

THE EFFECTIVENESS OF USING TED TALKS IN TEACHING PRESENTATION SKILLS FOR ENGLISH MAJORED STUDENTS

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Abstract: *The objective of this research was to explore the effect of applying TED Talks as an international platform to promote the first-year English majored students' presentation performance. Even though a lot of research has been done on how to help English language learners become better speakers, few of them focus on using TED videos and prove them to be efficient educational resources for enhancing students' presentation skills. Therefore, more work needs to be conducted to clarify the positive results brought by using videos in TED. The focus of this paper is ninety first-year English majored students at Dong Nai Technology University ranging from 18-20 years old. A combination of methods was applied to collect quantitative and qualitative data, including questionnaire, class observation and semi-structured interview. The results showed a positive influence on students' presentation ability when TED videos were implemented in language teaching. In addition, this study indicated students' positive reactions toward the use of the video-based learning program.*

Keywords: *effectiveness, English teaching, presentation skills, TED Talks, videos.*

I. Introduction

Many English teachers focus primarily on teaching new vocabulary and grammar structures to their students, which works well if all the students are merely taking national exams. However, according to Chang and Huang (2015), oral presentations are now one of the most important spoken activities for English language learners in contexts that are related to both studying and working. For this reason, presentation skills are considered central to foreign language learning and teaching (Evan, 2013).

Presentation skills have indeed been a fundamental component of university-level English language courses because of their rising significance recently. Hsu (2012) pointed out that oral presentations help students effectively convey their thoughts, opinions, and even statistics to the audience during presentation sessions. Presentation skills are necessary for students to succeed in the classroom as well as in the business after they begin their professions. Therefore, language trainers need to search for the most efficient approaches to assist students make a fluent presentation.

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In actuality, using ICT (Information Communication Technology) learning resources helps university students improve their oral presentation abilities. One ICT tool that is useful for fostering speaking abilities, particularly oral presentation is TED (Technology, Entertainment, and Design). Richard Saul Wurman originally intended to organize TED to be a conference, which took place in February 1984. The speeches given at these conferences are typically available online, and both native and non-native English speakers often try to mimic the style of delivery, and vocabulary resources of these lectures. Salem (2019) clarified that since native English speakers gave these speeches, non-native speakers are encouraged to conduct talks of a similar nature on their own. As a result, TED Talks can significantly aid in expanding students' vocabulary and helping them become better presenters.

The purpose of this study was to examine the educational benefits of TED Talks by investigating the following research questions:

- (1) What are the effects of using TED Talks to enhance students' oral presentation skills?
- (2) What are students' attitudes towards the application of TED Talks?

II. Literature review

2.1. Oral presentation skills

Oral presentations are a type of communication in which a speaker employs spoken words to share ideas or information with the audience (Donohoe, 2020). In fact, oral presentations come in a variety of formats, including speeches, panel discussions, debates, lectures, and seminars. Importantly, oral presentations in the classroom are seen to be helpful for the students. Miles (2009) asserts that presentations could help people become

more proficient speakers, particularly in front of audiences. Furthermore, Tsang (2020) discovered that oral presentations aid in the development of students' critical thinking abilities as well as their capacity for convincing and effective communication. Students who got appropriate instruction in oral presentation techniques were judged to have significantly improved in their learning outcomes.

Though it hasn't gotten much academic attention, teaching oral presentation skills is stressed in many educational contexts (De Grez et al, 2010). Currently, presenting proficiently is one of the competencies listed in several universities for graduation requirements. Obviously, employers usually recruit graduates with excellent presentation skills (Alshare & Hindi, 2004). However, making presentations, whether done alone or in a group, can also be difficult. The fear of performing in front of audiences is one of the most prevalent problems that students deal with (Chen, 2015). It is easy to understand that not many students are confident enough to do an oral presentation, especially in the target language. Besides, Chen (2015) stated that some factors like incorrect pronunciation, and the lack of practice also become students' challenges in oral presentations. Thus, the help of proper learning strategies might be one of the measures to solve problems in oral presentations.

