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THE ROLE OF PEER INTERACTION IN ENHANCING STUDENTS' ORAL PRESENTATION: PERCEPTIONS OF VIETNAMESE EFL PRE-SERVICE TEACHERS AT A UNIVERSITY

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Abstract

Oral presentations are essential in language learning, enhancing speaking abilities and fostering learner autonomy. While much research has been conducted, the role of peer interaction in enhancing students' oral presentation remains underexplored. This qualitative study, therefore, aims to investigate the Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers' (n=10) perceptions of roles of peer interaction in enhancing their oral presentations. The findings collected from semi-structured interviews indicate that peer interaction significantly aids idea development, language proficiency, and presentation skills, builds confidence, manages anxiety, and encourages active learning as well as developing skills to prepare for future careers. The study also highlights the importance of incorporating peer interaction into EFL instruction. Accordingly, it is recommended that teachers should use activities such as peer presentations and group discussions to foster a dynamic, supportive learning environment. These practices not only improve oral presentation skills but also prepare students for future academic and professional challenges.

Keywords: *Oral presentations, peer interaction, perception, pre-service teachers, role.*

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VAI TRÒ CỦA TƯƠNG TÁC NGANG HÀNG TRONG VIỆC PHÁT TRIỂN KỸ NĂNG THUYẾT TRÌNH BẰNG LỜI NÓI: GÓC NHÌN TỪ SINH VIÊN SỰ PHẠM TIẾNG ANH

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Tóm tắt

Thuyết trình bằng lời nói là một kỹ năng thiết yếu trong quá trình học ngôn ngữ, không chỉ góp phần phát triển năng lực nói mà còn thúc đẩy tính tự chủ và sự tham gia tích cực của người học. Tuy nhiên, mặc dù đã có nhiều nghiên cứu về hoạt động thuyết trình, vai trò của tương tác ngang hàng trong việc nâng cao kỹ năng này vẫn chưa được nghiên cứu một cách toàn diện. Nghiên cứu định tính này nhằm khảo sát nhận thức của 10 sinh viên sự phạm tiếng Anh tại Việt Nam về vai trò của tương tác ngang hàng trong quá trình cải thiện kỹ năng thuyết trình bằng lời nói. Dữ liệu được thu thập thông qua phỏng vấn bán cấu trúc. Kết quả nghiên cứu cho thấy rằng tương tác ngang hàng đóng vai trò tích cực trong việc hình thành và phát triển ý tưởng, nâng cao năng lực ngôn ngữ và kỹ năng trình bày. Đồng thời, quá trình này góp phần xây dựng sự tự tin, giảm lo lắng, khuyến khích học tập chủ động và hỗ trợ phát triển các năng lực nghề nghiệp cần thiết. Nghiên cứu đề xuất rằng việc tích hợp các hình thức tương tác như thuyết trình nhóm và thảo luận trong lớp là cần thiết để tạo ra môi trường học tập tích cực và hiệu quả. Những chiến lược này không chỉ cải thiện kỹ năng thuyết trình mà còn chuẩn bị cho người học đối mặt với các yêu cầu học thuật và nghề nghiệp trong tương lai.

Từ khóa: *Nhận thức, sinh viên sự phạm, thuyết trình bằng lời nói, tương tác ngang hàng, vai trò.*

1. Introduction

In recent years, oral presentations have gained significant recognition as an essential component of English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learning. Research suggests that incorporating oral presentations into language instruction enhances student engagement and improves communication skills (Girard et al., 2011). King (2002) further argues that oral presentations serve as a bridge between theoretical language learning and practical language use by integrating all four language skills (i.e., listening, speaking, reading, and writing). Therefore, this fosters linguistic competence and learner autonomy.

Thornbury (2005) highlights that oral presentations provide a more authentic language-learning context than traditional drills, allowing students to practice in real-life situations and develop essential skills such as research, critical thinking, and communication. Beyond language acquisition, oral presentations contribute to students' overall confidence and professional preparedness. Al-Issa and Al-Qubtan (2010) emphasize that presentation tasks build confidence and courage, which are crucial for academic and professional success. Živković (2014) further notes that oral presentation skills are particularly valuable in fields like English for Academic Purposes and English for Specific Purposes, where professional communication is often required. Employers also recognize these skills as transferable across diverse professional environments.

