UNIVERSITI TEKNOLOGI MARA

THE USE OF VIDEO-BASED BLOGS TO ENHANCE ESL STUDENTS’ ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS

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All my gratitude and praise are attributed to the Almighty Allah, for enabling me to complete this work. Indeed, the most exciting roller coaster ride cannot compare to the long and winding road of my graduate studies and dissertation. Throughout this journey, I have gained humility, knowledge, wisdom and intense appreciation for those who have contributed to my endeavours and success.

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Verily, with every hardship, there is ease (Quran 94:6).

Alhamdulillah.
To my dearest Abang, I dedicated this study to you. My memory of you is what moved me to put my best efforts in completing this task.

I miss you.
The study aimed to examine the use of video-based blogs in enhancing students’ oral presentation skills in an Effective Communication course. Specifically, it explored how video-based blogs are used to enhance students’ oral presentation skills, students’ views on the use of video-based blogs in enhancing oral presentation skills and the influence of video-based blogs on students’ oral presentation skills. Fifteen undergraduate students from various engineering faculties in one public technical university were selected to participate in the study via purposive sampling. This study adopted a qualitative research approach. The data were gathered from four different data sources, (a) video-based blogs, (b) reflective journal, (c) video-recorded speeches, and (d) oral presentation scoring rubric. In this study, the video-based blogs were used repeatedly throughout the three stages of the video-based blog activities to produce an oral presentation of the same topic. The repetition is necessary in order to give ESL students ample oral practice for continuous improvement. With the repeated oral practice, students can improve their oral presentation skills. However, the use of video-based blogs should fulfil three criteria namely (a) proper planning and time management, (b) assessment of oral presentation has to be evaluated using a scoring rubric and (c) feedback has to be useful and timely. Nonetheless, challenges that compromise the effectiveness of video-based blogs such as access to the Internet connection, affective interferences, availability of recording venue, recording tools and computer software, students’ technical capability as well as weak link to real-time communication should be addressed by the language instructors before the execution of video-based blogs activities. The findings of the study also revealed that the students reacted positively to the use of video-based blogs in enhancing oral presentation skills and video-based blogs have positive influence on the students’ oral presentation skills, especially in the areas of verbal skills, non-verbal skills and content.
Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji penggunaan blog berasaskan video dalam meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan pelajar di dalam kursus Effective Communication. Tiga aspek yang dikaiki dalam kajian ini adalah bagaimana blog berasaskan video digunakan untuk membantu meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan pelajar, pandangan pelajar mengenai penggunaan blog berasaskan video dalam meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan dan pengaruh blog berasaskan video terhadap kemahiran pembentangan lisan pelajar. Lima belas pelajar kejuruteraan dari sebuah universiti teknikal awam dipilih sebagai peserta kajian melalui teknik perempel pain bertujuan. Kajian ini menggunakan pendekatan penyelidikan kualitatif. Data dikumpul dari empat sumber yang berbeza, (a) blog berasaskan video, (b) jurnal reflektif, (c) ucapan rakaman video dan (d) pemarkahan rubrik. Dalam kajian ini, blog berasaskan video digunakan berulang kali pada tiga peringkat bagi menghasilkan pembentangan lisan menggunakan topik yang sama. Pengulangan adalah perlu bagi memberikan latihan pembentangan lisan yang mencukupi kepada pelajar ESL. Melalui latihan yang berulang, pelajar dapat meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan mereka. Walau bagaimanapun, penggunaan blog berasaskan video perlu memenuhi tiga kriteria iaitu (a) perancangan dan pengurusan masa yang berkesan, (b) penilaian pembentangan lisan menggunakan rubrik pemarkahan dan (c) maklum balas yang diberi hendaklah berguna dan tepat pada waktunya. Selain itu, cabaran seperti akses Internet, faktor afektif, kemudahan tempat rakaman, alat rakaman dan perisian komputer, kebolehupayaan teknikal pelajar dan juga kelemahan komunikasi masa nyata harus ditangani terlebih dahulu oleh pendidik sebelum pelaksanaan aktiviti blog berasaskan video. Hasil kajian turut menunjukkan bahawa pelajar memberikan maklum balas positif terhadap penggunaan blog berasaskan video dalam meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan mereka dan blog berasaskan video mempunyai pengaruh positif dalam meningkatkan kemahiran pembentangan lisan pelajar, terutamanya dari aspek kemahiran verbal, non-verbal dan isi kandungan.
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<td>Digital Single-Lens Reflect Camera</td>
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<td>ESL</td>
<td>English as a Second Language</td>
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<td>Vlog</td>
<td>A blog that contains video as its primary content</td>
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<td>Whats App</td>
<td>Cross-platform messaging application for smartphones</td>
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CHAPTER 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation skills are part of the repertoire of communication skills that are seen as vital for students to master, as without effective communication skills, one could find it difficult to be hired for jobs or survive in the profession later (Pathan, 2013; Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Kakepoto, Habil, Mohd Omar & Said, 2012; Ziegler, 2007; King, 2002). In Malaysia, studies have showed high graduate unemployment occurs when many graduates are incompetent in their oral communication skills such as oral presentation skills (Juhary, 2014; Kakepoto et al., 2012; Omar, Manaf, Mohd, Che Kassim & Abd. Aziz, 2012; Azian & Mun, 2012; Rahmah, Ishak & Wei Seing, 2011; Rasul, Ismail, Ismail, Rajuddin & Rauf, 2010; Singh & Singh, 2008). According to Wong (2011), as cited in Islam, Abd Hamid and Abd Manaf (2011), the number of unemployed graduates in Malaysian was 60,000 in 2009. The unemployment rate warrants attention when the statistics has indicated that 30,000 graduates remained jobless six months after their graduation (Mohd Salleh, 2011). This is due to the fact that oral presentation occupies a central position in the workplace in a lot of industries and jobs (Omar et al., 2012; Kakepoto et al., 2012) where employees are most often required to present proposals, product or project, deliver progress-report of on-going investigations or final outcomes of projects, explain product descriptions to vendors and conduct oral briefings (Indra Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014). As a result, in order to ensure the sustainability of the organisation,
employers and corporate recruiters nowadays have unprecedented demands for well-rounded graduates who are equipped with good academic achievement and excellent oral communication and presentation skills in English (Indra Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014; Tajizan, Ab Rahim, Abdul Halim, Abdullah, Ismail & Cochrane, 2012; Omar et al., 2012; Singh & Singh, 2008).

