



## ORAL PRESENTATIONS: A POWERFUL TOOL TO DEVELOP COMMUNICATION SKILLS

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### ABSTRACT

*The aim of this research article is to develop communication skills among the learners of English language. Generally, it is observed that most of the students are not confident about their communication skills though they are good at written communication. Especially, students who come from rural areas and those have studied in regional mediums face such problems. It usually happens, due to lack of exposure in the target language, cultural and economical background. Environment in which they grow up also plays a crucial role to develop communication skills because teachers, co-students and parents seldom speak or motivate them to speak in English.*

**Key Words:** Verbal Communication, Pronunciation, Body Language, Visual aids, Handouts

### INTRODUCTION

The book, *Strengthen Your Steps* (p-131), clearly mentioned that, how oral presentations have become a part of our lives and it can be used as a powerful tool to improve communication skills of learners of English language. Oral presentations are a form of verbal communication which is focused, purposeful and structured. This form of communication has gained importance recently and is being used extensively not only in offices and business organizations but also in schools, colleges and universities.

R.K.Chada explains the importance of oral communication in his book '*Communication Techniques and Skills*' that, our success as a professional depends, to a great extent, on our communication skills. Oral communication will take more of our time. We will be called

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upon participate in meetings and group discussions, deliver speeches, conduct or attend interviews, discuss important matters on the telephone or simply have face-to-face interaction with people. Our skills in formal as well as informal forms of oral communication will be on test. You will secure quicker promotions, achieve honour and prestige, if the communication skills are of high order. Some of us have the inborn flair for communication while others can acquire it by training and practice (p-292).

### **Verbal communication:**

Verbal communication is nothing but oral presentation in which speaker uses language with the help organs of mouth or it can also be defined as language which we use with the help of mouth is called verbal communication or oral presentation. It normally includes audibility, pronunciation, intonation, word stress, voice modulation, usage of grammar, selection of vocabulary etc. Students have to be well aware of all these in order to give an effective presentation. Though they use all the above it still conveys just 25% of effectiveness of our presentations remaining 75% speaks non-verbal communication.

### **Non-verbal communication:**

It is a fact that, non-verbal communication or body language is very much essential to give lively and interactive presentations. It basically includes eye contact, facial expressions, posture, stance, pleasant smile on face, dress sense etc. As research says body language speaks 75% where as verbal communication speaks just 25% which shows the importance of body language in our day to day communication and presentations. Students have to realize that importance of both verbal and non-verbal communication and make sure that they go together in order to give an effective presentation.

### **Oral Presentations as a tool:**

Teachers of English as well as other subject teachers can use oral presentations as an effective tool in classrooms or labs to develop students' communication skills. Firstly, we have to explain what oral presentations are and how they are going to help to improve their communication skills. Secondly, teach them how verbal communication which includes voice, audibility, grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, word stress and intonation are useful in order to improve their way of giving effective presentations. Finally, teach them how non-verbal communication/body language plays crucial role in making presentations lively and effectively.

Broadly speaking, oral presentations are divided into three types: They are as follows;

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1. Extempore /Impromptu presentations
2. Prepared presentations
3. Seminar presentations

### 1. Extempore/Impromptu Presentations:

Extempore/Impromptu presentations are spontaneous presentations. Generally, in this type of presentations students are expected to give presentation or speak without any preparation on the spot. It demands a good level of presence of mind and self confidence apart from the skill of organizing material in a rapid pace. If they want to perform well, they have to be thorough with all kinds of current issues. Therefore, they can speak without any hesitation, fumble, tense, nervousness, and repetition. Normally, these kinds of presentations are very useful to build their confidence, to improve fluency, accuracy and appropriateness. They are also useful to develop their spontaneous usage of language, vocabulary and both verbal and non-verbal communication skills.

### 2. Prepared Presentations:

For prepared presentations students will be given some time and topic will be given in advance to prepare well. Here, students would expect to prepare well and give better presentations. Usually, in this format of presentations they will get some time to think and gather some material. Once they are ready with gathering material and finding resources of material they can organize presentations what to speak in introductory part, body of the presentations and conclusion. These types of presentations are very much useful to build their confidence, in particular, in the case of students who come from rural areas and studied in their regional mediums.

### 3. Seminar Presentations:

It is true that, seminars have become part of students' lives these days. Seminar presentations are very useful tools to build up students' communication skills. They are somewhat similar to prepared presentations because in both, students will be given time to prepare and think. But in this format students would get more time comparatively prepared presentations, they can visit library to collect material and also consult both online and offline resources.

