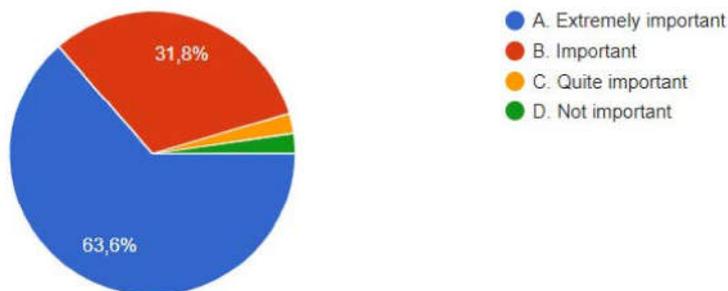


Chart 2: how important is English presentation skill

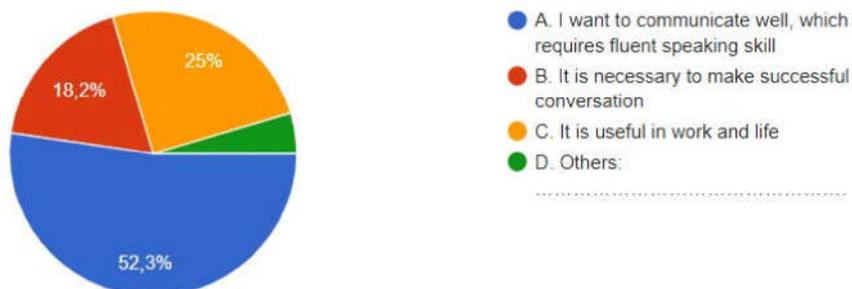


Chart 3: Why students think presentation is important.

As can be seen from pie chart 2, for each different study period, they think about the importance of different English presentation skills (chart 2). Most learners (63.6%) feel that presentation is extremely important. Others (31.8%) said that presentation is important. The rest said that presentation skill is quite or not important. There are many reasons why learners think English presentation skills play an important role (chart 3). Many learners (52.3%) said that in order to present well, presentation skills require fluency. Others (25%) said that presentation skills are very useful for their work and life. The rest, they have another opinion. The survey showed that many students participated in presentation activities in class. However,

not all students perform this job regularly. There are many different subjective reasons for this: many students are afraid of the wrong pronunciation and dare not present in front of the class; others lack confidence in presentation practice; others say that the topic is difficult, so they do not know how to deploy.

#### 4.1.2. Learners' problems of presentation skill

Depending on the learner, English presentation skills will have a different level of difficulty (chart 6). Most learners (52.3%) find presentation skills difficult to learn. In addition, learners find it extremely difficult, accounting for 29.5%, 13.6% find it quite difficult and the rest is not too difficult. Because they often make

mistakes, they find their presentation skills difficult. As you can see from bar chart 7, some common mistakes that the majority of learners make up to 40% are lack of sentences intonation, wrong grammar, repeating the words many times and lack of ideas due to limited vocabulary. In addition, making wrong stress (31.1%) and lisping in the mother tongue (20%) are also common mistakes. There are many reasons why learners have these problems (chart 8). In which, the proportion of

learners lacks vocabulary very much (57.8%). Others (37.8%) said that they did not know if they were pronouncing right or wrong. Moreover, 4 reasons why learners encounter problems when presentation are that they lack confidence, they do not have time to practice, the topic of presentation is unfamiliar, and not keeping up with the presenter's speed is also quite common, 28.9%, 24.4%, 26.7%, and 22.2% respectively. The rest have other opinions, accounting for 2.2%.

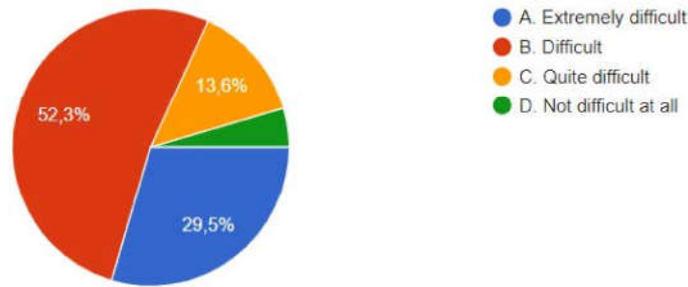


Chart 6: How difficult is English presentation skill.

