

The effects of academic oral presentations on English as a foreign language students' oral communication strategy use: An intervention study

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ABSTRACT: This study investigated how academic oral presentations impacted the use of oral communication strategies by Turkish students learning English to overcome speaking difficulties. The "Strategies for Coping with Speaking Problems" scale was used to measure the effectiveness of an oral presentation intervention. Two groups of first-year students: an intervention group and a control group took part in this study. Both groups were given a pre-test. The intervention group (n=35) engaged in giving academic oral presentations in English for 30 minutes, while the control group (n=34) attended conventional classes for 12 weeks. After the intervention, both groups were given a post-test. The results showed that academic oral presentations had a positive impact on the oral communication strategies used by the intervention group. The strategies employed were categorized into several types: fluency-oriented strategies, accuracy-oriented strategies, and nonverbal strategies. Additionally, 'total strategy use' refers to the integrated application of all these strategies. There was a significant improvement in most sub-dimensions of the scale. No significant difference was found in the pre-test and post-test results of the control group. Overall, the study suggests that academic oral presentations can help students improve their oral communication strategies and overcome speaking difficulties when learning a new language.

Keywords: Academic oral presentations, English as a Foreign Language, Oral Communication strategies, Target Language Proficiency, Speaking skills

El efecto de las presentaciones orales académicas en el uso de la estrategia de comunicación oral de los estudiantes de inglés como lengua extranjera: un diseño de intervención

RESUMEN: Este estudio investigó cómo las presentaciones orales académicas impactaron el uso de estrategias de comunicación oral por parte de los estudiantes turcos que aprenden inglés para superar las dificultades del habla. Se utilizó la escala "Estrategias para hacer frente a los problemas del habla" para medir la eficacia de una intervención de presentación oral. En este estudio participaron dos grupos de estudiantes de primer año: un grupo de intervención y un grupo de control. A ambos grupos se les dio una prueba previa. El grupo de intervención (n=35) realizó presentaciones orales académicas en inglés durante 30 minutos, mientras que

el grupo de control (n=34) asistió a clases tradicionales durante 12 semanas. Después de la intervención, a ambos grupos se les realizó una prueba posterior. Los resultados mostraron que las presentaciones orales académicas tuvieron un impacto positivo en las estrategias de comunicación oral utilizadas por el grupo de intervención. Las estrategias empleadas se clasificaron en varios tipos: estrategias orientadas a la fluidez, estrategias orientadas a la precisión y estrategias no verbales. Además, el "uso total de estrategias" se refiere a la aplicación integrada de todas estas estrategias. Hubo una mejora significativa en la mayoría de las subdimensiones de la escala. No se encontraron diferencias significativas en los resultados previos y posteriores a la prueba del grupo de control. En general, el estudio sugiere que las presentaciones orales académicas pueden ayudar a los estudiantes a mejorar sus estrategias de comunicación oral y superar las dificultades del habla cuando aprenden un nuevo idioma.

Palabras clave: Presentaciones orales académicas, Inglés como lengua extranjera, Estrategias de comunicación oral, Estrategias para hacer frente a los problemas del habla, Habilidades para hablar

1. INTRODUCTION

Speaking is often considered the most challenging language skill compared to writing, listening, and reading, especially for non-native speakers, requiring significant effort from language teachers (Pawlak, 2018). Fulcher (2003) and Bailey (2008) define speaking as the act of conveying verbal meaning to communicate with others. The Common European Framework of Reference for Languages (CEFR) further categorises speaking skills into spoken production and spoken interaction, emphasising the importance of the latter (Council of Europe, 2001). In line with this, the current study aims to investigate the efficacy of academic oral presentations (AOPs) in enhancing oral communication strategies for English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners, particularly in initiating, maintaining, and concluding conversations in the target language.

Communication failures in oral interactions due to inadequate communication skills present challenges across various life and educational contexts, including higher education (Dippold et al., 2019; Wu et al., 2017). While recent research has explored the effects of oral presentations on various aspects of language learning such as self-assessment (Barry, 2012), speaking anxiety and performance (Aliyu et al., 2019; Hammad, 2020), and language skills (Brooks & Wilson, 2014), the role of AOPs in oral communication strategy use remains under-researched. This study aims to make an original contribution to EFL research literature by providing empirical evidence for the effectiveness of AOPs in improving oral communication skills. It goes beyond stating the obvious by offering a nuanced understanding of how AOPs can be strategically used to improve various dimensions of oral communication, such as fluency, accuracy, and nonverbal cues.

2. THEORETICAL BACKGROUND

2.1. Communicative competence

The concept of communicative competence has been a subject of extensive inquiry since Chomsky's distinction between competence and performance in 1965. Communicative com-

petence, as defined by Tarone (1981), refers to an individual's ability to utilise their linguistic system effectively, tailored to the diverse demands of various contexts. This understanding was expanded by Canale and Swain (1980), who identified four integral dimensions: grammatical competence, discourse competence, sociolinguistic competence, and strategic competence. Of particular relevance to this study is the concept of strategic competence, which Canale (1983) described as the capacity to employ verbal and non-verbal communication strategies to address constraints and facilitate effective interaction. The emphasis on communicative strategies as a pivotal element of communicative competence, as advocated by Dörnyei and Thurrell (1991), forms the cornerstone of the theoretical framework for this research. This study, therefore, aligns with Canale and Swain's (1980) model of communicative competence, focusing specifically on strategic competence. It investigates the role of communicative strategies in enhancing this competence, thereby contributing to our understanding of effective language use in varying communicative situations.

