

# Oral presentation as authentic material for providing ESP instruction

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**Abstract:** *The paper investigates some perspectives of oral presentation as an authentic task for providing instruction to students who create their own presentations on a specified topic. For that purpose, undergraduate students who attend ESP courses were exposed to oral presentations prepared by their colleagues in order to be instructed on how to prepare their own presentations. Upon the task completion, a survey was conducted to collect the students' opinions on the impact of the instruction that contains authentic material on their preparation strategies, self-regulation and self-evaluation in the process of fulfilling the task. The results show that oral presentation used as authentic material for ESP instruction positively affect the strategies and activities that students use during the preparation for the task completion. It also promotes students' self-regulation and self-evaluation within the same process.*

**Keywords:** *oral presentation; authentic material; ESP instruction; strategies; self-regulation; self-evaluation*

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The instruction in ESP has been developed to meet the learners' needs for achieving specific purpose language ability [1]. Thus, its main goal should be to enable students to communicate efficiently in a vocational higher education setting or in their future workplace [1].

In this research, teaching instruction is based on students' oral presentations which represent authentic material intended to be used in the classroom context. We tend to explore whether the students' exposure to authentic material in oral presentations positively affects their preparation strategies including self-regulation and self-evaluation. We consider oral presentation as a particularly efficient task since it promotes the integration of all the language skills, making decisions, preparation for real-life communication, learner-centeredness and know-how to use technology [1].

The following passages reveal the qualities of the oral presentation as a widely used task in tertiary-level education. We are also telling the difference between authentic and methodologically modified material. Further on, we are discussing the benefits and disadvantages of the authentic material used in the classrooms.

## 2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

### 2.1. Oral Presentation as a task

Nunan highlights communicative language teaching as the most complex change in the 20th century teaching tradition [2]. In the 1970s, a bulk of various pedagogical and linguistic research concerning curricula development, teaching methodology and assessment spurred the expansion of communicative approach [3]. Similarly, Byram implies that linguistic, psychological, sociological and philosophical research served as the solid grounds for its development [4]. Therefore, several pivotal concepts are related to communicative language teaching such as communicative competence, learner-centeredness, learners' autonomy, group work, process-oriented work, task-based learning, etc. [4]. Additionally, contemporary research shows that the communicative teaching approach along with digital technology use is suitable for multimodal learning and the development of multimodal literacy [5].

Task-based language teaching (TBLT) stems from communicative language teaching [2]. However, while the language activities represented the core unit of communicative teaching, the task has been developed to be the most important concept of TBLT [3]. A task can be defined as an activity which enables students to engage language skills at their disposal and use them in order to fulfil a non-linguistic goal, thus conveying the meaning in a way that is similar to the real-life communicative situation [6]. In other words, in order to

communicate students should be exposed to real-life language and motivated to use it [7]. It is also desirable to draw their attention to language structures with the aim to make their communication more accurate.

Tasks can range from a simple listing, ranking or sequencing to the more complex ones such as analysing company performances, telling stories, etc. [8] and the project-based tasks which require students' collaboration [9]. Using TBLT in ESP in higher education with the students of technology and engineering enables FL use in the context that they can easily meet in their future occupational environment [10]. In tertiary-level education a task can include writing reports, business emails, giving presentations, writing scientific papers, etc.

An oral presentation is a widely used task in foreign language courses in higher education [11]. The oral presentation is a productive activity that is received by an audience [12]. It can range from a project or a group-work task to an individual activity [13]. In any of the mentioned circumstances it involves several different phases: 1) searching for the relevant information, 2) collecting necessary data and their evaluation, 3) selecting the most important issues and creating the presentation, 4) rehearsal of the prepared material and 5) presentation delivery. Various e-platforms used by educational institutions are particularly useful because they enable wide availability of online presentations.

The abovementioned arguments show that oral presentation is a complex task which enables students to use a foreign language to fulfil non-linguistic purpose by conveying the topical knowledge to the audience. The activity is suitable for students of higher-education levels. E-platforms can as well be used for the improvement and transparency of oral presentations.

