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RESEARCH ARTICLE

IN-SERVICE EFL TRAINEES' ATTITUDE TO ORAL PRESENTATION AND ASSESSMENT AT ARBA MINCH UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

Attitude to oral presentation and its assessment is highly crucial in the acquisition of effective presentation skills. This is particularly more evident for teachers as they communicate with their students' every time. In connection to this, teachers' attitude to oral presentation and its assessment, and the association between these two variables were found felt gap. Accordingly, this study attempted to fill the void taking 140 summer and regular in-service trainees of year I and II enrolled for their M.A degree in Teaching English as Foreign Language /TEFL/ at Arba Minch University between 2014-2016 academic years. In order to obtain the participants' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions were used. To analyze the trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, frequency counts and percentages were employed. So as to see the association between the trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, the mean scores of attitude to oral presentation and assessment scales were tested. To do this, two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlation was employed. On the other hand, the data acquired from semi-structured interview were thematically analyzed qualitatively as verbal description to supplement the data obtained from questionnaire. In addition, patterns of the analyzed interview data were compared and contrasted in order to see the link between trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment if any. The findings indicated that EFL trainees have favorable attitude to both oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation. Furthermore, strong and significant positive correlation was found between EFL trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation.

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INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation is vital skills that one should acquire to be successful in academic and professional careers. Scholars and professionals in various fields disseminate their academic works and deliver affluent experiences through oral presentations at conferences, public lectures and at other different settings. Specific to education, teachers who possess good oral presentation skills are shown to have the potential to convey messages effectively to their learners, which this in turn influences the quality of learners they produce (Al-Omari and Al-Dababneh, 2010). Oral presentation is conceived as a planned and practiced speech that a presenter delivers to the audiences without memorizing or reading the points (Levin and Topping, 2006 as in Al-Nouh, Abdul-Kareem & Taqil, 2015). Oral presentation is beneficial skills both to teachers

and students. Among these for instance, it allows the students to practice speaking, create paces for the learners' with diverse learning styles, investigate presentation topics in depth for better understanding, offer students with self-regulating learning (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010 and Munby, 2011). Moreover, effective oral presentation is also related with high quality teaching (Worley, Titsworth, Worley, & Cornett-DeVito, 2007). Furthermore, teacher's oral presentation effectiveness has been shown to correlate with perceived self competence of teacher (Rubin & Feezel, 1986), in addition to its influence on students' achievement. Studies indicate that oral presentation skills have become necessity in education. Consequently, educational institutions have already incorporated oral presentation skills into their curricula to let their students acquire the skills practically (Walters, 2000; Sprague & Stuart, 2005; Barrass, 2006, and Lucas, 2007). Cognizant of the values of oral presentation to the academic and professional careers of teachers, Ethiopian higher education institutions too encompassed it to their curricula. Arba Minch University as part of higher education institutions

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also adopted oral presentation skills into its various fields of studies among which M. A program in TEFL is one. Accordingly, the learning and teaching activities as stipulated in module outlines are made to integrate oral presentation in a variety of settings which include small group and individual oral presentations, seminar presentations on selected topics and graduate seminars in addition to thesis oral presentation (AMU, 2012). The integration of oral presentation into the curriculum has been assumed to create opportunities for the students in two ways. First, it equips the students with oral presentation skills required of them in the world of work. Second, it opens oral assessment as alternative to overwhelmingly common forms of written assessments. Oral assessment allows students to convey messages and support their arguments/opinions verbally in face to face manner explicitly. Moreover, it gives opportunities to students to demonstrate their abilities in a variety of assessment methods (Irvine, 2012). By the same token, oral assessment provides assessors to probe and scrutinize the competence of students in depth on certain issues which otherwise could not be done with written assessments.

In the acquisition of effective oral presentation skills, students' attitude to oral presentation and assessment plays paramount roles either as impediment or facilitator. Students' attitude to the assessment of their oral presentations will influence their approaches to study (Tinkler & Jackson, 2002). This implies that the more students satisfy and feel fair with the assessment of oral presentation, the more they work better and acquire presentation skills. In connection to this, as long as the knowledge of the author is concerned, only limited studies are available. These studies dealt with students' attitude to the assessment of oral presentation. Accordingly, the findings indicated that students had generally positive attitude to the assessment of their oral presentations (Andreasson, 2005; Benraghda, Ali and Radzuan, 2015, and Al-Amleh, 2015). Similar to that of students' attitude to the assessment of oral presentation, there is dearth of empirical works related to students' attitude to oral presentations. Generally, their findings revealed that students had positive attitudes to oral presentation and were willing to deliver their oral presentations (Ihmeideh, Al-Omari and Al-Dababneh, 2010, and Benraghda, Ali, Radzuan, 2015). The studies reviewed above were done in Arab countries. The findings of these studies may not reflect the situations and realities of Ethiopian higher institutions. In addition, the focuses of the studies were either on attitudes to oral presentation or to the assessment of oral presentation alone. None of them studied both issues together. Hence, the association between attitude to oral presentation and assessment was left void. Therefore, this study tried to investigate in-service EFL graduate trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment at Arba Minch University. In addition, it attempted to examine the association between attitude to oral presentation and assessment. Specifically, this study sought to answer the following specific research questions:

