Oral Presentation: Self-perceived Competence and Actual Performance among UiTM Business Faculty Students

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Abstract

The main aim of this research was to describe the students’ self-perceived and actual performance in making oral presentations. The study employed a mixed method research design and involved an intact class of 40 Business Faculty undergraduates taking an ESL (English as a Second Language) course in a local university in Malaysia. Data was collected using a self-constructed and expert-validated needs analysis questionnaire, oral presentation tests and semi-structured interviews. The results indicated that there were discrepancies between the actual performance scores and students’ self-evaluation marks for all the four skills. Thus, when designing a course outline, educators needs to focus more on those areas in order to improve the students’ oral presentation skills.

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Keywords: oral presentation; self-perceived competence; actual performance.

1. Introduction

In a majority of language based courses in institutions of higher learning, tertiary students are often called upon to make oral presentations. On the other hand, lecturers at the tertiary level of education often assume that the students come with the necessary capabilities and knowledge to make effective oral presentations. Yet, many tertiary students end up hyperventilating with the thought of having to stand in front of their peers to make an oral presentation. Many students consider oral presentations as one of the most challenging forms of assessments in the university. However, oral presentations are also one of the most fruitful sources of personal growth in their tertiary tutelage, particularly for the business students. For the students’ education and future work purposes, it is important to develop the skills and confidence in giving oral presentations. Tertiary students

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are well aware of the impact of competent presentation skills in English. In fact, students who are preparing for the working world tend to take presentation classes as a part of their regular degree programs (Nakamura, 2002). Although there are more students enrolling in oral presentation courses, most of them were unaware of what to be done to improve their oral presentation skills.

In such scenario, it is therefore important to conduct a needs analysis to examine the students’ self-rated level of competence. This is vital for the educators to understand how the students view themselves in term of making oral presentations, especially in the four parameters focused in this study (organisation, content, language and delivery). By understanding the students’ perceptions, educators can devise a course which can fit the students’ needs and requirements. Nevertheless, the educators are also required to know their students actual performance in making oral presentations in order to provide appropriate amount of assistance on every occasion possible.

A lot of research has been done to evaluate the students’ needs in language learning. However, there are limited literatures on the students’ needs in oral presentation. In Malaysia particularly, there are limited researches comparing the students’ self-perceived and actual performance in order to understand their needs in making oral presentations. Thus this current study is important in order to evaluate the students’ perceptions of their level of competence and their actual performance in making oral presentations and to look more into the students’ needs in learning oral presentation skills.

2. Literature Review

As Morita and Kobayashi (2008) indicated, there is a recent growing interest in examining university students’ development of academic literacy by focusing on oral activities. An important feature of tertiary education in different parts of the world today is oral presentations. As Morita (2000) observes, oral presentation is a “frequent, highly routinized part of classroom life” (p. 258) in higher education settings. It is also well-known that business courses have been putting more emphasised on oral activities, such as oral presentations. Despite the pervasiveness of oral activities in university, relatively little literature has been published thus far about oral presentations in the English language classroom (Morita, 2000; Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). These limited literature usually focused on discussing certain theoretical and practical aspects pertaining to oral presentations in the EFL classroom. Earlier research on oral presentation has addressed different issues such as the student conceptions (Joughin, 2007), students’ preparation process (Kobayashi, 2003), and courses specifically designed to help students develop their presentation skills (Hill & Storey, 2003). Some newer studies also focused on the students’ perspectives of the oral presentation. A few recent qualitative studies examined the challenges and socialization processes experienced by ESL students in oral activities at graduate-level content courses (Weissberg, 1993; Morita, 2000; Zappa-Hollman, 2007). These studies showed that ESL students found oral presentations quite demanding, because of their lack of training and experience in speaking conversationally in English.

In making oral presentations, ESL students, especially those less fluent in English, tended to restrict the spontaneous elements in their speeches and speak from their memory of a written text (Weissberg, 1993). This is typical among the Malaysian tertiary students where they usually speak what they read without comprehension. These students will have problem in dealing with the question and answer session later and based on observations, some speakers even avoid the questions from the audience by quickly taking their seats after the presentations. However, fortunately many ESL students perceived these oral activities positively as an opportunity for them to practice English, learn about the values promoted in English-medium universities, and refine their presentation skills (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). Students who were aware of the importance of oral presentation skills struggled to improve their skills and they viewed the classroom oral activities as medium for them to practice and seek for advice and comments from the lecturer.