1.1 BACKGROUND OF THE STUDY

In tertiary education, oral presentations have become important and remained as a “frequent, highly routinised part of classroom life” (Morita, 2000) all over the world (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Campbell, Mothersbaugh, Brammer & Taylor, 2001). It is a common practice for the instructors to conduct live oral presentations in front of the class as a means to teach oral presentation skills in the ESL classrooms (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarthy, 2011; Kim, 2006; King, 2002; Ferris, 1998). According to King (2002), oral presentations hold the virtues of promoting communicative competence, help learners to collect, inquire, organise and construct information as well as assist them to be active and autonomous learners.

However, despite the fact that oral presentation activities are deemed to be valuable, evidences from various literature had annotated that oral presentation activity remained the least anticipated activity during the lesson when students experienced most difficulty in their oral presentations (King, 2002; Ferris, 1998). This is due to the fact that most students ranked oral presentation as the most feared and daunting language activity in an anxiety-provoked situation (Guo, 2013; McNulty & Lazarevic, 2012; Mak, 2011; King, 2002). Asian students who are silent and reticent in class (Kim, 2006), in particular perceived oral presentation as a face-threatening
activity when it contradicts their culture of protecting one’s face (Tajizan et al., 2012) and is the common practice of teacher-centered activities in the classroom (King, 2002). The fear of speaking in public, conducting mistakes, being ridiculed by others, having low confidence together with the lack of English language proficiency eventually lead the students to be trapped in an anxiety-provoked situation (Guo, 2013; Tajizan et al., 2012; Yamkate & Intratat, 2012; Mohd Radzuan & Kaur, 2011; Mak, 2011).

Due to these overwhelming challenges, the students are found to be tongue-tied and jittery when they are asked to deliver an oral presentation in front of their peers (Guo, 2013; Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Rajoo, 2010). King (2002) further mentioned that under these stressful situations, most students just try to get through the ordeal without having the intention to improve their oral presentation skills. ESL students, especially those who are less fluent in English tend to restrict the spontaneous elements in their speech and narrate their oral presentation based on their memory of a written text. This situation is most typical among Malaysian tertiary students (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013), which resulted in their mastery of oral presentation skills and performance to be deteriorated (Tajizan et al., 2012; Kakepoto et al., 2010) when effective presentation was affected by their poor oral presentation skills (Cochrane & O’Donoghue, 2008; King, 2002).

Aside from that, several issues are raised with regards to the implementation of oral presentation activity in ESL classroom. The first issue is the meaningfulness of the activity to the learners. Most of the time, instructors observe and evaluate the presentation and learners wait for their turns and receive their grades at the end of the activity (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarty, 2012). This practice might work for the self-motivated students but ineffective for those who lack self-motivation. According to
Hinkelman, Rian and McGarty (2012), students with low self-motivation have less engagement in the activity, invest minimal effort in their oral presentation or are absent from their classroom.