## 2.2. Oral presentation as authentic material

Teaching material in tertiary level education should be designed to serve the purpose of equipping students with English which they could use in the vocational context. The authenticity, the contextual and topical range, tasks or activities, participants and social and pedagogical prompts have a significant role in choosing proper teaching material [1].

On the one hand, methodologically modified or pedagogic materials are intended for teaching and are therefore artificially simplified while on the other, authentic texts contain real-life unmodified materials [14]. The most frequent explanation of authentic materials is similar to the one offered by Adams [15]. According to this author, the authentic texts whether spoken or written, contain the language produced by and for the native speakers and therefore do not have primarily teaching and learning purposes. However, in our research, we

will confine to Morrow's definition which indicates that authentic material contains a real piece of language which enables a real speaker to convey a message to the real audience [16]. Gilmore accepts the same definition, adding that the concept of authenticity can also relate to the texts, participants, different social or cultural situations and purposes or their combinations [17].

Authentic materials in the classroom promote students' motivation due to their active involvement that enables learning and using language in a real-life manner by seeing, experiencing and practising [18]. Richards pays particular attention to videos as they are beneficial for students' comprehension since they offer both language inputs and a variety of non-verbal clues [19]. Macwan also indicates that the use of authentic materials, such as visual aids, as a teaching instruction promotes further communication that is similar to real-life situations [20]. As the main argument, he mentions that visual aids engage all the students' attention. Bajrami and Ismaili highlight the qualities of authenticity and originality as the most important benefits of using audio-visual materials in the classroom [21]. Videos can fulfil different teaching purposes such as providing the input information on the topics which students can use for further discussion, interactive tasks, self-study or evaluation. Borszéki agrees with the previous adding that besides raising students' interest, using visual aids as teaching instructions can help the retention of the knowledge acquired [22]. She refers to the pictures as clues for producing texts, making mind maps, authentic video clips, preparing Power Point presentations on ESP topics as the range of activities particularly suitable for promoting foreign language learning.

Furthermore, the advanced L2 learners show greater progress when being exposed to authentic materials [23]. Similarly, Jerković and Rakić explain that their research with technology and engineering students who were actively engaged in the tasks that included exposure to the authentic texts showed substantially better performance than the students who were taught on the basis of their usual coursebook texts [17]. The students' performance was measured within productive and interactive speaking activities that comprised oral presentations, business communication, telephone conversations and arranging business meetings.

The abovementioned arguments indicate that the use of authentic materials for teaching purposes is extremely valuable. It makes the process of learning foreign languages dynamic, interesting and natural. As such, it provides the necessary conditions for active learning and increases students' motivation. However, teachers should be cautious when choosing authentic materials for teaching purposes. In order to select proper

authentic resources, it should be considered whether they are suitable for students' age, interests, language knowledge and teaching goals [18]. Students will benefit from the authentic material only if it fits their language level, needs and expectations. It is also important to draw students' attention to language structures and the tasks teachers expect them to do, especially so when authentic material is used as instruction [19]. In other words, it is unrealistic to expect that mere exposure to authentic material will lead to language learning or acquisition.

Based on the previously exposed, one of the main ideas in this paper is to reveal the use of the students' video-recorded oral presentations as an authentic piece of material. The objective is also to check whether and to what degree such presentations promote students' preparation strategies, self-regulation and self-evaluation of their learning process.

### 3. Research design

#### 3.1. Research questions

The research was designed in order to answer the following research questions:

- Will the oral presentations as authentic material used for teaching instruction positively affect students' preparation strategies necessary for the completion of the task of presentation?
- Will the oral presentations as authentic material used for teaching instruction positively affect students' self-regulation and self-evaluation of the learning process when preparing for the presentation?

#### 3.2. Participants

The participants were 79 students of undergraduate vocational studies attending four different study programmes at the Faculty of Technical Sciences in Čačak (Production Management, Information Technology, Graphic Technology and Engineering Informatics and Computing). There were 57 male respondents and 22 female respondents. The majority of students, i.e. 58 of them were between 18 and 20 years old, while 12 students were between 20 and 25 years old. Only 9 of the students were older than 25. The students attended ESP courses for one semester. The research was conducted in the winter semester of the 2021/2022 academic school year.

