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The impact of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' speaking performance, speaking anxiety and achievement in *ELT Methodology 1*

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Abstract

The study aimed at examining the effectiveness of oral presentations in improving Al-Aqsa University EFL (English as a Foreign Language) students' performance in speaking and *ELT Methodology 1* (English Language Teaching) course and reducing their speaking anxiety level. To achieve the study aim, the researcher employed four instruments i.e., a standardized speaking test (IELTS, 2019), an achievement test (*ELT Methodology 1* test), an open-ended questionnaire, and a speaking anxiety questionnaire (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015). Participants were sixty Palestinian EFL female students, who were divided into two equivalent groups including an experimental group and a control group. While the experimental group experienced studying *ELT Methodology 1* through oral presentations, the control group studied it through the method used in previous terms (i.e., lecture). Results revealed that using oral presentations had a positive impact on the participants' performance in the speaking test and the *ELT Methodology 1* test, and it helped in reducing the participants' speaking anxiety. Additionally, the open-ended questionnaire data showed that the participants had positive attitudes toward employing oral presentations in EFL classes. In light of the study results, pedagogical implications were introduced.

Keywords oral presentations, speaking, anxiety, ELT methodology

1. Introduction

Speaking is crucial for any human communication especially communication among nonnative learners (Boonkit, 2010). Speaking is widely considered to be the main skill that indicates foreign language learners' overall knowledge of a language (Nowicka & Wilczynska, 2011), and it implies mastering FL sound system i.e., pronunciation, lexis, grammar, syntax, and fluency (Pawlak, 2018). Moreover, personality, self-image, and the ability to argue thoughts and ideas are reflected in spoken performance (Luomas, 2004).

Recognizing the paramount importance of speaking skill, many researchers and practitioners focused on enhancing it in EFL/ESL (English as a Foreign Language, English as a Second Language) settings. Chen (2006) states that sufficient exposure to a second language may improve learners' communicative competence. Tseng (2019) also maintains that practicing speaking can increase learners' confidence. Additionally, Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015) view that FL teachers can help students improve their speaking

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performance, and reduce anxiety accompanied with speaking activities through employing certain pedagogical methods (i.e., presentations, role plays, discussions, dialogues). According to Hammad and Abu Ghali, such methods can provide FL learners with ample opportunities to practice oral language creatively.

Among the strategies utilized for developing FL speaking is oral presentation strategy. Graig (2013) points that oral presentations allow FL/L2 (Foreign Language, Second Language) students to practice English pronunciation; develop fluency; and practice critical thinking and invention. In fact, a number of studies (e.g., Dekdouk, 2013; Farabi, Hassanvand, & Gorjian, 2017; Fraioui, 2016; Sotoudehnama & Hashamdar, 2016; Shimo, 2011) reported the effectiveness of oral presentations in developing EFL speaking. For instance, Dekdouk (2013) concluded that oral presentations had a positive effect on 80 EFL students' communicative competence in Ouargla University. Farabi, Hassanvand, and Gorjian (2017) also reported that guided oral presentations had a positive impact on 60 Iranian pre-intermediate students' speaking. Moreover, Fraioui (2016) showed that oral presentations assisted 60 EFL students at Biskra University in improving their speaking. Likewise, Sotoudehnama and Hashamdar (2016) found that oral presentations improved the speaking performance of 44 Iranian EFL intermediate students. Nadia (2013) also showed the effectiveness of oral presentation in enhancing 40 EFL students' speaking performance at Biskra University. Additionally, Shimo (2011) concluded that Japanese EFL students favored simultaneous pair presentations.

In the Palestinian EFL context, many studies (e.g., Abu Alyan, 2013; Al Nakhalah, 2016; El Enein, 2011; Irzeqat, 2010; Khader & Megdad, 2015; Radwan, 2012) have been conducted on EFL speaking and oral performance, but only El Enein (2011) focused on oral presentations use in EFL classes. The study identified the main difficulties Palestinian EFL university students encountered while conducting presentations (e.g., eye contact, organization plan, coherence, cohesion, and use of technological equipment). It is worth noting that none of the studies conducted in the Palestinian EFL context investigated the effectiveness of oral presentations in developing Palestinian EFL students' speaking performance and reducing their speaking anxiety level. Thus, the present study attempted to fill in this gap by examining the impact of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' speaking performance, speaking anxiety, and achievement level in ELT Methodology1. According to Wikipedia (2019), Al-Aqsa University is a Palestinian governmental university established in 1955 in Gaza Strip. It includes eight faculties offering B.A.(Bachelor of Arts) degree and M.A. (Master of Arts) degree. The researcher has worked as academic instructor of ELT courses in the university since 2006, and she had noticed from her experience that EFL students' speaking anxiety was high and their speaking performance was poor. Additionally, Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015) reported that Palestinian EFL pre-service teachers' speaking anxiety level was high. Irzeqat (2010) also concluded that anxiety had negative effects on Palestinian EFL university students' performance in speaking. Thus, the present study attempted to help Palestinian university students reduce their speaking anxiety and improve their speaking performance through utilizing oral presentations in

EFL classes. It is noteworthy that none of studies conducted in the Palestinian EFL context handled the impact of oral presentations on the students' speaking performance and speaking anxiety. Therefore, the present study investigated the effect of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' speaking anxiety, speaking performance, and achievement in *ELT Methodology 1*.

