

Attitudes among International University Students in Delivering English Oral Presentation in Academic Settings

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Abstract: *This paper outlines, in the pilot study, the results of a survey that carried out so as to identify the international university students' attitudes in delivering oral presentation in English language in academic settings. 30 non-English major university students who were targeted, in this research, to figure out what attitudes had pertaining to English oral presentation. They were divided into three groups according to their ages. Frequency and ANOVA were used in analyzing the data. The study indicates that students are willing to deliver an oral presentation in English language. They intend to be involved in various activities related to oral presentation in English language as well. However, students were almost reluctant to reveal a plain attitude towards presenting in English language. Also, it is found that, there is no statistically significant difference in their attitudes based on their ages in delivering oral presentation in English language in academic context.*

Keywords: *Attitude, English language, anxiety, oral presentation.*

BACKGROUND / INTRODUCTION

Foreign language (FL) learning involves different interrelated factors and FL anxiety is considered as one of the effective variables which play an essential role in learning a new language (Lizuka, 2010). Learners who have difficulty with learning of foreign language are predominantly described as having lack in motivation (Tercanliogler, 2004; Li & Pan, 2009).

The acquisition of foreign/second language is induced by different variables such as attitudes, anxiety, motivation, learning achievements, intelligence, age, personalities, and so forth (Lehmann, 2006; Schmidt, Borai & Kassabgy, 1996). These substantial affective variables have also been considered as factors which might influence the success of foreign language learning (Latchanna & Dagnev, 2009; Hall, 2009). Of these main factors, attitudes has been given much attention in this study in terms of its effects on students' oral presentation in English language that is pertained to be as a language of study in the Malaysian universities.

Attitudes have recently been received very considerable attention from both second and foreign language researchers, and it has been frequently reported as one of the most essential factors in second/ foreign language learning. Gardner and Smyth (1975) pointed out that attitudes

are impeded by several various factors such as: learners' age, upbringings, geographical area background where they initially are raised.

Review of literature

Gömleksiz's (2010) findings in the students' attitudes evaluation pertaining to English language learning in terms of several variables, revealed significant differences between the attitudes of students in terms of grade level, department variables. The researcher used a survey to analyze the students' attitudes towards English language learning. Descriptive statistics were used by the researcher to analyze the demographic characteristics of the respondents. T-test was used to see the differences between university students' attitudes towards learning English in terms of grade level. ANOVA was carried out at the analysis of variances of students' attitudes pertaining to learning English based on department variables. The researcher found that sophomores or second year students' attitudes were more positive than freshmen in terms of self-confidence, interest, teacher subscales and usefulness. Second year students' tendency towards learning English was much higher than freshmen's. In addition, Students at departments of Turkish language Education and Elementary Mathematics Education tended to possess more positive attitudes than other groups of students. Attitudes of students differed according to their teacher as well. Students of Social Sciences and Elementary Mathematics Education had more positive attitudes about their English teacher than Elementary Education, Religious Culture & Moral Education departments and Fine Arts Education's students.

A recent study about language attitudes of Turkish students towards the English language and its use in Turkish context has been carried out by Karahan (2007). This research examines the relationship between the language use and language attitudes towards the English language in Turkey. The method of inquiry used by the researcher, a questionnaire that was conducted to 190 students of a primary school in Adana. The findings revealed that students have mildly positive attitudes towards the use of English and the English language in Turkey. Concerning the attitudes towards the use of English in Turkey, the Turkish students are aware and conscious of the importance of the level of proficiency of English language helpful to understand cultures of others and they tend to have more accurate and fluent English speaking skills. However, they are not very tolerant to people of Turkey speaking English language among themselves. Ghazivini and Khajehpure's study (2011) identified Iranian students' attitudes and motivations concerning learning English language. The result of Ghazivini & Khajehpure's research showed that students were motivated to learning English language. The findings posited also that students are more inclined to bilingualism. Generally, high school students have positive attitudes to learning English language.

Yang and Lan (2003) reported that students were relaxed and comfortable with the environments of language and courses offered in secondary and tertiary educational settings. Students, according to the researchers, are conscious of the importance of learning English in the

post-1997 era. The learners reported that a more flexible and liberal choice of English courses are provided at university supported them to possess the language needed for personal growth and professional career. Students perceived the idea of how important it is to have a positive attitude towards the English language. Duer and Sayar (2013) identified Turkish students' attitudes towards English language in speaking classes. The method used in this research was a survey. The result of the survey indicates that the majority of students have positive attitudes about learning English. However, sometimes students feel anxious. They are comparatively willing and interested to learn more English with having the consciousness of the importance of English language learning. In terms of anxiety, when the feelings of in and out of class anxiety levels are measured, it is found that the anxiety level of student increases once they are in class rather than out of it. Durer and Sayar (2013) indicated that most of the students realized the significance of English language. They were aware that English is needed even after they finish their study.

Based on the arguments above, it is timely that a serious effort to identify the international university students' attitudes towards oral presentation in English should be carried in Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP). This is to investigate the students' attitudes related to performing an oral presentation in English language. The research questions of this study are as follows:

- 1- What kind of attitude do international university students possess?
- 2- Is there any significant difference among international university students' attitudes across their ages in performing English oral presentation?

METHOD

RESPONDENTS

The current study was conducted at Universiti Malaysia Pahang. The participants of the study were 30 UMP international university students enrolled in different technical programmes. The participants were selected randomly from various faculties in University, such as Faculty of Computer Science, Faculty of Civil engineering and Faculty of Management and industrial technology.

