

Group Presentation in a Pragmatics Course: Matches and Mismatches from Learners and Teachers' Perspectives

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Introduction

University teachers are generally encouraged to utilize oral presentation groups as much as possible, but whether or not the benefits the teachers believe in this activity really work and match with the learners' needs is still open to questions because little has been known about such questions based on empirical research.

- 1) *What specific aspects do teachers & students value?*
- 2) *What concerns do teachers and students have?*
- 3) *How do their perspectives align or diverge?*

Literature review

Mallette & Clare (2011, p161) showed that oral presentation is 'the most common method for presenting information and is usually done with a computer and projector'.

Girard & Trapp (2011) emphasized that an oral presentation bring various potential benefits on students' learning like boosting interaction in the classroom, engaging students in learning process, motivating students in language learning, enhancing students' communication skills and presentation skills considerably.

Research gap

A number of studies have been done to investigate impacts of group presentation on learner's language ability, yet few have been done in teaching pragmatics subject at university, especially in similarities and differences in students and teachers' perception of group presentation in doing pragmatics course.

Methodology

1. *Participants*

130 junior undergraduates 130 students studied Pragmatics in the second semester 2023-2024 over 15-week semester. They have a weekly meeting in three periods in which assigned groups would present a topic covered in the curriculum.

The four teachers (2 females and 2 males) are well - qualified with over 8 years of teaching experience.

2. *Research instruments*

Both quantitative and qualitative methods were combined to collect and analyze data.

In fact, two sets of questionnaire for about 130 EFL students and 4 teachers teaching English at this university were used.

117 out of 130 learners responded, which made up 90%. 100% of the teachers answered the survey.

3. *Data collection and analysis procedures.*

At the beginning of the semester, students were grouped and assigned six presentation topics from their book 'Pragmatics' by Jule, G. in the curriculum. The groups weekly delivered their powerpoint presentations mostly in English followed by open questions and discussions with the whole class and teachers over 15 - week semester.

The data were collected by Google Forms followed by a critical analysis of the assessment depending on the results of the questionnaires. SPSS was used to analyze and systematic the figures for thematic analysis.

Findings and Discussion

1. *Answer to research question 1*

Both teachers and learners positively perceived great benefits of group presentation in Pragmatics. Apparently, teachers' beliefs well matched with students' experience and perceptions. Learners took advantage of group presentation to be learning pragmatics more actively and interactively. They did research for the topics, had more chances to read and understand the material.

By this way, learners had to think, brainstorm and work on their own, thereby enhancing their self-study skills and cognitive skills.

2. *Answer to research question 2*

Both teachers and students were still concerned on how to get more students deeply understand the abstract knowledge. Mixed classes, especially weak students were still struggling with some units of pragmatics, so more explanations from teachers were needed after the group presentations. There existed some arguments and ineffective communication among team members. Group members, sometimes, overused their mother tongue to present a difficult piece of pragmatics knowledge.

3. *Answer to research question 3*

Both agreed that working for a presentation together boosts students' activeness requiring learners to think and to be able to learn at their own pace, especially in mixed classes. Yet, they both worried about delving into units of knowledge thoroughly. Undeniably, learners were better at understanding the presentation topics, yet ensuring a thorough interpretation always required more explanation from the teacher after the group presentation.