1.1. Literature review

Literature review consists of a theoretical framework and previous studies related to oral presentation use in FL/L2 classes, FL/L2 speaking, and F/L2 speaking anxiety.

1.1.1. Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework in this study centered on the definitions of speaking, anxiety, and oral presentation. It also discussed oral presentation stages and types and language subsystems needed for FL/L2 speaking.

1.1.2. Definition of Terms

1.1.2.1. Speaking

According to Bygate (1987), speaking is the act of communicating through speech and effective discussion, and it requires focusing on the topic, listening carefully, participating as a speaker and as a listener, and providing opinions. For Hughes (2011), speaking implies the use of grammatical rules, phonemic regularity, intonation, and knowledge of pragmatics points (e.g., responding to a complement). Moreover, Hammad & Abu Ghali (2015) define speaking as a productive aural/oral process that consists of using grammatical rules, cohesive devices, lexical items, phonological rules for expressing one's thoughts and feelings in speech. In light of the above definitions, the present study defines speaking as an aural/oral skill that requires proficiency in grammar, lexis, pronunciation, and pragmatics for producing fluent and accurate speech expressing cohesive and coherent meaning.

1.1.3. Anxiety

Anxiety is defined by Rachman (2002) as the tense anticipation of a threatening but vague event, and it is a feeling of uneasy suspense. Barlow (2002) defines anxiety as anxious apprehension that is accompanied by irritability, worry, sweating, muscle tension, hot flashes, trembling, fear, and negative thinking. Moreover, Ortega (2009) states that foreign language speaking anxiety includes many symptoms such as freezing up and getting confused in spite of having studied hard. Additionally, Hammad and Abu Ghali define anxiety as a negative feeling accompanied by low thinking ability, physical changes, and negative behaviors. The present study made use of the definition of Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015), since it is relevant to the study objectives.

1.2. Oral presentations

Graig (2013) defines oral presentations assignment as a significant communicative activity, that begins with critical thinking, invention, and drafting, and ends with oral presentation. Graig also points to the main stages of oral presentation including preparation, practice, and presentation. The present study defines oral presentation as a strategy, that can be utilized by EFL learners through planning, preparation, practice, and getting audience involved in the learning process.

1.2.1. The Significance of Oral Presentation

According to Graig (2013), oral presentation is considered as one of the important EFL speaking activities, and it allows EFL/ESL students to practice English pronunciation; develop fluency; and practice critical thinking, invention, and drafting. Brooks and Wilson (2014) also maintain that oral presentations are student-centered classroom activities that provide learners with realistic language tasks helping them for future developments or careers.

However, students may encounter problems while preparing and delivering presentations. Such problems may be related to their linguistic abilities (Morita, 2000). Furthermore, speech anxiety and limited presentation skills may be other problems that may lead to failures. Teachers may help learners cope with their anxiety by acknowledging them that being anxious is normal, and that most learners may feel worried and anxious while delivering their presentations (King, 2002). Besides, that each time a student makes a presentation, his nervousness will decrease in front of the audience (Budinski, 2005).

1.2.2. The stages of oral presentation

According to Budinski (2005) and Graig (2013), planning for the presentation is the first step. A student and a teacher should decide the objectives, topic or title, details, and gathering facts. Furthermore, Graig views that the teacher should decide the focus of the assignment ,e.g., content material, critical reading skills, students' pronunciation and fluency, encouraging students to develop more extensive verbal English, etc.

Doke, Hatton, and Smorfitt (2007) point to the other two stages as preparation and practice, as self-confidence during the presentation comes with preparation and practice. The presentation should be interactive, visually appealing, and should involve the audience in the learning process. Sanders, Verbulst, and Vitullo (2003) provide that when making a presentation, a student should prepare the introduction, the body of the talk, and the conclusion, and should consider language and rhetorical techniques, presentation aids, and rehearsal. In this context, Zivkovic (2014) also points that a presentation should consist of three parts. The first is an introduction including greeting audience, introducing her/himself, explaining the purpose of the talk, and announcing the outline of presentation simply and accurately. The second is the body stating main ideas and supporting it with examples and visual aids. The third part is the conclusion summarizing the main points and inviting questions and comments

Ferlazzo and Sypnieski (2018) view that the following guidelines should be considered when incorporating oral presentations:

Topics: Topics should be interesting and motivating. Students may select such topics or they can be connected to current units of their study.

Length: Students may deliver short presentations (two-four minutes) on a regular basis, once or twice a semester. Students do longer presentations (five-eight minutes) with a partner or in a small group several times.

Novelty: Mixing up how students present (in small groups, individuals, in pairs) and the visual aids they will use.

Whole class processing: Presentations should maximize students' participation in the class by asking them to practice some activities (e.g., taking notes, providing feedback, evaluating a presenter, doing a listening task)

Support: Teacher may provide students with speaking forms, and simple tools.

Teacher feedback – student evaluation: Teacher can give a simple rubric for the students before conducting their presentations and students keep their expectations in mind as they develop their presentations.