### Elements of Oral Presentation:

Let us discuss some of the important elements of oral presentations. They are as follows;



1. Selection of Topic
2. Collection of information
3. Planning
4. Rehearsals

### **1. Selection of Topic:**

First and foremost task is to identify the topic. In the selection of the topic students can take help from their teachers if they are not confident. Teachers have to be friendly and approachable so that they can approach without any hesitation. It is completely teachers' responsibility to create such kind of environment within classroom and outside the classroom. We may not face this problem with students who come from urban areas and English medium background but we will definitely face with students who come from traditional classroom environment and rural areas.

### **2. Collection of Information:**

Second important element of oral presentation is collecting information. They have to find out the right sources. For examples: Visiting library, accessing internet and taking help from friends or from subject expertise.

### **3. Planning:**

Once if they collect information from different sources they have to plan properly. For example: Firstly, what to speak and how to speak in introductory part examples like use of quotes or anecdotes etc. Secondly, middle or body of the presentation and finally, conclusion of the presentation with recollecting all the important points.

### **4. Rehearsals:**

It is always good if we practice before go for final presentation. Teachers can ask their students to practice in front of the mirror before they present before audience or spectators so that they can ensure facial expressions, stance and posture. They can also take help from their friends those are really good enough with all these techniques.

### **Use of Visual Aids / Handouts:**

Students also can be encouraged to use either visual aids or handouts in order to give effective and interactive presentations based on their convenient. Most of us know the

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effectiveness video clips which are relevant to topic and handouts which can break the monotony of traditional presentations and involve audience into the discussion.

### **Barriers to Effective Presentation:**

One of the fundamental barriers which most of the students face is fear or hesitation. It happens if they do not prepare well or sometimes due to lack of confidence on given topic they face problems. To avoid this problem, the only solution is they have to work hard or prepare well.

### **Unable to Control One's ideas:**

This is also one of the problematic issues during the presentations. Sometimes, students or teachers try to deviate from the given topic; one has to be very careful and cautious by not speaking points which are not relevant to presentation topic. It is also fact that if someone knows subject very well they cannot control themselves rather they keep speaking without thinking about audience.

### **Enhancement of Presentations Skills:**

Presentations can be enhanced through various methods especially by using non verbal devices. They help to attract, to get attention, to motivate and clarify points to the listeners. Some of the devices are power point projector, graphs and other visual aids such as chart and photos.

### **Steps involved in Oral Presentations:**

- The first step is to decide the topic. It is always good to choose a topic which is latest and appropriate and it has to be interesting also for the presenter and audience.
- The next step engages collecting materials and data based on the chosen topic. Learners can access internet, visit library and discuss with friends etc.
- After collecting information, we need to organize them in an appropriate manner. The aim should be to provide logical and meaningful discussion. A draft should be made keeping in view the time given and it should be revised again and again to make it more suitable.
- Lastly, we need to practice, rehearsing the speech before presenting it in front of the friends helps in boosting confidence. Practice provides an opportunity to understand flaws in the speech and at the same time correct them. While practicing, time taken



should be noted down. We can practice in front our friend or even alone before the mirror. The point however is to improve the delivery by identifying mistakes and removing them.

### Some quick tips for Effective Presentation:

- The language should be properly used and formal language rather than informal one is preferred. Use simple sentences rather than difficult one. Colloquial speech should be avoided. Jargons and technical words are to be carefully used so as not to give needed, they should be explained clearly.
- We should wear appropriate dress, preferably a formal dress which gives a smart and comfortable look is recommended.
- Body language of the presenter needs to be natural and comfortable. Eye contact, facial expression, use of hands, posture and other gestures convey message to the audience even if the speaker is not aware of it.
- A good body language means maintaining eye contact with the audience, having a warm facial expression, smiling, standing or sitting erect comfortably and using hand gestures to emphasis points made.
- As the communication has to be done orally, we need to be careful about pronunciation, accent and audibility. Pace should be medium, not very slow and not very fast.

### CONCLUSION:

Let us conclude by recollecting some of the important points what we discussed in this entire article. Firstly, it focused what oral presentations are and how they are helpful to develop students' communication skills. Secondly, it highlighted the differences between verbal communication and non-verbal communication and how oral communication speaks just 25% and where as non-verbal communication conveys 75% in order to give an effective presentation. Thirdly, it emphasized types of oral presentations and how they are different from one another. Fourthly, it briefed up elements of presentations and how they can be improved. Fourthly, it highlighted barriers to effective presentations such as fear, hesitation and lack of preparation. It also talked about how students usually deviate from the topic and how they cannot control their ideas. Lastly, it concluded by discussing how to enhance presentations skills with quick tips. This is how we can use oral presentation skills as a powerful tool to develop communication skills among students who are studying English as a second and foreign language.



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