

Exploring EFL students' challenges in oral presentations at National University of Battambang

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ABSTRACT

This study explored the challenges university students encounter in oral presentations, strategies for improving these skills, and the role of lecturers in enhancing students' presentation abilities. Using a quantitative research approach, the researcher applied descriptive and inferential statistical analysis through statistical package for social sciences to examine data collected from 200 bachelor's degree English as a foreign language (EFL) students from the National University of Battambang, Cambodia. Results reveal that EFL learners struggle with issues such as limited preparation time, presentation anxiety, and discomfort with peer evaluation. The results of independent sample t-test showed no significant gender differences, $t(198) = 1.062$, $p = 0.289$. However, a one-way ANOVA indicated a statistically significant difference in oral presentation difficulties among different class levels ($F[3, 196] = 3.294$, $p = 0.022$). This ANOVA analysis found no significant difference among class ranks regarding coping strategies ($F[3, 196] = 2.220$, $p = 0.087$). In contrast, there was a statistically significant difference among class levels ($F[3, 196] = 4.328$, $p = 0.006$). Furthermore, EFL learners utilized a range of strategies to improve their oral presentation skills, such as observing peers, boosting their confidence, incorporating visual aids, and relying on brief notes instead of fully scripted speeches. Instructors played a vital role in this development by ensuring sufficient preparation time, creating a supportive learning environment, and offering constructive feedback. Recognizing these specific challenges in oral presentations allowed educators to refine their teaching methods more effectively.

Keywords: EFL learners, oral presentation, difficulties, lecturers' roles, coping strategies

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INTRODUCTION

In Cambodia, 189 universities operate under the jurisdiction of 17 ministries and one secretariat, spanning 20 provinces and Phnom Penh. These universities include 79 public and 110 privates. Notably, the enrollment rate annually in higher education increase more than doubled between 2003 and 2023, rising from 14,778 to 284,599 students (MoEYS, 2023). A bilingual education model incorporating in both English and Khmer languages could be more advantageous for educational programs in Cambodia (Bunrosy & Vireak, 2024; Lan et al., 2024a, 2024b; Long et al., 2024). English serves as a crucial international language in Cambodia, facilitating broad communication. The development of English proficiency is closely tied to the teaching methodologies used in educational institutions (Clement & Murugavel, 2018; Setiyadi, 2020; Surkamp & Viebrock, 2018). This relationship is influenced by learners' diverse objectives, which often emphasize effective global communication. As a result, English language teaching and learning play a fundamental role in meeting these communicative needs (Chan, 2018; Clement & Murugavel, 2018). English as a foreign language (EFL) learners enhance their proficiency by integrating four-

core language skills—reading, listening, writing, and speaking—alongside grammar, pronunciation, and utilizing tools of information and communication technology (Pardede, 2020; Sukarno & Latif, 2023).

Among the various language skills, oral presentation plays a crucial role in English language teaching, particularly in higher education, where the goal is to develop learners' speaking proficiency. In many Asian educational systems, including Cambodia, traditional teaching methods have largely focused on rote memorization and written exams, making the transition to oral presentations especially challenging. These difficulties are further intensified by limited exposure to English in daily life, performance anxiety, and cultural perceptions of public speaking (Tareen et al., 2023). In Cambodian higher education, particularly in EFL classrooms, oral presentations are integrated into nearly all subjects. Proficiency in this skill is essential for students to effectively articulate their ideas, as English is used not only for academic purposes but also for broader communication needs (Heng, 2017).

Problem Statement

All students have the opportunity to develop their language skills, boost their confidence, and improve their communicative competence through oral presentations, which are a vital aspect of language

learning, particularly for EFL learners. However, many EFL students encounter considerable difficulties when delivering presentations. These challenges stem from various factors, including linguistic, psychological, and pedagogical aspects, as well as a lack of confidence, fear of making mistakes, shyness, and environmental influences (Riftriani et al., 2019). Additionally, research by Sam et al. (2024) and Ekmekçi (2018) has identified key difficulties faced by EFL learners. Sam et al. (2024) noted that students often struggle with limited knowledge, low self-confidence, low self-esteem, minimal class participation, insufficient practice, and weak listening comprehension. Likewise, Ekmekçi (2018) underscored the learners frequently experience anxiety, nervousness, and shyness during oral presentations, sometimes even trembling uncontrollably.

This study sought to examine the perceptions of EFL learners at the National University of Battambang regarding challenges they face during oral presentations. While oral presentations are an essential part of the curriculum, there is a research gap specifically focusing on the difficulties encountered by Cambodian EFL learners. This gap highlights the need for a comprehensive analysis of these challenges. By identifying the specific obstacles learners encounter, this study aims to propose effective coping strategies and pedagogical interventions to improve their presentation skills and overall learning experience. To achieve these objectives, this study looks for the answer to the following questions:

1. What are the most common difficulties EFL learners perceive in their oral presentations?
2. What strategies do EFL learners employ to enhance the effectiveness of their oral presentations?
3. How do EFL learners perceive their lecturer's role in improving their oral presentation skills?
4. Is there a notable difference between male and female EFL learners' perceptions of oral presentations?
5. Are there significant differences in EFL learners' perceptions of oral presentations across different academic levels (freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors)?