The second issue is the practicality of the activity. The implementation of the activity can be time-consuming for a large class (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarty, 2012; Tajizan et al., 2012; Cochrane & O’Donoghue, 2008). Due to the time constraint, instructors are more concerned with completing the syllabus rather than addressing the students’ needs. The opportunities for instructors to provide individualised feedback are also limited when facility and logistic constraints exist (Yang & Scharff, 2013; Tajizan et al., 2012; Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe, 2010; Cochrane & O’Donoghue, 2008). Not only that, providing timely feedback during the activity is a challenge as it interrupts and demotivates the students when it is given on the spot.

The third issue highlighted is the evaluation of the activity. Assessing oral presentation activity is a challenge when the judgment can be subjective without any concrete evidence (Yang & Scharff, 2013; Yamkate & Intratat, 2012; Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe, 2010). It is difficult for instructors to identify and evaluate the students’ presentation mistakes entirely (Tsutsui & Kato, 2001) and students fail to acknowledge their speech problems or mistakes in their presentation (Guo, 2013) when there is no tangible artefact for the students to review it (Yang & Scharff, 2013).

Therefore, there is a need to conduct a study in identifying a suitable method that creates less threatening environment for the students to practise and improve their oral presentation skills, reduce the time constraints faced by the instructor in providing ample scaffolding and individualised feedback as well as to overcome the challenges in assessing oral presentation activities. Hence, one of the techniques to incorporate
the solutions to these oral presentation issues is by using video-based blogs as a pedagogical tool to enhance students’ oral presentation skills in ESL classroom.

1.2 STATEMENT OF THE PROBLEM

The Web 2.0 technologies have brought new lights in teaching and learning. With the advancement of technology, Internet blog has gained its popularity in the educational realm when it is extensively used in the context of English language learning (Noytim, 2010). As cited by Shih (2010), blogs have emerged as a new medium of communication and publication in ESL classroom. This is due to the fact that blogs have become a popular method for writing instructors to share, store and display students’ composition efforts digitally (Watkins, 2012; Abu Bakar, Latif & Ya’acob, 2010; Noytim, 2010) or remained as an avenue for instructors to encourage students’ collaboration in a digital format (Gadera, 2012; Amir, Ismail & Hussin, 2011). Vlog, on the other hand, is the portmanteau word for video and blog (Watkins, 2012). According to Gao, Tian and Huang (2010), vlog is a form of blogging that uses video as its primary content. While blogs are deemed to be useful tool for a writing class, vlogs or video-based blogs are similarly useful for oral communication class (Balakrishnan & Puteh, 2014; Watkins, 2012; Shih, 2010).

There are various reasons why video-based blog is appropriate for oral communication class, especially in ESL classroom. One of the significant reasons is vlogging activities help students to increase their talking time when their speaking opportunities are no longer confined in the classroom in the traditional way (Watkins, 2012; Shih, 2010). Since learning is extended virtually, students can control their own learning pace and engage more frequently in oral presentations activities in order to
improve their confidence and mastery in oral presentation skills. In addition, vlogging encourages self-monitored speaking among the second language students (Watkins, 2012; Hung, 2011; Shih, 2010). This is because the use of video-based blog provides students with a record of their own speaking performance which they are able to view, analyse, evaluate and improvise before publishing it virtually. Furthermore, video-based blog activities afford the learners to obtain immediate and timely feedback when video-based blog is used to facilitate the development of oral presentation skills (Balakrishnan & Puteh, 2014; Watkins, 2012; Hung, 2011; Shih, 2010). Video-based blogs could provide specific, targeted guidance that support learners’ development of oral presentation skills when corrective feedback is given by their instructor and peers virtually. Hence, this approach is less daunting as compared to receiving in-class feedback when the learners can review it at their convenient time.

Previous literature has indicated the use of video-based blog can improve oral communication skills among second language learners. Shih’s (2010) research in Taiwan has found that using video-based blog to learn public speaking has helped the second language learners to overcome stage fright. In the study, the participants mentioned that being able to obtain unlimited opportunities to revise self-created videos have helped them to provide and accept peer-feedback. Such review and cooperative learning have enhanced their motivation and eventually helped them to improve their public speaking when the blogging technology allowed them to see their own performances, recognise their own oral skill, posture, gestures and facial expressions as well as improve their weakness by watching their recorded presentation repeatedly (Shih, 2010). Similar findings were found in the Malaysian context when Balakrishnan and Puteh’s (2014) study revealed that the incorporation of video-based blog in blended learning is effective in helping and developing ESL learners’ public
speaking skills. In addition, Hung’s (2011) study on the pedagogical implications of video-based blogs in an English for Specific Purpose course revealed that the learners perceived the use of video-based blogs does facilitate their speaking development in the targeted course.