It should be mentioned that oral presentations align with the principles of Communicative Language Teaching (CLT), which prioritizes meaningful communication through learner interaction (Brown, 2014). Studies have confirmed that oral presentations significantly enhance EFL learners' speaking abilities, particularly in terms of fluency, confidence, and accuracy. Their interactive nature fosters peer engagement, making the classroom environment more dynamic and participatory (Dheressa et al., 2023). This peer interaction has been linked to improvements in pronunciation and fluency as well as critical thinking development through the synthesis and analysis of information (ibid).

Peer interaction plays a crucial role in the development of communicative competence. Vygotsky and Cole (1978) argues that social interaction aids knowledge construction. Through collaborative activities, students engage in meaningful oral exchanges that refine their language skills. Peer feedback and dialogue promote self-reflection, which enhances communicative competence (Philp et al., 2008). Additionally, research suggests that peer interaction boosts self-efficacy, confidence, and overall language proficiency (Amirian & Tavakoli, 2016).

Despite extensive research on oral presentations in EFL contexts, most studies focus on teacher feedback, self-evaluation, or task-based learning strategies, while the role of peer interaction during the preparation and delivery phases remains underexplored. Furthermore, while collaborative learning has been widely studied, little attention has been given to how peer interaction specifically influences oral presentation skills among pre-service EFL teachers. This research seeks to address this gap by examining the perspectives of Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers on the role of peer interaction in the preparation, delivery, and feedback stages of oral presentations.

This study aims to explore the impact of peer interaction on the preparation and delivery of oral presentations among Vietnamese pre-service teachers of English. Specifically, it seeks to understand their perspectives on how peer interaction enhances presentation skills and affects their confidence and anxiety levels when presenting in English. To achieve these objectives, the study will address the following research question: "What are the perceptions

of Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers on the role of peer interaction in enhancing their oral presentations?”

2. Theoretical overview

2.1. Peer interaction in language learning

Peer interaction refers to the reciprocal communicative exchanges between learners of similar status, in which they collaboratively construct meaning, negotiate understanding, and co-construct knowledge through dialogue and shared activities (Vygotsky & Cole, 1978). Peer interaction plays a crucial role in language learning, enhancing communicative competence, fluency, accuracy, and learner autonomy. Rooted in Sociocultural and Interactionist theories, peer interaction provides opportunities for learners to negotiate meaning, receive feedback, and refine their language skills through collaborative engagement (Long, 1985). Unlike teacher-fronted instruction, peer interaction fosters a learner-centered environment that promotes active participation, social engagement, and self-regulation (Ellis, 1991).

Peer interaction significantly contributes to speaking skill development by enabling learners to participate in authentic communicative exchanges. Research suggests that students who engage in peer discussions improve fluency, pronunciation, and confidence (Philp et al., 2008). Collaborative tasks such as role-plays, debates, and problem-solving activities encourage spontaneous speech production, enhance turn-taking skills, and expose learners to diverse linguistic input. Additionally, repeated engagement in peer interactions fosters conversational competence and reduces anxiety in speaking tasks (Brown, 2014).

A key aspect of peer interaction is the negotiation of meaning, where learners seek clarification, reformulate utterances, and adjust their language to enhance comprehension (Long, 1985). This process allows learners to receive real-time feedback, improving grammatical accuracy and overall linguistic awareness (Swain & Lapkin, 1998). Peer interaction, in particular, is essential for language development, enabling learners to recognize errors, self-correct, and refine their language output (Widodo & Chakim, 2023). Studies indicate that peer interaction can be as effective as teacher feedback in enhancing both spoken and written proficiency, provided that students receive appropriate training in constructive feedback techniques (Saito, 2008).