LITERATURE REVIEW

Advantages and Challenges of Oral Presentations for EFL Learners in Higher Education

Effective oral practice, especially through oral presentations, plays a critical role in developing speaking skills among EFL learners in higher education, shaped by global English proficiency standards and the cultural and linguistic challenges students encounter. Oral practice is particularly beneficial for enhancing speaking abilities in language learners, especially those studying EFL in university, with oral presentations being especially valuable (Riadil, 2020). The global prominence of English as the international language of communication underscores its significance at all educational levels. Al Asmari (2015) notes that preparatory year students in Saudi Arabia view oral presentations as major challenges, mainly due to their fear of making mistakes and limited opportunities to practice with peers or teachers. Anxiety related to the content, oral proficiency, and delivery is further compounded by students' cultural backgrounds (Tian & Mahmud, 2018). In the settings examined, students often face difficulties with accuracy, vocabulary, and fluency, leading to frequent pauses (Perera &

Castro, 2024). Indonesian students in international programs experience communication breakdowns in English due to insufficient linguistic competence and challenges in sociolinguistics, strategy, and discourse, including issues with literal translation (Fitriani, 2019).

The Impact of Oral Presentations on Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Skills

Oral presentations have a significant influence on students' speaking abilities, helping them develop grammar structures, vocabulary, suprasegmental features, situational response skills, language selection, discourse strategies, and overall communication techniques (Riadil, 2020). In Bangladesh, EFL learners in higher education who use English for presentations demonstrate better pronunciation skills than those who rely on their native language or dialect (Noor, 2021). Students with lower English proficiency tend to experience higher levels of communication anxiety due to their limited use of social, fluency-focused, meaning-negotiation, and message-reduction strategies (Liu, 2018). Comparative studies indicate that learners participating in oral presentations perform better than those engaged in free discussions, although both groups have their distinct strengths and challenges (Sotoudehnama & Hashamdar, 2016). Turkish freshman students face difficulties in enhancing their EFL skills through oral presentations due to limited practical exposure and the predominance of classroom-based English use. However, student-created oral presentations can improve fluency, self-confidence, collaboration, interaction, and motivation in learning English (Ekmekçi, 2018).

Factors Affecting EFL Learners' Oral Performance and Proficiency

Familiarity with speaking tasks enhances performance, engagement, and reduces errors. Students tend to perform better on topics they are familiar with, using more words, making fewer mistakes, and more effectively making self-corrections (Kazemi & Zarei, 2015; Nazemi & Rezvani, 2019). For Iranian EFL learners, the content of speaking tasks greatly affects their engagement in L2 oral performance, with familiar tasks leading to more detailed responses in less time and fewer mistakes (Nazemi & Rezvani, 2019). Al-Hassaani and Al-Saalmi (2022) suggest that Saudi EFL learners need sufficient classroom time to practice speaking and should be encouraged to use English both inside and outside the classroom to improve their proficiency. Alshammari (2022) notes that low English proficiency negatively impacts EFL learners' oral presentations, influenced by factors such as educational goals, student characteristics, teacher effectiveness, curriculum design, assessment methods, and practicality. Sahrana (2018) studied the alignment of grammatical sequencing in four textbook series with the processability theory (PT) learning sequence by (Pienemann et al., 2005; Pienemann & Lenzing, 2020). The results show that while the textbooks generally follow PT guidelines in the initial stages, they exhibit inconsistencies in later stages, particularly in the sequencing of morphological elements.

Oral Presentations Anxiety among EFL Learners in Higher Education

EFL learners in higher education frequently encounter significant difficulties in delivering oral presentations due to anxiety and a lack of confidence (Sam et al., 2024). Key sources of anxiety include the fear of making mistakes, being observed by large audiences, and interruptions from lecturers (Amini, 2019). Young Egyptian learners also report high

levels of anxiety in EFL classrooms, primarily due to limited daily speaking practice, insufficient lecturer support, and a lack of exposure to comprehensible input through speaking activities (Mohamed et al., 2020). Students with lower anxiety tend to perform better in oral presentations, while higher anxiety is linked to poorer performance (Wu, 2022). Common challenges during presentations include nervousness, difficulty in self-regulation, inadequate vocabulary, limited exposure to the target language, and insufficient practice opportunities outside the classroom (Al Nakhalah, 2016; Alrasheedi, 2020; Kheryadi & Hilmiyati, 2021).

