

Difficulties in learning English presentation skills of the second-year English majors at Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment

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Abstract: It is widely acknowledged that English presentations are becoming increasingly significant for students, as they are essential in nearly every discipline and academic setting. To succeed in both university contexts and future professional environments, students must enhance their English presentation skills. However, students frequently find English presentations especially challenging. Consequently, this study was undertaken to identify common difficulties faced by English-major second-year students in learning English presentation skills. It identifies four main challenges: linguistic factors, background knowledge, psychological barriers and other factors. The research suggests a multifaceted approach, including intensive language training, effective research strategies, psychological support, and practical skills training, to enhance students' confidence and competence in English presentations.

Keywords: Learning English presentation skills

1. Introduction

1.1. Rationale

Communication is crucial for life and professional opportunities, especially in a technology-driven society. English-speaking courses at universities help students improve their speaking skills, including English Presentation Skills. Mastering presentation skills encourages fluency, critical thinking, creativity, and confidence, enabling students to excel in presentation activities, small group discussions, negotiation, and class responses. However, many students struggle with English presentation skills due to lack of linguistic competence, lack of background knowledge, and lack of necessary presentation skills. Psychological elements also influence their emotions and performances, leading to negative attitudes towards giving presentations. Hedge (2000) recommends enhancing understanding of grammar, vocabulary, and essential communication skills to enhance language competency, especially in the context of presentations. This study aims to assist English learners, particularly sophomores at Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment, in recognizing their challenges and suggesting solutions to improve their English presentation skills. Previous research has primarily focused on enhancing presentation skills, but this study aims to help students recognize their challenges and suggest solutions.

1.2. Aim and objectives of the study

The study investigates the challenges second-year English majors at Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment face in learning English presentation skills and proposes solutions to enhance these skills.

1.3. Research questions

To achieve the aim of the study, the researcher will find out the answers to the following questions:

What are the difficulties that the second-year English majors at HUNRE face in learning English presentation skills?

What are solutions for the students at the Department of Foreign Languages of HUNRE to improve their English presentation skills?

1.4. Methods of the study

The researcher will use questionnaire surveys and interviews to gather data on English presentation difficulties faced by second-year English major students at HUNRE. The quantitative data will be analyzed using Google Forms and SPSS software, while the qualitative data will be analyzed through interviews with ten students and five teachers from the Department of Foreign Languages at Hanoi University of Natural Resources and Environment.

1.5. Scope of the study

The study focuses on English presentation skills in the classroom context of second-year English majors of the Department of Foreign Languages at Hanoi

University of Natural Resources and Environment.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research approaches.

This research utilized the Mixed Method of Creswell, combining quantitative and qualitative methods to examine the challenges faced by second-year English students at HUNRE in improving their English presentation skills.

2.2. Data collection.

A survey questionnaire was used to assess the difficulties in learning English presentation skills among second-year English-majored students at HUNRE. The study included 107 students, both male and female, from two different classes. The students were from Vietnam and had at least 9 years of English language experience. Interviews were conducted with 10 randomly selected students and five teachers who taught English presentation skills and English speaking courses. The interviews were conducted in a classroom at HUNRE, lasting approximately 10 minutes each. The results were analyzed using note-taking and analysis.

2.3. Methods of the study

2.3.1. Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of 22 questions divided into two parts. Part 1 focused on general information about learning English presentation skills. Part 2 included 18 statements based on a five-degree Likert-type scale, highlighting difficulties in linguistic factors, background knowledge, psychological factors, and other difficulties in English presentation skills. The information was analyzed qualitatively and quantitatively.

2.3.2. Interview

Ten English-majoring sophomores and five teachers were interviewed to discuss their difficulties in learning English presentation skills. The interviews focused on frequency, difficulties, and suggestions for improvement. The data analysis will be presented with the collected questionnaire data from each section to enhance the study's credibility.

