INVESTIGATING ORAL PRESENTATION SKILLS AND NON-VERBAL
COMMUNICATION TECHNIQUES IN UAE CLASSROOMS

A THESIS IN TEACHING ENGLISH TO SPEAKERS OF OTHER LANGUAGES

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ABSTRACT

English language instruction encourages students to express their ideas and
thoughts through oral reports and presentations. Skilful teachers can, therefore, inspire
their students to communicate effectively when they demonstrate their roles as successful
communicators.

Among the various ESL communicative speaking activities, oral reporting
activities promote oral fluency on the one hand, and public speaking skills on the other.
These oral presentations function as excellent generators of students' natural language,
and can simultaneously prove to be a user-friendly technique of teaching nonverbal
communication to learners. In addition, a teacher's feedback on the language, style and
content of these presentations will play a significant role in enhancing students'
presentation and speaking skills.

In middle and high schools in the UAE, a variety of factors work to underplay the
role of non-verbal communication in students' oral performances. This may become a
serious problem because the students who graduate from these schools will then be
unprepared for the social, professional, and academic demands for these skills.

This study was, therefore, an attempt to investigate the teaching of oral
presentation skills and non-verbal communication in schools in the UAE. It sought to

answer the following questions: (1) How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentations and non verbal communication? (2) To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non-verbal communication teaching techniques possible in the UAE English learning classroom?

To answer these questions, data was collected through workshops, interviews, and questionnaires. 25 teachers from private and public schools participated in this study.

The findings indicate that most teachers are willing to include oral presentations in their ESL teaching. Furthermore, the obtained results confirmed the usefulness of non-verbal communication in the ESL classroom. Nevertheless, teachers' responses also suggested the widespread existence of certain misconceptions regarding the implementation of oral presentation skills in their classrooms.

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DEDICATION

I dedicate this work to my beautiful parents, Ahmad and Heyam. Thank you for your support and your patience. Above all, I thank you for your cheerful attitude and for keeping cool when I couldn't. I also dedicate this work to the memory of my grand-father, who instilled in his children and grand children the love of reading and learning.

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is well known that success in oral communication skills contributes to one's

success in academic and social life. To set the stage for giving focused teaching on oral

presentation skills, ESL teachers need to know their students' needs and social

background, and encourage them to share information relevant to their interests with their

peers.

Teachers in ESL classrooms around the world encourage students to express their

ideas and views about various topics they encounter and readings they go through. One

way to do this is to have students deliver prepared reports and presentations. Another way

is to engage students in spontaneous talks throughout classroom activities. Ivanova (2000)

points out several advantages on asking students to give oral presentations:

it gives the presenting student a good opportunity to practise unaided speaking, it

gives the other students good listening practice, it increases the presenting

student's confidence when using English, it can be a good diagnostic device, and it

can be good practice for the real situation when students may actually need to give

presentations in English in their professional lives, and it is an excellent generator

of spontaneous discussion and/or essay topic (N/A).

From my experience with grade four, five, and six ESL students, I noticed several

issues that encouraged me to sought answer for my study. First, I noticed a lack of

instruction and/or emphasis on oral presentation skills from the teachers' side. Second, I

noticed students' tendency to memorize prepared chunks of speeches with no oral

reporting skills or appropriate use of non-verbal communication. Third, I realized that

very few teachers give feedback on their students' use of voice, eye-contact, body language, and other aspects of non-verbal indicators.

Although much research has been conducted on oral presentation ESL teaching techniques, my study was among a few studies that investigated high school and middle school teachers' classroom practices in the U.A.E. In addition, this research informed participants about, on one hand, important features and teaching techniques that were missing in their ESL teaching, and on the other, the important role of non-verbal communication in adding action and meaning to the language classroom.

Thus, the aim of this study is to investigate oral presentation skills instruction in UAE ESL classrooms. It seeks answers to the following questions:

1) How do ESL teachers in the U.A.E. teach oral presentations and non-verbal communication?

2) To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non-verbal communication techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?

A hands-on workshop was offered for ESL teachers in two contexts: first, in Madares Al Ghad (MAG) governmental high school, and second, in TESOL Arabia professional development events in Dubai and Sharjah. After each workshop, a reflective researcher journal was filled in with a description about the teachers' input, attitudes, and reactions. In addition, teachers were asked to fill in pre and post workshop questionnaires, and were invited to participate in interviews.

Overview of Chapter and Appendices

Chapter 1 presented the introduction and research questions. Chapter 2 provides

an in-depth review of the literature in the field of Oral Presentation Skills (OPS) and Non-

verbal Communication (NVC). It discusses the challenges teachers may face when

implementing OPS practices, and it offers researchers ideas for more successful speaking

classrooms. Chapter 3 discusses the methodology. It presents information about the

participants, the role of the researcher, the data collection process and the instrument tools

utilized for the study. Chapter 4 analyzes the data and reviews the findings that were

obtained from the workshops, the questionnaires, and the interviews. Chapter 5, the

conclusion, summarizes the findings of the study, discusses the limitations, and provides

implications for the study.

There are eight appendices: Appendix A is the slideshow presented in the

workshops. Appendix B is the questionnaire utilized before the workshop, and Appendix

C is the questionnaire utilized after the workshop. The questionnaires investigate

teachers' current practices in OPS and NVC. Appendix D is a table of my reflective

researcher journal. Appendix E is the teachers' interview questions which I asked about

their attitudes towards the content of the workshop and its impact on their current

teaching practices. Appendix F is a reflective worksheet used as a tool to elicit data

related to how teachers emphasize NVC in the ESL classrooms. Appendix G is the pre-

workshop questionnaire results. Finally, Appendix H is the post-workshop questionnaire

results.

CHAPTER 2
REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

The literature on L2 oral performance activities describes the different types of these activities in different settings. Oral presentations, or oral reports, are one of the activities that contribute greatly to the students' academic success (Butler & Stevens, 1997; Dunbar, Brooks & Kubicka-Miller, 2006; Mead & Rubin, 1985; Young, 1998), professional success through organizations, such as Toastmasters International, Rostum, ASC, ITC, and language fluency (Brown, 2000; Harmer, 2001; Mead & Rubin, 1985; Winkyi, Bunyakarate, & Uthaisangchai, 1998). Coombe, England, & Schmidt (2008) look at the importance of presentation skills in the people's professional lives. They find that effective oral presentation skills are important in the success of ELT professionals. Results of a study conducted by the Center for Public Resources indicates that speaking and listening skills were chosen by 250 companies as crucial areas needed within people applying for work (Coombe et. al, 2008).

At present, the oral presentation skills needed to develop effective communication and discourse skills are discussed and fore grounded, often under the umbrella term Oral Presentation Skills, in many ESL articles and books, for example in Gebhard (1996), Goulden (1998), Harmer (2001), Hinkel (2006). Oral presentations can take place in a variety of settings as either a group activity or within small groups (Henning, 2000). In the ESL classroom, at the primary level, oral presentations are often practiced in different forms, such as when sharing a poem, telling a story, delivering a book report, or making an announcement. At the higher education level, students continue receiving instruction and guidance about oral presentations through public speaking courses (Dunbar et. al, 2006).

According to many studies, these skills become a necessity in courses across the curriculum, as they provide students with opportunities to express their ideas in speech form. In addition, these skills are in demand for future professional needs (Barrass, 2006; Lucas, 2007; Sprague & Stuart, 2005; Walters, 2000; Young, 1998). One particular aspect of oral presentations is that they reveal the origin of genre upon which a speaker bases the talk. For example, it differs when speakers retell a story they read, when they talk spontaneously about their personal experiences, or when they report and summarize an article.

Young (1998) briefly outlines the advantages a student can receive once (s)he has been trained to give effective presentations. First, he points to the exposure that students gain once they can communicate with a wide range of audiences. He also points out that it gives students different opportunities for objective assessment, often providing them with the opportunity to critically observe their peers' presentations. Finally, Young (1998) summarizes the effective skills that can be developed through oral presentation skills practice, such as time management skills, experience in selecting appropriate material, the opportunity to contribute confidently to discussions, as well as the ability to respond logically to peers and tutors. In addition to non-verbal communication, a clear component of the spoken language which plays a role in refining presentation skills and helping learners develop social skills (Darn, 2005). Darn (2005) calls teachers not to underestimate this kind of communication when teaching listening and speaking skills. The reason is that non-verbal communication helps learners produce natural language, while using expressions and gestures to reinforce meaning.

The Proficiency Level Debate

In the view of many authors in L2 research, teaching and developing oral presentation skills and techniques is not suitable for beginners. Winkyi, Bunyakarate, and Uthaisangchai (1998) stress that ESL learners need to be competent in writing, reading, and listening skills first, before moving on to achieve oral performance skills. Murphy (1991) argues that oral presentation activities are inappropriate for beginners. He indicates that training for these skills is more appropriate for high intermediate and advanced level learners who are enrolled in a seminar/speech course. Henning (2000) points to the importance of creating an appropriate environment for "talking-place activities" (p. 225). These environments need to enable students to share their ideas, and to allow them to express their opinions freely.

Much of the literature focuses on L1 oral performance activities, which can be integrated and adapted for ESL classrooms. With regard to these activities, the literature on L1 (Atkinson, 2005; Beck, Bennett & Wall, 2002; Henning, 2000) addresses very similar issues in L2 input (Brown, 2000; Harmer, 2001; Golden 1998; Murphy, 1991). For an L1 context, Henning (2000) presents several activities suitable for youngsters. One form of individual reporting that he refers to is show-and-tell. He also points to monologue activities, "in which a youngster assumes the identity of a personality of the past, present, or fiction" (p. 223). He reminds teachers how getting students "to share a story or poem expressively, converse naturally, [or]… report clearly" remains a great practice for creating classroom interaction (p. 224). Brown (2004) reviews very similar activities adapted for L2 learners. He points to telling stories and sharing poems as important practices that promote speakers' oral fluency.

The consensus in L2 literature, therefore, reminds teachers how they must adapt their teaching approaches, in order to cater to the students' specific spoken language needs across all proficiency levels and age groups.

Fears and Challenges in L2 Oral Presentations

The discussion about oral presentation skills and techniques is not complete without an accompanying mention of the issues of nervousness and stage fright. These challenges and fears are inevitable for both L1 or L2 speakers. Nunan (1989) states that

> while all native speakers can and do use language interactionally, not all native speakers have the ability to extemporize on a given subject to a group of listeners. This is a skill which generally has to be learned and practiced. (p. 27)

Lucas (2007) draws attention to the benefits of ongoing practice in helping learners control their nervousness. He confirms that the fears gradually decrease until they are replaced with what is called a "healthy nervousness" (p. 11). Barnes (1994) describes the challenging aspects of presenting formally, in front of a group, for native as well as non-native English speakers. Several studies report the challenges associated with verbal and non-verbal features of L2 oral presentation instruction. Barnes (1994) explains how presenting orally involves much more than simple language skills; "it requires good use of non-verbal communication, having a relaxed body, varying pitch and volume of one voice, and keeping controlled gestures" (p. 33). Moreover, "the non-verbal language of each culture has different ways of signalling such messages" (Brown, 2000, p. 263).

Lucas (2007) draws attention to the challenges resulting from the different

linguistic and cultural backgrounds of non-native speakers. Brown (2000) uses the

term 'style' to refer to non-verbal communication. He feels that these differences

act as "a primary barrier" (p. 261) to the acquisition and learning of styles. One

example of such a barrier is the messages conveyed through eye-contact. He

explains how "an unfettered and unambiguous conversation" (p. 263) is achieved

when speakers have a mutual understanding of these signals. Goulden (1998)

encourages ESL learners to enjoy learning through oral presentations, rather than

treating them as processes to be endured. He explains the advantages and rewards

gained at the end of this learning process.

The Relationship between Presentation Skills and Other Language Skills

Several authors draw attention to the similarities and differences between the art

of conversations and the art of oral presentations (Brown, 2000; Harmer 2001; Lucas,

2007). Brown (2000) compares the features used to initiate and terminate presentations

and conversations. He finds both of the non-verbal and verbal features very similar.

Harmer (2001) compares the writer's ability to change his/her writing style and structure,

to suit readers, with the presenter's ability to adapt his/her speaking style to suit listeners.

There are also other skills interconnected with presentation skills, such as critical

thinking, listening, reading, and writing. It is well recognized in the literature that oral

presentation skills have a direct effect on listening skills (Lucas, 2007; Barrass, 2006;

Sprague & Stuart, 2005; Walters, 2000). This is why L2 researchers call for consistent

and effective reinforcement of speaking skills; the effects of these enhanced speaking skills should last into the future (Lucas, 2007; Winkyi et. al, 1998).

Henning (2000) asserts that grouping patterns could accommodate different proficiency levels of ESL students. As he puts it, expressing oneself to small groups is not as intimidating as speaking in front of the class as a whole. Furthermore, small feedback groups, in which students report to one another, enable students to refine, revise, and adapt. He sums up the advantages of this grouping pattern:

- Because each group may have heard slightly different presentations, the whole class discussion that follows revolving-group reports is more likely to serve a summarizing function. (p. 222)

- Students must repeat their reports, and in so doing, they refine their presentations.