2.2. Oral presentation skills in EFL learning

Oral presentation skills are the communicative competencies required to plan, structure, and deliver spoken content effectively, including language use, voice modulation, body language, clarity, coherence, and audience interaction (King, 2002). Oral presentation skills involve clear speech, organized ideas, appropriate language, and confident delivery. They also include engaging the audience through eye contact, gestures, and effective use of visual aids (Brooks & Wilson, 2015).

Oral presentation skills play a vital role in EFL learning, contributing significantly to both language development and broader academic and professional success. Verbal communication enhances fluency, pronunciation, and vocabulary acquisition, the key components of language proficiency. As Goh and Burns (2012) note, oral presentations provide learners with opportunities to use language in realistic contexts, thereby improving speaking competence. Similarly, Gregersen (2020) emphasizes that presentations foster authentic language use, promoting greater fluency and confidence.

Developing oral presentation skills also sharpens learners' ability to structure ideas and convey information clearly (i.e., skills essential for mastering a second language). In academic contexts, these abilities are indispensable for participation in seminars, group discussions, and

thesis defenses. Yang and Gamble (2013) argues that preparing presentations helps students organize thoughts logically, resulting in clearer, more coherent academic work. This process strengthens critical thinking and organizational skills, which are transferable across various academic tasks and can enhance overall student engagement and performance.

Beyond the classroom, oral presentation skills are crucial for future professional roles. Clear, persuasive communication is highly valued in most fields, including business, education, and public service. Jeon (2005) highlights that presentation practice builds not only public speaking ability but also self-confidence, a key attribute in professional settings. Chan (2020) further observes that strong oral communication helps individuals establish credibility and build relationships in contexts such as meetings, client interactions, and conferences.

In a globalized workforce, English proficiency and the ability to present effectively in English are increasingly seen as essential. Brown (2014) points out that in sectors like international business, research, and academia, English-language presentations are often a job requirement. Similarly, it is added that such skills expand access to international career opportunities and professional networks, making them a valuable asset for EFL learners.

Despite these benefits, developing oral presentation skills in EFL settings poses several challenges. Among the most significant are anxiety, lack of confidence, and limited practice opportunities. Anxiety is a well-documented barrier to effective oral performance. Horwitz et al. (1986) define language learning anxiety as feelings of tension and nervousness linked to physiological arousal, which negatively affects second language production. Physical symptoms such as shaky voices, heavy breathing, and tense posture are often observed during student presentations (King, 2002). These reactions can undermine students' ability to speak fluently and coherently.

Lack of confidence is another obstacle. Learners may feel insecure about their language abilities, especially if they have experienced failure or lack self-esteem. According to Nunan (1999), low confidence contributes to communication apprehension, making students hesitant to speak and limiting their ability to express ideas clearly. This reluctance reduces participation in speaking tasks and hinders language development.

Limited practice opportunities further restrict skill development. In many EFL classrooms, speaking activities are infrequent or confined to formal presentations. Jeon (2005) argues that without regular, structured practice, students struggle to build the spontaneity and fluency necessary for effective communication. A lack of feedback and support during preparation can also leave learners feeling unready or discouraged.

2.3. Peer interaction in oral presentations

Peer interaction plays a pivotal role in enhancing oral presentation skills, offering opportunities for collaborative learning, reflection, and communicative development. While rehearsal remains central to improving individual performance, helping presenters internalize content, manage timing, and refine delivery (Duarte, 2010; Menzel & Correll, 1994), its impact is significantly amplified when situated within interactive, peer-supported settings. Analysis of student speech journals further supports rehearsal as a critical contributor to presentation outcomes. Among forms of peer interaction, peer feedback has gained prominence as a pedagogical strategy that encourages dialogic learning and self-regulation. Defined as reciprocal evaluation among learners, peer feedback promotes metacognitive awareness and learner autonomy by fostering reflection and co-construction of knowledge (Topping, 2009; Widodo & Chakim, 2023). Unlike teacher-led assessments, peer feedback aligns with formative assessment principles, emphasizing growth and mutual accountability.