In giving effective oral presentations in English, it is not a simple matter of learning language and following instructions; rather, it is a skill requiring process of complex sociolinguistics aspects as well as cognitive understandings (Morita, 2000). Tertiary students, especially ESL students need to acquire both sociolinguistics and cognitive understandings to learn oral presentation skills. Without these, the students were unable to use the
language correctly to interact with the audience appropriately as interactions involve both. The early survey studies and recent qualitative studies showed that oral academic activities are important for socializing ESL students into their academic disciplines. Students are required to socialize with their surroundings when making oral presentations, especially in communicating with the audience and answering questions regarding the oral presentation.

Self-evaluation is defined as the self-judgment of oral speech by the student (Boud, 2003, p.1). This definition was taken from previous research on the students’ self-assessment of oral activities. In previous study, Oskarsson presented six advantages of using self-evaluation: 1) promotion of learning 2) raising level of awareness 3) improving goal-orientation 4) expansion of range assessment 5) sharing assessment burden 6) beneficial post-course effects (Oskarsson, 1989, pp.1-13). As proven in recent research by Oi (2012), other than helping the students to increase self-awareness, self-evaluation can also motivate the students. When students assess themselves, they are more responsive to the lesson and at the same time, this perception will motivate the students to be more attentive towards their own learning. Another research shown that the students’ English proficiency would be improved using self-evaluation and peer evaluation because the ability to judge themselves helps students to find their problems and solution by themselves, and finally lead to autonomy. These proven benefits encourage the educators to employ self-evaluation thus to help improve the students’ oral proficiency, specifically oral presentation skills.

There are a lot of researches also evaluate the discrepancy between the self-assessment results and the actual results given by the lecturers, teachers and even panel of experts. According to a study by Oi (2012) there was a significant difference between teacher evaluation and student self-evaluation. However, these researches are still inadequate as there are very limited studies done to compare the tertiary students’ self-perceived and actual performance in oral presentation skills. This study will probe further on the students’ self-perceived evaluation and teacher evaluation and compare the students’ self-perceived competence and actual performance in oral presentations in order to fathom the students’ needs in learning to be effective presenters.

This study was conducted with the aim to fulfil the following objectives:

- To identify the students’ self-perceived and actual performance of oral presentations.
- To compare the discrepancies between the students’ self-perceived and actual performance of oral presentations.

3. The Study

This study employed a mixed method research technique to compare self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations among undergraduate students taking an Oral Communication Course. The natural setting for this investigation was a one-semester Oral Communication Course conducted at MARA University of Technology (UiTM), Malaysia. The students were part of an intact group that was required to take the Oral Communication course. The intact group comprised of 40 third semester Business Faculty degree students participating in a university-structured Oral Communication Program. All the students who registered for the course participated in the study. Respondents were coded with a number to ensure confidentiality. The students attended 26, two-hour weekly meetings.

As mentioned previously, the researcher used a self-assessment questionnaire as an instrument along with instructors’ authenticated assessment (the final semester exam) to document the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations. An expert-authenticated rating scales and assessment rubric were used by the evaluators and researcher to substantiate the final exam and control for bias. Reliability for this instrument was estimated by calculating a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient using Statistical Package for Social Science (SPSS Version 20.0) on the needs analysis questionnaire (α=0.96). In order to triangulate the quantitative data gathered from the questionnaire and oral presentation test, semi-structured interviews were conducted with six students and the two evaluators who assessed the students’ oral presentations. The students and lecturers were asked to elaborate and in some areas, to justify on the ratings given in the questionnaire and test.
Data collection consisted of a self-assessment questionnaire to grade the students’ self-perceived level of competency in making oral presentations and an oral presentation test. The students were asked to perform an individual oral presentation in front of the audience – their peers and lecturer. For the oral presentation test, a rating scale attached with a scoring rubric was employed to grade students’ oral presentation test (final semester test) to assure grading consistency and control for instructor bias, since there were two evaluators rating the students’ oral presentation skills. To provide feedback to the student, the evaluators rated the quality of each presentation on a 5-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (weak) to 5 (excellent), with 2 being limited, 3 being fairly and 4 being good. Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) version 20.0 was used to derive the statistical analysis pertinent to this study. The data collected was keyed into the software prior to the analysis. The data was analysed and interpreted by the researcher together with the two evaluators, which is a recommended technique for controlling experimenter’s bias (Borg & Gall, 1989). Qualitative data collected in the semi-structured interviews were transcribed verbatim and the answers were analysed by the themes emerged in the interviews. After the analysis, a report was written.