- Listeners in small groups are more willing to render verbal feedback. Similarly, reporters are more at ease when presenting to smaller groups.

Each configuration, whole class, small group, or pair work, has implication for task design (Nunan, 1985). There are two different aspects of learning situations for such configurations. One is mode, which distinguishes whether learners operate on an individual or group basis, and another is environment, which refers to where the learning actually takes place. If operating on an individual basis to fulfil a task, the teacher decides whether the task is self-paced or teacher directed. If the learner is operating as part of a group, the teacher will have to choose one of the configurations: whole class, small group, or pair work.

One important aspect of tasks is how the nature of the task impacts the performance of this task. Samuda and Bygate (2008) cite Bruner's (1986)

comments on reading strategies and how oral performance activities can reveal the

"psychology of genre" (p. 44). Thus, they explain how one gets the sense of a

genre once performed by listening for example to a retelling of a story or a

spontaneous telling of a story about a happening in the speaker's life. He

emphasizes the holistic aspect of these performance activities, in the sense that an

individual sorts out how, what, and in what order to produce utterances and put

them together into a whole discourse strategy. Samuda and Bygate (2008)

highlight how holistic language production reflects similarities in processing

among the different types of tasks.

In his discussion on designing tasks for the communicative classroom,

Nunan (1989) distinguishes between two basic language functions. The first

function is related to tasks on uninterrupted oral presentations. This is called

"transactional function" (p. 27) and it is primarily concerned with the transfer of

information. The "interactional function" (p. 27) is another function related to

dialogues and conversations, in which the primary purpose of speech is the

maintenance of social relationships. Nunan (2004) draws attention to the challenge

that lies in the former function and emphasizes the need for speaking to be both

learned and practiced.

Presentations as Communicative Activities

The literature addresses oral presentation under the category of communicative

activities. There is a consensus in the literature on L1 and the literature of L2 learners that

oral presentation activities take place in different forms and settings (Barrass, 2006;

Lucas, 2007; Rubin, & Mead, 1985; Sprague & Stuart, 2005; Walters, 2000).

Some presentations are delivered without preparation, while others are prepared in advance through careful instruction and organization. Harmer (2001) stresses the importance of development for organizing prepared talks. He says, "Just as in process writing, the development of talks, from original ideas to finished work, will be of vital importance" (p. 274).

To better understand the suitability of communicative activities for various proficiency levels, Gebhard (1996) refers to Littlewood's framework on communicative activities. Gebhard (1996) divides Littlewood's framework into pre-communicative activities and communicative activities; the former being reserved for lower intermediate levels and the latter for higher levels. Littlewood further divides pre-communicative activities into structural activities and quasi-communicative activities. Both structural and quasi-communicative activities allow students to interact under highly controlled conditions, e.g., dialogues. Oral reporting skills and techniques only develop at the stage of communicative activities. Gebhard (1996) explains how until the basic skills are developed, language learners can "give oral presentations on topics they [have] researched through interviewing and library research, and [by] solving problems in groups" (p. 52).

Oral Fluency Practice

It is well-known that extensive exposure to native speakers can, in many cases, enhance communicative efficiency of second language learners. Nevertheless, the classroom is also an ideal context in which a group of learners are exposed to fluency

activities in controlled conditions (Guillot 1999). Guillot (1999) raises awareness for teachers not to neglect the opportunities offered by the classroom, and to help students develop meta-awareness of what fluency entails in its position as a legitimate aim for FL pedagogy. L2 research studies highlight the role of oral reports/ prepared talks in promoting oral fluency. These studies discuss further aspects which play significant roles in promoting oral fluency, e.g., the use of new items, language hesitation, and spontaneity (Atkinson, 2005; Beck et al., 2002; Harmer, 2001). In the discussion on the importance of fluency practice, Hedge (2008) cites Prabhu's (1987) explanation for the two types of fluency activities: "opinion-gap activity" and "reasoning activity" (p. 59). Prabhu explains that reasoning is the act of "conveying personal preference, feeling, or attitude using factual information or formulating arguments" (Cited in Hedge, 2008, p. 59). It occurs when speakers relate new information to old information through "deduction, inference, or perception of relationship" (Hedge, 2008, p. 59).

Much literature indicates that communicative interactions serve as vehicles for fluency practice. Hinkel (2006) refers to oral presentations as a type of repetitive task that provides means for developing L2 communication. Hinkel (2006) cites Ellis's (2003) discussion of the development of L2 oral production, as he explains how debates, problem solving, and other types of oral presentations and manifestations are ways that "help foster the development of various aspects of L2 oral production" (Cited in Hinkel, 2006, p. 6).

The literature on oral fluency practice addresses both hesitation and spontaneity as elements which require much attention on the part of teachers and learners. Slowness and hesitation are described by referring to the amount of pause fillers used in one's speech.

Hedge (2008) describes fluency as "the ability to link units of speech together with facility and without strain or inappropriate slowness, or undue hesitation" (p. 57). Guillot (1999) cites Mohle's (1987) suggestion on using temporal variables as a possible measure to fluency. Examples of such variables are the distribution of filled pauses and speech rate. Guillot (1999) argues that the use of such features is not always intentional. Using temporal variables has been supported by L1 and L2 research to be a result of "the demandingness of the task of production, which reveals the cognitive activity of the speaker, particularly in unplanned speech" (p.29). Guillot (1999) indicates that "hesitations, pauses, false starts, repetitions can act as a time gaining device while thoughts are gathered to occur at points where verbal planning and selection is taking place" (p. 29) Thus, the occurrence of these features, resembles the condition of an L2 speaker confronted with encoding difficulties.

In their discussion on the differences between oral accuracy and fluency practice, Davies and Pearson (2000) emphasize communication and the natural use of language. They remind teachers not to interrupt students in order to correct errors but to monitor students, take note on their errors, and to deal with errors after the activity is over. Furthermore, Underhill (2004) urges teachers to avoid interventions at the final stage of presentations, neither when a speaker gives a final summary, nor during the questions and answer portion.

Samuda and Bygate (2008) refer to Barnes' (1976) discussion on hesitation. As they put it, Barnes (1976) looks at the positive aspect of hesitation, in which learners produce these utterances in the process of constructing knowledge. Barnes (1976) notes that hesitation characterizes the process of carrying out assimilation and accommodation

of the new to the existing knowledge (Samuda & Bygate, 2008). Barnes (1976) distinguishes between two types of a talk: exploratory and final draft. The former incorporates frequent hesitations, rephrasing, and false starts and changes of direction. The latter, however, is more of a polished, finished talk. Samuda and Bygate (2008) explain the way tasks take control over the type of language expected to be produced from students. For example, group tasks can be used to generate exploratory talk that allows students to think loud and take responsibility for formulating explanatory hypotheses. Nevertheless, final draft language comes as a final product, usually produced individually. They point out that the role of final talk language is not abandoned nor denied when explanatory talk takes over. Yet, it gives space and "opens up dynamics of learning to the attention of learners and to teachers, not merely to structure 'final draft' performance" (p.34).

Style/delivery

Oral presentations are often looked at from two perspectives: content and delivery. The former often includes main idea(s), objective, introduction, body, and conclusion, whereas the latter usually takes note of the speaker's attitude, pronunciation, grammar, use of visual aids, and non-verbal indicators, e.g., gestures, voice, posture, eye-contact (Brown, 2000). Harmer (2001) urges teachers to observe delivery styles in which gestures are used.

Galanes and Adams (2006) describe the style of delivery as an artistic standard, or as a classical canon in speech communication. They refer to the Greeks' and Romans' history, when they used these canons as a means of communication. In many language

teaching books, the discussion would not be complete without a suggestion of the role of non-verbal system in enhancing and complementing the verbal part. Because the classroom can be a home for the language of students, a teacher has to be a stimulating host for language-appropriate language production (Henning, 2000; Beck et Al., 2002; Brown, 2000; Diaz-Rico & Weed, 2002).

One aspect of non-verbal communication is the use of eye-contact to convey messages. According to Darn (2004), the research shows that "there is a strong link between the amount of eye-contact people receive and their degree of participation in group communication." In his study on the effect of eye-contact in English classrooms, Darn (2004) reminds teachers to encourage learners to make eye-contact while they are working together in pairs or groups. He explains how it starts by training them to listen carefully to each other, using non-verbal responses only.

How to help L2 learners carry out effective non-verbal communication is still being debated. A very serious question arises when the extent to which non-verbal communication should be present explicitly in a class is considered. Enright (1986) cites Ventigilia's (1982) work, in which she draws attention to the effect of demonstration of modalities in focusing "attention and communicative meaning in the L2 classroom" (p. 135). According to her study, the more modalities a teacher demonstrates, the easier the mastery of L2 lexical items will be. Enright (1986) also describes an ESL teacher's study which revealed similar results with regard to the role of non-verbal behaviour in ESL instruction. Molly, the ESL teacher, emphasized the use of gestures, body language, and facial expressions as part of her ongoing L2 input. The conclusions of both studies pinpoint the importance of non-verbal communication in enhancing L2 learners'

communicative competence. Gebhard (1996) draws a link between teachers' feedback on pronunciation and feedback on non-verbal communication. Teachers are often asked to demonstrate the appropriate pronunciation of words; however, according to Gebhard (1996), they can also encourage students to ask about non-verbal communication. This way, teachers can model non-verbal behaviours for their students and demonstrate how these behaviours could accompany L2 speech.

The element of voice plays a significant role in the language classroom. Lucas (2007) refers to eight elements in his description of voice: "volume, pitch, rate, pauses, variety, pronunciation, articulation, and dialect" (p. 305). It is important to note that the element of voice describes sounds, not content. Lucas (2007) addresses the speaker's voice, on one hand, and the speaker's body language, on the other. He points to four elements in his description of body language: eye-contact, movement, gestures, and personal appearance. Weed and Diaz-Rico (2002) point to the sending and receiving of messages often established through voice tone, facial expressions, gestures, posture, and eye-contact. Teachers can detect students' needs as these features are strongly related to emotions. In his discussion on non-verbal communication and delivery, Barnes (1994) reminds teachers to take into consideration several elements that are attributes of the speaker's voice: intonation, rate, stress, volume, and pitch.

Beck et., al. (2002) refer to oral presentations as a type of formal talk that often requires visual aids. He believes that the use of visual aids facilitates body language in general. Henning (2000) states that "pointing, moving toward, and holding up are all nonverbal communication devices necessary when using a visual … these gestures add action and force to a presentation" (p. 220).

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Apart from the dynamic use of body language, voice plays an integral role in holding the listener's attention. Language learners need to experiment. Gebhard (1996) gives an example of a voice warm-up exercise in which the teacher gets to speak at a very low volume and requires students to repeat the word at an increased volume. According to Gebhard, allowing students to experiment with voice variety can "coax" them to participate in oral fluency activities. Henning (2000) finds this technique effective as it demonstrates "organization, clarity of presentations, and general knowledge of the topic" (p.219).

Oral Presentation Assessment

The literature on speaking assessment covers various aspects and methods of assessment, such as descriptive tasks (Luoma, 2004), simulation and role plays (Harmer, 2005; Underhill, 2000), oral presentations or prepared talks (Brown, 2004; Underhill, 2000), interviews (Luoma, 2004), and communication games (Brown, 2004; Harmer 2005). By their very nature, oral presentation skills involve performance and communication. These require non-traditional assessments, which go beyond linguistic features positing behaviour and attitude as part of the effective presentation process (Dunbar et. al, 2006). There are two main methods of assessment: holistic, which includes giving an overall impression, or analytical, which looks at specific components in the speakers' communicative performance (Brown, 2004; Dunbar, et. al., 2006; Mead & Rubin, 1985;). With regard to oral reporting assessment, assessors often look at content and delivery. For advanced levels, assessors look at each specific area in more depth (Brown, 2004; Luoma, 2004; Underhill, 2000).

Luoma (1994) pinpoints how variations in pitch, volume, and intonation are essential for oral presentation assessments. He emphasizes the liveliness of expression as an essential factor in performance-based assessments. Goulden's (1998) criteria of assessment consider speakers' overall engagement with the audience, and the extent to which the speaker is engaged in the content. He calls teachers of all contexts to avoid pointing out to students their minor flaws during the process of evaluation. He believes these flaws exist only temporarily and are corrected in a short span of time. Young (1998) confirms that each tutor "almost certainly looks at different abilities" (p. 8) when evaluating and assessing learners' presentational skills. According to Henning (2000), assessment must be in terms of a number of behaviours. He urges teachers to point out specific learning behaviours so that students can eventually assess themselves.

Tools of Assessment

Much literature also refers to rubrics or checklists as the most influential tools for classroom oral performance assessment (Brown, 2004; Dunbar et al., 2006; Henning, 2000). Items in checklists can be adapted for several proficiency levels: beginners, upper elementary (Henning, 2000), or advanced (Brown, 2004). In his example of a self-evaluation checklist for assessing oral expression at the upper-elementary level, Henning (2000) includes four straightforward items in the delivery section: clarity, use of eye-contact, manner of using gestures, and use of visual aids. Brown (2004) expands his checklist with items suitable for assessing intermediate or advanced levels of speakers. The checklist targets two major components: delivery and content. Delivery includes pronunciation, grammar, and vocabulary. It also includes the use of gestures, body

language, eye-contact, volume, rate of speech, and visual aids. The component of content focuses on the basic elements of a speech: introduction, supporting ideas, and conclusion.