Additionally, Brooks and Wilson (2015) maintain that prior to delivering their presentations, students have to learn presentation skills, e.g., eye contact, voice projection, organization of a presentation, connection with audience, and use of Power Point.

1.2.3. Types of presentation

Al-Issa and Al-Qubtan (2010) refer to three types of presentations: controlled presentations, guided presentations, and free presentations, depending on learners' proficiency level, time devoted to a presentation, and choice of the topic. In controlled oral presentations, students' language proficiency is from beginner to elementary (6-12 years old). Topic should be easy, and it is not required from the student to use technological equipments. In guided oral presentations, the students can be classified as at the lower intermediate or intermediate level (12-16 years old), and they can prepare the work utilizing OHP or Power Point. They can also memorize their presentations. In free oral presentations, students are expected to have advanced level of proficiency (16-22 years old), and they should be given the freedom to choose the topics. They also are expected to use complex language, and can be given longer presentation times than their lower level peers. Moreover, advanced students may open discussion after having completed their presentations.

1.3. Language Subsystems Needed for EFL Speaking

The acquisition of speaking involves mastery of different language subsystems such as grammar, lexis, pronunciation, pragmatic routines, and paralinguistic means (Pawlak, 2011).

The first language subsystem needed for speaking is grammar. Grammar is necessary for language production. It is an important part of the whole language apparatus (Williams, 2005). Grammar may be defined as the way of manipulating and combining words or bits of words, so as to convey certain types of meaning. Additionally, grammar is concerned with ideas

relations, purposes of utterances, time relations, singular and plural distinctions, and other aspects of meaning (Ur, 2009).

Another language subsystem is vocabulary. Vocabulary is essential to language development, linguistic performance, and academic performance, and the process of L2 vocabulary acquisition begins as soon as the L2 is encountered and continues long after other aspects of the L2 have been mastered (Llach & Pilar, 2011). Another term related to the term vocabulary is lexical competence. Lexical competence is the ability to use words appropriately (Marconi, 1997), that is based on acquiring lexical concepts in its culture (Ma, 2009). Indeed, lexical items can be acquired through reading texts, listening to teacher's explanations, and communicating with the teacher and students. Thus, lexical competence consist of receptive and productive competence (Calvo-Ferrer & Campospardillos, 2014). While receptive competence refers to the way in which FL learners understand written or spoken texts, productive competence is the ability to produce vocabulary. It is noteworthy that the latter is based on the former (Haastrup,1991).

Related to grammar and lexis is cohesion. Cohesion is the relationship between sentences. The potential for cohesion is expressed through grammar i.e., grammatical cohesion and vocabulary i.e., lexical cohesion (Halliday & Hasan, 2013). In other words, cohesion is an explicit indicator of relations between topics, and it refers to the relationship between linguistic elements that are linked through lexical and grammatical devices (Menzel, Lapshinova-Koltunski, & Kunz, 2017). Thus, cohesion is the degree to which ideas in the text are explicitly related to each other and facilitate a unified situation model (McCarthy, Bringer, Rus, & McNamara, 2007).

Coherence, on the other hand, is a property of what emerges during speech production and comprehension. Coherently produced text _ spoken or written_ allows the receiver to form roughly the same text representation as the sender has in mind (Gerrnsbacher & Givon, 1995). Moreover, coherence in discourse involves more than lexical and grammatical links between elements in the text. It involves both intra-and the extra-textual (Coats, 1995)

Moreover, pronunciation is an important component underlying speaking. While pronunciation is concerned with knowing how the sounds and stresses should be combined to say the word correctly, articulation refers to the speaker's skill in forming sounds accurately, and it is the distinct and accurate formation of consonant and vowel sound, using the lips, teeth, tongue, and hard and soft palate (Ayres & Miller, 1990). Indeed, poor pronunciation can decrease a learner's confidence to speak up, and the better foreigners polish pronunciation is, the higher scores they receive on their education (Szpyra-Koztowska, 2015).

Fluency is typically measured by the speed of access, production, and number of hesitations. One main feature of fluency is that learners demonstrate fluency when they take part in meaning-focused activity, and without holding up the flow of talk. A second feature is that fluent language use does not require great effort from the learner. A third one implies that involving making the best use of what is already known (Nation & Newton, 2009). Pham (2010) views that the biggest reason why a learner cannot

speaking fluently is lack of practice. Additionally, Nation and Newton (2009) provide that a speaker can gain fluency through repetition, making connection and association with known items, and listening to recordings. Accuracy, on the other hand, is saying ideas correctly and comprehending them the way speakers or writers meant it (Leaver, Ehrman, & Shekhtman, 2005). It is concerned with the correctness of vocabulary, grammar, pronunciation, style, stress, intonation, etc. (Drozdral-Szelest, 2011), and it is measured by the amount of errors (Nation & Newton, 2009). It is obvious that for EFL learners to be proficient in speaking, they should have adequate linguistic knowledge (e.g., grammar, lexis, pronunciation, morphology). Learners can acquire such linguistic knowledge consciously through study that may assist them in their conscious production of language (accuracy). Moreover, speaking proficiency requires practice in that learners should practice extensive listening and speaking activities, the thing that may help them produce language easily and fluently.