Psychological factors play a significant role in language anxiety and oral presentation performance, influencing EFL learners' confidence and attitudes toward English. Classroom dynamics and personal characteristics are also crucial in shaping presentation experiences and outcomes. Psychological factors such as self-esteem, language learning difficulties, cultural differences, and social status have a substantial impact on language anxiety and performance (ALGhazo, 2023; Alharbi, 2021; Altun, 2022; Hadi et al., 2020). Discomfort and anxiety during presentations often arise from the classroom environment and the learning process itself (Utari et al., 2022). High degrees of classroom anxiety are associated with lower self-efficacy, diminished perception of the intrinsic value of learning, and negative attitudes toward English, leading to reduced confidence and adverse learning attitudes (Bademcioglu et al., 2017). Demotivating factors, from both teacher and student perspectives, include teacher-related issues, time limitations, and classroom utility (Han et al., 2019; Xie, 2020; Xie et al., 2021). Al-Nouh (2015) found that students continue to face challenges mainly related to "personal traits," such as fear of being evaluated, avoiding eye contact with the instructor, and forgetting their planned speech. Amoah and Yeboah (2021) argue that the speaking challenges faced by Chinese EFL learners stem primarily from psychological factors, including anxiety, fear of making errors, hesitation to speak, and concern about negative feedback, rather than linguistic limitations such as restricted vocabulary, pronunciation difficulties, inadequate grammar knowledge, or weak oral presentation skills. Nur and Sakkir (2022) identified both linguistic and non-linguistic factors—such as psychological, environmental, and individual factors—as causes of student anxiety. Solmaz (2019) noted that using a presentation style can offer various benefits, including improved speaking abilities, enhanced self-confidence, better time management, and refined presentation skills.

Improving EFL Learners' Speaking Skills Through Teaching Approaches

Effective teaching methods and support systems are essential for enhancing EFL learners' speaking skills. Vireak and Bunrosy (2024) note that when examining various teaching methods, it becomes clear that no single approach is universally applicable or ideal for every situation. Each method has its own distinct features and techniques tailored to specific learning environments and educational goals. Moreover, Vireak et al. (2024) highlight that incorporating technology into language teaching, especially in speaking, can improve teaching and learning outcomes, fostering a more inclusive, dynamic, and effective learning environment that prepares students for a digital future. Teachers' motivational strategies also play a significant role in boosting students' oral communication abilities (Larsari et al., 2023). Williyani (2019) emphasizes that methods such as communicative language teaching (CLT), audio-lingual method (ALM), cooperative

language learning (CLL), and the use of corrective feedback play a crucial role in enhancing speaking skills. Encouraging a positive attitude toward oral presentations in EFL classrooms can reduce speaking anxiety and improve performance in speaking exams and methodology courses (Hammad, 2020). Classroom activities that immerse students in academic discourse, such as class oral academic presentations (COAPs), are crucial for professional development, as demonstrated by Thai undergraduate student-teachers (Dumlao, 2020).

Improving EFL Learners' Academic Communication Skills Through Oral Presentations and Self-Image Development

The gradual integration of students into academic discourse through oral presentations is essential. Interacting with instructors and peers during the preparation, observation, performance, and feedback stages of COAPs allows students to practice and develop necessary academic communication skills (Dumlao, 2020). Self-image training can also serve as an effective method for improving speaking skills, boosting both complexity and fluency (Zahra & Shiva, 2020). Jubier (2019) observed that Arab EFL learners struggle with pronunciation due to a lack of sufficient instruction or exposure to proper English pronunciation in school, which hinders their ability to perform effective oral presentations in both classroom and public contexts. Sahib (2016) found that EFL learners often use strategies like seeking help and making educated guesses to compensate for weaknesses in their speaking and listening abilities during oral exam interviews.

Improving EFL Learners' Oral Presentations Through Technological Tools and Intervention Strategies

Incorporating technology into oral presentations greatly improves their effectiveness. Similarly, a study by Vireak and Bunrosy (2024) emphasized that teachers should use technology, communicative teaching methods, and a learner-centered approach to enhance effectiveness. Furthermore, Keo et al. (2024) suggest that the integration of technology in language instruction, especially in speaking, can lead to better teaching and learning outcomes, fostering a more inclusive, dynamic, and successful learning environment that prepares students for a digital future. For instance, PowerPoint presentations can be an effective tool for teaching speaking skills in the classroom (Fauzi & Hanifah, 2018). However, casual conversation often leads to pauses, repetition, false starts, and backtracking, highlighting the importance of structured practice (Williyani, 2020). Thematic relevance in textbooks should strike a balance between communicative needs and structured grammar teaching to improve learnability (Tang, 2018). Additionally, content and language integrated learning, which uses English to teach specific subjects, has been shown to enhance oral presentation skills (Mamdouh Makhoun, 2022).

Intervention strategies, such as technology-integrated teaching, improved assessment methods, and student-centered approaches, can help reduce anxiety during oral presentations by addressing environmental, psychological, linguistic, and resource-related challenges (Kho & Ting, 2023). Task repetition in task-based language teaching methods also enhances oral production in EFL classrooms (Fang, 2021). Computer-assisted language learning techniques have been shown to improve EFL students' speaking abilities (Tang, 2023). The application of a support vector machine for assessments has demonstrated high accuracy in boosting speaking skills (Ali et al., 2022). Seraj and Hadina (2021) highlighted that environmental factors play a significant role in shaping EFL learners' oral communication skills, which greatly impact their performance in this area. Amine (2016)

explored the effects of EFL development on learners, stressing the importance of English as a key global communication tool.