Brown (2004) states that as long as items on evaluation checklists are clearly specified and are made understandable to students, this type of assessment is "reasonably" practical, reliable, and authentic. Henning (2000) asserts that students need to be involved in the assessment by applying "clearly-stated criteria [for assessing] their own activities" (p. 223). Dunbar et., al. (2006) consider the methods, tools, and criteria used in assessing oral performance useful for training beginner teachers to teach these skills.

Topic Choice

Apart from style and delivery, the content of oral presentations also plays a significant part in the students' L2 output. Goulden (1998) looks at topic and content as essential areas in his criteria of assessment. In order to match the difficulty level of the topic with the speaker's language ability, Underhill (2004) says it is important to allow students to choose their topics in consultation with teachers. He points out several issues regarding the choice of topic and assessment. First, he reminds teachers to pay attention to whether or not the topic is a difficult one. Second, he stresses that topics need to be relevant to the aims of the lesson/course, and that they must also convey new information. Students often "play safe by choosing the topic[s] they are most familiar with" (p. 47). If students have sufficient experience in this area of speaking skills, teachers need to encourage them to be risk takers and expand their topics. However, if students are still in the beginning stages of learning, teachers could encourage students to talk about topics relevant to their backgrounds and communities as this would help convert students'

expression levels from drill to free (Finnochiario, 1989). The learning outcome can thus

be very rewarding for ESL learners, as they will soon be able to generate topics on their

own in front of a whole classroom (Goulden, 1998; Murphy, 1992).

Conclusion

　　　　In this literature review, I have looked at oral performance activities and focused

on formal oral reports. I have mentioned the potential advantages of presenting in front of

a class using L2. I have also focused on the factors which pose challenges for L2 speakers

while they acquire oral performance skills. I have mainly looked at the use of checklists,

the types of checklists used for different proficiency levels, etc., with regard to the

assessment of oral performances. I have considered the following topics with regard to

non-verbal communication: the acquisition of non-verbal communication, the role of style

and delivery in promoting speaking skills, and the importance of modelling gestures,

body language and projecting voice to develop L2 learning. Finally, I have discussed the

tools of assessment, such as rubrics and checklists, which can be influential to assess oral

presentation skills and non-verbal communication.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

Introduction

In this study, the purpose was to investigate the practices and techniques used to teach oral presentation skills and non-verbal communication skills in ESL classes in the UAE. My study sought answers to the following questions:

1) How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentations and non verbal communication?

2) To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non verbal communication teaching techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?

One of my aims for this research study was to inform ESL teachers about important features and teaching techniques that might be missing in their teaching. The study is also intended to communicate to teachers the significant role that non-verbal communication plays in adding action and meaning to the language classroom. To realize these purposes, I collected data with the use of four methods: pre-workshop questionnaires, workshop, post-workshop questionnaires, and interviews. From the workshops, I gathered data regarding the participants' input and attitudes towards teaching oral presentation skills, the participants' responses to questions about the practices they employ when teaching oral presentation skills in ESL classrooms, and the participants' attitudes towards emphasizing non-verbal communication in the ESL classroom. In addition to collecting survey data, I wrote down the participants' answers and comments to questions I asked during the workshops.

Context

The data was collected via workshops given to ESL teachers in two contexts: first, in Madares Al Ghad (MAG) High School and second, in Dubai and Sharjah TESOL Arabia (TA) chapters. The first workshop was conducted on November 6th, 2008, in Madares Al Ghad (MAG) Governmental High School. Later, on two consecutive Saturdays, I delivered workshops for TESOL Arabia chapters. The first was conducted in Dubai on November 22, 2008. The second workshop was conducted in Sharjah on November 29, 2008. The TA workshops were attended by a number of English teachers, from both private and governmental sectors. Because my study targets school teachers only, attendees from higher educational levels were not included in the data collection.

The first context in the data collection process was Madares Al Ghad (MAG) school, an all-male government high school in Sharjah. Like most governmental schools, Arabic is the medium of instruction and English is taught as a separate subject within the course load. The school includes nine sections for grade 10, six sections for grade 11 and seven sections for grade 12. Typically, the number of students in each section ranges between 22 and 25, which makes a total of about 500 students in the school as a whole. The all-male faculty includes about fifty teachers from different disciplines: mainly Arabic, English, Maths, History, Geography, Islamic Education, Chemistry, Physics, Biology, and Human Studies. The English department, in particular, includes 10 teachers, one teacher mentor, and one team leader.

The second and third contexts in which I conducted my study were via TESOL Arabia (TA) professional development events. TA is a non-profit organization which provides high profile professional development opportunities for English language

teachers, in a variety of working situations: elementary secondary, tertiary, governmental, private sector, etc. Each of the TA chapters, which are based all over the Emirates, holds professional development events throughout the academic year. Local chapters, as well as the TA International Conference, give opportunities for teachers to share their research studies and pedagogical experiences. I conducted two workshops: one in Sharjah and the other in Dubai.

Participants

There were eight participants in the TA Sharjah event, six females and two males and seven participants in the Dubai event four females and three males. Teachers attended the TA workshops voluntarily. Also, they had the chance to choose from a list of workshops available in the TA program. Therefore, participants in my workshop came purposefully to learn about OPS and NVC teaching techniques. As seen in the demographics in Table1, teachers varied in the number of years of teaching experience. Yet, they all came with one purpose, which was to learn more about OPS and NVC techniques. In addition, eleven male teachers attended the workshop held at Madares Al Ghad (MAG) High School. Attendance for this group, however was compulsory. The workshop was offered to teachers, through the administration, as part of their professional development. Table 2 shows demographics relevant to this group. Most participants had more than 15 years of teaching experience. Data related to the average class size helped me determine the challenges teachers face when teaching OPS and NVC.

Table 1: Teacher demographics of TA workshops

	Year of Teaching Experiece				Average Class Size	
n=14	0-9	10-15	Above 15	Not mentioned	15-25	25-30
	3	8	2	1	7	7

Table 2: Teacher demographics of MAG workshop

	Years of Teaching Experiece				Average Class Size	
n=11	0-9	10-15	Above 15	Not mentioned	15-25	25-30
	2	2	6	1	10	1

Role of the Researcher

As a member of TESOL Arabia and as an active speaker in the chapter events, I was aware of the nature of the audience. Thus, I was well-prepared to answer any potential questions and ready to cater to any needs in the area of oral presentations. My main goal was to meet the interest of my audience and to encourage them to reflect on their current classroom practices. As a researcher, I was sensitive to the process of gathering data. I introduced my study to the participants and explained to them that the questionnaires were part of my data collection. I was also careful not to push attendees to participate in the surveys. In addition, I kept the questionnaires very simple and short so that they would not to take too much time from the session. As a presenter, I put all my effort into being a good communicator/listener, and carefully responded to the participants' questions. I also maintained a balance between giving input to, and receiving output from my audience.

Procedures

In September, 2007, I conducted a pilot study and delivered a workshop for the Fujairah TESOL Arabia chapter, SIG event for governmental teachers. Thirty English teachers attended my presentation, which was entitled "Oral Presentation Skills and Techniques in the ESL Classroom". My purpose was to ensure the usefulness and practicality of the information presented in my slides, and to identify weaknesses in content, whether it's relevant to governmental school teachers, or not. Changes were accordingly made on some of the slides, as I removed some information and added further information in reaction to the teachers' needs and questions.

Information on Presentation

The revised presentation consisted of 25 slides (see Appendix A). Slides one to ten included an overview of the subject matter and highlighted some important issues, such as the proficiency level, the age of instruction and the principles regarding oral presentation skills. The practical aspect of the workshop included activities and reflective worksheets on the application of non-verbal communication in the English classroom (see Appendix F).

Slide number 11 presented the three elements of feedback: language, content, and style. The next four slides, slides 12 to 15, provided data about the role of non-verbal communication, the required techniques, and accompanying non-verbal indicators for verbal speeches. Slide 16 focused on the fears harboured and challenges encountered by non-native speakers, and slides 17-19 tapped into the assessment tools and methods. The

last four slides, 20- 23, concluded the presentation with a discussion about the factors

needed to implement oral presentations and non-verbal techniques in UAE classrooms.

At the beginning of each workshop, I explained that the workshop itself was part

of my MA thesis study. I had split each workshop into two sessions of 45 minutes each.

Session one addressed oral presentation skills and teaching techniques, while session two

looked at non-verbal communication techniques and instruction. All the participants

expressed a willingness to assist, and filled in the relevant questionnaires.

Questionnaires

Two questionnaires were used: a pre-workshop questionnaire and a post-

workshop questionnaire. The pre-workshop questionnaire included items 1 to 18, and the

post-workshop questionnaire included items 19 to 27. Responses to items 7, 8, 9, 14, 15,

16,18 24, 26 helped me answer my first research question "How do ESL teachers teach

oral presentations and non-verbal communication?" Moreover, responses to items 10, 11,

12, 17, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 25, 26 and 27 helped me answer my second research question

"To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentation and non-verbal

communication teaching techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?" (see

Appendices B & C).

The beginning of the first questionnaire gathered biographical data about the

years of teaching experience, grade levels of students taught in the past and present, and

the average class size (items 1 to 5). Item 6 asked teachers about the reasons behind for

attending the workshop. Item 7 asked the participants the following questions:

a) Do you ask your students to give oral presentations in class?

b) How often?

c) What type of oral presentation activities do you practice with your students?

Section two used a Likert-scale formatting for items eight to 18. Items eight to 13 were scaled on a 4 point Likert-scale from "strongly agree", "agree", "disagree", "strongly disagree", to "not applicable". I included the option "not applicable", in case the item does not fit into the respondent's context. The six items sought information about the teachers' practices and challenges in oral presentation skills and non-verbal communication. As for items 14 to 18, they were scaled on a 5 point Likert-scale from "always", "usually", "sometimes", "never", to "not applicable" was again used for the same reason mentioned above. The focus of these items was non-verbal communication. Items 14, 15, 16, and 18 addressed the following non-verbal indicators: position of presenter (body movements, eye-contact, and voice). However, item 17 looked at the time factor in relation to teaching oral presentation skills.

The themes of items eight-18 were similar to the workshop; items eight-13 focused on oral presentation skills similarly to session one in the workshop. As for items 14-18, their theme of non-verbal communication was the same addressed in part two of the workshop. Post-workshop questionnaires were distributed to participants at the end of each workshop. Item19-26 were designed to answer my second research question: to what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non-verbal techniques possible in ESL classrooms in the UAE? Item one asked about the appropriate age of instruction; items two, three, and five looked at the possible benefits and advantages of teaching oral presentation skills to students; and items four, six, seven, and eight emphasized the importance of nonverbal communication and the teachers' knowledge and

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training. The very next item looked at factors which may help teachers implement oral presentation instruction in their classroom. Teachers were given the following options to choose from: more time, training, material, support from school, and an option for other factors was left for teachers' answers.

Reflective Research Journal

Another tool utilized to gather data was a reflective researcher journal, in which I wrote a description of the teachers' input, inquiries, and ideas triggered during the presentation. I filled in a table, which included questions similar to ones used for the semi-structured interviews. Questions were designed to elicit responses to my first research question: How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentations and non-verbal communication? (see Appendix D).

Interviews

Conducting semi-structured interviews enabled me to attend closely to the teachers' reflections towards their classroom practices, with regards to oral presentation and non-verbal communication skills. Six teachers from Madares Al - Ghad High School volunteered to be interviewed as soon as the workshop finished. At the beginning of the interview I thanked the participants for their time and then shared the interview questions. I did not audio tape the interviews; however, I took key notes and detailed notes according to the given input. The process was systematic; I gave a list of five questions to each interviewee and followed the same order of questions with each of them (see Appendix E).

In conclusion, the various data collection techniques provided triangulated information needed to answer my research questions.

CHAPTER 4

DATA ANALYSIS AND FINDINGS

This chapter presents the data analysis and the findings of this study. It is divided into three sections. The first section presents the demographics of the participants. The other two sections present results based on the two research questions:

1. How do ESL teachers teach oral presentations and non-verbal communication?

2. To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentation and non-verbal communication teaching techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?

Findings pertaining to the first research question are discussed under the heading of "Practices and Techniques in Teaching OPS and NVC." Responses to items 7, 8, 9, 24, 26 from the post-workshop questionnaire targeted oral presentation skills. Moreover, responses to items 14, 15, 16, and 18 targeted non-verbal communication. From the responses, I was able to determine how teachers look at teaching grammar and vocabulary in relation to OPS, and how they perceive feedback in terms of the three elements: language, content, and non-verbal communication.

Findings pertaining to the second research question are discussed under the heading of "Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching OPS and NVC." Responses to items 10,19, 20, 21, and 26 helped me determine the teachers' attitudes with regards to students' age and proficiency level. From responses to items 11and 17,19, 22, and 27, I was able to determine the teachers' attitudes regarding the factors time, material, and training. From responses to Items 12, 23, and 25, I was able to determine the teachers' attitudes towards teaching NVC in the ESL classroom. The questionnaire designed for

this study consisted of four sections: short answers (Question 1-7), Likert-scale responses (8-14), yes/no questions (19-26), and one multiple choice question (Question 27).