2.2. The implementation of TED Talks in language teaching

As previously mentioned, the Sapling Foundation established TED as a conference and later turned it into a non-profit organization. TED offers talks and presentations by globally renowned inspirational personalities on a wide range of fascinating subjects, and it has been translated into more than 100 languages. Recently, videos on TED address myths

and facts on various subjects. The good news is that they can now be downloaded with just a click and have multilingual subtitles (Griffin, 2015). In the light of recent development of ICT tools, videos are used in education. Sherman (2003) stated that video may be used with less effort and with tremendous enjoyment and profit, making it an excellent tool for expanding one's horizons in the English-speaking world.

TED Talks become a helpful resource for bringing printed language closer to life because of the videos' brief duration, the available transcripts, and the common language used in the discussions (Kaiser, 2014). In fact, TED Talks offer a broad vocabulary and straightforward approaches to communicating concepts with innovative viewpoints. It is possible to become familiar with native speakers' perspectives in academic settings by listening to their speeches (Brown, 1994). Since audio-visual content is more engaging than traditional printed letters, students can get more engaged in the English language by watching TED videos. Additionally, viewing TED videos broadens students' vocabulary and increases their past knowledge of several unusual topics that they would not have learned in school.

Likewise, according to Ziebell (2019), TED videos are excellent tools for ESL teachers. It goes without saying that they assist students in realizing the numerous advantages of TED for improving their proficiency in the language, particularly about vocabulary, ideas, and structures. Additionally, this method of teaching English helps students become accustomed to utilizing the Internet for English language learning rather than sending texts, sharing news, spreading words, purchasing online, etc. Moreover, videos can be used in the

classroom by English teachers as useful resources to develop presentation skills. Students become more motivated to learn and give speeches in English because they are able to supply themselves with real speeches that have proper pronunciation and formal language.

Using TED Talks not only enhances a learner's vocabulary and background knowledge, but also facilitates better idea organization. We can easily understand the speaking styles, linguistic choices, and conceptual organization of TED speakers as we watch their videos. Stevenson (2013) claimed that using media produced by native speakers can provide authentic examples of natural speech. Overall, there is no denying that TED videos have a lot of potential benefits for English language learners. Consequently, it is recommended that students should use TED Talks as an effective learning resource for enhancing presentation skills.

III. Research methodology

3.1. Methodology and methods

In the research, the mixed method was applied which conducted the analysis using both qualitative and quantitative data including questionnaire, class observation, and semi-structured interview.

3.1.1. Questionnaire

Initially, the researcher employed a questionnaire to gather data regarding the students' frequency of using the Internet as a tool for studying, TED's popularity among students, the unique obstacles to build their professional potential, and students' perceptions about using TED videos. The researcher offered a few options for the students to consider.

3.1.2. Observation

Secondly, observation was also used as the main source of collecting data in this study. Class observation was implemented

on week 4, week 6, and week 8 during the experiment. Each observed lesson lasted two periods with clear criteria for marking. After eight weeks of the process, the researcher was able to make a conclusion on the efficiency of teaching students presentation skills with TED videos.

3.1.3. Semi-structured interview

Thirdly, to get more detailed and insightful answers from the students, semi-structured interviews were done during the last week of the experiment. Five of the ninety participants were randomly chosen by the researcher. Then, interviews were conducted in-person in the university library's group study room. With the approval of the interview subjects, these were tape-recorded, transcribed verbatim, and then translated.

3.2. Participants

Ninety students from different classes were selected randomly to take part in the study. These individuals are all first-year English majors at Dong Nai Technology University. It should be mentioned that the participants' levels of English proficiency varied. However, they could understand questionnaire items and interview questions to provide proper responses in English.