4. Findings

The results of this study are reported in three areas:

- The students’ self-perceived competence of oral presentations.
- The students’ actual performance of oral presentations.
- The discrepancies between the students’ self-perceived and actual performance of oral presentations.

4.1. Students’ Self-perceived and Actual Performance in Oral Presentation.

In Table 1, the students’ self-perceived level of competence and their actual performance in making oral presentations were indicated for each of the four core oral presentation skills (organisation, content, delivery and language). On the whole, the students did better in the self-perceived level of competence compared to their actual performance in making oral presentations. The students evaluated themselves in the needs analysis questionnaires and they believed that they were better than what the examination panels rated them. Out of the four skills, the students rated themselves the highest (mean=3.83, SD=.712) in delivery skills and the lowest in language skills (mean=2.68, SD=.888). This showed that the students were very confident in their ability to speak and deliver their oral presentations. However, there was a slight mismatch between the evaluators and the students as the evaluators rated the students with the highest (mean=2.75, SD=.776) marks in the students’ ability in language while the students rated themselves a little lower (mean=2.68, SD=.888).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Self-perceived</th>
<th>Actual Performance</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Mean</td>
<td>Std. Deviation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>1.194</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>.807</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>.712</td>
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<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>.888</td>
</tr>
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Scale: 1=Weak, 2=Limited, 3=Fairly, 4=Good, 5=Excellent

Objective two of the study was to examine the differences between the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competency in oral presentations. In order to determine if there is a significant difference in the mean scores of the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations, a paired sample t-test was conducted. Based on the results shown in Table 2, it is evident that three out of four oral presentation skills listed indicated that there is a significant difference in the mean scores between the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations. No significant difference in the mean
score was recorded for language skills where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 2.68 and the actual level of competence at 2.75 (t(39)=-.38; p-value>.05).

Table 2. Paired sample t-test results for the students’ self-perceived and actual level of oral presentation skills

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Paired sample t-test</th>
<th>Self-perceived</th>
<th>Actual</th>
<th>Mean difference</th>
<th>t</th>
<th>df</th>
<th>Sig. (2-tailed)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Organisation</td>
<td>3.40</td>
<td>2.48</td>
<td>.92</td>
<td>4.94</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Content</td>
<td>3.63</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.05</td>
<td>6.74</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Delivery</td>
<td>3.83</td>
<td>2.58</td>
<td>1.25</td>
<td>7.32</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(.000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Language</td>
<td>2.68</td>
<td>2.75</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>-.38</td>
<td>39</td>
<td>(.706)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

4.2. Organisation

Going into details, several aptitudes were listed under each skill to elaborate more on the skills. There are eight aptitudes under organisation, ten aptitudes for content, 15 aptitudes for delivery and another four aptitudes for language. Findings in this study indicated that the students were of the opinion that their organisation skills are largely higher than average. Whereas according to the evaluators, the students’ organisation skills were also ranging from fairly to good except for the students’ ability to use connectives and discourse markers appropriately in oral presentations to help audience maintain focus on main points where the students’ mean score (mean=2.600, SD=.900) was lower than fairly.

The students self-assessed their ability to gain the audience attention in the introduction a little higher (mean=3.575, SD=0.844) than their actual performance (mean=3.400, SD=1.194). The students believed that they were not able to introduce the topic interestingly (mean=3.475, SD=0.784), however the evaluators remarked that the students were quite good in introducing their oral presentation topic (mean=3.750, SD=.543). The students were misjudging themselves as their mean score (mean=3.225, SD=.733) was lower than the evaluators’ mean score (mean=3.650, SD=.802) for the ability to make a good thesis statement. For the ability to phrase and organise the main points, the students were really underestimating themselves when the evaluators mean score (mean=3.450, SD=0.783) was higher than what the students perceived themselves (mean=3.300, SD=.758). For the next ability in organisation skills, the students again underrated themselves (mean=3.300, SD=.758) as the evaluators marked the students’ ability to organize supporting material in logical, coherent way as (mean=3.850, SD=.483). Nevertheless, the students did overestimate their ability to use connectives and discourse markers appropriately in oral presentations to help audience maintain focus on main points when they self-assessed themselves with a mean score of 3.600 (D=0.810) while the evaluators assessed them with much lower marks (mean=2.600, SD=.900). The students perceived that their ability to signal the conclusion in the oral presentation with a suitable statement is lower (mean=3.350, SD=.749) than the actual mark (mean=3.500, SD=.679) evaluated by the evaluators. Lastly, the students again misjudged their ability to reinforce central idea before ending the presentation (mean=3.700, SD=.758) when the actual score (mean=3.350, SD=1.442) was lower than the perceived score.