However, even though it is clearly illustrated that video-based blogs do facilitate students’ oral development in language learning, due to the inherent challenges of video blogging (Becvar, 2007), most instructors refuse to utilise video-based blogs to improve learners’ oral presentation skills because the use of video recordings, blogs and the Internet becomes a daunting prospect for instructors who are not familiar with the technology (Watkins, 2012). The notion of setting up recording equipments, saving the recorded video, converting it into a readable format on the computer before finding a suitable platform to host the footage before embedding it into the video-based blog might be too overwhelming for the students and instructors. Additionally, even if the technology, unlimited access to the Internet and skills are present, v-loggin feedback is considered too time consuming as is not feasible for a large classroom size (Watkins, 2012).

Therefore, in the light of these reasons and coupled with the aforementioned virtues of video-based blogs, this study is set out to examine the use of video-based blogs in enhancing ESL students’ oral presentation skills. Since there is little empirical evidence hitherto has been made in relation to video-based blogs and oral presentations, this study intends to explore the use of video-based blogs in enhancing students’ oral presentation skills, students’ views on the use of video-based blogs in enhancing their oral presentation skills as well as to determine the extent to which the use of video-based blogs influences students’ oral presentation skills.
1.3  **RESEARCH OBJECTIVE**

This study is outlined based on the following objective:

1. To examine the use of video-based blogs in enhancing students’ oral presentation skills.

1.4  **RESEARCH QUESTIONS**

In order to achieve the objective of the study, the following research questions are identified:

1. How are video-based blogs used to enhance students’ oral presentation skills?
2. What are students’ views on the use of video-based blogs in enhancing oral presentation skills?
3. To what extent does the use of video-based blogs influence students’ oral presentation skills?

1.5  **SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY**

By attempting to examine the use of video-based blogs in enhancing oral presentation skills, it is hoped that this study will offer meaningful insights to academics on the use of video-based blogs in improving students’ oral presentation skills in ESL classroom. Not only that, the findings of this study have useful implications for teaching oral presentations as the insights can be used to help academics to prepare suitable teaching activities and materials that could enhance students’ oral presentation skills. In addition, since teaching and learning is no longer
constrained in the classroom setting, it is hoped that this study will provide students with adequate scaffolding to acquire and improve their oral presentation skills more effectively with the use of video-based blogs.

Furthermore, the findings of the study can help higher institutions to improve curriculum and balance their course instructions as well as class activities that are in accordance with the current market requirements when the most sought after skills are effective communication skills. Finally, since there has been a dearth on empirical research on the use of video-based blogs in enhancing students’ oral presentation skills, it is hoped that this study will add to the body of knowledge and become a guide for future researchers who might want to embark their research in a similar field.

1.6 SCOPE AND LIMITATIONS OF THE STUDY

Due to the accessibility of data, the sampling of the study is confined to a purposive selection of fifteen undergraduate engineering students who are taking an Effective Communication course in one public technical university in southern Malaysia. Therefore, the findings of this study could not be generalised to the overall population of engineering students who are taking the course in other tertiary institutions due to the difference in the syllabus.

In addition, since the study focused on investigating the use of video-based blogs in enhancing students’ oral presentation skills, the study is only confined to determine how video-based blogs are used to enhance ESL students’ oral presentation skills, the students’ views on the use of video-based in enhancing their oral presentation skills and to determine the extent to which the use of video-based blogs
influences students’ oral presentation skills in language learning based on Guo’s (2013) identified criteria of oral presentation skills. Another limitation is since the duration of the study is limited to an interval of one semester (14 weeks), the conclusions obtained can be considered only as a pioneer research, and thus further studies are needed in order to yield comprehensive findings.

1.7 DEFINITIONS OF TERMS

The following definitions of terms are used in this study:

1.7.1 Video-Based Blogs

Video-based blog is a blog that contains a video content (Balakrishnan & Puteh, 2014; Watkins, 2012; Hung, 2011; Shih, 2010). Just like the normal blog, the uploaded video in the blog is visible to the public and viewers can rate, comment and share it. Hence, in this study, video-based blogs are used as a platform for the students to upload their video-recorded speeches in order to receive online feedback from peers and instructors on their presentation skills.

1.7.2 ESL Students

ESL students are defined as students who use English as their second language and have a specific and practical need for English (Oxford University Press ELT, 2011). The students have daily exposure to English-speaking culture even though their understanding may be limited due to their language skills. Therefore, in this study,
ESL students refer to undergraduate students from various engineering faculties in one public technical university in southern Malaysia.