Improving EFL Learners' Oral Presentation Abilities Through Feedback and Evaluation

Feedback and assessment play a vital role in improving oral presentation skills. Both peer and teacher evaluations have a significant influence on the oral presentation abilities of young EFL learners (Hung et al., 2016). Teachers' motivational strategies greatly impact students' oral communication skills (Larsari et al., 2023). Approaches like CLT, ALM, CLL, and corrective feedback are key in developing speaking proficiency (Williyan, 2019). Peer feedback has been shown to enhance EFL students' oral communication skills, although it may not always improve their use of communication strategies (Fang, 2018). Mispronunciation and lack of fluency are common challenges students face during presentations (Sahan et al., 2022). While formative peer assessment during presentations has positive effects, students may encounter difficulties related to scoring, feedback, presentation anxiety, and understanding of their peers' presentations (Widodo & Chakim, 2023). EFL learners often focus on feedback regarding gestures, eye contact, tone of voice, and pronunciation (Khonomri et al., 2021). Mabrouk (2023) found that EFL learners generally view oral presentation assessments positively, recognizing their value in improving speaking skills, self-reflection, and self-assessment abilities. They appreciate teacher feedback and are highly aware of the objectives behind oral presentation assessments.

Theoretical Approaches for Enhancing Effective Oral Presentations

Monroe motivated sequence

This brief activity, designed to be completed within an hour-long class, aims to provide background information, allow preparation time, and offer feedback to the audience (Haugen & Lucas, 2019). The following are the steps for Monroe's motivated sequence (MMS) practice:

Students are first informed about the significance of enhancing team consistency and presentation skills. Common challenges, such as poor positioning, ineffective nonverbal communication, and problematic transitions, should be addressed. This can be achieved through a lecture highlighting these issues or a discussion that includes examples of both effective and ineffective presentations. Students should be guided to identify and evaluate inconsistencies in content, tone, and style. If class time is constrained, the lecture can be presented in advance, either during a previous session or through an online platform.

A well-structured list of effective team-based delivery skills should be developed, focusing on key aspects essential for group presentations. This list can serve as a checklist to help students refine their performance. One important element is physical positioning, where team members should stand in an orderly manner, avoid overcrowding, and ensure that visual aids remain visible. The main speaker should step forward while speaking and then move aside for the next presenter. Another crucial aspect is nonverbal communication, which involves maintaining engagement through confident body language, attentive facial expressions, and avoiding distracting behaviors such as crossing arms or fidgeting. Lastly, introductions and transitions should be smooth, with each speaker acknowledging the previous presenter's

points before introducing the next, ensuring a seamless flow throughout the presentation.

MMS is then introduced to students, outlining its five steps: attention (capturing the audience's interest), need (highlighting the audience's desire or need), satisfaction (explaining how the need can be addressed), visualization (depicting the positive outcomes), and action (motivating the audience to act). A complete example is demonstrated using a short video, with pauses to highlight each step. After gaining an understanding of the MMS framework, students participate in an activity where they have ten minutes to design a marketing campaign and prepare a persuasive team presentation following the MMS structure. Each team member is responsible for one step of the MMS process, and the team's performance is evaluated based on the coherence of their content and the effectiveness of their delivery skills. The students are divided into teams of five, with each team receiving an MMS planning worksheet outlining the steps. Each team member is responsible for one MMS step, and if teams cannot be divided evenly, smaller groups are formed, with some members handling multiple steps. Two sets of pre-prepared cards are given: one with local businesses or national brands, and another with random words. Teams pick one business card along with two or three random word cards. They then have ten minutes to design a marketing campaign for the selected business or brand, incorporating one of the random words, and preparing their presentation. Each team member prepares their assigned MMS step individually, aiming for a total presentation time of two-and-a-half minutes. Afterward, teams present their pitches to the class in a supportive environment. Feedback should focus on the consistency and cohesion of the team's presentation, rather than individual delivery. Facilitate hands-on practice and immediate feedback, such as adjusting positions or practicing transitions between speakers.

Dual coding theory and education

Dual coding theory (DCT) explains human behavior and experience through dynamic associative processes within a complex network of modality-specific verbal and visual (nonverbal) representations (Wong & Samudra, 2021; Wooten & Cuevas, 2024). It suggests that mental structures emerge from interconnected networks of verbal and visual elements, with their formation and activation influenced by contextual factors.

Visual and verbal mental representations: DCT suggests that mental representations consist of separate verbal and nonverbal symbolic systems, each preserving elements of the sensory experiences they represent. The verbal system contains codes specific to words, which serve as arbitrary symbols for both tangible objects and abstract concepts, processed sequentially. In contrast, nonverbal representations involve modality-specific images that resemble the events they represent, are processed in parallel, and can integrate detailed information into more complex images. DCT outlines two types of connections: referential connections that link verbal and nonverbal representations, allowing images to be associated with words and vice versa, and associative connections within each system that link related words or images. These connections form a rich associative network that deepens the understanding of experiences and concepts.