3.3. Data Analysis

On the one hand, Microsoft Excel was used to process the information gathered for the questionnaire data. Next, by precisely entering the code of the chosen answer for every question in the cell beneath its header, all the data was put into the Excel spreadsheet. For every question, the frequencies and percentages of response items were determined using this computer software. The opinions of students on the use of TED Talks in the classroom were determined by looking at the numerical data expressed as percentages. Graph, pie chart, and table were then used to visually represent the data.

On the other hand, the observational notes and the interview transcripts were carefully examined, and the first concepts were also recorded, in order to obtain qualitative data. To ascertain the variations and advancements in student performance, involvement, and classroom environment, two observation notes were compared for creating initial code for the interview data systematically. Two main themes that connected to the two research questions emerged from the sorting of the various codes: the advantages of TED Talks and students' reactions to TED videos. A few chosen participant excerpts were used as examples in the final analysis.

IV. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results of the questionnaire

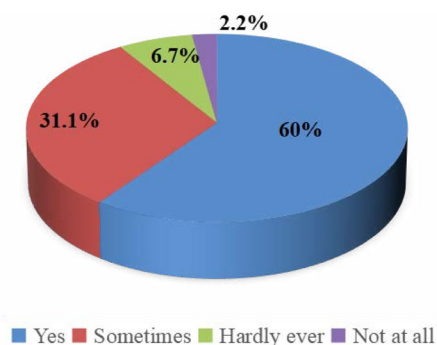


Figure 1. Using the ICT tools for studying

Figure 1 reveals students' frequency of using the internet as a tool for studying. The pie chart shows us the fact that students nowadays are more capable of making use of the Internet as a supplement for their schoolwork. Approximately 60% of surveyed students claimed that they found the Internet a good source that provided information and other soft materials. However, 31.1% of the students stated that they could balance their acquiring study materials, both from traditional books and from the Internet. From the two figures seen above, we can confidently affirm that the Internet is now an indispensable source for those who are serious about their studying.

Disappointingly, a smaller proportion at 6.7 % and 2.2% of participants hardly ever and never utilized the Internet for educational purposes respectively. Hence, the minority of those who are unfamiliar with using the Internet to perfect their school performance should start getting along with it.

Figure 2 illustrates how popular TED videos are among students. 31.1% of the students were using TED videos as a tool

to boost their language learning process. Moreover, about 35.6% of the participants used TED Talks only for entertainment. However, it was a good sign that they do know well about TED videos, so later they could utilize TED for educational purposes. In fact, the students who rarely watched TED videos and never heard of it accounted for one-third of the participants. This could sound negative, so it is important for teachers to introduce TED Talks to their learners.

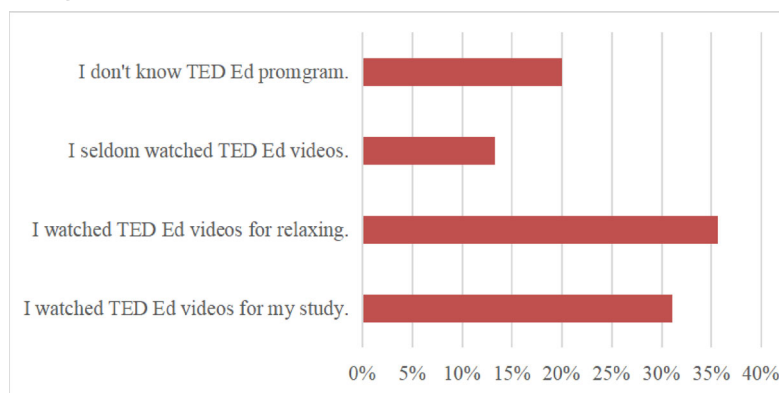


Figure 2. Students' views on TED's popularity

Table 1. What students lack while giving a presentation

What students lack while giving a presentation	
Grammar patterns	22.2%
Vocabulary	55.6%
Background knowledge	53.3%
Pronunciation	35.6%
Idea organization	84.4%
Non-verbal presentation skills	91.1%

Table 1 shows what students claim they lack while giving presentations in class. Only 22.2% of participants stated that they did not acquire sufficient grammatical structures. Meanwhile, more than half of the students revealed that they lack background knowledge and the necessary vocabulary to fulfill their tasks. Therefore, most English learners who do not catch up with up-to-date knowledge cannot respond accordingly to the tasks given. In addition, 35.6% of the total participants had mispronunciation in speaking English. A large proportion of

students was really in need of the skills for organizing ideas and using non-verbal codes at 84.4% and 91.1% respectively. It once again discloses the importance of TED Talks in providing crucial elements for making better presentations.