Practices and Techniques in Teaching OPS and NVC

Item 7, in the pre-workshop questionnaire, was included in an attempt to better understand the practice of teaching oral presentation skills in UAE's ESL classrooms. In both contexts, the TA workshops and the MAG school, all participants responded to the item "Do you ask your students to give oral presentations in class?" in the affirmative. In response to the question "How often", responses were split into two groups. 6/14 respondents in the TA workshop said they frequently asked for oral presentations and on a regular basis. On the other hand, 8/14 said they do not frequently ask students to give oral presentations. Answers of both groups are shown in Table 3 below. Some of the answers in the table are given by more than one respondent.

Table 3: TA workshops: teachers' responses toitem27/b

n=14	Frequently	Not frequently
b) How often?	Very often (1)	At the end of each chapter (1)
	Very frequently (2)	Once a term (1)
	Weekly (1)	On final project (3)
	Once every two weeks (1)	Once at the end of each cycle (1)
	Once every week at least (1)	Two or three times (1)
		Once per semester (1)

In the MAG workshop, 6/11 gave answers on the pre-workshop questionnaire, which indicate frequency in practicing OPS. However, 3/11 gave answers which indicate

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that they do not frequently ask their students to give oral presentations, and two teachers

decided not to answer this question. Answers are shown in Table 4 below.

Table 4: MAG workshop: Teachers' responses to item 27

n=11	Frequently	Not frequently
b) How often?	Quiet often (2)	Once a semester (2)
	Once or twice a week (1)	Monthly (1)
	Once a week (1)	
	Most of the time whenever its possible (1)	
	On-going (1)	

The next item was included to determine the types of activities teachers conduct in

their classrooms. Teachers chose from a list of oral presentation activities: 'projects',

'summarizing', 'storytelling', 'oral book reports', and 'speeches'. The last option was

'other', which allowed teachers to mention any other types of activities that they held in

their classrooms. It is important to note that respondents were not limited to one answer.

Figure 3 shows results of the TA workshop. The option 'projects' was ticked 10 times and

'summaries' 9 times. On the other hand, 'story telling' was ticked 5 times, 'oral book

reports' 6 times, and finally, the options 'giving a speech' and 'other' were ticked 4 times

each. Figure 4 shows results of the MAG school workshop. The option 'summaries' was

ticked 8 times, while 'projects' and 'story telling' were ticked 5 times each, 'giving a

speech' 3 times, 'oral book reports' 2 times, and 'other' 4 times. It is not surprising that

the option 'giving a speech' received a small number of replies. Based on the discussion

that took place during workshops, it appeared that giving speeches is not a prevailing

activity as opposed to 'projects.' However, the majority look at projects as an end result activity, usually assigned for summative assessments.
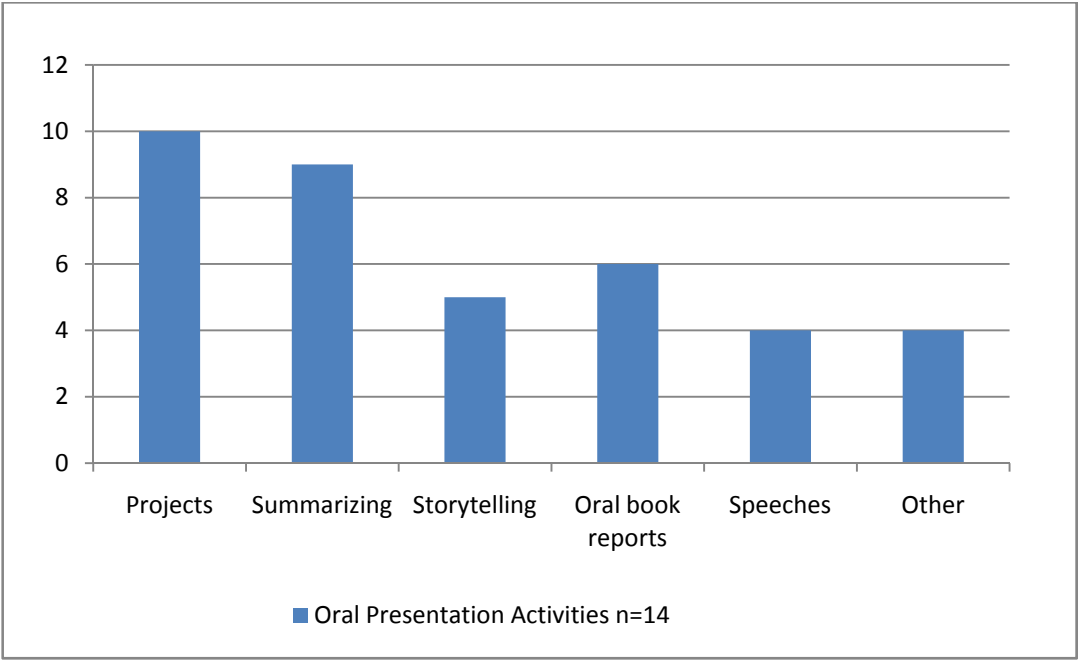
Figure 1: TA Workshops: Oral Presentation Skills Activities Held in ESL Classrooms
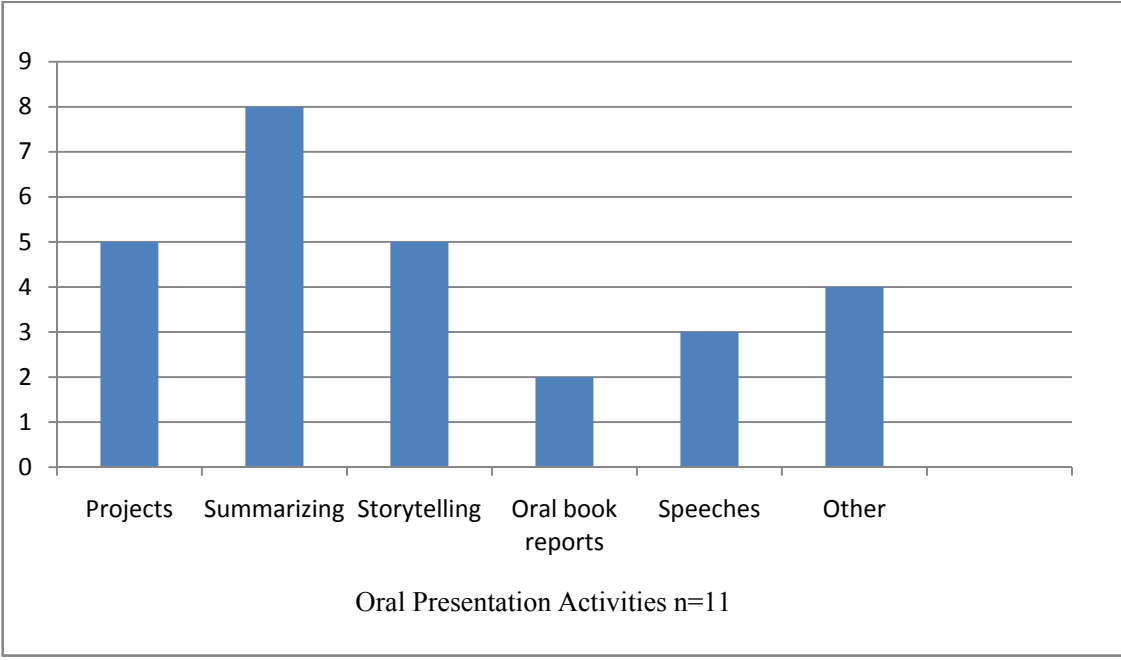
Figure 2: MAG Workshop: OPS Activities Held in ESL Classrooms

In my presentation, I touched upon certain issues pertaining to my research questions, in order to elicit data from the audience. Since I discussed performance activities and linguistically structured activities, I was able to elicit responses that show how teachers perceive these activities and whether or not they conduct activities in their classrooms. This data analysis highlighted some of the teachers' aims of shifting their focus from structured speaking activities to performance-based activities. Input from workshops suggested an emphasis on the teachers' part towards communicative performance activities. A very important part of my presentations focused on the following key practices: performance-based activities, communicative language learning, task-based learning, and project-based activities (see Slide Number 7 in Appendix A). When discussing the teaching of the four language skills, teachers explained that they placed less emphasis on speaking skills and more on other related language skills, for example, writing and reading. The main reason they gave for this was that the assigned textbooks and curriculum did not include as many speaking activities as writing and reading exercises.

Item 9, "I find teaching students how to use vocabulary and grammar more important than teaching oral presentation skills", was answered in the negative by the majority of respondents. 7/11 disagreed, 2/11 strongly disagreed, and 2/11 agreed in the MAG school. As for TA workshops, 9/14 disagreed and 1/14 strongly disagreed, 2/14 strongly agreed, and 2/14 agreed. Responses indicate that teaching OPS is as necessary as teaching other language specific issues, e.g. vocabulary and grammar.

On reaching slide 10 (see Appendix A) in my presentation, I explained in my presentation three elements related to feedback: language, content and style. Some

teachers in the MAG workshop expressed emphasis on content rather than language and style. They explained that instead of pointing out students' language errors, they preferred to pay more attention to content. In my journal, I noted: "a teacher focuses on the extent her students demonstrate understanding of the relevant aspects of the topic presented". Attendees were less responsive, however, during the Sharjah TESOL Arabia chapter. They were listening much more than interacting. I attempted to explain to them my point regarding language and content; however, there was little data elicted regarding their perceptions. As I questioned their views regarding the pointing out of language errors, teachers seemed to have some understanding of why this element of feedback is important. In contrast, participants in the MAG workshop provided input throughout my presentations. A teacher from the MAG school said: "No way. Let the students speak freely." Another teacher suggested noting down the mistakes and pointing them out to students at a later stage. In my journal, under Dubai TA section, I wrote, "some teachers from the Dubai TA

workshop give feedback on language by displaying lists of grammatical mistakes on the notice board." This teacher explained that students would become more aware of the mistakes and would value the opportunity to review the list as a group. According to Goulden (1998), if language errors are pointed out directly, students tend to correct their language errors only temporarily and eventually go back to using them in a short time. Thus, this teacher's idea to display errors may give students more indirect exposure.

As I discussed the issue of feedback, I explained the differences between content, language and style, and also how the three elements intertwine. In an attempt to learn which of the three elements teachers emphasize, I asked my audience during the workshops to rank three items language, content, and style from 1 to 3 based on their importance. Responses from both the TA and MAG workshops showed how teachers look at feedback from different perspectives; according to the students' language needs and learning styles. Thus, it is understandable that teachers would have different objectives with regards to the three elements of feedback: style, content, and language. In my journal, I noted that "teachers in the MAG school give feedback on the very surface level; they require students to produce L2 with focus on specific styles regardless to the language errors." The teachers indicated that the students' proficiency level in this governmental school is below the expected level. Digging more in this respect, I asked in the pre-workshop questionnaire if "teachers need to ignore language errors and focus on content in students' oral presentations" (item 8). The majority in the MAG school agreed; 4/11 strongly agreed 3/11 agreed, while 4/11 disagreed. In general, results showed a preference to ignore language errors and focus on specific styles instead.

Also, the majority in the TA workshops agreed on item 8; 3/14 strongly agreed, 5/14 agreed, 3/14 disagreed, 2/14 strongly disagreed, and 1/14 decided not to provide a response. It is understandable that the variety in answers is because respondents had students from different schools and different levels. When I discussed the issue of content, I backed my talk with the literature on topic choice. I explained the importance of giving feedback to students on what they choose as their topics. From the MAG workshop, teachers explained that topic relevancy is their main focus with regards to feedback on content. According to the literature, topic and content are essential areas in the criteria of assessment. Goulden (1998) reminds teachers to pay attention to the fact that students tend "to play safe by choosing the topic they are most familiar with" (p. 47).

Practice on Giving Feedback on NVC

Non verbal communication tools, such as gestures, body language, and eye contact "have functions, which as with language, need to be taught along with other forms" (Darn, 2004). Through the workshops, I found out that the majority of teachers emphasize some aspects whilst teaching, but they do so unconsciously. Given the importance of oral presentation skills, I explained to my audience how non-verbal communication is inseparable from these skills. As Darn (2004) points out, "[non-verbal communication] needs to be taught and practiced situationally, in the right contexts."

In the workshops, I distributed worksheets to foster teachers' reflective thinking on their students' use of non-verbal communication (see Appendix F). However, this worksheet was used only as a tool to clarify my approach to the topic. Also, in the interviews, teachers were asked specifically about their knowledge of non-verbal

communication, both before and after the workshop. In the second section of the pre-workshop questionnaire, I attempted to determine whether teachers emphasized non-verbal communication or not, and whether or not they emphasized it when providing feedback. Items 1-3 and 5 looked at the following non-verbal indicators in order: position, body movements, eye-contact, and voice. The majority of teachers (9/11) thought they always encourage their students to stand in front of the class during speaking activities, and 2/11 thought they usually do so (item 14). For item15, nobody selected always regarding body language. In fact, 4/11 thought they never did so, 4/11 believed that they sometimes comment on the students' body language, and 3/11 thought they usually do so. Responses from the MAG school workshop revealed that teachers tend to ignore body movements, as opposed to the other non-verbal signals.