1. What attitudes do in-service EFL graduate trainees have to oral presentation?
2. What are the attitudes of in-service EFL graduate trainees to oral assessment?

3. Is there association between in-service EFL graduate trainees attitude to oral presentation and oral assessment?

The development of effective presentation skills depends strongly upon the attitudes of the trainees to oral presentation and its assessment. Unless the attitude of the trainees to oral presentation and its assessment is known, it will be difficult to work towards building the attitude of the trainees which in turn will likely affect the trainees' oral presentation skills. Therefore, the results of this study will provide empirical evidences of trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, the link between oral presentation and assessment. On the basis of these possible outcomes, concerned bodies may work hard to either change or improve the attitude of the trainees as attitude is not static. Moreover, EFL teacher educators will get empirical evidences on what to maintain as positive aspects and what to reduce or change as negative aspects.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Research Design

This study was aimed to explore in-service EFL graduate trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment. In addition, it attempted to examine the association between attitude to oral presentation and its assessment. To this effect, cross-sectional survey design was employed as the intention of the study was mainly to describe the phenomenon at certain point in time.

Participants of the Study

The study was conducted at Arba Minch University. The participants of the study were 140 summer and regular in-service trainees of year I and II enrolled for their M.A degree in Teaching English as Foreign Language/TEFL/ between 2014-2016 academic years. All of them were selected for questionnaire survey purposively as their number was manageable. However, one individual from each year was randomly selected for interview.

Data Collection Instruments

In order to obtain the in-service trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, questionnaire and semi-structured interview questions were used. Questionnaire was the main instrument utilized to collect information regarding the trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment. The items of questionnaire were adapted to fit to the purposes of the study from diverse sources (Ihmeideh, Al-Omari and Al-Dababneh, 2010; Al-Nouh, Abdul-Kareem & Taqil, 2015, and Benraghda, Ali and Radzuan, 2015). The questionnaire consisted of 15 items, 10 of the items were to elicit trainees' attitude to oral presentation while the rest 5 items were to probe their attitude to oral assessment component. All the items of the questionnaire were prepared on 5-point attitude Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1), disagree (2), neutral (3), agree (4), and to strongly agree (5). The positively worded items were scored ranging from (5) strongly agree to

(1) strongly disagree while the negative items were scored in the reverse manner. In addition to questionnaire, semi-structured interview questions were used to intensively probe the in-service trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment.

Methods of Data Organization and Analyses

Questionnaire responses of trainee teachers on attitude scale were tallied and tabulated with frequency counts and percentages. Qualitative data acquired from interview were coded aligned with the central theme of the study- attitude to oral presentation and assessment. In order to answer the trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, frequency counts and percentages were employed. Accordingly, responses with the highest frequency counts and/or percentages were used to interpret the results. To see the association between the trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment, the mean scores of attitude to oral presentation and assessment scales were tested. To do this, two-tailed Pearson product-moment correlation was employed provided that the assumptions of Pearson product-moment have been met. On the other hand, the data acquired from semi-structured interview were thematically analyzed qualitatively as verbal description to supplement the data obtained from questionnaire on the first two research questions. In addition, patterns of the analyzed interview data were compared and contrasted in order to see the link between trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment if any.

Table 1 below shows frequencies and percentages of EFL trainees' to attitude to oral presentation sub-scale.