The students perceived that in organisation skills, with the highest mean of 3.700 (SD=.758), the students believed that they were very good in reinforcing central idea before ending the presentation and according to the lowest mean value (3.225, SD=.733), the students were not good in making thesis statement. This is supported by the data collected in the semi-structured interview with the students. As stated by student 4 in the interview:

“I just speak without even organising my..my speeches. Sometimes I didn’t think about introducing the students to my main points because I cannot remember. So, sometimes the lecturer itself like give out..like.. tugur me lah..about my organisation so I think that, I still that, I need to improve lah.”

However, according to the evaluators, for organisation skills, the students’ weakest point (mean=2.600, SD=.900) was in using connectives and discourse markers in oral presentation. The evaluators felt that the students were very good in organising the main points for their oral presentations (mean=3.900, SD=.810).
The students’ perceptions on whether they have the ability to provide relevant and interesting content for their oral presentations were positive. The findings indicated higher than average mean values of the ten abilities listed under content, except for the ability to cite and write bibliography (mean=2.90, SD=0.96). This indicated that they were having problem to cite and write bibliography. The students were very confident with their ability in making a creative and interesting introduction (mean=3.60, SD=0.87) which had the highest mean score. However, the evaluators assessed differently. The students ability to present ideas clearly in the oral presentation scored the highest marks (mean=4.425, SD=.636) while the evaluators alleged that for content, the students’ ability to prepare relevance explanation and details suitable to the presentation topic was not good with the lowest mean score of 3.275 (SD=1.012).

### 4.3. Content

For content, there were slight mismatches between the ability to make a creative and interesting introduction, ability to make a clear topic sentence for each point, ability to prepare well-researched, sound and substantive materials in the oral presentation, ability to insert adequate supporting material, ability to cite and write bibliography, ability to provide suitable and rich content for the presentation topic and the ability to provide logic and reasoning in doing the presentation where the students underestimating their abilities and the evaluators’ provided higher marks than the self-assessment marks. The students also extremely underestimating their ability to present ideas clearly in the oral presentation (mean=3.550, SD=.714) as the evaluators deemed that they were better (mean=4.425, SD=.636). Nonetheless, the students also overestimated their ability to prepare relevance explanation and details suitable to the presentation topic and the ability to make a clear conclusion for each point.

On a five-point likert-scale, the respondents were asked to evaluate their delivery skills. The delivery skills involved 15 aptitudes, regarding the presenters’ abilities to make verbal and non-verbal communication such as the ability to control their pitch and volume, the ability to pronounce, enunciate and articulate the words when presenting, the ability to maintain eye control, posture and gestures and more. The results displayed that the respondents’ self-perceived level for the delivery skills were mostly average. This was shown by the above average mean values for all the 15 aptitudes under delivery skill. The highest mean score was the respondents’ ability to dress appropriately and professionally according to the situation (mean=4.525, SD=.506) and the lowest mean score affirmed that the respondents were unable to avoid using verbal pauses in their presentations (mean=3.10, SD=.841). Despite the fact that the students believed they were good in delivery skills, for the evaluators, the students needed more guidance in delivery skills where they rated the students as above average to weak. The students obtained highest mean score of 3.925 (SD=1.023) for the ability to speak loudly and audibly in the oral presentation and the lowest score (mean=1.875, SD=1.181) was for the students ability to make deliberate movements on the stage (appropriate use of space).