INSTRUMENT/ DATA ANALYSIS

The present study utilized the quantitative research approach where the instrument used in this study to collect data was a questionnaire. The questionnaire contains two different sections which are; firstly, personal demographic questions concerning age. Secondly, Students' attitudes towards English oral presentation consist of ten items investigating Students' attitudes divided into three factors 1) Students' views of the importance of

delivering a presentation in English Language. 2) Students' desire to present in English Language. 3) Students' anxiety towards English oral presentation. The questionnaire was adapted from both Personal Report of Communication Apprehension (PRCA-24) (McCroskey, 1982) and Gardner's Attitude/Motivation Test Battery (AMBT) (Gardner, 1985). It has been used in a significantly large number of quantitative studies which focused on examining different affective components influencing second/foreign language (Gardner and Lambert, 1972; Ghazvini and Khajehpour, 2011; Williams, Burden & Lanvers, 2002). The AMTB explores language learning in three major sections; attitudes, motivations and classroom anxiety; motivational intensity; and teacher and curriculum (Gardner, 1985). The Likert Scale format used a scale ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree.

Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS 20 Version) was used in order to analyze the gathered data. Concerning the data analysis, Frequency and ANOVA were used to identify the participants' responses

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

As a preliminary step to get the reliability of the questionnaire, reliability of the score was assessed for the complete sample to identify the consistency of the items. The consistency reliability of the ten items was measured and calculated to be acceptable by Cronbach's alpha was 0.81

The findings of the study of attitudes under three factors: (A- The importance of delivering oral presentation in English, B- desire to speak and present in English, and C- Anxiety towards oral presentation in English language.) using frequency and ANOVA analyses are presented.

Students' attitudes towards English oral presentation

A- Students' views of the importance of delivering a presentation in English Language.

- 40% of the students agreed to view delivering and performing oral presentation and involving in different presentations in English as essential and important and not a waste of time.
- 35% of the students agreed to not give up presenting in English even after they leave University since they are interested to use it.

B- Students' desire to present in English Language.

- 30% of the students strongly disagree with the idea of English oral presentation as being dull.

- 35% of the students strongly agree on the statement “I like to spend most of my free time doing English oral presentations with my friends”. It shows that they prefer to spend most of their spare time doing many activities which are related to performing a presentation in English with their friends.
- In terms of whether students like giving a presentation in English, they agreed 40% of that, however, 04% strongly disagree to give any activity that might be related to oral presentation in English Language.

C- Students' Anxiety towards oral presentation in English language

- About 1/3 of the students expressed that they would feel neutral in terms of whether they feel anxious in presenting orally in English in their classes (40%). They are concerned neither agree nor disagree to express clearly their attitudes. They kept with undecided decision towards calling upon to present their works in English Language.

With regard to the responses of the international students, it is noteworthy that the students were quite willing to involve more in various ways of using oral English activities such as: communication, presentation...). In addition, students realized the essential importance of English through their education, although, it is not their major of study. They were conscious of English language as being needed even after they leave university, for instance respected better life, job opportunities, high salary and general cultural information.

When students' responses about anxiety about performing English oral presentation or delivering different presentations in the class, they were reluctant to reveal a plain attitude pertaining to oral presentation in English language.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

According to the following table 1., the result shows that the students' ages ranged from (17-20) have positive attitudes towards English oral presentation than the students' ages between (21-25) (26-35). i.e. According to the table N.01, shows that the first and the second groups (17-20) (21-25) have positive attitudes pertaining to speaking and performing oral presentation in English language comparing to the third group (26-35). As it is presented in the table.01, the students' ages (17-20) and (21-25) have positive attitudes. (M= 3.21, SD .91), (M= 3.18, SD .86) respectively.

Table1: Descriptive study

G: group

Scale	G	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error	95% Confidence Interval for Mean	
						Lower Bound	Upper Bound
Attitudes	17-20	6	3.21	.91	.37	2.25	4.17
	21-25	15	3.18	.86	.22	2.70	3.66
	26-35	9	2.91	.60	.20	2.44	3.37
	Total	30	3.11	.79	.14	2.81	3.40

Table2. Anova Results

Anova Results							
Scale	Source of Variance		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
attitudes	Between Groups		.512	2	.25	.39	.68
	Within Groups		17.65	27	.65		
	Total		18.16	29			

One-way between groups analysis of variance (ANOVA) was conducted to identify the three groups of students' attitudes pertaining to English oral presentation. The international university students were divided into three groups according to their ages (group one: 17-20; group2: 21-25; and group3: 26-35). The table N.02 shows the output of ANOVA analysis that there is no statistically significant difference at the $p < .05$ level among the three groups as the value indicates [(F =3.9), $p = .68$] and the degree of freedom ($df = 2$). Despite the real variances or differences in mean scores between the age groups was slightly small.

CONCLUSION

Attitude is among the effective factors which impeded students' speaking skill in different contexts especially in educational one. This study has examined the attitudes of international university students at Universiti Malaysia Pahang (UMP) in performing oral presentation in English language in academic settings. As Al-Tamimi and Shuib (2009) posited that student's motivation in language learning is effected by her/ his attitudes towards speaking language. Lennartson (2008) pointed out that students' negative attitudes can be turned into positive

attitude and having positive outcome and results due to positive attitudes that students do possess. i.e. The attitude is highly related to the outcome of the students or the successful/unsuccessful achievement of a student is entirely determined by the attitude of the students towards the object or the contextual position in which it is experienced by the students. The main objectives are to explore the university students' attitudes towards oral presentation in English language. And to investigate the differences of the international university students' attitudes with regards to their age. However, there was no statistically significant difference between the three groups. The study also revealed that university students intended to involve into various oral activities that are delivered in English language. Additionally, university students are still reluctant to show their attitudes pertaining to their oral presentation in English language in academic settings.

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