Table 1. Post Graduate EFL Trainees' Attitude to Oral Presentation (n=140)

Items	SA=5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1	
1 Oral presentation is interesting skills	80% (112)	20% (28)	--	--	--	
2 Oral presentation is too easy	5% (7)	11.4% (16)	35% (49)	40% (56)	8.6% (12)	
3 I feel confident in oral presentations	39.3% (55)	48.6% (68)	3.6% (5)	8.6% (12)	--	
4 I dislike oral presentations	--	6.4% (9)	6.4% (9)	6.4% (9)	80.7% (113)	
5 I feel uncomfortable when I do an oral presentation	--	30% (42)	30% (42)	33.6% (47)	6.4% (9)	
6 Oral presentation is a useful exercise	51.4% (72)	48.6% (68)	--	--	--	
7 Oral presentation is the most difficult task	7.9% (11)	21.4% (30)	32.1% (45)	38.6% (54)	--	
8 Oral presentation is as important as other skills	77.1% (108)	13.6% (19)	9.3% (13)	--	--	
9 Oral presentations improve my confidence	66.6% (93)	33.6% (47)	--	--	--	
10 I enjoy oral presentation	20% (28)	62.9% (88)	17.1% (24)	--	--	
Total	34.7% (486)	29.7% (373)		13.4% (187)	12.7% (178)	9.6% (134)

As can be seen from the table 1 item 1, 80% (112) and 20% (28) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that oral presentation is interesting skills. Thus, the majority of the respondents showed positive attitude and are interested in oral presentation as skills. Concerning item 2, 5% (5) and 11.4% (16) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the notion that oral presentation is too easy while 35% (49) of the respondents remained neutral. On the

other hand, 40% (56) and 8.6% (12) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item. The majority of the teachers disagreed to the view that oral presentation is too easy. However, it should be noted that large respondents have found it difficult to decide whether oral presentation is too easy or not. With respect to item 3, 39.3% (55) and 48.6% (68) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they feel confident in oral presentations. In contrast, 8.6% (12) of the respondents disagreed to the issue while the rest 3.6% (5) left undecided. This shows that the majority of the respondents agreed that they have positive attitude to and felt confident in oral presentations. Pertaining to item 4, the majority of the respondents 80.7% (113) strongly disagreed with the notion that inquired them whether they dislike oral presentations or not. On the other hand, 6.4% (9) of the respondents each agreed, undecided and disagreed respectively to the item. The majority of the respondents strongly disagreed to the item which implies that the respondents like oral presentations and have positive attitude to.

Relating to item 5, 30% (42) of the respondents agreed while 33.6% (47) and 6.4% (9) disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item that asked them if they feel uncomfortable when they do an oral presentation. Conversely, 30% (42) of the respondents remained unable to decide either ways. The data depicted above seem to be scatter among agreed, disagreed and undecided although respondents who opted for disagree/strongly disagree are slightly higher than respondents who agreed or remained neutral to the issue.

Therefore, it seems that slim majority of teachers have positive attitude and feel comfortable when they do an oral presentations. With regards to item 6, 51.4% (72) and 48.6% (68) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the item that oral presentation is a useful exercise. This may reveal that the respondents have highly favorable attitude to the usefulness of oral presentation practices. As to item 7,

7.9% (11) and 21.4% (30) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively while 38.6% (54) of them disagreed to the item that inquired them if oral presentation is the most difficult task. On the other hand, 32.1% (45) of the respondents remained neutral to the item. Although considerable percentage of the respondents remained indecisive to the issue, the majority of the respondents disagreed to the notion that stated oral presentation is the most difficult task. This entailed that teachers have positive attitude to oral presentation and do not think it is the most difficult task.

With reference to item 8, 77.1% (108) and 13.6% (19) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that oral presentation is as important as other skills while the rest 9.3% (13) lingered undecided. This suggests that the majority of the respondents strongly agreed they have positive attitude and perceived that oral presentation is as important as other skills. In connection with item 9, 66.6% (93) and 33.3% (47) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that oral presentations improve their confidence. It seems that the respondents have positive attitude to and believe that oral presentations improve their confidence. In the last item 10, 20% (28) and 62.9% (88) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively while the rest 17.1% (24) unable to decide to the item. This may indicate that the majority of the respondents agreed that they have positive attitude to oral presentation and enjoy it. Finally, 34.7% and 29.7% of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the sub-scale of attitude to oral presentation while 13.4% of the respondents remained neutral. On the other hand, 12.7% and 9.6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the sub-scale. This may reveal that majority of the respondents seem to have positive attitude to oral presentation.