1.4. Previous studies

A number of studies have been conducted on the effectiveness of oral presentations in developing EFL speaking or communicative competence. For instance, Dekdouk (2013) focused on role of oral presentations in enhancing 80 EFL students' communicative competence in Ouargla University. The questionnaire results reported that oral presentations had a positive role in improving the participants' communicative competence. Fraioui (2016) examined the relationship between oral presentation strategy and speaking proficiency of 60 EFL students at Biskra University. Based on a questionnaire and an observation checklist, it was concluded that oral presentations assisted the participants improve their speaking. Another study of Farabi, Hassanvand, & Gorjian (2017) explored the impact of guided oral presentation and free oral presentation on 60 Iranian pre-intermediate students' speaking. Utilizing a pre-post speaking test, the study reported that guided oral presentations had a positive effect on the students' speaking. Likewise, Sotoudehnama & Hashamdar (2016) investigated the effect of oral presentations and discussions on 44 Iranian EFL intermediate students. Results concluded that the learners who experienced oral presentation significantly outperformed the learners who experienced free discussions. Furthermore, Shimo (2011) evaluated 94 Japanese students' reaction to presentation assignments. A questionnaire results showed that the students favored simultaneous pair presentations. Additionally, Yahay & Kheirzadeh (2015) identified the impact of oral presentations on 35 Iranian EFL students' speaking fluency and accuracy. Oral pre-post tests were administered to the participants, and data showed that oral presentations improved students' accuracy and fluency.

Other studies examined the relationship between oral presentation and anxiety level. For instance, Ball (2017) focused on the impact of anxiety and motivation on EFL students' oral presentations at Tlemcen University. Results of questionnaires, interviews, and observations revealed that a high level of anxiety had negative impacts on the students' oral presentations. Chen (2015) also explored the relationship between 3 Chinese ESL university

students' anxiety and their speaking performance. Triangulated data sources revealed that the students got anxious during in-class-oral presentations. In the Palestinian EFL context, many studies (e.g., Abu Alyan, 2013; Al Nakhalah, 2016; EL Enein, 2011; Irzeqat, 2010; Khader & Megdad, 2015; Radwan, 2012) have been conducted on EFL speaking and oral performance, but only El Enein (2011) focused on oral presentations use in EFL classes. The study identified the main difficulties Palestinian EFL university students encountered while conducting presentations. Data of an Interview and a questionnaire showed that the students had problems related to limited presentation skills (e.g., eye contact, organization plan, coherence, cohesion, and use of technological equipment).

It is note mentioning that none of the previous studies investigated the effect of oral presentation strategy on students' speaking anxiety and courses other than speaking or communicative competence, and none of studies conducted in the Palestinian EFL context handled the impact of such strategy on Palestinian EFL students' speaking performance, speaking anxiety, and achievement level in ELT courses. Thus, the present study attempted to fill in this gap by investigating the impact of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL students' speaking performance, speaking anxiety, and achievement level in ELT Methodology1.

1.5. Research questions

The study attempted to answer the following questions:

1. To what extent do oral presentations improve Al-Aqsa University EFL female students' achievement in *ELT Methodology 1*?
2. To what extent do oral presentations reduce Al-Aqsa University EFL female students' speaking anxiety level?
3. To what extent do oral presentations improve EFL speaking performance of Al-Aqsa university female students?
4. What are Al-Aqsa University EFL female students' attitudes towards oral presentations?

1.6. Hypotheses of the Study

The present study addressed three hypotheses:

1. There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) in achievement between the students who will learn *ELT Methodology 1* through oral presentations (experimental group) and those who will learn *ELT Methodology 1* through the traditional method i.e., lecture (control group) in favor of the experimental group.
2. Oral presentations will reduce the experimental group students' speaking anxiety.
3. There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) in EFL speaking performance between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group.

2. Methodology

2.1. Research design

The study employed the experimental approach (i.e., quasi-experimental) for investigating the effect of oral presentations on Al-Aqsa University EFL

students' achievement in *ELT Methodology 1* course, speaking anxiety, and speaking performance. According to Martella, Nelson, Morgan, and Marchand-Martella (2013), experimental research investigates cause-and-effect relationship between variables. Moreover, Wallen and Fraenkel (2001) state that while the experimental group receives a treatment (e.g., a different method of teaching), the control group receives no treatment or is treated as usual.

2.2. *Participants*

A total of sixty Palestinian female students were purposively selected from English department students at Al-Aqsa University. Participants were studying *ELT Methodology 1*. They were ranging between nineteen and twenty years old. The researcher divided the participants into two equivalent groups i.e., experimental group and control group, each included 30 participants. While the experimental group experienced learning *ELT Methodology 1* through oral presentations, the control group studied it through the method used in previous terms (i.e., lecture). Considering the students' GPA (Grade Point Averages) in their university, each group consisted of seven high achievers, seventeen middle achievers, and six low achievers. All participants were willing to participate in the study.