Additionally, the students were asked to share their views about other aspects of using TED videos to improve their presentation skills. Figure 3 expresses the students' opinions on applying TED videos in the classroom. Most students (88.9%) showed that they received more useful authentic materials from watched videos. Also, 80% of the students indicated TED videos helped them do tasks quickly. When the majority of students found the benefits of using TED Talks, it was not surprising that 91% of them revealed that watching sample videos on TED made them more confident when practicing the presentation tasks. Noticeably, the results presented 86.7% of students thought TED videos

provided them non-verbal presentation skills to be successful presenters. In particular, 100% of students admitted that they learned good presentation structures

after watching videos. To sum up, the figure indicated that TED videos brought benefits to most students which affect positively their presentation performance.

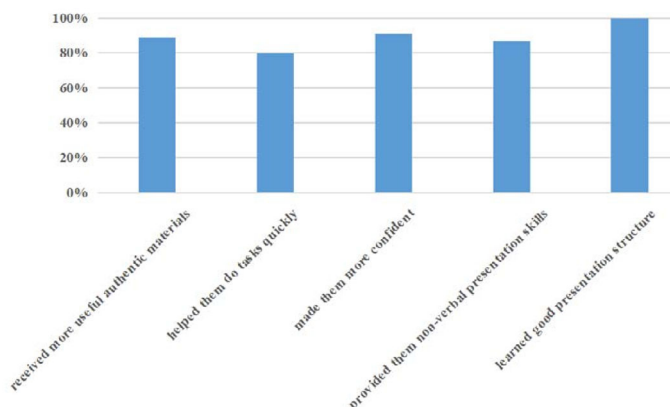


Figure 3. Students' views about using TED Talks

4.2. Results of the interviews

4.2.1. The benefits of TED Talks

The data from interviews suggested that using TED Talks in EFL classrooms brought many advantages for students. First of all, the students said that watching videos gave them additional opportunities to be exposed to real content, which improved their ability to present. Furthermore, they recognized that they could discover new ideas and knowledge when viewing the talks. As two students stated:

"I often watch TED videos on YouTube and I can practice what I've learned. I can use the ideas that I get from the videos to complete my task. So I think TED videos can improve my presentation skills". [Student 1]

"After watching videos, I can take note of new words, and sentence structures, and imitate the speaker's way of presentation as well. It really works". [Student 3]

Secondly, three students mentioned improvement in pronunciation while speaking that they learned through videos. They also prepared the tasks faster and better when they needed to present in class. One student said:

"I pronounce incorrectly some words while giving my ideas. After watching videos I myself can correct them. It is useful for me". [Student 4]

Eventually, the students remarked that TED videos helped them reduce stress and gain more self-confidence when speaking in class. As one student shared:

"It presents a significant challenge for me to speak in class. However, with the help of sample videos on the TED program, I can share my ideas now. [Student 2]

4.2.2. Students' attitudes towards TED Talks

Each of the five students made extremely nice statements about using TED Talks in the classroom. "I like it" was a popular response in interviews. However, they enjoyed TED videos for various reasons. One of their answers was:

"The videos assist me very much. I am provided useful skills for giving presentations. So I can perform better". [Student 5]

In general, the students found the videos played in class enjoyable because these videos helped them increase their confidence, enrich their background knowledge thanks to a variety of topics, and create a relaxed learning environment.

“I love watching videos. It is very interesting to discover new knowledge about different topics. After watching lots of videos, I can perform my presentation tasks better”. [Student 2].