#### 3.3. The task

An oral presentation is a compulsory pre-examination assignment that students prepare in pairs or in groups within their ESP courses. It takes about 8 lessons to prepare the presentation since the task includes several different stages: 1) choosing a topic, 2) searching for the material relating to the topic, 3) selecting the appropriate material, 4) creating the presentation, 5) rehearsal

and preparing for the report phase and 6) delivering a presentation.

During the winter semester of 2020/2021 five groups of students created their presentations, cam-corded them and posted them online using the MS Teams platform which we started using due to the Covid-19 pandemic situation. The recordings of their presentations were used as authentic video materials for the participants of the research to design their own presentations in the winter semester of 2021/2022. The main idea of using students' presentations as authentic material was to give instructions to their peers on how to prepare their own presentations.

In order to present a chosen topic successfully and efficiently, the students need to have background knowledge, language knowledge, clear structure and organization of the presentation, maintain eye contact with the audience, use the appropriate body language, be persuasive and enthusiastic, etc. [24]. Therefore, besides language knowledge and skills, a student needs to develop various communicative strategies and use paralinguistic clues to fulfill the task. We considered that video presentations would be a very useful source of authentic material used for giving instructions since the students would be able to pay attention to all the characteristics of a good presentation and use them to regulate their own process of fulfilling the task. Hence, for the sake of the research, the students were first given the opportunity to watch and listen to their colleagues' presentations and adjust their process of learning to suit their own needs.

The same group of students was subsequently exposed to instructions on how to prepare their presentations on the basis of the coursebook texts during regular classes. Students were able to read the texts, write down useful words and phrases and talk about their impressions and conclusions.

Thus, the students had the opportunity to use and compare two different types of instructions while preparing for their own performances.

#### 3.4. Research method and analysis

After the students presented their topics, a survey was conducted and a questionnaire was used to collect their answers on the preparation process. The statements were designed on the basis of the literature review presented in the theoretical background and the conducted research design. A five-point Likert scale with choices ranging from 1 strongly disagree to 5 strongly agree was used in the questionnaire. The main objective of the questionnaire was to identify the impact of oral presentations as EFL instruction on the strategies that the students use when they have the task of creating their own presentations.

The first eight statements were designed to check the activities and strategies that the students perform when preparing their presentations and they mostly refer to language acquisition and use as well as the qualities of successful presentations. The ninth and tenth statements relate to self-regulation of the learning process, while the last two questions investigate the process of self-evaluation in the phase of preparation for the deliverance.

Descriptive statistics was used for the analysis of the obtained results.

### 3.5. Results

The results are presented in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Students' perceptions of the oral presentation as ESP instruction vs coursebook material as ESP instruction

It is easier to prepare my presentation when:	1 I strongly disagree (%)	2 I disagree (%)	3 Neutral (%)	4 I agree (%)	5 I strongly agree (%)
1. I can watch and listen to my colleagues presenting their topics.	6.33	0	3.80	8.86	81.01
2. I can read the instructions about creating presentations from the coursebook material.	75.94	13.92	3.80	0	6.33
3. I can select and write down the words and phrases I myself find useful in my colleagues' presentations.	26.58	5.06	0	3.80	64.56
4. I can write down useful words and phrases suggested by the coursebook material.	63.29	5.06	0	0	31.65
5. I learn useful words and phrases when watching and listening to my colleagues.	10.13	2.53	0	12.66	74.68
6. I learn useful words and phrases from the coursebook material.	62.02	22.78	0	2.53	12.66
7. I spot the qualities of good presentations when watching my colleagues' presentations.	1.26	1.26	1.26	1.26	94.94
8. I read about the qualities of good presentations in my coursebook material.	87.34	7.59	1.26	1.26	2.53
9. I learn by watching online presentations whenever it is convenient for me.	1.26	1.26	0	1.26	96.20

10. I learn about presentations during regular classes.	91.14	5.06	0	2.53	1.26
11. I can evaluate my performance by comparing my presentation with the presentations of my colleagues.	0	0	1.26	2.53	96.20
12. I can evaluate my performance by comparing my presentation with the examples of successful presentations offered in the coursebook materials.	88.61	7.59	1.26	0	2.53