2.3. *Instruments*

The study employed four instruments: a standardized speaking test (IELTS, 2019), a researcher-made test (*ELT Methodology 1* test), an open-ended questionnaire, and a speaking anxiety questionnaire (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015). It is noteworthy that the researcher checked the face validity and content validity of the *ELT Methodology 1* test and the open-questionnaire.

2.4. *A standardized Speaking Test*

Standardized testing (e.g., standard-based tests) is popular achievement test designed to cover a specified content, and it offers information about the academic knowledge or skills of the students tested (Phelps, 2007). The researcher utilized a standardized speaking test (IELTS, 2019) _ as a pre-test and a post-test_ in this study, so as to determine the participants' performance in English speaking. The test consists of three parts (introduction and interview, individual long run, and two-way discussion). In the first part, a student should answer questions about herself, family, and her interests; in the second part a student should speak about a topic; and in the third part, the examiner asks questions on the topic in the second part (Appendix A).

2.5. *A Self-developed Test*

An achievement test is used to explore the change in the students' cognitive behaviors due to the experience or instruction (Salkind, 2007). The researcher in the present study prepared an achievement test to assess the participants' achievement in *ELT Methodology 1* course. It was employed as a pre-test and a post-test in this study. First, the researcher designed a table

of specification. According to Asaad and Hailaya (2004), a table of specification assures that the assessment is based on the learning outcomes and the contents included in the instruction.

Table 1
Table of specification of the ELT Methodology 1 Test

Unit/ Level	Knowledge	Comprehension	Application	Analysis	Synthesis	Evaluation	Total
Unit 1 3 class periods 30%	3	4	1	-	-	1	9 30%
Unit 2 3 class periods 30%	3	1	-	1	-	4	9 30%
Unit 3 2 class periods 20%	-	-	3	-	1	2	6 20%
Unit 4 1 class periods 10%	-	-	2	-	1	-	3 10%
Unit 5 1 class periods 10%	1	1	-	-	1	-	3 10%
Total 10 periods 100%	7	6	6	1	3	7	30 100%

The content validity (i.e., Referee validity) of the test was checked, and Cronbach Alpha was run for the test. Alpha coefficient was 0.83 (Appendix B).

2.6. *A Closed-ended Questionnaire (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015)*

The researcher utilized a closed-ended questionnaire (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015) consisting of four categories and 18 items. The questionnaire categories include 'Physical Changes', 'Negative Feelings', 'Low Thinking Ability', and 'Negative Behaviors'. The questionnaire items required multiple choice answers with a five-point Likert scale: 1=Strongly Agree, 2=Agree, 3=Uncertain, 4=Disagree, and 5=Strongly Disagree (Appendix C).

2.7. *An Open-ended Questionnaire*

Open questions allow participants to freely express their views and personal feelings on an issue (Sesay, 2011). The researcher used an open-ended questionnaire to supplement the quantitative data. After reviewing some previous studies (i.e., Shimo, 2011), the researcher designed the open-ended questionnaire questions (Appendix D).

2.8. *Data Collection and Analysis Procedures*

In the first session, the three quantitative instruments were administered (i.e., IELTS speaking test, *ELT Methodology 1* test, and a questionnaire of Hammad and Abu Ghali) were administered to sixty students who were divided into two equivalent groups i.e., experimental group and control group, each included 30 participants. Both experimental group and control group studied five units of Kailani and Muqattash (2014) within 10 weeks. The book consists of six units discussing some relevant educational terms, methods of teaching English language as a foreign language (e.g., Audio-lingual Method, Structural Method, Grammar Translation Method), the communicative pedagogy, teaching pronunciation, teaching vocabulary, and teaching grammar). While the experimental group experienced learning the course through oral presentations, the control group studied it through the method used in previous terms (e.g., lecture). It is note remarking that in the second session the researcher explained to the experimental group students oral presentation skills (mentioned in theoretical framework). All experimental group students were free to select their topics out of the book. Each presentation lasted from 15 to 20 minutes. At the end of the instruction, the three quantitative instruments were re-administered to all participants, and the experimental group students responded to the open-ended questionnaire. The researcher informed the participants that their participation was voluntary and participating in the research might improve their speaking skills, and may reduce their speaking anxiety. In fact, all participants were willing to take part in the research.

For assessing the participants' speaking performance, the researcher and another expert were present during the test. The expert was just assessor, and he did not get involved in the conversation. The average of the scores of both researcher and the other expert was considered. Additionally, the researcher scored the participants' *ELT Methodology 1* test papers. Then, the scores of the two groups were processed statistically SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Studies). Statistics including means, standard deviations were utilized, and t-test was used to identify the differences between the scores of the experimental group participants and the control group participants. For Fitz-Gibbon and Morris (1987), the t-test is employed to identify the statistical significant differences between the mean scores of both experimental group control group. Second, In analyzing the participants' responses to the open-questionnaire, the researcher utilized Gillham's rubrics (2000). Data were reviewed, coded, and organized into three main categories including advantages of using oral presentations in EFL classes (i.e., increasing motivation, reducing speaking anxiety, increasing self-confidence, and reducing shyness), factors contributing to the effectiveness of using oral presentations in EFL classes (i.e., students' preparation, relaxing encouraging classroom, and students' beliefs about the positive role of oral presentations for future careers), and problems encountered by students when preparing for presentations (i.e., lack of lexical knowledge and inability to arrange and summarize ideas). To establish the interviews data credibility, another researcher reviewed and

coded the material, and the two researchers agreed on 88% of the coded data.