### 4.4. Delivery

The students overestimated 14 out of 15 aptitudes in delivery skills except for one, the students’ ability to avoid using verbal pauses. The students rated themselves lower (mean=3.100, SD=.841) than what the evaluators rated the students (mean=3.125, SD=.757). Out of 14 aptitudes which were being overestimated by the students, nine abilities were extremely overestimated. These are the ability to articulate clearly in the oral presentation, ability to enunciate words clearly in oral presentation, ability to dress appropriately and professionally according to the situation, ability to make appropriate gestures, ability to maintain suitable facial expression, ability to make eye contact with listeners, ability to make deliberate movements on the stage (appropriate use of space), ability to keep a proper posture throughout the presentation and ability to make powerful impression on the audience. They were considered as extreme as the difference between the self-perceived and actual mean scores were more than 0.5. Based on the results, it was clear that the respondents needed more guidance from the lecturer on improving their delivery skills, especially when most of the respondents were not confident when speaking in English and this was supported by the qualitative data from the semi-structured interview when Student 3 mentioned that:
“I think I would need the most help in delivery because err I don’t.. err I don’t have a lot of confidence when talking in. in front of people. When delivering, I usually stand like a statue and keep staring at the floor. So, it. this disturb my delivery when I try to present my oral presentations”.

4.5. Language

Finally, the researcher asked the evaluators to assess the students and the students to assess themselves of their ability to use sentences typical to spoken language in their presentation, the ability to speak in correct grammar, the ability to speak using appropriate choice of words relevance to the topic they presented and the respondents’ abilities to use variety of vocabulary in the presentation. Based on the findings, the students’ self-perceived mean values for all the abilities were below than the cutting point (3.50). This indicates that the respondents’ estimated that their language skills were lower than average. The highest mean score was the respondents’ ability to speak using appropriate choice of words relevance to the topic (mean=3.30, SD=.83). The lowest mean value is the students’ ability to speak in correct grammar (mean=3.10, SD=.84). The evaluators rated the students to be below fairly. The highest mean score (mean=2.800, SD=.758) is for the students’ ability to speak using appropriate choice of words relevance to the topic. This is about the students’ ability to use appropriate word register according to the topic and situation. The lowest mean score (mean=2075, SD=.730) shows that the students were weak in grammar. Both self-perceived and actual scores showed that the students and evaluators reckoned that the students were unable to perform successfully in term of language when making oral presentations especially their ability to speak in correct grammar.

Apart from that, semi-structured interviews were also conducted with the evaluators who further clarified the students’ actual performance during their individual oral presentations. The excerpt below was taken from the evaluators’ responses when they were asked to clarify the marks given for the students’ oral presentations.

Evaluator One:

“Some of them can speak fluently and in good confidence, most are in the level of moderate and weak. Their main problem is the grammatical and minor structural errors they make when they begin to feel excited during their presentation resulting in the loss of control of their speech. The students also need to improve their delivery skills, most of them were barely making eye contact with the audience and some keep looking at the slides without acknowledging the audience. Based on what I observed, they are insecure of the words they are using and performing public speaking in English because English is not their mother tongue. They need lots of practice and a high level of self-confidence. Hence lecturers need to give them a lot of opportunity to practice and at the same time give them encouragement, good moral support as well as emotional support”.

Hence this view supported the perception that students still need help from the lecturers and at the same time, lecturers need to provide time and opportunity for these students to practice in order to improve their oral presentation skills.

To determine if there is a significant difference in these scores, a paired sample t-test was conducted for the abilities under the four skills – organisation, content, delivery and language. The findings as shown that four out of eight abilities in organisation skills listed indicated that there are significant differences in the mean scores between the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in oral presentations. No significant difference in the mean score was recorded for another four abilities which were the ability to gain the audience attention in the introduction where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.575 and the actual level of competence at 3.40 (t(39)=.84; p-value>.05), the ability to introduce the topic interestingly where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.475 and the actual level of competence at 3.75 (t(39)=-1.811; p-value>.05), the ability to signal the conclusion in the oral presentation where the self-perceived mean score is 3.35 and the students’ actual performance mean score is 3.50 (t(39)=-.291; p-value>.05) and the ability to reinforce central idea before the end of the presentation where the self-perceived mean score is 3.7 and the actual
mean score is 3.35 (t(39)=1.418; p-value>.05) at the .05 level. This simply means that although the students’ self-assessed and actual mean scores are different, these differences were not significant.