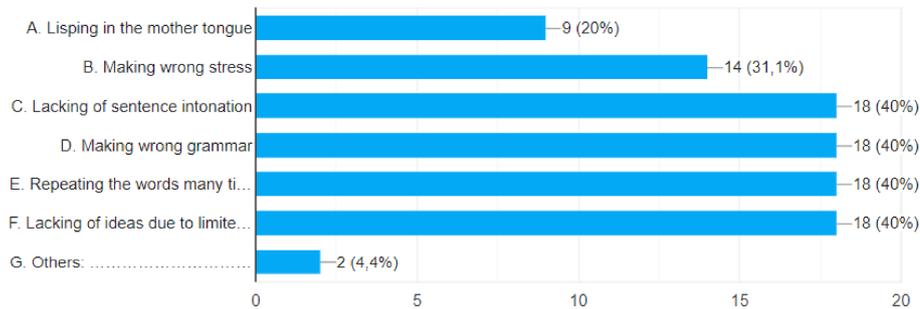


Chart 7: Rate of common mistakes when making English presentation

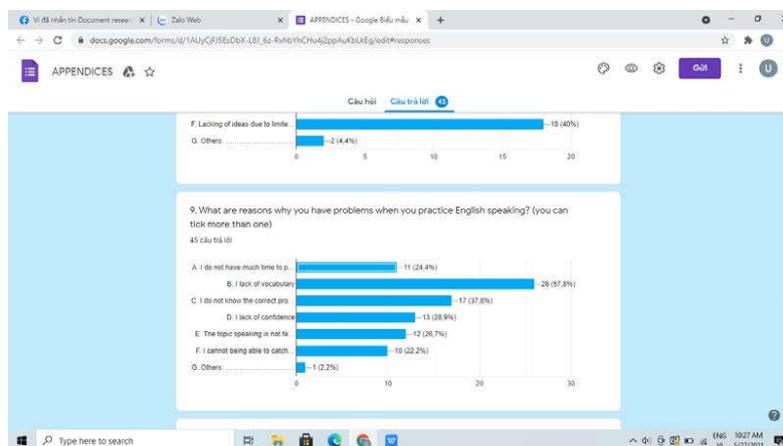


Chart 8: Rate of the reasons why students have problems with presentation.

The responses to the survey questionnaire showed that many students found it important to practice English presentation. The benefits of the English presentation practice proposed by the researcher have been agreed upon by many of them. However, they also face certain difficulties such as lack of vocabulary, lack of confidence, not much time to practice, ... Students' choices can mainly come from experience in presentation. their rates, therefore, rate their choices at varying degrees. For students who think presentation is important, they practice presentation with high frequency and vice versa. It can be seen that awareness of the importance of skills will promote the development of presentation skills.

#### *4.1.3. Suggestions to improve learners' presentation skill.*

Although you know that practicing presentation with effective methods will improve your presentation skills faster, not all students know it and apply it. Many students believe that joining English clubs and listening to English songs is the most popular method. Several other students reported that they noticed their presentation skills develop while watching their favorite shows in English. Others have found that parodying characters in a movie or show helps them present better.

Research on the presentation situation of students in the third-year English majoring in My Hao Campus-UTEHY campus 2 shows that, although many students want to present well, not many of them know how to do it effectively. Furthermore, a majority of the students surveyed agreed that English presentation well is of utmost importance to them. Therefore, this chapter proposes several methods to improve presentation. some tips and techniques for improving speech and overcoming presentation difficulties. Good ways to learn to present

English are also suggested. Hopefully, the recommendations will work effectively for many students.