In response to item 16, "when students express their opinions I ask them to direct their eye-contact to their peers", the responses were split into equal numbers between always and usually. 4/11 teachers chose always and 4/11 chose usually. However, 2/11 thought they sometimes do so, and only one teacher believed that he never gave comments on eye-contact. As for the element of voice, I explained in item18 that feedback involves volume (too high or too low) and rate of speech (too fast or too slow). 4/11 believed they always comment on their students' voice, 3/11 thought they usually do so, and 3/11 thought they sometimes do so. However, one respondent chose not to answer this question. The results are shown in Figure 3..
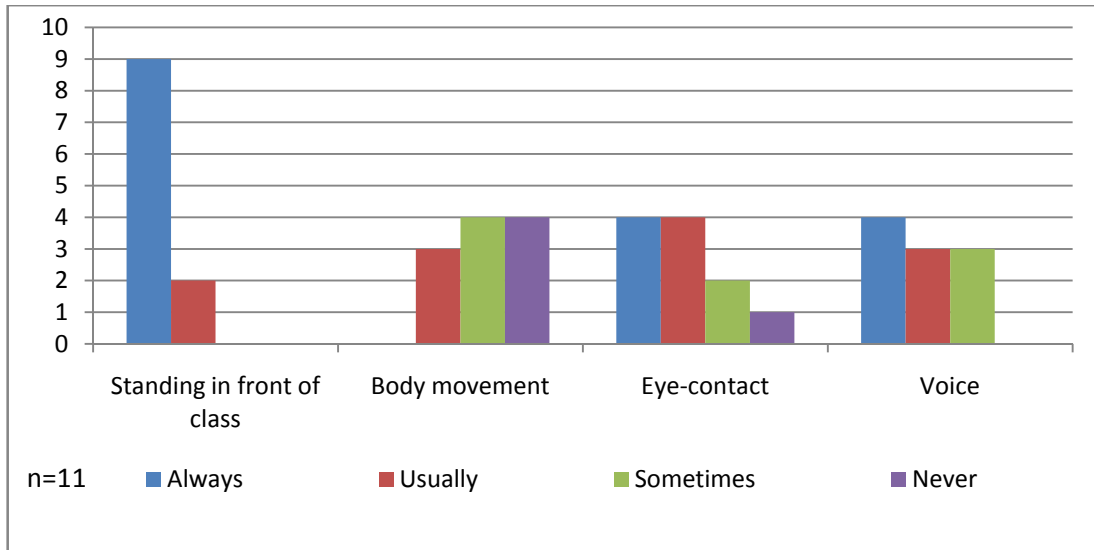
Figure 3: MAG Teachers' Responses to Items on the Use of Non-verbal Indicators

In the TA workshop, half of the teachers (7/14) believed that they always encourage their students to stand in front of the class when speaking activities are held in class. 6/14 thought they usually do so, and one teacher responded with sometimes (Question 14). Similar to the MAG school, the majority of teachers tended to ignore feedback on body movements—8/14 believed that they sometimes comment on their students' body movements. However, 3/14 believed they always do so, and 1/14 believed that he/she usually does so, and 2/14 thought they never do so (Question15). In response to item16 that dealt with eye-contact, 6/14 thought they always ask students to direct their eye-contact to their peers, 3/14 thought they usually do so, 4/14 thought they sometimes do so, and one person thought that he/she never does so. For item18, "I comment on students' voice when giving feedback", responses were split equally: 5/14 chose always, 5/14 chose usually, and 4/14 thought they sometimes do so. Figure 4 below shows the results.

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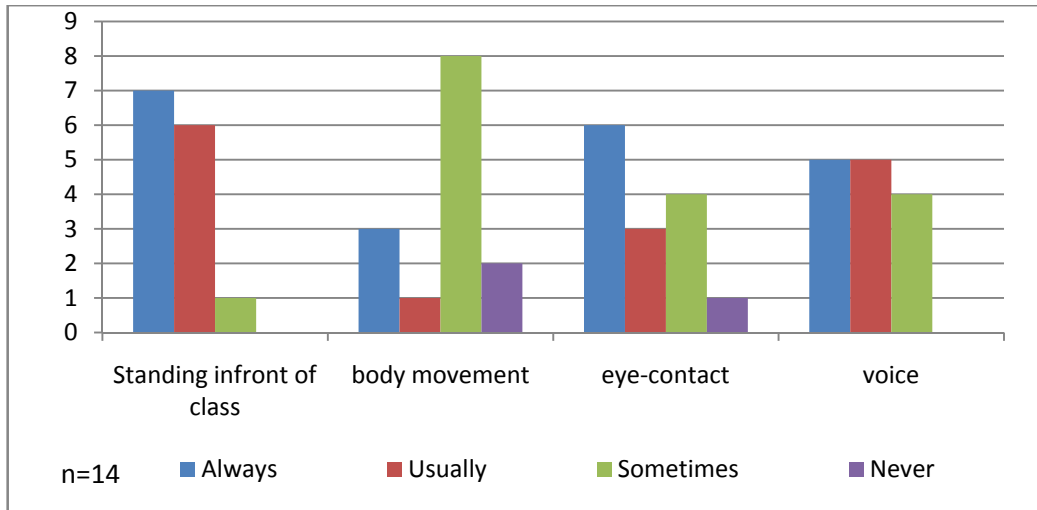
Figure 4: TA Teachers' Responses to Items on the Use of Non-verbal Indicators

Input from post-workshop questionnaire, workshops, and interviews helped answer the second research question. With a focus on teachers' attitudes towards the usefulness of NVC, results obtained confirmed the possibility of teaching NVC in the ESL classroom. This is evident from the activities practiced during the workshops. They had an impact on teachers' questions and fostered interactive discussions. According to Darn (2004):

> It is well known that speech is only one part of communication, yet teachers often forget about or underestimate the importance of non-verbal communication in their own and their students' performance. (p. 1)

One of the major findings, gathered from the pre-workshop questionnaire, regarding NVC is that teachers looked mainly at two signals: voice and eye-contact. Yet, results from this questionnaire indicated that most teachers did not focus on body language or gestures. Only 3/14 teachers thought that they always comment on the students' body movements while speaking, 1/14 thought they usually do so, and 3/14 thought they never look into body language. Whereas the majority, 8/14, though that they

sometimes point to the students' body language when giving feedback. Similarly in the MAG workshop, no teachers selected always for this item, and only 3/11 believed that they usually comment on body movements. On the other hand, 6/14 thought they always comment on eye-contact, and 3/14 thought they usually do so. Also, in the MAG workshop, 4/11 thought they comment on students' voice, and 4/11 thought they usually do so. Eventually, after demonstrating types of distracting mannerisms and practicing some activities related to body language, teachers started to accept this aspect as an informative and useful means of clarifying and emphasizing parts of speech.

Results of this data collection reveal two main results: First, the participants reported that they indirectly teach their students strategies for communicating non-verbally, while ignoring the use of gestures and body movement. Enright (1986) emphasizes the role of non-verbal communication in facilitating L2 input to learners. She points to the act of "modelling" (p. 135) non-verbal signals, as a way to explain meanings of L2 lexical items. Second, most teachers do not include criteria on the use of non-verbal signals in their rubrics. Although they acknowledge the importance of teaching it, very few teachers demonstrate experience in applying non-verbal communication in their criteria of OPS assessment.

Participants' responses from workshops and interviews also indicated similar results. When interviewed, teachers were asked which element is the most important for students: eye contact, voice, posture, or body language, Teachers' responses pointed to voice and eye-contact more than body language. One teacher said, "I think the three elements are of great importance, especially voice." Another teacher explained, "Voice is the most important because it attracts students' attention; they stop talking and listen.

Eye-contact comes second and so students have to face the audience and establish contact." Another teacher mentioned "eye-contact is an important factor for its role in demonstrating respect and care to others." This teacher, however, confirmed that voice is also important. He said, "Voice is essential and complementary to the theme."

Teachers were engaged in the topic during the workshop, when the element of style was explained (Slides 13-15), and some participants took notes. In my discussion of this section, I interacted with the audience and asked them to rank, according to importance, the non-verbal signals of eye-contact, voice, and body language. Responses indicated that eye-contact and voice were the most important, followed by body language.

In order to collect data from workshops, I engaged the audience in a practical activity about non-verbal communication. One teacher from each workshop volunteered to speak for 2-3 minutes, while the audience filled in evaluation rubrics. From this activity, I was able to elicit teachers' attitudes towards fostering non-verbal communication practices in the ESL classroom. This section helped answer my first research question, "To what extent is implementing oral presentation skills and nonverbal communication possible in UAE?" From the teachers' comment throughout the workshop, I noticed that it was new for many teachers to give focused instruction on NVC in their ESL classrooms. In the Dubai chapter, only one teacher was very knowledgeable about giving her students instruction and feedback on the non-verbal indicators: body language, eye-contact, voice, and proximity. With guidance and clear instructions, all participants were able to participate in the activity.

Results from interviews

In order to obtain further data regarding the first research question, it was important to find out how teachers felt about teaching OPS and NVC, and to understand their overall impression regarding their students' language abilities. The first two interview questions attempted to determine just that. In response to Question One from the interview "What is your overall impression of your students' speaking and oral presentations abilities?", one teacher in the MAG school mentioned, "We have mixed ability classes where some students are really capable of independent learning and presentation skills, and some others lack such abilities and need practice." Another teacher from the MAG school emphasized the same problem pointing out that only "50-60% of the students try to speak English." Another male teacher stated, "Students in the Science section are able and have potential, while the Arts students remain very weak and require a lot of work." He continued, "I feel happy because students try to do their best in order to speak without feeling embarrassed." Another interviewed teacher said:

> I have problems with the local students, who choose to remain quiet and not to speak. Students are passive, they don't care because they're not going to be tested in these skills. Even their parents, do not care….so how would they care?

In response to Question 2 from the interview, "Reflect about your teaching practices, how do you feel about implementing focused teaching on Oral Presentations and Non-Verbal techniques ?", there was no consistency in the responses, and each participant responded according to his own perception. One of the interviewed teachers in the MAG said: "I implement focused teaching at the beginning of the school year and train students to use some non-verbal communication skills, like looking at the audience,

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raising their voice, and moving as needed." Another teacher stated that, "they are really important to guide students for successful presentations." One teacher said, "Yes, of course. They are very important to encourage them to speak." She also added, "We use simple books that depend on pictures and stories and events."

Two findings were revealed from the teachers' responses to this question. First, teachers had different definitions for the term 'oral presentations.' Second, teachers had different perceptions of the purpose of oral presentations. The following are results of the responses to Question 2 from the interview: One teacher mentioned activities he conceived as oral presentations, such as storytelling and developing arguments. In the interviews, some teachers talked openly about their current practice; they pointed out to some obstacles, such as time and syllabus. They explained that they were required to cover all activities in each unit, which meant that there was not enough time for them to reinforce other activities. Other teachers seemed more positive about their experiences. One teacher described his approach to teaching speaking; he stated the objectives to students clearly and then gave them simple controlled activities. However, these activities did not go beyond memorizing pre-fabricated chunks of language.

Responses to Question 3 in the interview, "How did you view non-verbal communication before the workshop? What do you think now?," generally can be seen addressing the first research question "How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentations and non verbal communication?" One of the interviewed teachers mentioned, "I train students to use some non-verbal communication skills, like looking at the audience, raising their voice and moving as needed. I use some of them, not all, and I think there should be a lot of research and workshops to help teachers deal professionally

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with these issues." Another teacher said, "I really found non verbal communication very important in oral presentations. Now, I am willing to stress on it more in my teaching." A third interviewed teacher stated, "I have been thinking that it is very important to teach this kind of communication, but we are not free to use our own way of teaching."

Thus, an analysis of the data collected to answer the first research question, "How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentation and non-verbal communication?" revealed that non-verbal communication is not new to teachers. However, teaching it in an explicit way is indeed worth their consideration. Also, further research on the use of body language and gestures in ESL communication is recommended by the teachers. In general, teachers emphasize OPS as assessment at the end of an academic term or a chapter. Further analysis revealed that teachers relate proficiency level to the type of feedback given on OPS. Input from workshops showed that it is more effective to give learners with low proficiency holistic feedback, on the overall L2 production. In general, teachers of low achievers focus on content and message and avoid pointing out language errors. As for teachers of intermediate learners, their feedback is more analytical with focus on three elements of style, content, and language.