Research consistently affirms its benefits. Patri (2002) found strong alignment between peer and teacher evaluations, highlighting its role in developing critical and reflective thinking. Similarly, Au and Bardakçi (2020) demonstrated that both peer and teacher feedback improved beginner learners' presentation skills across several modules. Ndoye (2017) further reported that peer oral feedback enhances clarity, confidence, and actionable improvement by fostering shared expectations in a supportive environment. Beyond skill development, peer interaction cultivates student engagement, ownership, and a shift toward learner-centered instruction (Saito, 2008; Azarnoosh, 2013). Peer evaluation also enhances students' analytical and self-assessment skills (Tullis & Goldstone, 2020; Yu et al., 2023), yet its effectiveness depends on structured implementation. Training students in how to give constructive feedback, through clear rubrics and guided practice, increases both reliability and educational value for all participants (Dochy et al., 1999).

However, challenges remain. Feedback can be perceived as face-threatening, particularly in contexts lacking trust (Yoshida, 2010), and students may doubt their ability to evaluate peers fairly (Philp et al., 2008). Therefore, creating a collaborative and respectful classroom climate is essential. This aligns with Vygotsky's sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the importance of social interaction and scaffolding in learning. The teacher's role is central in facilitating meaningful peer interaction, setting expectations, modeling feedback, and providing ongoing support (Van den Berg et al., 2006).

2.4. The Interaction Hypothesis

The Interaction Hypothesis (IH), proposed by Long (1985), provides a key framework for understanding how conversational interaction supports second language acquisition. It posits that language learning is most effective when learners engage in interaction that offers access to comprehensible input, opportunities for output, and interactional feedback. Through negotiating meaning in communication, learners enhance both comprehension and production of the target language.

Long (1985) emphasized that interaction with both native and non-native speakers promotes language development. These exchanges enable learners to experience the language in context, triggering strategies like clarification requests, reformulations, and input modification that make language more accessible and meaningful. Communication breakdowns followed by negotiation of meaning help learners process language more deeply at the levels of both form and meaning. Expanding on the IH, Long and Pica (1988) examined classroom implications, stressing that task design and interaction structure are central to maximizing learning. Long and Crookes (1992) advocated minimizing display questions in favor of authentic prompts and collaborative tasks that encourage genuine communication and peer interaction.

Within this framework, peer interaction and feedback also play a vital role because they create opportunities for learners to engage in meaningful communication, respond to comprehension breakdowns, and refine their language through negotiation and scaffolding, processes that lie at the heart of the Interaction Hypothesis (Long, 1985). Pica (1988) highlighted peer engagement as a means to foster language development through corrective feedback and mutual scaffolding. Such activities promote learner autonomy, metacognitive awareness, and deeper language processing. Empirical support for IH includes studies showing that interactionally modified input (i.e., language adjusted in response to learner needs) is more beneficial than unmodified input (Wang & Castro, 2010). Ellis (1991) added that task-based interaction facilitates restructuring of interlanguage, enhancing both syntactic and pragmatic skills. Brown (2014) further noted that conversational interaction promotes cognitive engagement and social participation, contributing to improved fluency and linguistic accuracy.

3. Research methods

3.1. Research design

This study examines the impact of peer interaction on the oral presentation skills of Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers. To achieve this objective, a qualitative research design was employed to facilitate an in-depth understanding of the collected data (Creswell, 2021). Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews, which incorporated open-ended questions to allow for flexible yet focused probing based on participants' responses (Trepper et al., 2022). The use of semi-structured interviews is particularly relevant in qualitative research, as it enables researchers to explore participants' experiences in greater depth while maintaining a conversational and adaptive approach (Adeoye-Olatunde & Olenik, 2021; Creswell, 2012). This method fosters a more relaxed and exploratory environment, encouraging participants to share detailed insights into their practices.

3.2. Research participants

A total of ten pre-service EFL teachers voluntarily participated in this study. The sample included three male (30%) and seven female (70%) participants, with ages ranging from 22 to 24 years. In terms of English learning experience, participants had studied English for an average of 12.2 years, beginning in primary school and continuing through their university education.