Students can have a variety of learning styles to improve their communication skills. According to the survey results, students have many difficulties in presentation practice for many reasons. The methods that students often use to improve their presentation skills are joining English clubs, listening to English music, reading newspapers or magazines, ... Talking with native presenters is also a very good method and is applied by many of you. However, to learn and practice presentation skills systematically and effectively, students can rely on apps and youtube. These two forms of study will save a lot of time and money because you can open up and study anytime, anywhere... Here are some suggestions that many Vietnamese presenting English find helpful.

##### *4.1.3.1 The Shadowing technique*

Shadowing is a very effective method of practicing the intonation, rhythm, and pronunciation of native presenters. This is the method of practicing like a child, listening and repeating immediately what is heard. Shadowing is different from listening and repetition, in that you don't wait to hear the whole sentence and then repeat what the presenter said. Instead, you and the presenter will almost present at the same time, specifically, you completely imitate their intonation, the way they break sentences, their slurs. Shadowing is a great method to help people practice presentation at home. The advantage is that it is easy to implement, allowing everyone to practice listening and presentation skills at the same time. The downside of this method is that it's easy to get bored when you can't keep up with and understand what the presenter is saying. Therefore, students need to patiently spend time understanding and

practicing presentation more in a video that they want to practice with Shadowing.

#### 4.1.3.2. Youtube

Youtube is also an extremely good platform when there are very useful channels for improving presentation skills. Youtube shares various types of videos such as TV clips, music videos, movie trailers, and other content such as blog videos, short original videos, and educational videos. YouTube offers the opportunity to interact with native and non-native English presenters, and also learn about different dialects and types of English used around the world.

Youtube makes students listen more and will gradually be able to think in English. That helps students increase their ability to understand English and their presentation ability will also be fluent and faster.

In addition to the above ways, students also need to actively add vocabulary so that when presentation, they can convey their wishes to the listener completely. Finding a companion for more motivation to practice is also very helpful when you want to have difficulty communicating when presentation. These ways will help students develop faster and better presentation skills and Tedtalk is a very popular channel for students to practice their presentation.

#### 4.1.3.3. Some common phrases to make presentations.

##### a. Introduction

The introduction is perhaps the most important part of a presentation. This is the part that makes the first impression on your audience of your presentation. You should take the following steps:

- Hello audience
- Introduce the topic of the presentation
- Outline the structure of the presentation
- Give instructions on questions

##### b. Body

This section needs to be well organized and reasonably divided.

✓ As I said at the beginning...

✓ This, of course, will help you (to achieve the 20% increase).

✓ As you remember, we are concerned with...

✓ This ties in with my original statement...

✓ This relates directly to the question I put to you before...

✓ I'd now like to move on to...

✓ I'd like to turn to...

✓ That's all I have to say about...

✓ Now I'd like to look at...

✓ This leads me to my next point...

✓ This graph shows you...

##### c. Conclusion

✓ Do you follow what I am saying?

✓ I hope this explains the situation for you.

✓ I hope this was what you wanted to hear!

✓ That's an interesting question. I don't actually know off the top of my head, but I'll try to get back to you later with an answer.

✓ I'm afraid I'm unable to answer that at the moment. Perhaps I can get back to you later.

✓ Good question. I really don't know! What do you think?

✓ That's a very good question. However, we don't have any figures on that, so I can't give you an accurate answer.

Making presentations can be a very challenging task for most 3<sup>rd</sup> year students in FFL at UTEHY, but it can be less stressful if they practice more often and follow the tips and phrases mentioned above.

#### 4.2. Discussion

Although you know that practicing presentation with effective methods will improve our presentation skills faster, not all students know it and apply it. Many students believe that joining English clubs and listening to English songs is the most popular method. Several other students reported that they noticed their presentation skills develop while watching their favorite shows in English. Others have found that parodying characters in a movie or show helps them present better. Research on the presentation situation of students in the third-year English majoring in My Hao Campus-UTEHY campus 2 shows that, although many students want to present, not many of them know how to do it effectively.