3. Findings

3.1. Results of the First Hypothesis

The first research hypothesis was "There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) in achievement between the students who will learn *ELT Methodology 1* through oral presentations (experimental group) and those who will learn *ELT Methodology 1* through the traditional method i.e., lecture (control group) in favor of the experimental group". To test this hypothesis, the researcher used means, standard deviations, and t-test analysis (see Table 2).

Table 2

Means, Standard deviations, and t-test values of the experimental group and the control group

Group	Mean	STD	T	p-value
Experimental group	8.17	1.25	14.102	0.000
Control group	4.06	0.99		

According to Table 2, p-value (Paired samples t-test) is below 0.05, which indicates that there are statistically significant differences in the test scores between the experimental group and control group in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the study confirms the first hypothesis.

3.2. Results of the Second Hypothesis

The second hypothesis was "Oral presentations will reduce the experimental students' speaking anxiety." To examine this hypothesis, the researcher used means, standard deviations, and t-test analysis (see Table 3).

Table 3

Means, Standard deviations, and t-test values of the experimental group and the control group

Group	Mean	STD	T	p-value
Control group	3.77	0.61	13.077	0.000
Experimental group	1.88	0.50		

Table 3 shows that the p-value for the test is below 0.05, and this means that there are statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group, and oral presentations reduced the experimental group students' speaking anxiety. In light of this, the study confirms the second hypothesis.

3.3. Results of the Third Hypothesis

The third hypothesis was "There are statistically significant differences at (0.05) in EFL speaking between the experimental group and the control group in favor of the experimental group." Table 4 shows the differences in EFL speaking between the experimental group and the control group.

Table 4

Means, Standard deviations, and t-test values of the experimental group and the control group

Group	Mean	STD	T	p-value
Experimental group	5.67	0.84	3.043	0.000
Control group	4.93	1.01		

As shown in Table 4, there are statistically significant differences between the experimental group and the control group in the speaking test scores in favor of the experimental group. Thus, the study affirms the third hypothesis.

3.4. Results of Fourth Research Question

The fifth research question was "what are Al-Aqsa university EFL female students' attitudes towards oral presentations?" The open-ended questionnaire data showed that the study participants had positive attitudes towards the use of oral presentations in EFL classes. From their perspectives, oral presentations could result in increasing motivation, reducing speaking anxiety, decreasing shyness, and increasing self-confidence.

Participant 20 (a students with high achievement level): *I was very pleased with this experience. I enjoyed preparing the presentation materials, arranging ideas, planning, training in front of a mirror, introducing the material to my colleagues, and discussing it with them. In fact, It was a challenging experience.*

Participant 7 (a student with middle achievement level): *It was a very useful experience. It helped me to get rid of my anxiety during speaking in front of my colleagues. Now I can look at my colleagues' eyes while speaking, and can no longer forget the ideas in my mind.*

Participant 4 (a student with middle achievement level): *I conducted two presentations, I feel no longer shy when standing in front of others and speaking English.*

Participant 10 (a student with middle achievement level): *In fact, I felt excited during the course. I liked speaking English freely with my colleagues.*

Participant 13 (a student with low achievement level): *I think that I become more-self-confident by the end of the course.*

Moreover, The open-ended question questionnaire analyses revealed that three influential factors contributed to success of most students in their presentations including the relaxing encouraging classroom, students' preparation, and students' beliefs about the positive role of oral presentations for future careers.

Participant 12 (a student with high achievement level): *I was very anxious at the beginning of my presentation, but the smiling faces of my colleagues and my instructor got me relaxed and encouraged me to continue talking.*

Participant 16 (a student with middle achievement level): *Though I spent much time and effort preparing the presentation material , I was excited.*

Participant 27 (a student with middle achievement level): *I consulted printed and unprinted resources for preparing the materials of my presentations.*

Participant 21 (a student with middle achievement level). *Though I felt very nervous at the beginning of my first presentation, I did not withdraw, and I asked my teacher to give me a chance to conduct another presentation. I have to train myself to stand in front of an audience and practice language, otherwise how can I become a teacher in the future?*

In spite of the positive aspects of using oral presentations in Al-Aqsa University EFL classes, a few low achieving students complained that they encountered problems while preparing for the presentations i.e., lack of lexical knowledge and difficulties with organizing and summarizing ideas.

Participant 1 (a student with low achievement level): *In fact, I found a difficulty in comprehending key vocabs. Though I spent much time on checking key words in the dictionary, I can hardly comprehend the presentation material.*

Participant 9: (a student with low achievement level): *I find it difficult to arrange and summarize the ideas I am going to present.*

It is quite apparent that unlike high and middle achieving students, low achievers did not enjoy the course due the difficulties they encountered including lack of lexical knowledge and difficulties with organizing and summarizing ideas. It might be argued that utilizing oral presentation strategy in EFL settings requires the existence of linguistically competent learners who are able to study on their own, plan materials, arrange ideas, and get an audience involved in a discussion.