### 1.7.3 Oral Presentation Skills

Oral presentations are common in the academia world as they pose significant benefits in the academic settings. As cited in literature (Mohd Radzuan & Kaur, 2011; Irvine, 2009), oral presentation is defined by Levin and Topping (2009) as “a planned and rehearsed talk or speech that is not committed to memory or read directly from script, given by a presenter (sometimes more than one) to an audience or two or more people”. Another prominent definition of oral presentation is by Refe (1990), as cited in Hamm (2006), who posits that presentation generally involved a speaker and listener (or known as audience), where the speaker intends to motivate the audience to accept a new idea, alter an existing opinion or act on a given premise. Thus, in this study, the scope of oral presentation skills is confined to Guo’s (2013) identified criteria of presentation skills namely (a) verbal skills: volume, speed, intonation, articulation and enunciation, (b) non-verbal skills: appearance, facial expression, body language, gestures and eye contact, and (c) content: introduction of topic, organisation of idea, supporting evidence, summary or conclusion and evidence of preparation (refer to Appendix A: Oral Presentation Scoring Rubric).
1.8 CONCLUSION

To summarise, this chapter has outlined the introduction, background of the study, statement of the problem, objective of the study, research question, significance of the study, scope and limitations of the study as well as definitions of terms. In the subsequent chapters, Chapter Two highlights the literature related to the area of study, Chapter Three focuses on the research methodology, Chapter Four outlines the data analysis and findings of the study and finally, Chapter Five presents the discussions and conclusion.
CHAPTER TWO
LITERATURE REVIEW

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This chapter describes the literature review of the present study. It highlights the overview of oral presentation activities, namely the definition of oral presentation, elements of oral presentation skills, advantages of oral presentation, oral presentation activities in language learning and issues concerning oral presentation activities in language classroom. In addition, notable findings pertaining blogs in language learning, namely text-based blogs and language learning, audio-blogs and language learning, video-based blogs and language learning, video recordings in language learning as well as the conceptual framework of the study are also discussed in this chapter.

2.1 ORAL PRESENTATION ACTIVITIES

This section highlights the literature review of oral presentation activities related to the area of study. The following sub-topics presented in this section are definition of oral presentation skills, elements of oral presentation skills, advantages of oral presentation, oral presentation activities in language learning and issues of oral presentation activities in language classroom.
2.1.1 Definition of Oral Presentation

Oral presentation is one of the common methods of oral evaluation in the academia world, especially in language learning (Hinkelman & McGarthy, 2012). It is a significant academic oral activity that university students engaged in, especially in ESL classroom (Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Tajizan et al., 2012; Mohd Radzuan & Sidhu, 2011). According to Levin and Topping (2009), as cited in literature (Mohd Radzuan & Sidhu, 2011; Irvine, 2009), oral presentation is defined as “a planned and rehearsed talk or speech that is not committed to memory or read directly from script, given by a presenter (sometimes more than one) to an audience or two or more people”. Refe (1990), as cited in Hamm (2006), posits that a presentation has a persuasive aspect as it involves with motivating the audience in order to accept a new idea, alter an existing opinion or act on a given premise. Hence, oral presentations, which are apart of oral communication skills, have acquired significant position in tertiary education (Kakepoto et. al., 2012) as they are recognised and emphasised in various major educational disciplines (Mohd Radzuan & Sidhu, 2011; Rajoo, 2010; Degrez, Valacke & Roozen, 2009).

2.1.2 Elements of Oral Presentation Skills

Cavanagh, Bower, Moloney and Sweller (2014) categorised oral presentation skills into two broad categories, namely Modes of Communication and Constructed Impressions. There are five variables in Modes of Communication, namely (a) body language: centered, open body posture, upright, shoulders back, head up, utilising hand or arm gestures to emphasise point or convey meaning, inclusive eye contact,
relaxed stance, smooth gesture and warm facial expression, (b) voice: natural, appropriate volume projection, melodic variety or intonation, clear enunciation and appropriate pace; (c) words: positive and expressive language, structured, clear meaning, inclusive, use appropriate register that is relevant to the audience, use positive humour and strategies such as rhetorical questions to engage audience and (d) alignment: messages are aligned and there is congruency between body, voice and words. Constructed Impressions of Communication, on the other hand refers to (a) confidence: appears relaxed and stable, flexible and presenter’s manners conveys the necessary knowledge and authority as well as rapport with the audience, (b) clarity: meanings are easily understood, (c) engagement: presenter shows interest and enthusiasm and the anticipated audience are likely to be engaged and interested in presentation, makes a positive impression as well as interacts with the audience and (d) appropriateness: delivers oral presentation according to the level of the audience and situation through the use of content and language registers that is suitable to the audience.