Students can have a variety of learning styles to improve their communication skills. According to the survey results, students have many difficulties in presentation practice for many reasons. The methods that students often use to improve their presentation skills are joining English clubs, listening to English music, reading newspapers or magazines, ... Talking with native presenters is also a very good method and is applied by many of you. However, to learn and practice presentation skills systematically and effectively, students can rely on apps and YouTube. These two forms of study will save a lot of time and money because you can open up and study anytime, anywhere...

#### V. Conclusion

Presentation is one of the four important skills in learning English. This skill helps learners present or use it for work. It's important to be serious about a presentation practice and that you should practice every day wherever you can. When you practice presentation, you can try different techniques such as learning to think in English, talking by yourself or

trying to describe everything in English. In addition, good communication is also very useful for the future of students at work. This study cannot cover the full spectrum of English communication problems. It is only intended to find out the current presentation ability of third-year students majoring in English at the UTEHY campus; what do they think about presentation, and actions done and done to improve learners' presentation skills. The results of the study show that:

- Many students during the hour have not voluntarily practiced presentation but still let the teacher remind or request

- Many students do not know which presentation practice is suitable for them and effective even when everyone knows the importance of presentation practice.

- Some students applying different presentation techniques are proficient in communication, but not all students know how to combine presentation practice together for the best development of presentation skills.

After learning some facts about a student's presentation ability, a researcher can only come up with a few suggestions to improve their presentation skills but cannot do anything directly to change them. These clues only come in handy when the student works on their own. Improving presentation skills now depends on each student because at this level learning is mainly a process of self-study.

Presentation is an essential skill for foreign language students who must use English as a means of communication to successfully complete current and future jobs. Therefore, in this study, we hope to go deeper into this issue, which also plays a very important role in presentation.

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## MỘT SỐ GIẢI PHÁP GIÚP CẢI THIỆN KĨ NĂNG THUYẾT TRÌNH CHO SINH VIÊN NĂM THỨ 3 KHOA NGOẠI NGỮ - TRƯỜNG ĐẠI HỌC SƯ PHẠM KỸ THUẬT HƯNG YÊN

*Nguyễn Thị Ánh Tuyết<sup>†</sup>, Lê Thị Thanh Nga<sup>†</sup>*

**Tóm tắt:** *Thuyết trình là một trong những kĩ năng quan trọng nhất đối với người học ngoại ngữ nói riêng và các ngành nghề khác nói chung. Để có một bài thuyết trình thành công và hiệu quả, sinh viên cần thực hành rất nhiều kĩ năng ngôn ngữ khác nhau và làm chủ được kĩ năng nói trước đông người. Nghiên cứu này được thực hiện bằng cách phân tích các câu trả lời trong bảng câu hỏi khảo sát và các câu trả lời phỏng vấn liên quan tới thái độ của sinh viên đối với kĩ năng thuyết trình, những khó khăn và thử thách mà sinh viên đang gặp phải khi thực hiện kĩ năng này và gợi ý một số phương pháp giúp sinh viên giải quyết khó khăn để đạt được sự tự tin và hiệu quả khi thuyết trình nhằm đạt kết quả cao trong học tập và hiệu quả thuyết trình cao trong tương lai. Việc tiến hành nghiên cứu còn bị hạn chế do khoa Ngoại ngữ, trường Đại học Sư phạm Kỹ thuật Hưng Yên có các cơ sở đào tạo khác nhau nên nhóm tác giả chỉ thực hiện đối với nhóm sinh viên năm thứ 3 của khoa tại cơ sở Mỹ Hòa. Từ những phân tích khó khăn và thách thức của sinh viên khi thuyết trình, nhóm tác giả đã khuyến nghị các đề xuất để nâng cao kĩ năng thuyết trình như: cải thiện vốn từ vựng, phát triển chủ đề, làm chủ tốc độ nói và giọng nói, sử dụng hiệu quả ngôn ngữ cơ thể, khai thác các yếu tố hỗ trợ phần nhìn khi thuyết trình như power point, tranh ảnh, ...*

**Từ khóa:** *kĩ năng thuyết trình, sinh viên năm thứ 3, chiến lược, khó khăn, gợi ý.*

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