All participants were enrolled in an English Teacher Education program at a university in the Mekong Delta, Vietnam that emphasized oral presentations as a key component of their training. Their extensive experience with oral presentations, along with peer interactions during the preparation and delivery of these presentations, provided them with valuable insights into the role of peer interaction in EFL classroom settings. Given these factors, this group was deemed particularly suitable for the study.

3.3. Research instrument

This study used semi-structured interviews as the primary data collection method to explore how peer interaction enhances oral presentation skills among Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers (Creswell, 2012). This method offered a balance between structure and flexibility, allowing participants to share their experiences freely while enabling the researcher to explore emerging themes in greater depth. Trilling (2009) supports interviews as an effective tool in qualitative research due to their capacity to elicit rich, meaningful responses through direct interaction.

The interview protocol was structured into three main sections, grounded in an extensive review of relevant theoretical literature, most notably Long's (1985) Interaction Hypothesis, and informed by established qualitative research methodologies. To enhance the instrument's reliability and validity, the questions were reviewed and refined by a specialist in English Language Education. This validation process helped minimize potential biases, improve clarity, and ensure alignment with the research objectives of the study.

The first section focused on participants' engagement in peer interaction during both the preparation and delivery phases of oral presentations (e.g., "Can you describe how peer interaction occurs when preparing for an oral presentation?"). The second section explored the perceived impact of peer interaction on specific language-related aspects of oral presentation performance, such as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation (e.g., "How does interacting with peers help you with language skills?"). The third section examined participants' broader perceptions of peer interaction as a mechanism for language learning and skill development (e.g., "In your opinion, how does interacting with peers help you learn and apply new language

skills?"). Follow-up or probing questions were used as needed to elicit deeper insights and facilitate more comprehensive responses.

3.4. Data collection procedures

3.4.1. Data collection procedures

A purposive sampling strategy was used to recruit participants based on their experience with oral presentations and peer interaction. Eligible participants received a clear explanation of the study's objectives and signed consent forms to confirm their voluntary participation and ensure confidentiality.

Prior to data collection, semi-structured interview questions were piloted to evaluate their validity, clarity, and relevance. The pilot phase involved three pre-service EFL teachers sharing the same learning context as the main study group. Each 45-minute interview was audio-recorded and analyzed. Feedback from both participants and qualitative research experts confirmed the questions were well-designed, clear, and effective in eliciting meaningful responses. No changes were required before moving to the main data collection phase. For the official study, individual face-to-face interviews were scheduled at participants' convenience. Conducted in Vietnamese, the native language of both the researcher and participants, these interviews allowed for full comprehension and expression (Creswell, 2012). Participants were informed of their right to withdraw at any point without consequence.

Each interview lasted about 45 minutes, with additional time if needed. A conversational tone was used to promote openness, while probing questions were applied selectively to deepen responses (Creswell, 2021). To ensure confidentiality, participants were assigned pseudonyms (Participant 1-10). All interviews were audio-recorded, then transcribed verbatim and analyzed using a thematic coding process. This structured approach preserved data integrity and enabled a focused examination of how peer interaction influences oral presentation skills among Vietnamese pre-service EFL teachers.

3.4.2. Data analysis

To analyse data, the qualitative data collected from the semi-structured interviews were analyzed using the thematic analysis framework proposed by Braun and Clarke (2006). This method consists of six key stages: (1) familiarization with the data, (2) generating initial codes, (3) identifying themes, (4) reviewing themes, (5) defining and naming themes, and (6) producing the final report. The objective of this analysis was to systematically identify patterns and insights that align with the research aims of the study.