Guo (2013) in her study on the use of video recordings as an effective tool to improve presentation skills highlighted three aspects of oral presentation skills that is (a) communication skills that consist of non-verbal skills (appearance, facial expression, body language, gestures and eye contact) and verbal skills (volume, speed, intonation, articulation and intonation), (b) content that includes introduction of topic, organisation of idea, supporting evidence, summary or conclusion as well as evidence of preparation, (c) integration of technology and (d) engaging the audience.

Yamkate and Intratat (2012), on the other hand, indicated that oral presentation skills consist of three elements, namely (a) verbal proficiency: grammar, pronunciation and fluency, (b) body language: eye contact, posture and gesture as
well as (c) quality of content: interestingness, relevance, expressions and continuity. Meanwhile, Chou (2011) emphasised five elements of academic oral presentation skills that are (a) rhetorical and lexical appropriacy used in oral presentations, (b) organisation, (c) exposition of professional knowledge, (c) fluency, (d) phonetic and phonology appropriacy and (e) the language that the learners used in academic presentation.

Renganathan, Abu Bakar, Chong, Abdullah, Mohamed Noor and Mohd Ali (2011) purported nine elements of oral presentation skills, namely (a) introduction: gain attention, justify topic and state purpose, establish credibility, preview the main points and use suitable formal address, (b) content: use factual evidence and logical reasoning, appeal to logic, credibility and emotion, cite sources of information for credibility and use visual aids effectively, (c) organisation: demonstrate effective organisational pattern and use appropriate as well as varies transitions and transitional phrases, (d) audience: deliver presentation relevant to audience, audience understands the topic as well as sustain audience’s interest throughout the presentation, (e) conclusion: summarise main theme, review main points, reinforce belief or call for action, deliver presentation within the stipulated time, (f) question and answer: handle the session well, maintain good relationship with the questioners and refute effectively if any, (g) delivery: vocal clarity and quality, eye contact, stance and gestures as well as appearance, and (h) language: use accurate and appropriate language.

However, since there are various intersected elements of oral presentation skills defined by various researchers, Guo’s (2013) elements of oral presentation skills namely (a) verbal skills: volume, speed, intonation, articulation and enunciation; (b) non-verbal skills: appearance, facial expression, body language,
gestures and eye contact; and (c) content: introduction of topic, organization of idea, supporting evidence, summary or conclusion and evidence of preparation are adapted in the present study in order to confine the scope of oral presentation skills.

2.1.3 Advantages of Oral Presentation

Numerous researchers have indicated the benefits of using oral presentations in the classroom. Girard, Pinar and Trapp (2011) found that oral presentations helped the students to improve their communication and presentation skills and at the same time, heightened their interests to learn English as it allowed them to interact and participate more in the classroom. King (2002), on the other hand, purported that oral presentations can benefit the students by helping them to bridge the gap between language study and language use.

Apart from that, another benefit of using oral presentations in the language classroom is the activities itself are student-centered (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010; King 2002). As claimed by Apple and Kikuchi (2007) as well as Al-Issa (2007), oral presentations enable the students to have both direct control of the content and the flow of the classroom. This is due to the fact that students are required to use their four language skills, namely listening, speaking, reading and writing skills during their oral presentation activities (Thornbury, 2005; King, 2002). Hence, students have to exercise their reading and writing skills to research and write their presentations whilst presenting in front of the audience requires the students to use spoken English. Besides that, students have the opportunity to practise their listening skills too when they exercise their role as the audience to their peers’ presentations.
Furthermore, oral presentations afford the students with an authentic way of practising English as compared to speaking drills (Wilson & Brooks, 2014) that have no relation to real-life language use and poor preparation for students’ autonomy (Thornbury, 2005). Thus, oral presentations enable the students to use their second language in a more natural way since they are required to use their English proficiency to understand the topics that they are presenting and communicate their understanding to others. Wilson and Brooks (2014) further argued that this method is closer to real language use as it provides the students with ample opportunities to develop their research, critical thinking, linguistic and communicative skills.

Hovane (2009) further asserted that oral presentations could motivate the students to learn English. This is because oral presentations provide the opportunities for the students to exercise peer teaching and if the activities are properly scaffolded, the students are able to work independently in order to produce effective oral presentations. According to Wilson and Brooks (2014), this type of goal-oriented activities will increase students’ motivation in learning as they are able to witness the results of their hard work and effort when they manage to deliver their oral presentations successfully.

Last but not least, oral presentations are useful for the students’ future (Wilson & Brooks, 2014; Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Various empirical studies have shown that participating in presentations can benefit the students in their future employment since the students will be asked to use English in order to deliver their oral presentations for their future jobs (Živković, 2014; Bruce, 2011). Hence, the students’ experience in dealing with oral presentations can enhance the students’ employability as many employers place significant importance on future employees’ ability to give formal oral presentations. Pittenger (2004) further stressed that even if
the employers are not looking for employees who can deliver their oral presentations in English, the presentation skills that the students have learnt when they are presenting in English are transferable for their first language oral presentations.