As depicted in table 2 item 11, 5.7% (8) and 60% (84) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they feel hard to be assessed through oral presentation. In contrast, 24.3% (34) and 10% (14) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item. The result shows that the majority of the respondents felt that they are not comfortable to be assessed through oral presentation. With regards to item 12, 23.6% (33) and 32.9% (46) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they prefer written assessment to oral presentations while 27.9% (39) and 15.7% (22) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item. This divulges that the majority of the respondents prefer written assessment to oral presentations. As to item 13, 13.6% (19) and 19.3% (27) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they feel they would get an unfair grade for their oral presentations while 47.1% (66) and 20% (28) of them disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item. The result disclosed that the majority of the respondents disagreed to the issue. This implies that teachers have positive to attitude to the grading of oral presentations and think they would get fair grade. Concerning item 14, 12.9% (20) and 20% (28) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the opinion that assessments to oral presentations are fairer than written assessments whilst 20% (28) of the respondents remained undecided. On the other hand, 40% (56) and 7.1% (10) of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the item. This shows that the majority of teachers view that assessments to oral presentations are not fairer than written assessments. Pertaining to item 15, 20% (28) and 71.4% (100) of the respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively that they felt they had done well after the oral presentation while the rest 8.6% (12) lingered disagreed to the concern.

Table 2. Post Graduate EFL Trainees' Attitude to the Assessment of Oral Presentation (n=140)

Items	SA=5	A=4	U=3	DA=2	SDA=1
11 I feel hard to be assessed through oral presentation	5.7% (8)	60% (84)	--	24.3% (34)	10% (14)
12 I prefer written assessment to oral presentations	23.6% (33)	32.9% (46)	--	27.9% (39)	15.7% (22)
13 I feel I would get an unfair grade for my oral presentation	13.6% (19)	19.3% (27)	--	47.1% (66)	20% (28)
14 Oral presentation assessments are fairer than written assessments	12.9% (20)	20% (28)	20% (28)	40% (56)	7.1% (10)
15 I feel I have done well after the oral presentation	20% (28)	71.4% (100)	--	8.6% (12)	--
Total	15.2% (108)	40.7% (285)	4% (28)	29.6% (207)	10.6% (74)

Table 3. Pearson Product-Moment Correlation on the Relationship between EFL Trainees' Attitude to Oral Presentation and Assessment of Oral Presentation

		Attitude to oral presentation	Attitude to oral assessment
Attitude to oral presentation	Pearson Correlation	1	.967**
	Sig. (2 tailed)		.000
	N	140	140
Attitude to oral assessment	Pearson Correlation	.967**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	140	140

** Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Table 2 below shows frequencies and percentages of EFL trainees' attitude to the assessment of oral presentation sub-scale.

The result showed that the majority of the respondents have positive attitude and felt they have done well after the oral presentations. To sum up, 15.2% and 40.7% of the

respondents strongly agreed and agreed respectively to the sub-scale of attitude to the assessment of oral presentation while 4% of the respondents remained indecisive. On the other hand, 29.6% and 10.6% of the respondents disagreed and strongly disagreed respectively to the sub-scale. This may possibly disclose that majority of the respondents appear to have positive attitude to the assessment of oral presentation at the entire sub-scale level.

Table 3 above shows the relation between EFL Trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment to oral presentation.

Table 3 shows the relationship between EFL trainees' attitude to oral presentation and attitude to the assessment of oral presentation scores. Accordingly, significant positive correlation was found between the two issues ($r=0.96$, $n=140$, $p<0.01$). This implies that as trainees' attitudes to oral presentation increase, their attitudes to the assessment of oral presentation also rise.

Analyses of Trainee Teachers' Interview Data

In addition to questionnaire, semi-structured interview questions were administered to trainee teachers to elicit in depth data concerning their attitude to oral presentation, assessment of oral presentation and the link between these two issues. Accordingly, data collected from the two trainee teachers (TT₁ and TT₂) were presented below.

Concerning attitude to oral presentation, TT₁ noted that:

"I think oral presentation is essential skills that I should develop as teacher. I feel good to do an oral presentation though I experienced nervousness at the first few minutes. However, I usually do it smoothly after couples of minutes".

On the same line of discussion, TT₂ stated the attitude to oral presentation as:

I think oral presentation has become part and parcel of every course which I have taken here. I can say I have developed positive attitude to it through time. In addition, I think I have built up my oral presentation skills as well. Now I hope I am comfortable to do an oral presentation.

From the interview data presented above, it seems apparent to conclude that trainee teachers think that oral presentation is indispensable and feel comfortable it. In addition, they believe that they built oral presentation skills. Moreover, the interviewees have positive attitude to oral presentations through time as attitude is dynamic and amenable to change. In relation to attitude to the assessment of oral presentation, TT₁ disclosed that:

"I feel comfortable with written assessment than the assessment of oral presentation for various reasons. For instance, most of the time, you will not be given rubric with which your presentations will be evaluated along with the allotted marks. In addition, unexpected questions may be raised from instructor and/ or class on which you should react to. Hence, you should be given sufficient wait time to

contemplate possible answers in organized manner. Unless these and other issues which reduce anxiety will be considered duly, the students may worry for their assessment grades".