The obtained results reveal that a great majority of students (89.87%) agree (8.86%) or strongly agree (81.01%) that it is easier to prepare their presentations by watching and listening to their colleagues performing the same type of task. The results for the second statement confirm the previous findings since only 6.33% of students consider that it is easier to prepare a presentation when the instructions were given in their coursebook material. When we consider the third statement, it turns out that a great number of students (68.36%) agree (3.80%) or strongly agree (64.56%) that they find it easier to prepare their presentations by selecting the words and phrases they themselves discern as useful while watching their colleagues' presentations. As many as 31.65 % of students strongly agree that it is easier to write down words and phrases suggested by the coursebook material (statement 4). When the process of learning useful words and phrases is considered (statement 5), the great majority of students (87.34%) agree (12.66%) or strongly agree (74.68%) that it is easier to prepare their presentations when they watch and listen to their peers presenting, as opposed to their colleagues who agree (2.53%) or strongly agree (12.66%) that it is easier to learn the words and phrases from the coursebook material, only 15.19% (statement 6). Also, the results of the seventh question prove that almost all the students (96.20%) agree (1.26%) or strongly agree (94.94%) that they spot the qualities of a successful presentation when they watch their colleagues presenting. Accordingly, only 3.79% of students agree (1.26%) or strongly agree (2.53%) that it is easier to discern the qualities of a good presentation on the grounds of the coursebook texts (statement 8). As far as the ninth statement is concerned, the results show that the greatest majority of students (97.46%) agree (1.26%) or strongly agree (96.20%) that they prefer preparing for the presentation when it is convenient for them. Only a small percentage of students, i.e. 3.79 %, agree (2.53%) or strongly agree (1.26%) that preparations during regular

classes are more suitable for them (statement 10). If we take into account the results of the eleventh statement, it turns out that almost all the students (98.73%) agree (2.53%) or strongly agree (96.20%) that they evaluate their performance more easily while preparing for the presentation when they have the opportunity to compare their oral production with the performance of their colleagues. Only 2.53% of students evaluate their presentation more easily when they can compare it with the examples of successful presentations described in their coursebook texts (statement 12).

#### 4. Discussion

As far as the research questions are concerned, the previously exposed results suggest that the oral presentations as authentic material used for teaching instruction positively affect students' preparation strategies for the task of presentation since the majority of students confirmed that it is easier for them to prepare for their own presentations by watching and listening to their colleagues' performances and selecting and learning the useful words and phrases on their own. Also, authentic material used as teaching instruction promotes self-regulation of the learning process when students prepare for the presentations as well as self-evaluation during the process of preparation for the final report. The inferences based on the results imply that students can benefit from learning a foreign language when preparing presentations on the basis of authentic material even though the language is not produced by native speakers. This is probably due to the fact that the material is adjusted to their own level of FL knowledge, as well as to their own age and interest.

On top of this, we also showed that the purpose of students' presentations should not be restricted to eliciting their performance in order to assess their achievement. Presentations can also serve as a useful source of authentic material that can be used by other students as a model for assignment design and preparation activities. It is supposed that the students will produce the language suitable for their peers' age and interests. Thus, the teacher is encouraged to make the proper choice of authentic material that has already been made to suit their students' level of knowledge and understanding.

However, the study has its limitations. They mostly concern a small number of items that were investigated in the questionnaire. The other elements of successful presentations could also be investigated, such as the impact of video presentations on the development of paralinguistic qualities (eye contact, body language, enthusiasm and self-confidence while presenting, etc.).

#### 5. Conclusion

This paper described oral presentations as a useful source of authentic material that can be used in ESP courses in higher education. It provided deeper insights into the benefits of using students' performances to promote their peers' engagement and motivation to complete the tasks.

The students were actively engaged not only during the task fulfillment, but also during their exposure to the corresponding instruction. In other words, the input enabled real-life context for language learning since the students were able to listen, watch and experience the same task they were subsequently required to complete.

Accordingly, the results show that the respondents of the research found it easier to create their own presentations if they had the opportunity to watch and listen to their colleagues performing the same task than when they are exposed to the coursebook material. The contribution is the most prominent in the domain of self-regulation and self-evaluation strategies where almost all the students confirmed the advantages of the use of authentic material.

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