4. Discussion and Implications

In line with the results of the previous studies, the present study concluded that oral presentations improved the participants' performance in EFL

speaking. For example, Farabi, Hassanvand, and Gorjian (2017) reported that guided oral presentations had a positive effect on Iranian EFL pre-intermediate students' speaking. Nadia (2013) also concluded that oral presentation was effective in developing EFL university students' speaking skills. Furthermore, Yahay and Kheirzadeh (2015) showed that oral presentations improved Iranian EFL students' accuracy and fluency in speaking.

It might be argued that the high level of motivation most participants had in the present study resulted in the improvement of their performance in the speaking test as well as *ELT Methodology 1* test. The open-ended questionnaire data revealed that a considerable number of the participants felt interested and motivated during the course due to the opportunities they were given to practice speaking and discussion and to the challenge they felt while carrying out the tasks. This kind of motivation urged them to devote more time and effort to the course tasks. According to Li (2015) and Reid (2007), motivation is a key factor in successful learning, and the classroom environment can affect learners' learning. Middleton and Perks (2014) also provide that for teachers to motivate the students, they should match them with an optimal level of challenge. Additionally, Bonnets (2018) views that EFL teachers should stimulate the students to test their linguistic hypotheses by participating in classroom communication. Based on that, EFL instructors in Gaza universities are advised to motivate students through assigning them challenging tasks (i.e., tasks requiring critical thinking, speaking to an audience, and making discussions) and providing opportunities through which students can practice language communicatively.

Related to study results, it was shown that oral presentations reduced the participants' speaking anxiety level. It might be argued that lack of oral practice could be a main reason for EFL students' speaking anxiety, and the more oral practice the students have, the less nervous they become. According to the open-ended questionnaire data, the majority of participants reported that each time they conducted presentations, their anxiety decreased. In this context, Budinski (2005) views that more practice could assist in decreasing the nervousness students may experience while speaking to an audience. Thus, Gaza EFL university instructors need to provide the students with opportunities to stand in front of an audience (i.e., teachers and students), and practice language genially.

One important factor that might have contributed to the success of most students in their presentations was the relaxing encouraging classroom. The open-ended questionnaire data indicated that the relaxing encouraging classroom assisted in reducing the students' anxiety while speaking. According to Liu (2009), teachers' encouragement could help in decreasing students' anxiety when speaking English. Additionally, King (2002) states that successful learning requires a comfortable and low-threatening learning environment. Consequently, Gaza EFL university instructors are recommended to establish relaxing encouraging environments, so as to promote the students' communicative skills.

Another influential factor contributing not only to the reduction of the participants' speaking anxiety but also to the improvement of their performance in the speaking test and ELT Methodology1 test was students' preparation. The open-ended questionnaire results showed that the experimental group students studied the course content on their own (i.e., home assignments) prior to practicing oral presentations and discussions in class, the thing which might have assisted the participants in comprehending the textbook details and reducing their speaking anxiety. In this context, Iha (2006) views that home assignments assist students in raising additional questions, making comparisons and right judgments, and in making them aware and self-responsible for their personal achievement. Hammad and Abu Ghali (2015) also provide that EFL students' preparation might help in reducing their nervousness during speaking. In light of this view, Gaza EFL advanced students are recommended to study the contents of their university courses on their own prior to class discussion.

A third factor might be the students' beliefs about the positive role of oral presentations in preparing university learners for future careers i.e., a teacher's career. According to the open-ended questionnaire analyses, some students reported that though they felt very anxious at the start of their presentations, they chose continuing, and did not withdraw due to their beliefs about the significance of oral presentations for future careers. In their opinions, oral presentations are very beneficial for promoting their teaching skills. Related to the relation between one's beliefs and behaviors, Backus and Chapien (2000) state that what a man believes affect how s/he behaves. Furthermore, Yzer (2013) provides that beliefs lead behaviors if one has the necessary abilities to perform the behavior, and if there are no obstacles impeding the behavioral performance. Based on that, Gaza EFL university instructors need to help the students who are unconcerned about oral presentations to be aware of the positive role of oral presentations for future careers.

5. Recommendations

Based on the above discussion, the study recommendations can be summarized as following:

1. EFL instructors in Gaza universities are advised to motivate the students through assigning them challenging tasks (i.e., tasks requiring critical thinking, speaking to an audience, and making discussions) and providing opportunities through which students can practice language communicatively.
2. Gaza EFL university instructors need to help in reducing the students' speaking anxiety through training students to stand in front of an audience (i.e., teachers and students), and practice language effectively.
3. Gaza EFL university instructors are recommended to establish relaxing encouraging environments, so as to promote the students' communicative skills.
4. Gaza EFL university teachers need to help the students who are unconcerned about oral presentations to be aware of the positive role of oral presentations for future careers.

5. Gaza EFL advanced students are recommended to study the contents of their university courses on their own prior to class discussion.

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Appendices

Appendix A: The Speaking Test (IELTS, 2019)

Part 1: Introduction and interview

[This part of the test begins with the examiner introducing himself or herself and checking the candidate's identification. It then continues as an interview]

Let's talk about your home town or village.