Teachers' Attitudes Towards Teaching OPS and NVC

In order to collect further data from the pre and post-workshop questionnaire regarding the second research question, "to what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non-verbal communication techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?", I asked the teachers about their views regarding the benefits of OPS and NVC. Items 20, 21, and 26 (post) were designed in attempt to determine the teachers'

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attitudes towards the advantages of OPS. As for items 12 (pre), 23, and 25 (post), they

were designed to determine the teachers' attitudes towards the advantages of NVC. The

results are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: MAG teachers' responses to Items 12, 23, and 25

	Questions	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/A
12	I would like to learn more about how non-verbal communication instruction improves English learning.	2	8	1	0	0
		Yes	No	Comment		
23.	Do you think focusing on non-verbal communication will add to the learners' speaking abilities?	11	0	No comments		
25.	Did you have experience and knowledge in teaching non-verbal communication techniques before this workshop?	10	1	No comments		

It turned out that the majority of the respondents, 2/11 strongly agreed and 8/11

agreed that they would actually like to learn how NVC instruction improves English

learning (Question 12) There was one strongly disagree response to this question. When

asked if teachers think focusing on NVC will add to their learners' speaking abilities, all

respondents replied in the affirmative (Question 23). Moreover, 10/11 teachers said that

they had experience in teaching NVC techniques before this workshop and only one

teacher indicated a lack of experience in this field. As for the TA workshop, responses

were very similar. All teachers replied positively to item12, 4/14 strongly agreed and

10/14 agreed. Also, the majority of teachers answered with 'yes' when asked if they think

focusing on NVC will add to the learners' speaking abilities (12/14). It is worth noting

that two respondents didn't provide answers to this question. As for the teachers'

experience in teaching NVC techniques from before, 9/14 responded with 'yes', 4/14

responded with 'no', and one participant decided not to give an answer (Question 25). For

item 23, 12/14 responded in the affirmative, and 2/14 didn't give reply. Results are shown

in Table 6 below.

Table 6: TA teachers' responses to Items 12, 23, and 25

	Items	Strongly agree	Agree	Strongly disagree	Disagree	N/A
12	I would like to learn more about how non-verbal communication instruction improves English learning.	4	10			
		Yes	No	Comment		
	23. Do you think focusing on non-verbal communication will add to the learners' speaking abilities?	12		No comments		
	25. Did you have experience and knowledge in teaching non-verbal communication techniques before this workshop?	9	4	No comments		

All teachers responded in the affirmative to items 20, 21, and 26. 11/11 in the

MAG workshop and 14/14 in the TA workshops thought oral presentation skills might

improve their students' confidence (Question 20). All teachers who participated in the

study thought their students would speak with more facility and without inappropriate

hesitation if they were to practice giving oral presentations (Question 21). Finally, all

teachers expressed a favorable overall impression on OPS instruction (11/11 in MAG and

14/14 in the TA workshops). The teachers' comments, given in the space provided for

item 23, indicated positive attitudes by secondary and high school teachers. A teacher

from the MAG school wrote," This will encourage shy students." Another teacher wrote, "To talk in front of the community, it is important to have self-confidence". With regards to item 21, "Do you think students would speak with more facility and without inappropriate hesitation if they practice giving oral presentations?", one teacher commented, "Training leads students to talk more". Another wrote, "We are after fluency, not accuracy".

It's worthwhile to mention that during the process of data collection, there was a need for further explanation and elaboration from my side about fluency practice. For example, in the governmental school where I gave my workshop, teachers expressed an interest in and a need to learn more about the issue of hesitation in speech. I elaborated on this point and gave examples of other terms, such as 'pause-fillers' and 'vocalized pauses'. I also showed how teachers can help learners punctuate their speech, by giving appropriate lengths of pause for commas and full stops. In TESOL Arabia workshops, some teachers were busy taking notes and others acknowledged this issue. Although some participants were aware of this issue, their input revealed that they wanted to learn more. One of the attendees in TA Sharjah workshop commented, "I have an idea about pauses, but never had the chance to put it together this way to serve students." Another teacher expressed her interest when demonstrating an activity on fluency practice and said, "I never thought of it this way." As well, one teacher even suggested recording and transcribing students' speeches as a method to raise their awareness about hesitation. This agrees with the literature presented in this field. Henning (2000) explains how videotaping presentations allows students to view their contribution and flaws.

Beliefs about Proficiency Level and Age of Instruction

Apart from the teachers' personal feelings and attitudes towards OPS instruction, I also attempted to get a sense of the teachers' view regarding the appropriate age and level of instruction at which teachers can give focused OPS and NVC instruction. Item 10 (pre) focused on middle-school and item19 (post) asked about the primary school level. Teachers' responses to item19 were all in the affirmative for the MAG and the TA workshops. In response to item 10, "Students' language level in middle school is suitable for oral presentation instruction", 1/11 strongly agreed, 5/11 agreed, 3/11 disagreed, and 2/11 disagreed. Data from the workshop revealed that students are very weak in speaking across all high school grades: 10, 11, and 12. In the reflective journal, I wrote, "three grade 12 teachers strongly believe that this is the suitable level for oral presentation instruction." It is also noted that "grade 10 and 11 teachers feel that students can benefit from oral presentations activities by increasing their confidence and getting adapted to standing in front the class." Given the MAG teachers' negative outlook at their students' speaking skills, it is not surprising that five teachers did not agree with item 10 "Students' language level in middle school is suitable for oral presentation instruction."

From the interviews, the teachers highlighted the difference between the students' literacy skills and presentational skills. The majority of the teachers agreed that learners have high academic proficiency and limited presentation skills. For some researchers, reading and writing skills are pre-requisites for oral presentation skills; learners are required to be competent in literacy skills before they proceed to practicing oral presentations skills (Winkyi, Bunyakarate, & Unthaisangchai, 1998; Murphy, 1991).

Discussion from the workshop revealed that some teachers had a positive outlook towards proficient learners, believing that middle school can be suitable for them to receive oral presentation instruction. Responses to item 10 in the pre-workshop questionnaire showed that 1/14 strongly agreed, 4/14 agreed, 5/14 disagreed, 1/14 strongly disagreed, and 3/14 didn't provide answers. The responses were split almost equally into two groups with opposing views. Because the teachers come from different schools and teach a variety of levels, it was not easy to detect a clear-cut explanation for any of the given results. However, all teachers responded in the affirmative to item19, "Do you believe oral presentation skills and nonverbal communication should be taught for grade five and six students?". A space was provided for teachers' comments. Some of these comments were, " I think it should be taught in all classes"," Lets train them early, to build up their skills as early as possible", " It can be done, but in a more simple method", and " It will be of greatest help to them when they join the university."

More data from the teacher's discussion during the workshop illustrated further opinions about the age of instruction. The audience in the Dubai TA workshop brought up the issue of stage fright, and how training in early years may help overcome this hurdle. One primary teacher explained how practice can begin during the primary years. Some teachers elaborated and mentioned that simple performance activities, such as show-and-tell can set the stage for oral presentation skills practice. The prevailing view in both the TA and the MAG workshop was with teaching oral presentation skills at primary levels. Research in this field argues in favour of implementing this type of instruction as early as possible, even though learners may have a low proficiency level (Brown, 2000).

In general, the MAG teachers expressed negative impressions regarding the learners' speaking proficiency. First, most teachers pointed to the differentiation needed because of the students' different speaking abilities. Second, teachers' input revealed that only a minority of learners had significant language proficiency, and that the majority had limited proficiency in their overall language. Third, some teachers believed that middle school could be a good age for basic practice, but not for focused teaching. They explained that the UAE Ministry of Education requires oral presentations strictly in the curriculum of grade twelve.

Beliefs about Challenges in Teaching OPS and NVC

To collect further data for my second research question, "To what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentation and non-verbal communication teaching techniques possible in ESL classes in the UAE?", I investigated the teachers' opinions about three main factors which may possibly promote their implementation: training, material, and time. For the last item on the post-workshop questionnaire, "If you wanted to focus on teaching oral presentation skills with your classes, what would help you to do this?" teachers were asked to answer in a multiple choice format (item 27). The following options were given: more time, training, new material, support from your school, and other. For the last option 'other', some of the answers were 'books', 'films', 'tapes', and 'pictures'. (See Figures 7 and 8)
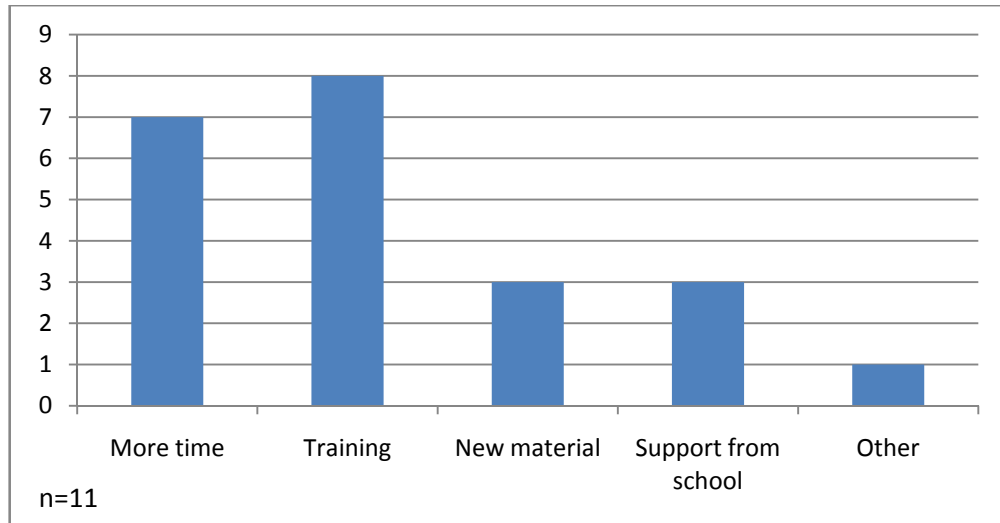
Figure 5: MAG Workshop: Factors that May Help Teachers Implement Oral Presentation
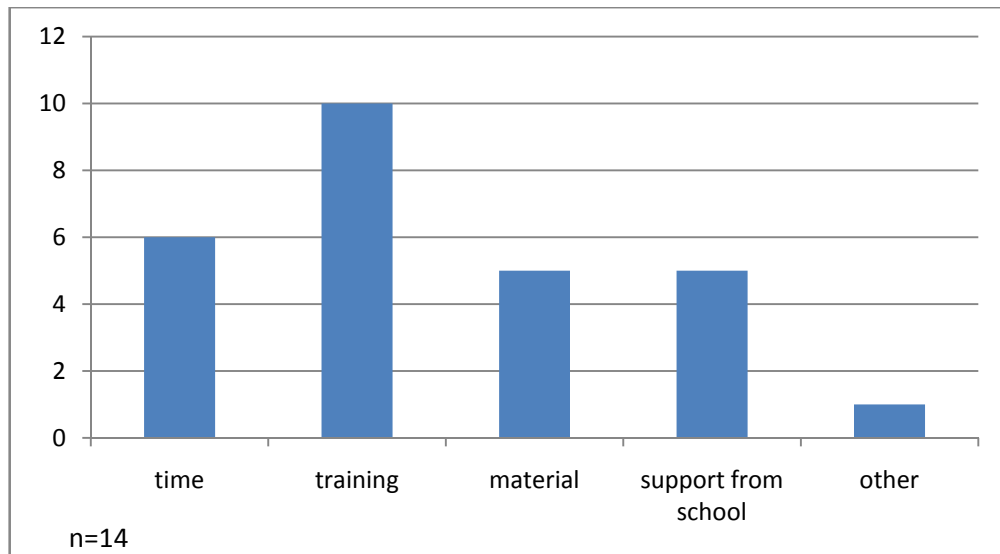
Activities

Figure 6: TA Workshop: Factors that May Help Teachers Implement Oral Presentation

Activities (TA)

With regards to item 27, it is important to note that respondents were allowed to

choose more than one option. Also, not all teachers responded to this question. In item 27,

the factor 'training' was the most selected in both contexts, followed by the factor 'time'.

Training was selected 10 times in the TA workshops and 8 times in the MAG workshop.

'Time' was selected 7 times in the MAG workshop and 6 times in the TA workshop. As

for the options 'material' and 'support from school', they received an equal number of

selections. In the TA workshop, both options were selected 5 times, whereas in the MAG

workshop 3 times. Finally, the option 'other' was selected once.

Several items on the pre and post-workshop questionnaire were designed to elicit

responses regarding the same main factors: time, material, and training. Item 17 (pre) is

related to time, item 11 (pre) asked about material, and item 22 (post) about training (see

Tables 7 and 8 below).

Table 7: MAG Workshop: Teachers' Responses to Items 17, 11, and 22

	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	N/A
17	There is not enough time available in the curriculum to teach oral presentation skills	4	1	3	2	1
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
11.	It is difficult to teach oral presentation skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus.	1	5	1	3	1
		Yes	No			
22. Do you think training/workshops on teaching presentation skills would help English teachers in your school?		11	0			

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Table 8: TA Workshop: Teachers' Responses to Items 17, 11, and 22

	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	N/A
17	There is not enough time available in the curriculum to teach oral presentation skills	3	5	5	1	
		Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	N/A
11.	It is difficult to teach oral presentation skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus.	4	4	4	2	
		Yes		No		
22. Do you think training/workshops on teaching presentation skills would help English teachers in your school?		14				

As for training, all participants responded in the affirmative, 14/14 and 11/11 (Question 22). Responses to item 17 show that time is an obstacle for most teachers when holding activities on OPS. In the MAG workshop, 4/11 thought there is not always enough time in the curriculum to teach OPS, 1/11 thought there is not usually enough time, 3/11 believed that sometimes there is not enough time, while 2/11 have chosen the option "never." It is worth noting that the 11th teacher didn't provide a response. In the TA workshops, 3/14 selected "always", 5/14 "usually", 5/14 "sometimes", and only 1/14 chose "never" (Results are shown in Tables 7 & 8).