Assumption of the process: DCT posits that mental representations are divided into separate verbal and nonverbal symbolic forms, with their activation being influenced by contextual factors. Verbal representations are processed sequentially, while nonverbal

representations, like images, are processed simultaneously, allowing for the integration of detailed information into complex structures. DCT highlights two main types of connections: referential connections, which link verbal and nonverbal representations, and associative connections, which connect related words or images within each system. The formation and activation of these mental representations and their connections are shaped by prior experiences and the situation at hand, which can either enhance or reduce their activation levels. Contextual elements, such as the setting in which a word is encountered, can trigger specific associations and impact subsequent cognitive reactions. Furthermore, the clarity and concreteness of instructional materials play key roles in aiding imagery processing. Differences in individuals' ability to form mental imagery and the educational context also affect how effectively these mental representations are applied in learning and memory tasks.

In summary, DCT offers a comprehensive model for understanding various psychological processes by integrating verbal and visual representations within a complex network of referential and associative connections. This framework considers the influence of past experiences, context, and the dynamics of spreading activation. DCT models, made up of networks of mental representations and their activation patterns, demonstrate how these processes shape responses to stimuli. For example, when learning foreign vocabulary, both verbal and nonverbal representations are involved during the learning and recall phases.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study investigated EFL learners' perceptions of the challenges they face in oral presentations, the strategies they believe can help address these difficulties, and the role of lecturers in enhancing their presentation skills. A quantitative research approach was utilized to collect data, which was then analyzed using descriptive and inferential statistics through the statistical package for social sciences (SPSS). The analysis incorporated frequency distributions, percentages, independent sample t-tests, and ANOVA to examine the findings.

Participants

The participants in this case study were EFL learners from the foreign language faculty at the National University of Battambang, a leading public university in Cambodia. The sample included students across all academic levels—freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior. From a total population of approximately 400 BBA EFL students, a random sample of 200 male and female learners was selected (Hossan et al., 2023; Li et al., 2022; Rahman et al., 2022). Research suggests that a sample size of 200 is sufficient to represent a population of up to 1,000 (Kock & Hadaya, 2018; Lewis et al., 2021; Rahman, 2023).

Instrument

A cluster random sampling method, which is a type of probability sampling, was employed. Data were gathered using a questionnaire adapted from Tareen et al. (2023), with minor adjustments made to align better between the study's objectives and context. The questionnaires were divided into two sections: the first section collected demographic details, while the second section had three parts. The questionnaire was divided into three sections: the first comprised 14

Table 1. Questionnaire reliability

Categories	Number of items	Alpha
Difficulties (DROP)	14	.69
Strategies (SIOP)	10	.78
Lecturer's role (LRIOP)	8	.84

items assessing EFL learners' perceptions of challenges in oral presentations; the second included 10 items examining strategies for improving presentation skills; and the third contained 8 items evaluating the lecturer's role in enhancing oral presentation abilities. All items were measured using a four-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) agree, and (4) strongly agree. Participants completed the questionnaires individually during class, with the researcher distributing them after obtaining permission from the instructors. It took each participant about 30 minutes to complete the questionnaire. To ensure clarity, the researcher provided explanations in both Khmer and English.

Validity and Reliability

Before pilot testing the questionnaire for validity, the researchers sought feedback from an education expert to refine its context, content, and structure, ensuring alignment with the research questions (Bujang et al., 2024; del Mar Seguí, 2015). This expert review also focused on improving wording and correcting any grammatical issues that could impact the study's outcomes. Data collection was conducted with strict confidentiality, with only the researchers having access. To evaluate the questionnaire's internal reliability, the coefficient alpha method was applied (Amilani et al., 2020; Naqvi et al., 2019), yielding a reliability score of approximately .70 or higher, meeting the acceptable standard for reliability (Table 1).

Data Collection and Ethical Issues

Ethical considerations play a crucial role in social research, including educational studies, as they involve individuals' beliefs, values, and lives (Hammer, 2017; Yip et al., 2016). For this study, data were collected through questionnaires. Prior to data collection, approval was obtained from the heads of the educational and international foreign language departments. The researchers then visited the classrooms, explained the research title and objectives to the participants, and assured them that the questionnaire would only be used for research purposes. This ensured that participants could share their perceptions openly without feeling monitored or judged. There was no strict time limit for completing the questionnaire, although it typically took around 30 minutes.

Data Analysis

The quantitative data were analyzed using the SPSS. Descriptive statistics were employed to calculate the frequencies and percentages for each questionnaire item (Gevisa & Kurniati, 2024). For further analysis, inferential statistics, including ANOVA and independent sample t-tests, were utilized (Sutanapong & Louangrath, 2015).

FINDINGS

The results are explained as mean rank interpretation (Table 2).

Respondents' Demographic Profile

Table 3 shows the participants' demographic profiles.

Table 2. Interpretation of mean rank

Rank	Interpretation
3.01–4.00	High degree of significance of oral presentation
2.01–3.00	Moderate degree of significance of oral presentation
1.00–2.00	Low degree of significance of oral presentation

Table 3. Participants' demographic profiles

Characteristic		Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	46	23.0
	Female	154	77.0
Level of education	Freshmen	28	14.0
	Sophomores	77	38.5
	Junior	64	32.0
	Senior	31	15.5
Age	18–21	141	70.5
	22–26	52	26.0
	27–30	7	3.5

The Findings Based on Research Question One: What Are the Most Common Difficulties EFL Learners Perceive in Their Oral Presentations?