4.3. Results of the classroom observations

First of all, the results demonstrated students' improvement in self-motivated linguistic input. The majority of students concurred that they would rather mimic the pronunciation and intonation of the speakers. They also used words, phrases, and sentence structures from the videos in their own presentations. The outcomes showed students' vocabulary development after watching videos. It's equally important that the observation results also highlighted the students' linguistic production. Prior to giving a presentation in class, students make lots of effort to practice until they can speak clearly and fluently. It became more common for students to integrate their own speeches with what they have heard from the videos to make their task a better version. They were willing to respond to queries from their peers after completing their speech, demonstrating their eagerness to communicate in English. Finally, the findings displayed that students were fully aware of the role that nonverbal language played in giving presentations. For example, students paid much more attention to the importance of facial expressions, gestures, eye contact and body language during their speeches. In short, it appears that the students have made some progress in terms of their classroom presentation skills. The integration of TED videos in language teaching has effectively inspired students to learn languages and thoroughly love the educational process.

V. Conclusion

The study's findings clearly showed that an increasing number of students were extremely motivated and had opportunities to enhance their presentation skills. After

analysis and discussion of the findings, the researcher can conclude that a large number of students supported the use of TED videos in language teaching and learning. Nevertheless, in order to make use of TED videos, teachers have to conduct many steps. Firstly, teachers need to find out good sources of TED Talks containing attractive, suitable, and educational topics. Secondly, teachers have to provide students with knowledge of vocabulary, and structures involved in the topics so that students can understand and develop their ideas. Moreover, teachers are always a facilitator whenever students have troubles. Finally, teachers need to give suitable corrective feedback for students to recognize their mistakes and perform better for the next time. On the other hand, the researcher recommends further studies on the use of TED Talks for boosting other English language skills so that students can get better results in English learning.

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HIỆU QUẢ CỦA VIỆC SỬ DỤNG CÁC BÀI DIỄN THUYẾT CỦA TED TRONG GIẢNG DẠY KỸ NĂNG THUYẾT TRÌNH CHO SINH VIÊN CHUYÊN NGỮ

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Tóm Tắt: Mục tiêu của nghiên cứu này là tìm ra hiệu quả trong việc áp dụng các bài diễn thuyết của TED như một nền tảng học tập quốc tế để nâng cao kỹ năng thuyết trình của sinh viên năm nhất chuyên ngành tiếng Anh. Mặc dù rất nhiều nghiên cứu đã được thực hiện để giúp người học cải thiện kỹ năng thuyết trình, nhưng rất ít nghiên cứu tập trung vào việc sử dụng những bài diễn thuyết của TED và chứng minh chúng là nguồn tài nguyên giáo dục hiệu quả để nâng cao kỹ năng thuyết trình của sinh viên. Vì vậy, cần thực hiện nhiều nghiên cứu hơn nữa để làm rõ những kết quả tích cực đạt được thông qua việc sử dụng các bài diễn thuyết của tổ chức TED. Đối tượng của nghiên cứu này là 90 sinh viên năm nhất chuyên ngành Tiếng Anh tại Đại học Công nghệ Đồng Nai, trong độ tuổi từ 18-20. Một phương pháp tổng hợp đã được sử dụng để thu thập dữ liệu định lượng và định tính gồm có bảng câu hỏi khảo sát, dự giờ lớp học và phỏng vấn. Kết quả cho thấy khi ứng dụng các bài diễn thuyết của TED trong giảng dạy ngôn ngữ đã ảnh hưởng tốt đến kỹ năng thuyết trình của sinh viên. Ngoài ra, nghiên cứu này còn chỉ ra thái độ tích cực của sinh viên đối với việc sử dụng phương pháp học tập dựa trên bài diễn thuyết của TED.

Từ Khóa: hiệu quả, giảng dạy tiếng Anh, kỹ năng thuyết trình, bài diễn thuyết của TED, băng hình.

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