Similarly, TT₂ revealed the attitude to the assessment of oral presentation that:

"Written and oral presentation assessments provide options for assessment. I do not prefer one over the other as a big deal. Some students are good in conveying their ideas through written medium while others prefer oral discourses. Hence, assessment through both channels provides students' with options for being assessed. Moreover, assessment through both means strengthens the development of both written and oral skills in balanced manner. However, what are expected of oral presentations should be made clear in advance to assist the trainees to get ready to the standards expected of them at best. This in turn will affect students' attitude to grading of oral presentations positively".

From the interview data presented above, trainees do not seem to have unfavorable attitude to the assessment of oral presentations if handled properly. The interviewees pointed out some threat which might influenced their attitude to the assessment of oral presentation. Among which failure to make clear rubric with which the assessment of oral presentation will be made is one. In addition, the insufficiency of waits time for presenters to contemplate answers to questions raised after presentation was worth mentioning.

The last research question was on the relationship between EFL trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation. To this end, the interviewees were asked if their attitude to oral presentation affect their attitude to the assessment of oral presentation or not. Both respondents unanimously marked that the more they developed positive attitude to oral presentations the more they felt comfortable with the assessment of oral presentations which implied direct link between the two issues.

Discussion of the Results

The purpose of this study was to investigate in-service EFL graduate trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment at Arba Minch University. In addition, it was to examine the association between attitude to oral presentation and assessment. Concerning trainees' attitude to oral presentation, trainee teachers felt that oral presentation is not too easy. On the same line of discussion, the trainees believed that oral presentation is not the most difficult task. However, considerable percentage of the respondents remained indecisive to both issues. This reveals that teachers think oral presentation is neither too easy nor very difficult. In addition, the results disclosed that trainee teachers like oral presentations and are interested in oral presentation as skills. Along with this, it was found that the greater part of the teachers feel they have confidence and are comfortable with oral presentations. Moreover, the trainees believe that oral presentation is as important as other skills and deem that it improve their confidence. Furthermore, they think that oral presentation is useful practices which they enjoy. Consequently, it seems lucid

to conclude that EFL trainees appear to have positive attitude to oral presentation. This finding is congruent with other few related works (Ihmeideh, Al-Omari and Al-Dababneh, 2010, and Benraghda, Ali, Radzuan, 2015).

The second research question was related to EFL trainees' attitude to the assessment of oral presentation. Accordingly, the result divulged that the trainees experience discomfort to the assessment of oral presentation. Along with this, the majority of the respondents favor written assessment to the assessment of oral presentations. In addition, greater part of teachers view that assessments to oral presentations are no better than written assessments in terms of fairness. The findings obtained from the interview seem to reveal the likely reasons behind the results mention above. Failure to make clear rubric with which the assessment of oral presentation will be judged and the insufficiency of waits time for presenters to contemplate answers to questions raised on presentation were among the notable attributes. However, it was discovered that the trainees feel they would get fair grade to the assessment of oral presentations. Consequently, they feel they have done well after oral presentation. At the sub-scale level, it seems logical to conclude that the majority of the respondents have positive attitude to the assessment of oral presentation. This finding is consistent with previous studies (Andreasson, 2005; Benraghda, Ali and Radzuan, 2015, and Al-Amleh, 2015) which showed that students had positive attitude to the assessment of their oral presentations.

The last issue was related to the relationship between EFL trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation. Accordingly, strongly significant positive correlation was found between the two issues. In addition, the interviewees believe that their attitudes to oral presentations influence their attitudes to the assessment of oral presentations. This implies that as trainees' attitudes to oral presentations increase, their attitudes to the assessment of oral presentations also increase.

Conclusions and Recommendations

The purpose of this study was to explore in-service EFL graduate trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment. Accordingly, it was found that EFL trainees by and large appeared to have favorable attitude to both oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation. Nevertheless, the study uncovered that instructors failure of the provision of clear rubric for the assessment of oral presentation and the inadequacy of waits time given for presenters to contemplate answers to questions were found to be barriers that possibly influence trainees attitude to oral presentation and assessment. Therefore, EFL teacher educators should introduce assessment rubric for oral assessment. In addition, teacher educators should allot sufficient time for presenters to let them contemplate answers to questions. Furthermore, the study revealed strong and significant positive correlation between EFL trainees' attitude to oral presentation and assessment of oral presentation. EFL teacher educators should be aware of the inter-dependence between these variables and hold them positively to the advantage of the trainees.

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