The data in **Table 4** highlight students' perceptions and challenges regarding oral presentations. The mean scores (M) range from 2.08 to 3.08 on a scale where 1 represents strongly disagree and 4 represents strongly agree. The highest M of 3.08 was recorded for the statement

"I feel confident when I have adequately prepared for the presentation" (DRO5),

suggesting that students gain confidence through preparation. Conversely, the statement

"I enjoy giving oral presentations because I am skilled at them" (DRO1)

received an M of 2.62, indicating a moderate level of agreement. The statement

"I get nervous when I know I'm the next one to present" (DRO3)

had an M of 2.90, reflecting prevalent pre-presentation anxiety. The lowest M of 2.08 was for

Table 4. Difficulties related to oral presentation

Item	Statement	Level of agreement (%)				M	SDV
		SD	D	A	SA		
DRO1	I enjoy giving oral presentations because I am skilled at them.	3.5	38.5	51.0	7.0	2.62	.670
DRO2	I find presentations easy because I am very confident.	4.0	42.0	47.0	7.0	2.57	.684
DRO3	When I know I'm the next one to present, I get nervous.	1.5	20.0	66.0	12.5	2.90	.613
DRO4	Although I prepare thoroughly, I tend to forget things while presenting.	3.0	49.0	36.0	12.0	2.57	.740
DRO5	I feel confident when I have adequately prepared for the presentation.	1.0	12.5	64.0	22.5	3.08	.621
DRO6	When the instructor interrupts with questions or feedback, it impacts my performance.	7.0	33.0	40.5	19.5	2.73	.856
DRO7	I'm afraid my teachers will point out my mistakes during the presentation.	9.5	32.0	49.0	9.5	2.59	.791
DRO8	I'm comfortable with giving a presentation and being evaluated by the teacher.	2.5	22.5	55.5	19.5	2.92	.718
DRO9	I am not worried about getting an unjust grade for my presentation.	8.0	32.0	47.0	13.0	2.65	.807
DRO10	I remain confident even when many people are watching me.	8.5	37.5	45.5	8.5	2.54	.769
DRO11	I am not concerned about maintaining eye contact with the audience during an oral presentation.	7.0	26.5	56.0	10.5	2.70	.750
DRO12	I enjoy being evaluated by my classmates in front of the class.	17.0	61.5	18.5	3.0	2.08	.687
DRO13	I am able to speak clearly and accurately during a presentation.	4.5	60.5	32.0	3.0	2.34	.612
DRO14	I am able to structure my ideas effectively during a presentation.	.5	20.0	74.0	5.5	2.85	.502

Note. Degree of agreement: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Agree; 4: Strongly agree

"I enjoy being evaluated by my classmates in front of the class" (DRO12),

demonstrating that most students feel uneasy about peer evaluations.

The Findings Based on Research Question Two: What Strategies Do EFL Learners Employ to Enhance the Effectiveness of Their Oral Presentations?

M values in **Table 5** range from 2.75 to 3.30, reflecting varying levels of agreement among students regarding strategies for improving oral presentations. The highest M of 3.30 corresponds to the statement

"I observe other presentations to enhance my own" (SIOP8),

which indicates strong agreement with the idea that observing others is a valuable strategy. Following this, the statement

"I need to create effective slides and manage my time efficiently" (SIOP10)

received an M of 3.22, showing broad agreement on the significance of quality visuals and time management. The statement

"I need to boost my confidence in order to present effectively" (SIOP6)

had an M of 3.21, emphasizing that most students acknowledge the importance of confidence for successful presentations.

"I take brief notes as references to help me avoid reading directly from a script" (SIOP3)

received an M of 3.19, highlighting that many students prefer using brief notes to engage with their audience more naturally. Lastly, the statement

"I pay close attention to my audience" (SIOP1)

had an M of 2.75, suggesting moderate agreement and implying that while some students recognize the importance of audience awareness, it is not universally practiced.

Table 5. Strategies for improving oral presentation

Item	Statement	Level of agreement (%)				M	SDV
		SD	D	A	SA		
SIOP1	I pay close attention to my audience.	4.0	23.5	66.0	6.5	2.75	.632
SIOP2	I prepare thoroughly before delivering a presentation.	1.0	7.0	72.0	20.0	3.11	.547
SIOP3	I take brief notes as references to help me avoid reading directly from a script.	1.0	9.5	58.5	31.0	3.19	.640
SIOP4	I rehearse to focus more on the audience and less on my notes.	2.0	18.5	64.0	15.5	2.93	.646
SIOP5	I anticipate potential questions and practice my responses.	2.0	17.0	64.5	16.5	2.95	.644
SIOP6	I need to boost my confidence in order to present effectively.	1.5	5.5	64.0	29.0	3.21	.604
SIOP7	I need to pay more attention to the sounds and pronunciation of the language.	3.5	15.0	57.0	24.5	3.02	.733
SIOP8	I observe other presentations to enhance my own.	3.5	4.5	51.0	41.0	3.30	.715
SIOP9	I need to use gestures and establish strong eye contact with the audience.	4.0	14.0	54.0	28.0	3.06	.761
SIOP10	I need to create effective slides and manage my time efficiently.	3.0	5.5	57.5	34.0	3.22	.683