When the challenges of teaching oral presentation skills were discussed in the workshops (Slide 22), I asked the audience if they had any particular concerns about these issues in terms of materials, training, time, and students' learning styles. Time and the number of students in the class seemed to be the major issues for teachers in both contexts. In her MA Thesis "Integrating Oral Communication skills into the English

Curriculum in Dubai Schools", Salari (2006) mentions that most teachers have serious

reservations about adopting speaking activities in their classroom. She points out that

"most teachers firmly held the belief that there should be a sufficient time given" (p. 54)

in order to include the teaching of speaking skills within their mandated teaching

objectives. One teacher in the MAG workshop explained to me, "There is a lot to cover

according to our lesson plans, and therefore no time for students' presentations." Another

teacher inquired, "How can we give a chance for everybody to speak in one lesson?" I

answered the teachers' questions by explaining the strategy of "small feedback groups"

(Slide 23): First, students are put into groups of four or five and each group chooses one

speaker. Second, students choose criteria to evaluate their speaker. For example, one

person chooses eye-contact, another might be the timer, the third can look at voice or

body language, etc. Finally, one student gives a small presentation for his own group

only. This kind of setting can be established weekly, and the roles would be rotated

between students including the role of the speaker. This method, as discussed by

Henning (2000), received a lot of interest from teachers. In fact, teachers conceived it as a

way to cater to the students' different abilities. One teacher said, "I can let the high

proficient students start speaking and demonstrate to encourage their peers."

  With regards to item11, which says that "It is difficult to teach oral presentation

skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus", 1/11of the MAG participants strongly

agreed and 5/11 agreed; whereas 1/11 disagreed and 3/11 disagreed. As for the TA

workshops, 4/14 strongly agreed and 4/14 strongly agreed that because the skills do not

appear in the syllabus, it is difficult to teach OPS. More than 50% of participants, in both

the MAG and TA workshops, indicated that it is difficult to teach OPS. since it doesn't

appear in the syllabus. As Darn (2005) states," There is a singular lack of material for the teacher which focuses on this aspect of communication." With this, he suggests a list of techniques, which I shared in the workshop. Darn (2005) says,

- Learners discuss the meaning of gestures and expressions (either demonstrated by the teacher, from pictures, or from existing published materials. This is particularly effective with multilingual classes.
- Learners watch a video clip without sound, then discuss and write the dialogue.
- Learners act out a dialogue using gesture and expression only

In the discussion on material throughout the workshops, teacher reactions showed that support material is insufficient for teachers in order to teach oral presentation skills. One male teacher in the MAG school illustrated that they needed ideas or lists of activities to follow from the textbook. He explained that this would make the teaching much easier than when teachers need to come up with activities on their own. Another teacher in the same workshop explained that the textbook was filled with very structured speaking activities, but not performance-based ones. Digging more into this aspect, I displayed some material which I had developed for non-verbal communication teaching. Also, I distributed some samples of existing published materials. As a result, the majority of teachers expressed interest in getting a copy for classroom practice. In the Dubai TA chapter, there was an overwhelming interest in getting full details about the source. Some teachers explained how such materials may help them implement more focused instruction in this respect.

Thus, the analysis of the data collected to answer research question 2 shows that the implementation of focused oral presentation and non-verbal teaching techniques is

possible in ESL classrooms in the UAE. Teachers want to learn more about NVC

teaching techniques to improve their ESL teaching. Also, teachers are aware that OPS and

NVC should be taught to young learners. They acknowledge the role of OPS in improving

the students' speaking ability. Moreover, most teachers believe that proficient learners

would benefit from receiving focused teaching of oral presentation and non-verbal

teaching techniques. As a result, most teachers find that having more time in the

curriculum and further training would help in focusing their teaching on OPS and NVC.

CHAPTER FIVE

CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

Summary of Findings

This study was carried out to investigate how ESL teachers teach oral presentation

skills and non verbal communication techniques in their classrooms as well as to find out

the extent to which implementing focused oral presentations and non verbal

communication instruction is possible in ESL classrooms in the UAE. Findings from

workshops, interviews, and questionnaires contributed to understanding the teachers'

perception towards their teaching of OPS and NVC, as well as the teachers' attitudes

towards their students' language abilities, the appropriate age of instruction, and the

usefulness of teaching NVC and OPS.

Generally, all participants agreed that oral presentation skills and nonverbal

communication are important elements in ESL teaching. The purpose for separating the

groups was to target variance between audience from public school only (MAG) and ones

from private and public school sectors (TA). There was very little variance between

participants in both the TA and MAG workshops. However, there was a slight difference

in terms of knowledge and experience within each group. In the MAG workshop, for

example, some teachers were more knowledgeable about developing rubrics than others.

Also, a few participants in the TA workshops reflected knowledge and experience in non-

verbal communication.

Teachers interested in emphasizing oral presentation skills illustrated one

common misconception as to what constitutes an oral presentation. First, results obtained

from both the TA and MAG workshops, interviews, and questionnaires indicate that

teachers do, in fact, hold activities on OPS on their classes although they are not aware of doing so. They gave some examples of oral performance activities, which they do not relate or perceive as part of oral presentation skills. Such activities consist of memorizing short, fabricated chunks of speech or elaborating individually in free discussions. Nevertheless, teachers did not refer to these activities as being part of teaching OPS. Brown (2004) points out several activities, which can be practised as oral presentations, such as telling stories, sharing poems, giving prepared talks, or even making classroom announcements.

Second, results indicate that oral presentation skills are usually implemented at the end of units or terms, and not as an on-going process throughout the teaching of a unit. The evidence for this claim is revealed when teachers were asked how often they hold oral presentations activities. Most responses were "at the end of semester", "at the end of each chapter", or "on final projects". In fact, oral presentations can be implemented at the beginning of a lesson or as part of an ongoing process throughout the term. Third, in the workshops, most teachers looked at oral presentations as a class-wide activity. Very few teachers from both the MAG and TA workshops were aware of small group options. Very few participants had experience in having students present in small groups. As noted in the literature, Henning (2000) considers small feedback groups to be a practical way to boost students' confidence and a way to encourage shy individuals to speak.

Nevertheless, results on how teachers give feedback correspond with what is available in the literature. There was no consistency in the teachers' responses on giving feedback. Many teachers agreed that they tend to ignore language errors and focus instead on content. However, some teachers expressed a preference towards focusing on grammar

mistakes as well as the students' style of delivery. From the workshop and interviews, this view can be attributed to a number of reasons, such as the teachers' personal approach and/or the teachers' own personal judgments about their students' language levels and abilities. Young (1998) points out to the benefits of giving evaluations on OPS as a way to differentiate between learners' abilities and proficiency.

In response to the first research question, "How do ESL teachers in the UAE teach oral presentations and non-verbal communication?" results indicate that the main objective for most teachers is to improve the learners' fluency. It is a prevailing tendency for many teachers that oral presentations are used as part of summative assessment, at the end of units, rather than being part of on-going formative assessments. Results also indicate that teaching vocabulary and grammar is generally addressed through writing and rarely through oral fluency practice. According to many teachers in the TA workshops, it is more effective to give detailed feedback to students with high language proficiency. Researchers indicate that analytical feedback is effective for intermediate and advanced ESL learners (Brown, 2004; Luoma, 2004; Underhill, 2000). However, the MAG teachers perceived students' presentations holistically, since oral performance is considered a skill in which most of the students are very weak. This differentiation in terms of feedback agrees with the literature as well.

As to the second research question "to what extent is the implementation of focused oral presentations and non-verbal communication techniques possible in the ESL classes in UAE?", results indicate that it is possible to implement focused OPS and NVC teaching techniques to high school students, while allowing practice and direct exposure to these skills to primary and middle-school students. Although teachers have sufficient

knowledge regarding NVC, further research and training is required to improve their practice and guarantee the achievement of successful focused NVC techniques in their ESL classrooms.

Implications of the Study

In order for teachers to better be prepared to face the intricacies of a speaking classroom, further training and professional development events need to be considered throughout the academic year. At the end of the workshop, many teachers expressed an interest in having more workshops that emphasized NVC instruction in order to improve their classroom practices. Results showed a strong need for expanding knowledge in this field by attending extended professional development events that expose teachers to possible methods of implementing NVC instruction.

Since teachers speak informatively in public in order to teach, this study might encourage teachers to enroll in programs and/or organization that focus on public speaking, following the advice of Coombe, England, and Schmidt (2008). They assert that,

> while there is overlap between teaching and public speaking, the considerable learning curve for an educational leader to become a highly competent public speaker often goes unaddressed when the teacher assumes the role of leader without attentive and systematic focus on the development of the skills set of an effective public speaker. (p.51)

Thus, the TESOL Arabia organization should be looked into as possible venues for training in NVC and OPS. Skills and knowledge reinforced by such programs could

be perhaps strengthening the teaching in ESL classrooms. Presentation skills are rapidly expanding in the education sector, and if teachers wish to prepare their learners for higher education, they must be ready to gain further knowledge in this field.

Also, results indicate that these teachers require support material, in order to be able to implement focused instruction about speaking skills. Hence, this study may give curriculum designers reasons to develop NVC and OPS teaching materials, such as the ones displayed and distributed during the workshop. It is suggested that they take action and include supplementary materials on teaching OPS. Moreover, results indicated that teachers in some schools do not have the opportunity to teach OPS due to the fact that they are constrained to follow a text-based curriculum. If revising the curriculum is impossible, perhaps teachers can take it upon themselves to revise, adapt, and adopt whatever sources they can to guarantee successful teaching to OPS and NVC. Thus, this study is a clear call for the administration to give teachers more flexibility and control in planning and adapting materials from external resources.

Limitation of the Study and Directions for Further Research

There are some limitations to this study, which occurred due to factors I could not control. The first issue was with regards to the small sample size of the participants. The Ministry of Education designated Saturday November 1st, 2008, as a make-up day for governmental schools and teachers were obligated to teach in their schools on that day. This was announced twice on Thursdays just before the TA workshops. The first time, I contacted the Sharjah chapter representative and rescheduled the presentation for another date. Unfortunately, the Ministry of Education again designated a make-up day for

governmental schools on the same rescheduled date. As a result, there was not a big turnout in the number of school teachers. Researchers interested in conducting further studies regarding this methodology should be aware of such conditions. However, as an initial attempt at gathering information about how teachers teach OPS and NVC in ESL classrooms in UAE, this study does provide data that are certainly worthy of attention and is a step for further research in the region. The second issue was with regards to the tight schedule of the events; my two TA workshops were among a list of other workshops taking place during the event. Thus, there was a lack of time to conduct interviews, which happened in both events. A few teachers expressed willingness to be interviewed, but there were other workshops running back to back after my presentation. If this study were to be repeated, it would be beneficial to get a large number of teachers to take part of focused group.

Also, it would have been helpful if I had videotaped or audio taped my workshops. This was, however, not possible because I wanted to respect the UAE community's customs. This is why the researcher journal was a very useful tool for noting all the observations and teachers' comments. Moreover, I would have benefitted more if I audio taped the interviews. I have not done so, inorder not to discourage participants from discussions. The specific group of interviewed teachers were all Arab, non-native speakers of English. Therefore, I was aware that they might become reluctant in providing information if the interviews were audio taped.

Another drawback pertains to the questionnaires. For further studies, I would try to incorporate open-ended questions that would help me collect more data from participants. It would have been more practical to design a few specific open-ended

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questions. This would have helped elicit more data. However, rich discussion took place during workshops, which provided sufficient data regarding my research questions. Also, the teachers' inquiries and comments throughout the presentation helped me determine how ESL teachers teach OPS and NVC in UAE schools.

Conclusion

To conclude, this study gives us a point of departure for further research in this field and specifically in UAE. The importance of presentation skills and non-verbal communication in ESL teaching continues to grow and to impact L2 learners' confidence and fluency. Thus, it is hoped this study can serve as a useful step in gaining more knowledge about the situation of teaching OPS and NVC techniques in UAE classrooms.

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Appendix A. Slideshow Presentation

TESOL Arabia
Dubai Chapter

Oral Presentation Skills In ESL Classrooms

Samah Sabbagh

Outline

Components of Communication
Speaking Activities
 Oral Presentation skills activities
Principles of OPS
Goals
Feedback
Style
Fears and Challenges
Assessment
Discussion and conclusion

Components of Communication

Verbal	Non-verbal
Content	Gestures
Language	Body language
	Facial expressions
	Eye-contact
	Voice

Speaking activities

For beginners	For higher levels
Drills	Performance activities
Rote memorization	Free speaking
Role Plays	Spontaneous talks
Structured Interviews	

Oral Presentation Skills for all levels

□ Perform
□ Practice
□ Construct
□ Talk Spontaneously

Presentation Activities

Giving announcements
Topics related to personal interest
Book report
Speeches and Announcements
Story telling
Telling a poem

(Hennings, 2000;Goulden 1998)

Key Practices

- Performance-based activities
- Project –based learning
- Task-based Learning (TBL)
- Communicative Language Learning (CLL)
- Autonomous Learning

Principles of Oral Presentation Skills Practice
(Butler & Stevens, 1997;Young,1997; Hennings,2000)

- Provides means for developing L2 communication and oral production
- Requires time management skills and organizational skills
- Challenges learners to use language naturally and creatively
- Foster autonomous language learning
- Engages learners in selecting appropriate materials

Goals

- Delivering ideas coherently and logically by including an introduction and a conclusion

- Writing a well organized outline to avoid:
  1-memorization
  2-reading from the original text

- Transforming ideas in to a presentation using visual aids
- Promoting critical thinking, listening, writing, and reading skills   (Lucas, 2007, Barrass 2006, Walters 2000)

Organization and Language

Organization	Language
Preparation	Grammar
Structure	Vocabulary use
Outline	Appropriate use of pauses

Feedback and evaluation

Content	Topic and ideas Introduction, body and conclusion
Language	Correct grammar vocabulary pronunciation
Style	Attitude Non-verbal signals

Style

Voice	Body language
Eye-contact	Gestures
Visual aids	attitude

Voice

Tone | Rate | Volume | Stress
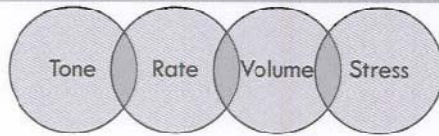
Luoma (1994) pinpoints how variation in pitch, volume, and intonation are essential for oral presentations.