The researcher began by reviewing the interview recordings and notes to gain an initial understanding of participants' perspectives. The raw audio recordings were transcribed verbatim, after which the transcripts were carefully examined to identify meaningful data segments. These segments were then coded, with similar codes grouped together to form preliminary themes. A comprehensive review of all transcripts followed, ensuring that significant patterns and relationships within the data were accurately captured. To enhance the accuracy and reliability of the analysis, the researcher sought clarification from participants via phone or email when necessary. Additionally, the original Vietnamese transcripts were translated into English, with the translations reviewed by an expert to ensure linguistic and conceptual accuracy. The final stage of analysis involved interpreting the identified themes in relation to the objectives of the study. Creswell's (2009) qualitative data analysis approach was integrated into this process, which involved organizing and preparing the data, coding, developing themes, and interpreting their meaning within the context of peer interaction and

oral presentation skills. This structured approach ensured a rigorous and comprehensive analysis of the data, allowing for meaningful conclusions to be drawn.

4. Results and discussion

Overall, the findings suggest that peer interaction plays a significant role in fostering idea development, enhancing language proficiency, and improving presentation skills such as organization, pacing, and body language. It also boosts learners' confidence, helps manage anxiety, promotes active learning, and cultivates skills relevant to future career preparation. A critical discussion of these findings will follow.

4.1. Developing ideas and structuring presentation work

The findings reveal that more than half of the participants (n=6 out of 10) shared a similar view, expressing that peer interaction in delivering oral presentations helps students develop ideas more properly. Participant 1 and Participant 2, for instance, both emphasized that through such interactions, they are able to “*expand on many different ideas*” and gain “*practical suggestions*” from friends, which helps turn “*vague*” or “*unclear ideas*” into more defined ones. These exchanges broaden their perspectives and enable them to come up with stronger “*examples*” and “*evidence*” for their presentations. Participant 7, too, highlighted the importance of feedback given by members in gaining more insightful ideas for the presentation, stating: “*I turn to people I trust for helpful feedback. My friends always offer unique viewpoints and come up with creative ideas that make my presentation more effective.*”

The findings reveal that many participants (n=8 out of 10) additionally mentioned that peer interaction in delivering oral presentations contributes to structuring presentation work more effectively which can be done through discussions, feedback, and content revisions. As a result, this makes the presentation more coherent, creative, and easier to understand. To illustrate, Participant 1, for instance, reported that:

Through interactions with my friends, this helps us summarize the ideas, making what I want to express clearer and more logical. As a result, the presentation becomes more reasonable, and the flow of the presentation is clearer and more logical.

Participant 4 also added:

I find it very, very necessary because it's really hard to pay attention to and focus on all aspects during both the preparation and presentation process. Thanks to my friends' feedback, for example, during the topic selection, I can choose a suitable topic and narrow its scope to share in more depth.

The findings indicate that Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers view peer interaction as a key factor in developing ideas and organizing content during the preparation of oral presentations. Participants reported that discussions with peers enhanced their ability to generate, refine, and structure ideas more effectively. This process was seen as essential not only for presentation quality but also for developing broader language competencies, such as logical organization and clarity of expression. These results are consistent with Yang and Gamble (2013), who emphasizes that the act of preparing presentations promotes coherent academic thinking and improved expression. Similarly, Ndoye (2017) found that peer interaction clarifies expectations and supports the delivery of more cohesive presentations. The current findings affirm that peer interaction facilitates clearer, more creative, and better-structured presentations through content negotiation, iterative feedback, and collaborative revision.

4.2. Enhancing language proficiency

The results show that all participants (n=10) agreed that peer interaction in oral presentation plays a significant role in enhancing students' language proficiency, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary, and grammar. Participant 1 shared that through feedback from friends, she was able to improve her pronunciation, intonation, and overall delivery, making her presentations clearer and more accurate. She gave an example, stating that:

Feedback from friends helps me improve pronunciation, intonation, delivery, and content accuracy in presentations. For example, I learned the phrase "a novel experience" from a friend and corrected my mispronunciation of "literature" thanks to their guidance. These interactions greatly enhance my communication skills and overall presentation quality.

Participant 3 similarly pointed out that peer interaction helped identify and correct mistakes, saying:

I often make mistakes when using the past tense, and my group members remind me of this. When working together and listening to my friends speak and exchange ideas, I sometimes discover language points and language skills that are really interesting.