2.1.4 Oral Presentation Activities in Language Learning

There are three common practices of conducting oral presentation activities in language learning, especially in ESL classroom. The common activities include live individual presentation, paired presentation and grouped presentation (Wan Mustapha, Abdul Ghani, Abu Bakar & Musa, 2011; Chou, 2011; Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan; 2010; Ferris, 1998). However, the choice of determining the suitable types of oral presentations very much depends on the size of the class, the topic, the aims and objectives that the instructor wants to achieve for the lesson. As cited by Al-Issa and Al-Qubtan (2010), individual oral presentations exercise the learners’ autonomy whilst paired or grouped presentation instils the value of collaboration, productivity and teamwork. Schcolnik and Kol (1999) supported this statement by indicating paired and grouped works can influence students’ social integration and negotiation of meaning in which it can positively impact the process of language and knowledge acquisition as well as the quality of language output and spontaneity of speech in an arranged manner.

Wilson and Brooks (2014), indicated another type of oral presentation activity that is poster presentation. According to Thornbury (2005), poster presentation refers to an academic presentation that utilises poster as its main visual aid for presentation. Most instructors employed poster presentations as part of oral presentation activities due to several reasons, namely (a) using posters as visual aid helped to reduce
students’ anxiety when delivering their presentation; (b) poster presentations allowed the students to experience high level of interactivity between the audience and presenter that is not possible in a structured academic presentation; and (c) poster presentation allowed room for students’ creativity and at the same time, catered to students’ diverse learning styles (Wilson & Brooks, 2014; Lambert, 2008).

2.1.5 Issues of Oral Presentation Activities in Language Classroom

Oral presentation skills are valuable and considered to be the most significant component of communication skills that should be acquired by students in language learning (Kakepoto et. al., 2012). However, even though oral presentation activity is beneficial for students and oral presentation skills can be best acquired through practice and feedback obtained during the activity (Tajizan et al., 2012), the activity remains the least anticipated during the learning of the language. Most students ranked oral presentation as the most feared and daunting activity in an anxiety-provoked situation (Wilson & Brooks, 2014; Guo, 2013; Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; McNulty & Lazarevic, 2012; Tajizan et al., 2012; Mak, 2011; King, 2002; Ferris, 1998). Asian students, in particular perceived oral presentation as a face threatening activity when it contradicts with their culture of protecting one’s face (Tajizan et al., 2012; Kim, 2006) and teacher-centered activities in the classroom (Tajizan et. al. 2012; King, 2002;). The fear of speaking in public, conducting mistakes, being ridiculed by others, together with the lack of English language proficiency lead to the emergence of anxiety later (Tajizan et al., 2012; Yamkate & Intratat, 2012; Guo, 2013; Mak 2011). Guo (2013) and Tajizan et al. (2012) reported that due to these overwhelming
challenges, students are reluctant to participate in the activity, resulting in them not able to master their oral presentation skills and their performance to be deteriorated.

Kakepoto et al. (2012) further indicated that these particular challenges, if continue not to be addressed will lead to the significant reasons of graduate unemployment. Impressive grades are no longer a determiner for employment nowadays when graduates are sought to possess effective oral communication skills (Pathan, 2013; Alwi & Sidhu, 2013; Kakepoto et al., 2012; Ziegler, 2007; King, 2002). Tajizan et al. (2012) indicated that the fear of speaking in front of the audience has become one of the contributing factors why job seekers are rejected and thousands of employees are declined for job promotions in the United States. This is due to the fact that the acceptance of a new position often requires an individual to deliver their speech or presentation in front of their future supervisors or co-workers (Kakepoto et al., 2012; Krannich, 2004; as cited in Tajizan et al, 2012). The statement is in line with Juhary (2014), Omar et al. (2012), Kakepoto et al. (2012), Azian and Mun (2011), Rahmah, Ishak and Wei Seing (2011), Rasul et al. (2010) and Singh and Singh’s (2008) claims that of the highlighted oral communications skills sought by the employers is the ability to present ideas and to conduct effective presentation.

According to Yang and Scharff (2013), Hinkelman, Rian and McGarty (2012), Tajizan et al. (2012), Christianson, Hoskins and Watanabe (2010), Cochrane and O’Donoghue (2008), Garcia, Marin and Miralles (2008), Tsutsui and Kato (2001), there are several issues arise in regards with the implementation of oral presentation activity in language learning. The first issue is the meaningfulness of the activity to the language learners. Often, educators will observe and evaluate the oral presentation and learners will wait for their turn and receive their grades at the end of the activity (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarty, 2012). This practice might be adequate for the self-
motivated learners, but remains a major deterrent for learners who lack self-motivation. Hinkelman, Rian and McGarty (2012) further supported the statement by indicating that the low-motivated learners are prone to have less engagement in language learning (Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe; 2010), will invest minimal effort during their oral presentation or will play truant in their lesson (Wilson & Brooks, 2014). Hence, the activity remains meaningless to the learners.