Lucas (2007) refers to voice as an element of sound, not content.

Barnes (1994) reminds teachers to take into consideration intonation, stress, and pitch.

Eye-contact
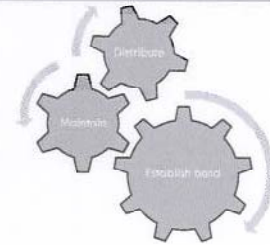
<u>Gestures</u> and body language

Effective	Distracting
□ overcome nervousness	□ Leaning on lectern
□ bring vitality to your speech	□ Tapping with fingers
□ draw pictures in people's mind	□ rocking
	□ Dangling pocket change
	□ Swaying

❑They function as visual aids
❑They help the audience understand our words

Fears and Challenges: native and non-native speakers

(Barnes, 1994;Lucas, 2007)
□ Stage fright
□ Proficiency/abilities
□ Time
□ Undue hesitation or slowness
□ Culture

Assessment

□ Since oral presentation skills are performed and communicated, this requires non-traditional assessment.
□ Assessment needs to go beyond linguistic features positing behaviour and attitude (Dunbar et al.)
□ Assessment must be in terms of a number of behaviours. (Hennings 2000)

<u>Types</u> of assessment

Types of Assessments

Self assessment Checklist | Peer assessment Checklist | Group assessment Notice Board
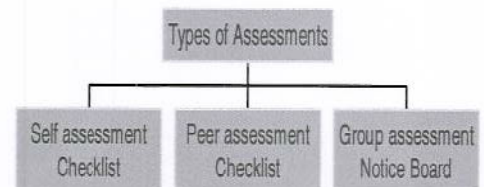
- The speaker used gestures and body language well
- The speakers maintained eye-contact with the audience
- The speaker's language was natural and fluent
- The speaker's volume of speech was appropriate
- The speaker's rate of speech was appropriate
- The speaker's pronunciation was clear and comprehensible
- The speaker's grammar was correct and didn't prevent understanding
- The speaker showed enthusiasm and interest

Conclusion and discussion

School OR University

- In the English classroom   Public speaking
- Primary   Seminar course
- Middle school   Across the disciplines
- High school

Challenges in the ESL classroom

Material?

Time?

Training?

Student learning styles?

Required by the syllabus and curriculum?

Settings

- Whole Group activity
- Small feedback group

(Brown, 2004;Henning, 2000)

Thank you

Any questions?

- Samah Sabbagh
- Samah.sabbagh@gwaschool.com

Appendix B. Pre-workshop questionnaire
The purpose of this questionnaire is to investigate teachers' practices for teaching oral presentations in their English classrooms and their instruction in non-verbal communication.

Please note that data provided will be used for analysis as part of my thesis in the Masters in TESOL Program. This survey will remain confidential. I appreciate your time in filling out this survey.
<u>**Section One:**</u>

1. Gender:
    ☐ Male ☐ Female Nationality (Optional): _____

2. Teaching Experience _____ years

    Number of teaching years in the UAE _____

3. Classes you taught in the past: _____

.   4. Which grade(s) are you teaching now? _____

5. Your average class size _____

6. Please describe briefly your reason for attending this workshop.

    _____
    _____

7. a) Do you ask your students to give oral presentations in class?

        Yes ☐   No ☐

    b) How often _____
    c) What type of oral presentation activities do you practice with your students?
       (You can tick more than one box)

    ☐ Presenting a project   ☐ Giving a speech at morning broadcast
    ☐ Giving a summary   ☐ Story telling
    ☐ Oral book report   ☐
    Other_____

Section Two:

Please read each item and tick the cell for the most appropriate answer.
Strongly Agree (SA) Agree (A) Disagree(D) Strongly Disagree (SD) Not applicable (N/A)

No.	Question	SA	A	D	SD	N/A
8.	Teachers need to ignore language errors and focus on content in students' oral presentations					
9.	I find teaching students how to use vocabulary and grammar more important than teaching oral presentation skills.					
10.	Students' language level in middle-school is suitable for oral presentation instruction.					
11.	It is difficult to teach oral presentation skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus.					
12.	I would like to learn more about how non-verbal communication instruction improves English learning					
13.	Teachers need to be trained in teaching oral presentation skills, before teaching these skills.					

For each item below, please tick the cell that most accurately reflects your current practice

	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	N/A
14.	I encourage students to stand in front of the class when doing speaking activities.					
15.	When students speak, I comment on their body movements.					
16.	When students express their opinions, I ask them to direct their eye-contact to their peers.					
17.	There is not enough time available in the curriculum to teach oral presentation skills					
18.	I comment on students' voice (too fast or too slow, too loud or too low) when giving feedback					

Appendix C. Post-workshop questionnaire
You are kindly requested to tick (√) your answer to the following questions.

Question	Yes	No	Comment
19. Do you believe teaching oral presentation skills and non-verbal communication should be taught for grade five and six students?			
20. Do you think oral presentations might improve your students' confidence and language learning?			
21. Do you think students would speak with more facility and without inappropriate hesitation if they practice giving oral presentations?			
22. Do you think training/workshops on teaching presentation skills would help English teachers in your school?			
23. Do you think focusing on non-verbal communication will add to the learners' speaking abilities?			
24. Do you think there is possibility to consider oral presentation as part of your speaking assessment?			
25. Did you have experience and knowledge in teaching non-verbal communication techniques before this workshop?			
26. Is your overall impression on oral presentation skills instruction favourable?			

27. If you wanted to focus on teaching oral presentation skills with your classes, what would help you to do this? ☐ more time   ☐ training

☐ new material ☐ support from your school ☐ Other

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Appendix D. Reflective Researcher Journal

Venue	Slide number	Journal entry
Students' abilities/ Age of instruction	1 -10	
Feedback (language, content, style)	11	
Attitudes and practices towards non-verbal communication	12 -15	
challenges	16	
Assessment	17 -18	
Needs (material, time, Training/PD opportunities	20-22	

Appendix E. Questions for Possible Teacher interviews
1. What is your overall impression of your students' speaking and oral presentations abilities?
2. Reflect on your teaching practices. How do you feel about implementing focused teaching on oral presentations and non-verbal techniques?
3. How did you view non-verbal communication before the workshop? What do you think now?
4. Which of these elements do you think the most important for students: eye-contact, voice, posture, or body language? Why?
5. Can you think of any factors which may hinder your teaching of oral presentation skills?
What are they?

Appendix F. Reflective worksheet on the teacher's application to non-verbal communication
You are kindly requested to tick (√) your answer to the following questions.

   A. In your classroom, do you usually …

		Yes	No	Uncertain
1.	use animated facial expressions to clarify your talk?			
2.	Distribute your eye contact to the whole classroom?			
3.	use moderate volume (not too loud, not too soft)?			
4.	use moderate rate of speech (not too fast, not too slow)?			
5.	use body movements to explain your lessons?			
6.	use meaningful and spontaneous gestures while speaking to your students?			

7. Which item do you mostly apply? Which item do you apply the least? Explain.

   B. Please answer yes or no. Do most of your students…

		Yes	No	Uncertain
1.	Use meaningful facial expressions when speaking to you or their peers?			
2.	distribute eye contact when speaking in front of a group?			
3.	use vocal variety (convey friendly, enjoyable voice)?			
4.	have balanced, poised posture when speaking in small or big groups?			
5.	Use gestures and body movements that is free of distracting mannerisms?			

   7. In what ways do you think these non-verbal indicators can improve your
   8. students' oral reporting? Why or why not?

Appendix G. MAG Workshop: Pre-Questionnaire Results

No.	Question	SA	A	D	SD	N/A
8.	Teachers need to ignore language errors and focus on content in students' oral presentations	4	3	4		
9.	I find teaching students how to use vocabulary and grammar more important than teaching oral presentation skills.		2	7	2	
10.	Students' language level in middle-school is suitable for oral presentation instruction	1	5	3	2	
11.	It is difficult to teach oral presentation skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus.	1	5	1	3	1
12.	I would like to learn more about how non-verbal communication instruction improves English learning.	2	8	1		
13.	Teachers need to be trained in teaching oral presentation skills, before teaching these skills.	6	5			

	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	N/A
14.	I encourage students to stand in front of the class when doing speaking activities.	9	2			
15.	When students speak, I comment on their body movements.		3	4	4	
16.	When students express their opinions, I ask them to direct their eye-contact to their peers.	4	4	2	1	
17.	There is not enough time available on the curriculum to teach oral presentation skills	4	1	3	2	1
18.	I comment on students' voice (too fast or too slow, too loud or too low) when giving feedback	4	3	3		1

Appendix H. MAG Post-workshop Questionnaire Results

Question	Yes	No
19. Do you believe oral presentation skills and non-verbal communication should be taught for grade five and six students?	11	
20. Do you think oral presentations might improve your students' confidence and language learning?	11	
21. Do you think students would speak with more facility and without inappropriate hesitation if they practice giving oral presentations?	11	
4. Do you think training/workshops on teaching presentation skills would help English teachers in your school?	11	
5. Do you think focusing on non-verbal communication will add to the learners' speaking abilities?	11	
6. Do you think there is possibility to consider oral presentation as part of your speaking assessment?	11	
7. Did you have experience and knowledge in teaching non-verbal communication techniques before this workshop?	10	
8. Is your overall impression on oral presentation skills instruction favorable?	11	

Appendix I: TA Pre-Questionnaire Results

No.	Question	SA	A	D	SD	N/A
8.	Teachers need to ignore language errors and focus on content in students' oral presentations	3	5	3	2	
9.	I find teaching students how to use vocabulary and grammar more important than teaching oral presentation skills.	2	2	9	1	
10.	Students' language level in middle-school is suitable for oral presentation instruction	1	4	5	1	3
11.	It is difficult to teach oral presentation skills, because they do not appear in the syllabus.	4	4	4	2	
12.	I would like to learn more about how non-verbal communication instruction improves English learning.	4	10			
13.	Teachers need to be trained in teaching oral presentation skills, before teaching these skills.	11	2	1		

	Item	Always	Usually	Sometimes	Never	N/A
14.	I encourage students to stand in front of the class when doing speaking activities.	7	6	1		
15.	When students speak, I comment on their body movements.	3	1	8	2	
16.	When students express their opinions, I ask them to direct their eye-contact to their peers.	6	3	4	1	
17.	There is not enough time available on the curriculum to teach oral presentation skills	3	5	5	1	
18.	I comment on students' voice (too fast or too slow, too loud or too low) when giving feedback	5	5	4		

Appendix J. TA Post-workshop Questionnaire Results

Question	Yes	No
19. Do you believe oral presentation skills and non-verbal communication should be taught for grade five and six students?	14	
20. Do you think oral presentations might improve your students' confidence and language learning?	14	
21. Do you think students would speak with more facility and without inappropriate hesitation if they practice giving oral presentations?	14	
4. Do you think training/workshops on teaching presentation skills would help English teachers in your school?	14	
5. Do you think focusing on non-verbal communication will add to the learners' speaking abilities?	12	
6. Do you think there is possibility to consider oral presentation as part of your speaking assessment?	13	
7. Did you have experience and knowledge in teaching non-verbal communication techniques before this workshop?	9	
8. Is your overall impression on oral presentation skills instruction favorable?	13	

Vita

Samah Sabbagh was educated in a British system schooling in Jordan, where she graduated in 2005 from the Univeristy of Jordan. She received a BA in Modern Languages (English and Italian), where she obtained two scholarships of intensive courses in Italian linguistics and literature in Rome and Siena, Italy. She has also completed her teaching certification in Italian C.I.L.S. and has obtained the DELF A1, A2, A3, and A4 certificates. Currently, Samah is an ESL secondary teacher at Gems World Academy in Dubai.

Samah was an active member of Toast Masters International organization for public speaking skills. She has given many speeches and has participated in establishing the Youth Toastmasters program in Amman Al Ahleyyeh University, Jordan. Her main research interests are materials development, leadership and presentation skills. She has presented at various conferences in Turkey, Oman, in addition to TESOL Arabia chapters across the UAE