Participant 6 added that interactions with peers during presentation preparation helped her improve her understanding of challenging topics like phonetic symbols and phonemes. She said:

In Phonetics, I've studied phonetic symbols, phonemes, and other complex concepts. Group discussions and presentation preparation with friends have helped me understand new language ideas and improve fluency. Since starting group work and presentations in my first university year, my language skills have significantly developed through collaboration and practice.

Participants also reported noticeable improvements in their language proficiency as a result of peer interaction, particularly in pronunciation, vocabulary use, and grammatical accuracy. These findings align with previous studies highlighting the role of peer engagement in improving oral fluency and syntactic accuracy (Philp et al., 2008; Gass & Mackey, 2014). Exposure to diverse language input during peer discussions was seen to support both receptive and productive language skills. In line with Ellis (1991), such interactions were found to promote syntactic and pragmatic development by encouraging the use of language in authentic and purposeful contexts. Several participants specifically mentioned learning new vocabulary and deepening their understanding of language concepts through collaborative work. This supports Vygotsky and Cole's (1978) sociocultural theory, which emphasizes the role of social interaction and scaffolding from more capable peers in advancing cognitive and linguistic development. Through peer engagement, learners negotiated meaning, clarified doubts, and built a deeper understanding of language in use.

4.3. Improving presentation skills

It is worth mentioning that all of the participants (n=10) highlighted that peer interaction plays a crucial role in improving presentation skills by helping individuals refine their content organization, delivery speed, body language, and audience engagement, ultimately resulting in more effective and engaging presentations. Participant 8 said:

When practicing, we listen to each other's presentations, provide feedback, and suggest improvements in phrasing and body language. Feedback from friends is

crucial as it helps me identify weaknesses in my delivery. Thanks to their input, I've improved my speaking pace, added pauses, and enhanced my pronunciation.

Participant 9 shared a similar sentiment, stating:

Feedback from my friends plays a very important and essential role in improving my presentation skills, as it helps me recognize mistakes I might not notice or pay attention to. Thanks to this, my subsequent presentations become clearer and more engaging for the audience.

Participant 10 also emphasized the significance of peer interaction, stating that it plays a key role in improving communication skills, particularly in refining the clarity and smoothness of self-expression. She said:

Before presenting, we rehearse as a group to finalize the script, content, and flow. Friends offer helpful feedback, ensuring smooth delivery. These regular interactions have improved my communication skills, especially in expressing ideas more clearly and confidently during practice sessions and presentations.

Peer interaction was also found to play an important role in improving overall presentation performance. Participants highlighted how collaborative preparation allowed them to enhance various aspects of delivery, including content organization, pacing, and audience engagement. These findings reflect previous studies emphasizing the value of peer and teacher feedback in refining presentation skills (Au & Bardakçi, 2020; Ndoeye, 2017). According to Philp et al. (2008), such feedback fosters meaningful interaction that encourages self-reflection and refinement of oral output. In this study, participants perceived peer feedback as both supportive and instructive, enabling them to revise and improve their presentation delivery in a constructive learning environment.

4.4. Building confidence and managing anxiety

It is important to note that all of the participants (n=10) agreed that peer interaction in oral presentation helps reduce anxiety, build confidence, and create a supportive environment where each individual can improve their skills, receive feedback, and better prepare mentally before the presentation. Participant 5, for instance, emphasized that:

In a well-coordinated team, we have more time for feedback, which boosts my confidence when presenting. I feel more comfortable because my friends eagerly answer my questions and explain things clearly. Their support helps me prepare better and present with greater ease and confidence.

Similarly, Participant 6 added:

Talking with friends gives me helpful feedback, builds confidence, and eases anxiety. Sharing ideas shows me what to improve, making me feel more prepared. These interactions improve my skills and help me feel more steady and less nervous during presentations.