What kind of place is it?

- What's the most interesting part of your town/village?
- What kind of jobs do the people in your town/village do?
- Would you say it is a good place to live? (Why?)

Part 2: Individual long turn

Candidate Task Card

Describe something you own which is very important to you. You should say:

where you got it from,
how long you have had it,
what you use it for,
and explain why it is important to you.

You will have to talk about the topic for 1 to 2 minutes.

You have one minute to think about what you are going to say.

You can make some notes to help you if you wish.

Rounding off questions

- Is it valuable in terms of money?
- Would it be easy to replace?

Part 3: Two-way discussion Let's consider first of all how people's values have changed.

- What kind of things give status to people in your country?
- Have things changed since your parents' time?

Finally, let's talk about the role of advertising.

- Do you think advertising influences what people buy?

Appendix B: ELT Methodology1 Test

Course Title: ELT Methodology1 (EDUC2216E)		Al-Aqsa University
Time: 2hours		Fuculty of Education
Student's Name:		Curricula & Instruction Department
Number of pages: 6 Number of questions: 5		Instructor: Dr. Enas Abdullah Hammad

Final exam

Question 1 [20 points, 2/1]

Decide whether each of the following statements is true or false:

1. *Historical linguistics* refers to the deployment of significant linguistic findings to language data.
2. The imaginative function of language means talking about language functions.
3. The Audio-lingual Method aims at developing listening and speaking skills first, as the foundation on which to build reading and writing.
4. It is esential for EFL teachers to focus on internal motivation rather than external motivation in thier classes.
5. Transformational grammar tries to reconcile language usage and use.
6. In teaching language, explanations are useful with beginners.
7. Extensive reading is usually done outside of the EFL class.
8. Controlled role play is one of the communicative drills.
9. Grammar Translation Method gives a predominant place to morphology and neglects syntax.
10. Information Hunt is one of writing activities.

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10
Answer										

Question 2 [14 points, 2/1]

Choose the best answer:

- 1- English is used as a ----- language in UNRWA.
 - a. Native
 - b. foreign
 - c. second
- 2- Pair work can be used as a -----in EFL classroom.
 - a. technique
 - b. method
 - c. approach
3. Knowledge of apology, request, advice, etc., is related to -----
 - a. linguistic competence
 - b. pragmatic competence
 - c. socio-cultural competence.
4. EFL Teachers should provide learners with an immediate feedback in -----activities
 - a. fluency
 - b. accuracy
 - c. complexity

5. Based on -----, the four skills of English language should be learned simultaneously in primary stage.
a. Communicative Method b. Grammar Translation Method
c. Audio-lingual Method
6. Scrambling letters of the new word is one of -----.
a. mechanical drills b. meaningful drills c. communicative drills
7. The most important qualifications of high school teachers are -----
a. linguistic qualifications b. educational qualifications
c. personal qualifications

Item	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Answer							

Question 3

Write your opinion briefly on the following: [10 points, 2/1]

- a. The importance of teaching English language

- b. Utilizing Grammar Translation Method in EFL classes

- c. Using Eclectic Method in EFL classes

- d. Employing Audio-lingual Method in EFL classes

- e. The importance of teaching English pronunciation

Question 4

Give two examples to illustrate each of the following [10 points,2/1]

a. Diphthong

b. Stressed syllable

c. Gimation

d. Active words

e. Consonant cluster

Question 5

Design activities for teaching the following language items: [6 points, 2/1]

Fruits, vegetables

Soha has already done her homework.
Maha has not done her homework yet.

Pin, pen

The End

Appendix C: The Speaking Anxiety Questionnaire (Hammad & Abu Ghali, 2015)

Read the following sentences, and tick the appropriate.

Category	Item	Always	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
Physical Changes	1. My heart is pounding, when I'm going to be called on to speak English. 2. Even when I'm well-prepared, I tremble when knowing that I'm going to be called to speak English. 3. I start to tremble when I have to speak English without a preparation in advance. 4. I freeze up in English role play activities. 5. Certain parts of my body (stomach, legs, hands, etc.) feel very tense while speaking English.					

<p>Negative feelings</p>	<p>6.I do not enjoy the experience of speaking English.</p> <p>7.I feel afraid when speaking English.</p> <p>8.Even when I'm well-prepared, I feel anxious about speaking English.</p> <p>9.I feel anxious when I'm going to be called on to speak English without a preparation in advance.</p> <p>10.I feel anxious while waiting to speak English.</p> <p>11.I dislike using my voice and body expressively while speaking English.</p>					
<p>Low ability</p> <p>cognitive</p>	<p>12.My thoughts are confused when speaking English</p> <p>13.In speaking activities, I forget things I know</p> <p>14.I cannot find answers for my colleagues' questions in spite of having prepared the material.</p>					
<p>Negative behaviors</p>	<p>15.I avoid academic challenges such as voluntary speaking.</p> <p>16.I withdraw easily from speaking activities in English classes.</p> <p>17.I have trouble to coordinate my movements while speaking English.</p> <p>18.I do not look at the audience while speaking English.</p>					