Next are the skills to provide rich and relevant content for the oral presentation. Out of the ten abilities listed under content skills, three abilities show significant differences in the mean scores between the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in oral presentation. They are the ability to present ideas clearly in the oral presentation (t(39)=-6.074; p-value<.05), ability to prepare well-researched, sound and substantive materials in the oral presentation (t(39)=-4.038; p-value<.05) and ability to cite and write bibliography (t(39)=-4.640; p-value<.05). Another seven abilities recorded no significant difference between the self-perceived and actual level mean scores.

For 15 aptitudes under delivery skills, 10 aptitudes showed that there are significant differences in the mean scores between the students’ actual performance and self-perceived competence. Another five abilities which showed no significant difference are the ability to speak loudly and audibly in the oral presentation (t(39)=.585; p-value>.05), ability to speak in a steady rate (speed of speech) appropriate to the topic (t(39)=.561; p-value>.05), ability to avoid using verbal pauses (t(39)=1.144; p-value>.05), and ability to make powerful impression on the audience (t(39)=1.202; p-value>.05). This indicates that although there are a difference between the means scores for these aptitude these differences were not significant.

Lastly, for language, the mean scores between the students’ actual performance and self-perceived competence show that there are significant differences for all the four abilities. Ability to use sentences typical to spoken language in the presentation where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.225 and the actual level of competence at 2.675 (t(39)=2.598; p-value<.05). Next, ability to speak in correct grammar where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.100 and the actual level of competence at 2.075 (t(39)=5.460; p-value<.05). The ability to speak using appropriate choice of words relevance to the topic where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.300 and the actual level of competence at 2.800 (t(39)=2.793; p-value<.05). Finally the ability to use variety of vocabulary in the presentation where the mean score for self-perceived level of competence is 3.125 and the actual level of competence at 2.575 (t(39)=3.139; p-value<.05). This shows that the actual performance mean scores were higher than the students’ self-perceived performance and these differences were significant.

4. Conclusion

The first research objective was to identify the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations. From the findings, it was clear that students performed better in the self-perceived evaluation rather than the actual performance where the students were evaluated by a panel of experts. The self-evaluation scores were collected by administrating a questionnaire where the students were asked to assess themselves for the 37 abilities which were grouped under four skills - organisation, content, delivery and language. The actual performance scores were later collected by asking two evaluators to assess the students’ oral presentation skills. The students’ self-evaluation scores for all the 37 aptitudes were mostly higher than average. The students believed that they were quite accomplished in oral presentation skills. The evaluators who judged the students’ ability in oral presentations scored the students differently. In the study, the evaluators believed that the students’ organisation and content skills were ranging from fairly to good. For delivery skills, the evaluators assessed that the students were scattered effusively from weak to good. Lastly, the evaluators believed that the students’ actual performance in language were far from excellent. The marks were below average for all the four components under language skills. The evaluators believed that the students’ actual performance was far from outstanding. They needed more guidance and practice as what was mentioned by the assessors, recorded in the interviews. The qualitative data from the interviews also clarified the students’ lack of skills and confidence regarding oral presentation tasks.

The second research objective looked into comparison between the students’ self-perceived and actual level of competence in making oral presentations. Accurate self-assessment of personal and professional capabilities is
essential for success (Cummins, 2005). None of the students estimated their competence with reasonable accuracy and more than half of the students underestimated their organisation skills in oral presentation. However, most students overestimated his or her competence in delivery and language skills. For organisation skills, the evaluators believed that the students were underestimating their abilities as the actual marks were higher than the students’ self-evaluation scores. The actual performance and students’ self-evaluated scores for content show diminutive difference between the two. The scores for both were ranging from fairly to good. However, the students overestimated 14 out of 15 aptitudes in delivery skills where the students’ actual performance scores were far lower than the self-evaluation marks. Lastly, for language skills, evaluators’ scores of the students’ abilities were below average while the students still believed that their language abilities were above average. The findings demonstrate that the discrepancy between the students’ actual performance and self-evaluated scores for delivery and language skills were highly evident.

Henceforth this study implies that it is important for educators especially language instructors to understand these discrepancies and work towards further understanding their students’ learning needs. What is more pertinent, tailor made courses must be constructed for students to identify their needs to create a better learning environment which can be adjusted based on the students’ needs and compliment so that they can become effective presenters when they go out into the working world.

References