Another major theme emerging from the findings is the impact of peer interaction on reducing anxiety and building confidence. All participants agreed that collaborative preparation contributed to increased comfort and self-assurance when delivering presentations. Receiving constructive feedback from peers helped them feel more prepared and less nervous, echoing findings by Dörnyei (2014) and Toth (2008), who observed that peer support lowers speaking anxiety and promotes confidence. The study also supports research by Namaziandost, Behbahani and Naserpour (2024) and Male (2018), which shows that low-stress, peer-supported tasks foster greater fluency and comfort in language production.

Furthermore, reciprocal peer feedback not only reduced performance anxiety but also motivated students by fostering a sense of responsibility and engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2013). This collaborative, low-pressure environment encouraged learners to take risks, experiment with language, and overcome fear of making mistakes, further enhancing their confidence and willingness to speak (Brown, 2014).

4.5. Encouraging active learning and developing skills to prepare for future careers

The findings also indicate that many participants (n=6 out of 10) expressed that peer interaction in oral presentation plays an important role in encouraging active learning. To illustrate, Participant 6, for example, said that: “When interacting with my friends, I gradually become more proactive in the learning process. I become more dynamic, actively seeking to understand and prepare well for both my studies and presentations.” Sharing a similar view, Participant 8 also stated: “When interacting with my friends, this helps me become more proactive in seeking knowledge, finding content, and determining the direction for our group presentation. I find that this helps reduce passivity and makes me more proactive in finding answers.”

Moreover, a significant number of participants (n=9 out of 10) shared that peer interaction plays an important role in developing the skills necessary for future careers, such as communication, teamwork, and problem-solving. As Participant 5 shared: “Interacting with friends during presentations has improved my skills, from preparing content to communicating clearly. It’s also strengthened my pronunciation and vocabulary, which will benefit my future career.” In the same vein, Participant 10 also mentioned that:

Interacting with friends has better prepared me for a teaching career. Skills like communication, teamwork, and problem-solving will be essential when working with colleagues and students. Collaborating with different personalities in group tasks has especially improved my teamwork abilities for the future.

The findings underscore the role of peer interaction in fostering active learning and equipping pre-service teachers with skills relevant to their future careers. Participants reported that engaging with peers enhanced their critical thinking, knowledge construction, and overall classroom participation. These observations support previous research demonstrating the cognitive and social benefits of collaborative learning (De Costa, 2007; Mercer & Ryan, 2010). Peer feedback in particular was identified as a tool for promoting reflection, self-regulation, and independent learning, the skills critical for professional growth and lifelong learning (Nicol & Macfarlane-Dick, 2006; Topping, 2009). By evaluating peer performance and engaging in reflective dialogue, participants developed both analytical thinking and self-assessment abilities (Saito, 2008; Tullis & Goldstone, 2020).

Beyond academic development, participants recognized that peer interaction during oral presentation tasks helped cultivate transferable professional skills. These included public speaking, confidence in communication, and the ability to collaborate effectively. As Jeon (2005) and Chan (2020) note, clear and persuasive communication is a critical asset in most career contexts. Peer interaction thus contributed not only to the immediate goals of language learning and academic performance but also to long-term professional readiness.

5. Conclusion

This study explored Vietnamese EFL pre-service teachers’ perceptions of the role of peer interaction in enhancing oral presentation skills. The findings reveal that peer interaction plays a pivotal role in facilitating idea development, strengthening language proficiency, and refining presentation skills, including organization, pacing, and body language. It also

contributes to building learners' confidence, alleviating presentation-related anxiety, fostering active engagement, and equipping students with essential competencies for future academic and professional endeavors.

These insights underscore the pedagogical value of integrating peer interaction into English language instruction. By incorporating structured peer activities such as collaborative presentations, group discussions, and peer feedback sessions, educators can cultivate a supportive learning environment that encourages active participation and continuous improvement. Ultimately, this approach not only enhances learners' oral communication skills but also promotes autonomy and readiness for real-world communicative demands.

Future research could expand on these findings by examining the long-term impact of peer interaction on oral proficiency and exploring how peer dynamics vary across different institutional or cultural contexts.

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