Note. Degree of agreement: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Agree; 4: Strongly agree

Table 6. The lecturer's role in improving oral presentation

Item	Statement	Level of agreement (%)				M	SDV
		SD	D	A	SA		
LRIO1	The lecturer should allow students enough time to prepare effectively.	3.0	3.5	47.5	46.0	3.37	.696
LRIO2	The lecturer should make learning enjoyable and encourage students.	2.5	6.0	49.0	42.5	3.32	.699
LRIO3	The lecturer should provide EFL students with grading rubrics before their presentations.	1.5	11.0	62.5	25.0	3.11	.640
LRIO4	The lecturer should use videos of skilled speakers to help students enhance their presentation skills.	3.0	8.0	59.0	30.0	3.16	.690
LRIO5	The lecturer should give clear and helpful feedback after the presentation.	2.0	4.0	58.0	36.0	3.28	.635
LRIO6	The lecturer should encourage peers to be more supportive.	2.0	7.5	63.0	27.5	3.16	.638
LRIO7	The lecturer should permit students to choose their own topics to reduce anxiety.	3.0	18.0	51.5	27.5	3.04	.759
LRIO8	The lecturer should develop a course focused on enhancing oral presentation skills for EFL students.	2.5	4.0	63.0	30.5	3.22	.633

Note. Degree of agreement: 1: Strongly disagree; 2: Disagree; 3: Agree; 4: Strongly agree

Table 7. Independent samples t-test comparing genders

	Gender	n	M	SDV	t	df	Significance
Oral difficulties	Male	46	2.69	.289	1.062	198	.289
	Female	154	2.64	.327			
Coping strategies	Male	46	3.12	.291	.933	198	.352
	Female	154	3.06	.411			
Lecturer's role	Male	46	3.25	.520	.786	198	.433
	Female	154	3.19	.453			

The Findings Based on Research Question Number Three: How Do EFL Learners Perceive Their Lecturer's Role in Improving Their Oral Presentation Skills?

M values in **Table 6**, ranging from 3.04 to 3.37, illustrate varying levels of agreement regarding the lecturer's role in enhancing oral presentation skills. The highest M of 3.37 corresponds to the statement

"the lecturer should allow students enough time to prepare effectively" (LRIO1),

emphasizing strong student support for adequate preparation time. The statement

"the lecturer should make learning enjoyable and encourage students" (LRIO2)

follows closely with an M of 3.32, underscoring the importance of a supportive and engaging learning environment. Similarly, the statement

"the lecturer should give clear and helpful feedback after the presentation" (LRIO5)

received an M of 3.28, indicating that students highly value constructive feedback. Although the lowest M of 3.04 is associated with the statement

"the lecturer should allow students to select their own topics to help ease anxiety" (LRIO7),

it still reflects overall agreement that this strategy can help alleviate presentation-related stress.

The Findings Based on Research Question Number Four: Is There a Notable Difference Between Male and Female EFL Learners' Perceptions of Oral Presentations?

Table 7 presents the results of an independent samples t-test comparing male and female participants across three variables: oral difficulties, coping strategies, and the lecturer's role. For oral difficulties, males had an M of 2.69 (standard deviation [SDV] = 0.289), while females had an M of 2.64 (SDV = 0.327). The t-test revealed no significant gender difference, $t(198) = 1.062$, $p = 0.289$. In terms of coping strategies, males scored an average of 3.12 (SDV = 0.291), whereas females scored 3.06 (SDV = 0.411), with no statistically significant difference, $t(198) = 0.933$, $p = 0.352$. Regarding the lecturer's role, males reported an M of 3.2527 (SDV = 0.52074), while females scored 3.1907 (SDV = 0.45311), with the t-test indicating no significant difference, $t(198) = 0.786$, $p = 0.433$. Overall, the findings suggest that

Table 8. One-way ANOVA among freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors

	Gender	Sum of squares	df	Mean square	F	Significance
Oral difficulties	Between groups	.968	3	.323	3.294	.022
	Within groups	19.209	196	.098		
	Total	20.178	199			
Coping strategies	Between groups	.980	3	.327	2.220	.087
	Within groups	28.835	196	.147		
	Total	29.815	199			
Lecturer's role	Between groups	2.718	3	.906	4.328	.006
	Within groups	41.033	196	.209		
	Total	43.751	199			

gender does not significantly influence oral difficulties, coping strategies, or perceptions of the lecturer's role.

The Findings Based on Research Question Number Five: Are There Significant Differences in EFL Learners' Perceptions of Oral Presentations Across Different Academic Levels (Freshmen, Sophomores, Juniors, and Seniors)?