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3.1. Linguistic factors

3.1.1. Vocabulary

The study found that participants find learning English vocabulary for specific presentations to be a significant challenge, potentially hindering their

performance and confidence. Additionally, they feel they lack sufficient vocabulary to effectively express their opinions and feelings during presentations. The mean scores for these two statements are similar (3.78 and 3.82), suggesting a consistent perception of vocabulary-related difficulties in learning English presentation skills. The slight difference between the two means suggests that the challenge lies not only in learning new vocabulary but also in having enough vocabulary to express oneself effectively in presentations.

3.1.2. Pronunciation

The study found that students generally find it hard to learn English pronunciation, often mispronounce words during presentations, and struggle with syllable stress. The mean score for pronunciation was 3.63, above the neutral midpoint of 3, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The mean score for mispronunciation was 3.71, with a standard deviation of 1.099. The mean score for intonation was 3.73, with a standard deviation of 0.996. These results suggest that pronunciation is a significant challenge for many students in improving their English presentation skills. This information can be useful for HUNRE teachers and educators.

3.1.3 Grammar

The study found that many participants find learning English grammar challenging, which can impact their proficiency and confidence in using the language effectively, especially in presentations. They also often make grammatical mistakes, which can affect the clarity and professionalism of their presentations. Additionally, choosing appropriate grammar structures during presentations is a significant challenge, with moderate variance in individual experiences. The data suggests that teachers should find solutions to help students improve their grammar skills and overall effectiveness in English presentations.

3.2. Background knowledge.

The data shows that students often struggle with acquiring knowledge about English presentations, expressing their ideas on unfamiliar topics, and finding background knowledge about the topic. These difficulties may impact the effectiveness and confidence of their presentations, as they struggle to gather relevant information and effectively present their ideas. Overall, these challenges are perceived as significant challenges for sophomores.

3.3. Psychology factors.

The study reveals that students often feel nervous when speaking in front of others, fearing making mistakes in public, and struggle to control their nerves during presentations. These psychological challenges can negatively impact performance and confidence. The findings suggest that teachers need to teach strategies and skills to help students manage anxiety effectively and improve their confidence in English presentation situations. This will help students overcome the challenges they face in learning English presentation skills.

3.4. Other factors.

Students often struggle with non-verbal communication, time management, and visual aids during presentations. They struggle with body language, gestures, eye contact, and voice inflection. They also struggle with controlling time for each section of their presentations. Additionally, they find it difficult to design and use slides or other visual aids effectively. These challenges can impact the effectiveness and engagement of their presentations, highlighting the need for improved communication skills.

3. Solutions to enhance student's english presentation skills

The study suggests that second-year English major students at HUNRE can improve their English presentation skills by implementing a comprehensive approach. This includes regular practice and exposure, focusing on linguistic improvement, psychological support, presentation skills training, interactive and collaborative learning environments, and leveraging technology. Regular practice helps students develop versatility and adaptability, which are essential for effective communication. Specialized pronunciation workshops and language labs provide a practical, hands-on approach to language learning. Psychological support encourages spontaneous thinking and adaptability, while presentation skills training focuses on non-verbal communication and visual aids. Interactive and collaborative learning environments foster a sense of community and collective growth, while technology enhances the learning experience with presentation software, online platforms, and multimedia resources. Personalized feedback is also essential, addressing specific areas of struggle and offering targeted advice. These solutions not only enhance

students' language proficiency but also cultivate valuable communication and presentation abilities essential for academic and professional success. Integrating these solutions into educational practices ensures holistic support tailored to individual needs, ultimately empowering them to excel in English presentations and beyond.

4. Conclusion

The chapter explores the challenges faced by second-year English majors at HUNRE in learning English presentation skills. It reveals linguistic, cognitive, psychological, and practical factors. Linguistic barriers include grammar, vocabulary, and pronunciation, while lack of background knowledge complicates presentation preparation. Psychological issues like anxiety and fear of public speaking hinder performance. Non-verbal communication skills, such as body language and visual aids, are also underdeveloped. Addressing these challenges requires intensive language instruction, research strategies, psychological support, and practical training.

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