The second issue is the practicality of the activity. Oral presentation activity is time-consuming with little or no pedagogical values especially for a large class (Wilson & Brooks, 2014; Hinkelman, Rian & McGarthy, 2012; Tajizan et al., 2012; Cochrane & O’Donoghue, 2008). Due to time constraint, instructors are more concerned to complete the syllabus rather than addressing the students’ needs. This situation is further exemplified in the tertiary engineering classroom when the engineering faculties heavily emphasise on covering critical technical material in the curriculum rather than prioritising oral presentation in engineering courses even though they recognise the necessity of training the students for effective communication (Indra Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014; Tajizan et al., 2012; Cochrane & O’Donoghe, 2008). Not only that, it is also a common practice for the engineering students to deliver oral presentations that are mainly focused on the content of the presentation without being taught on how to present effectively due to the assumption of they will be trained later in elective courses such as Public Speaking or Effective Communication. Subsequently, many leave the responsibility to the English and media department, which results in the input provided in the elective courses to contradict the oral presentation skills needed for a practicing engineer (Indra Devi, Amir & Krish, 2014; American Society for Engineering Education, 2012).
Although oral presentation skills can best be improved through practice and feedback obtained during oral presentation activity, the opportunities for instructor to provide feedback are limited (Wilson & Brooks, 2014). Due to the limited number of classrooms and the increase number of students per class, instructors do not have the luxury of time to monitor students’ oral presentation skills individually as well as to provide guided practice and comprehensive individualised feedbacks for the students so that they can be competent in their oral presentations (Tajizan et al., 2012; Yang & Scharff, 2013). Introducing oral presentation activity with an average of 40 students generates implausible noise that may distract other instructors and students who are learning nearby. Cochrane (2009) in his study also highlighted a similar issue experienced by many engineering departments. Due to the massive number of enrolment, the growing size of engineering classes have impacted students’ ability to acquire oral presentation skills when students’ speaking time is limited and the lessons are skewed into a teacher-centered approach (Tajizan et al., 2012; Cochrane & O’Donoghue, 2008). To aggravate the situation further, due to time constraints and hindrance of facility, instructors often fail to provide meaningful feedback on the positive and negative aspects of students’ presentation, thus, impacting the students’ mastery of oral presentation skills (Tajizan et al., 2012; Yang & Schraff, 2011).

The third issue is the evaluation of the activity. Oral presentation activity is restricted to “on spot and one-chance grading” within several allocated minutes (Hinkelman, Rian & McGarty, 2012). Assessing oral presentation activity itself is a challenge when the judgment is subjective without any concrete evidence (Yang & Scharff, 2013; Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe, 2010). It is difficult for instructors to identify and evaluate the students’ presentation mistakes entirely (Tsutsui & Kato, 2001) and students fail to acknowledge their speech problems or mistakes in their
presentation (Guo, 2013) when there is no tangible artefact for the students to review it (Yang & Scharff, 2013; Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe, 2010). Not only that, students may perceive the evaluation of the assessment to be invalid, unfair and unreliable too (Christianson, Hoskins & Watanabe, 2010; Garcia, Marin & Miralles, 2008).

Furthermore, another issue is the timeline of the feedback. As cited by Yang and Schraff (2013), studies have indicated that students were unable to benefit from the feedback if it was not given immediately. This is due to the fact that students failed to relate the received feedback with the mistakes of their presentation if they could not remember it afterwards (Tsutsui & Kato, 2001). The tendency for the students to disregard the feedback is high when they perceived it as no longer relevant. In addition, providing timely feedback during the activity will only interrupt and demotivate the students, and not to mention, it is time-consuming too.

Thus, the above-mentioned issues highlighted in the previous studies are taken into consideration when dealing with oral presentation activities in this study.

2.2 **BLOGS IN LANGUAGE LEARNING**

Second language learning has experienced a paradigm shift from a cognitive oriented learning to a social oriented learning nowadays (Wang & Vasquez, 2012; Abu Bakar, Latif & Ya’acob, 2010). This is due to the fact that millions of Netizens today are allured with Web 2.0 technologies to interact, collaborate, connect and entertain themselves through blogs, wikis and social networking tools for an instant self-publishing and live online interaction (Wang & Vasquez, 2012; Dyment, O’Connel & Boyle, 2011; Warschauer & Grimes, 2007). There is no acceptance for
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