Table 8 presents the results of a one-way ANOVA test comparing the M values of oral difficulties, coping strategies, and the lecturer's role across freshman, sophomore, junior, and senior students. For oral difficulties, a significant difference was found among the class levels [$F(3, 196) = 3.294, p = .022$]. However, no significant difference was observed in coping strategies across the class levels [$F(3, 196) = 2.220, p = .087$]. Finally, for the lecturer's role, a significant difference was identified between the class levels [$F(3, 196) = 4.328, p = .006$].

DISCUSSION

In addressing the first question, this discussion highlights the main challenges faced by EFL students during oral presentations. The current study reveals that students feel significantly confident when they are well-prepared, as shown by a high M ($M = 3.08$) for the statement about feeling assured with adequate preparation (DROP5). This underscores the importance of preparation in reducing anxiety and improving performance. However, there is noticeable discomfort with peer evaluation, reflected in a much lower M ($M = 2.08$) related to being judged by classmates (DROP12). This suggests that while preparation boosts confidence, concerns about social evaluation continue to be a prominent issue for students.

Regarding research question number two about the strategies EFL learners use to improve their oral presentation skills, the study reveals several important findings. Watching other presentations is identified as the most preferred strategy ($M = 3.30$), highlighting a shared view among students about the benefits of peer learning. The focus on effectively using visual aids and managing time ($M = 3.22$) suggests that students recognize these elements as essential for delivering impactful presentations. Moreover, the study underscores the importance of boosting confidence ($M = 3.21$) and utilizing brief notes ($M = 3.19$), reflecting the students' proactive efforts to enhance their presentation skills.

In response to research question number three about EFL learners' views on the role of lecturers in enhancing the skills of oral presentation, the results reveal several important insights. Students place considerable importance on lecturers providing sufficient preparation time ($M = 3.37$), highlighting their strong expectation for adequate time to prepare before presenting. Additionally, students

expressed a clear preference for a supportive and engaging classroom environment ($M = 3.32$), reflecting their desire for positive reinforcement and a nurturing atmosphere to foster their presentation skills. The importance of detailed feedback from lecturers ($M = 3.28$) was also emphasized, illustrating its key role in helping students improve their oral communication skills. However, the option for students to choose their presentation topics to reduce anxiety received a relatively lower M ($M = 3.04$), suggesting that while this feature is helpful, it is considered less crucial than other factors in improving oral presentation skills.

Regarding the fourth and fifth research questions about possible differences in perceptions of oral presentations based on gender and class (see **Table 7** and **Table 8**), the findings showed no significant gender differences in views on oral difficulties, coping strategies, or the lecturer's role. This indicates that male and female EFL learners face similar challenges and expectations in oral presentations. However, significant differences were found across class levels, especially in perceptions of oral difficulties and the lecturer's role. Freshmen, sophomores, juniors, and seniors displayed notable differences in their perspectives on these aspects, suggesting that academic progress influences their needs and experiences.

CONCLUSIONS

This study aims to explore the challenges university students encounter during oral presentations, strategies they use to improve these skills, and instructors' role in enhancing students' oral presentation abilities. Findings clearly show that EFL students face particular difficulties and use a range of strategies to improve their presentation skills. Preparation is identified as vital for boosting confidence and alleviating anxiety. However, discomfort with peer evaluation continues to be a major concern.

Students strategically prefer watching other presentations and focusing on visual aids and time management to enhance their presentation skills. These results highlight a proactive approach to skill development, underscoring the value of peer learning and effective presentation methods.

When it comes to the lecturer's role, students emphasize the importance of sufficient preparation time, a supportive classroom environment, and detailed feedback as key elements in enhancing their oral communication skills. This highlights their expectation for conducive conditions and constructive support from teachers to help improve their presentation abilities.

The study also found that while gender does not significantly affect EFL learners' perceptions of oral presentations, there are noticeable

differences across academic levels. Freshmen, in contrast to seniors, have differing views on oral difficulties and the lecturer's role, which reflects the changing needs and experiences as students' progress in their studies.

In conclusion, the findings offer important insights into the challenges, strategies, and expectations EFL students have regarding the role of their instructors. They highlight the need for targeted preparation, a supportive learning environment, and constructive feedback to boost confidence and improve skills. These insights can inform future educational strategies to better support and cater to the diverse needs of students at various stages of their academic development.

Limitations

This study has some limitations. The researchers initially planned to use a qualitative approach, including conducting in-depth face-to-face interviews with the target sample to gain a deeper understanding of the challenges students face with oral presentations. However, due to time limitations, the researchers were unable to implement this method and opted to use questionnaires instead.

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Ethics declaration: The authors declared that this study was approved by the Ethics Committee at the National University of Battambang (ECNUBB). Before administering the survey questionnaire, the authors ensured the protection of participants' privacy and data security. Participation in this study was entirely voluntary. To maintain confidentiality, participants' real names will not be disclosed in any written reports or discussions. The authors also committed to preserving de-identified study data for potential use in future research.

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Data availability: Data generated or analyzed during this study are available from the authors on request.

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