2.2. Communication strategies

The field of foreign language education has long recognized the significance of learning and communication strategies (Liu & Thondhlana, 2015; Nakatani, 2006). Learning strategies, as defined by Chamot (1987), are techniques aiding learners in assimilating linguistic and content area knowledge. CSs, conversely, involve conscious plans for achieving communicative objectives (Tarone, 1980). These strategies are categorised into compensatory and avoidance strategies (Dörnyei & Scott, 1997), with the former aiding learners in utilizing alternative resources to achieve communicative goals, and the latter assisting in overcoming message delivery challenges (Zhang & Goh, 2006). This study connects these theoretical underpinnings to empirical evidence, particularly focusing on how CSs facilitate language proficiency in EFL learners. Subsequent sections of this manuscript will discuss recent research that aligns with this theoretical framework, examining the practical implications and effectiveness of specific communication strategies in enhancing the communicative competence of EFL learners.

Numerous studies have explored the use of communication strategies in foreign language education contexts. For example, Hardianti (2016) investigated the oral communication strategies used by English as a foreign language students at an English university and found that students tended to use achievement strategies more than avoidance strategies. The study revealed that communication strategies helped students increase their proficiency by addressing their linguistic inadequacies. Similarly, Jamshidnejad (2011) explored how university students improve their accuracy levels in the target language. This study found that communication strategies notably improve accuracy and meaning negotiation among Persian English as a foreign language learners, especially when vocabulary is limited. These findings highlight the importance of these strategies in enhancing language proficiency and overcoming communication challenges.

Kuen et al.'s (2017) study, which found that twelve weeks of oral communication strategy instruction significantly improved learners' communicative performance and strategic competence, aligns with the broader research focus on the efficacy of communication strategies in language education. This study, mirroring the positive self-reports from learners in

the treatment group, parallels Somsai and Intaraprasert's (2011) findings, where two primary categories of strategies were identified for Thai tertiary-level EFL learners: conveying messages and understanding messages from interlocutors. Somsai and Intaraprasert's emphasis on the crucial role of teachers in enhancing strategy awareness underscores a common theme in communication strategy research: the need for guided instruction in strategy use. Both studies contribute to a growing body of evidence that highlights the importance of structured strategy instruction in improving learners' communicative abilities in foreign languages.

Nakatani's (2006) development of the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) has been pivotal in categorizing communication strategies to overcome language barriers, contributing to the development of communicative proficiency (Bialystok, 1990; Dörnyei, 1995). This tool has been extensively utilized in studies such as by Demir et al. (2018), who applied OCSI to explore the communication strategies of Turkish EFL learners in higher education. Their research, adopting a mixed-methods approach, identified negotiation strategies for meaning as the most commonly employed communication strategies, especially in contexts involving audio-visual materials in English-taught courses. The study also highlighted a notable disparity in the usage of communication strategies between learners with varying degrees of exposure to audio-visual content, underscoring the influence of teaching methodologies on strategy adoption. This finding not only corroborates the utility of OCSI in diverse educational settings but also enriches our understanding of how specific educational experiences shape communication strategy use among EFL learners.

Nakatani's (2010) 12-week study on Japanese college students using the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) revealed that maintaining discourse and negotiation for meaning strategies significantly improved communicative competencies. This finding is echoed in Ounis's (2016) research, which found a clear correlation between proficiency levels and strategy use among Tunisian EFL learners, with higher proficiency learners favoring meaning-negotiation and fluency-oriented strategies. Additionally, Demir et al. (2018) observed in Turkish EFL learners that those with greater exposure to audio-visual content in English courses demonstrated more effective use of communication strategies. Together, these studies underscore the value of integrating communication strategies into foreign language courses, highlighting the need for frequent application, student familiarization with these strategies, and teacher training for effective strategy implementation in language education.

Research indicates that the effectiveness of learning strategies in foreign language learning varies, with more proficient learners generally using them more effectively (Huang & Van Naerssen, 1987; Liu & Thondhlana, 2015; Lu & Liu, 2015; Nuypukiaw & Chompurach, 2023). Chu (2008) observed that higher proficiency EFL learners in Taiwan employed more communication strategies than their lower proficiency counterparts. Similarly, Huang and Van Naerssen (1987) underscored the significance of functional practice in using strategies for oral communication among Chinese EFL students. This study aims to explore the impact of functional practice on the use of target language. Further, Liu and Thondhlana (2015) noted moderate strategy use among low proficiency English learners, while Lu and Liu (2015) found that increased anxiety led to reduced strategy use in reading activities among FL learners.

Despite limited research on strategies in foreign language (FL) speaking, several studies have made important contributions. Chwo et al. (2010) found that supplementary materials improved listening and speaking strategies among Taiwanese EFL learners. Méndez López

(2011) demonstrated that students' proficiency levels in Mexican universities influenced their speaking strategies. Maleki (2007) confirmed the pedagogical effectiveness of teaching communication strategies in Iranian EFL contexts. However, Razmjoo and Ardekani (2011) observed no significant effect of gender or proficiency on speaking strategy use. These studies collectively indicate a research gap in understanding the impact of AOPs on EFL learners' strategy use for addressing speaking difficulties, which this study aims to fill.

2.3. Academic oral presentations (AOPs)

The pursuit of fluency in a foreign language (FL) forms a core focus of this study, particularly addressing the challenge learners face in practicing the language outside the classroom. This challenge is heightened in regions where the FL is not commonly spoken. Emphasizing the necessity of immersive contexts for extensive FL use, this paper explores the effectiveness of social settings, as recommended by Dewaele (2002) and Wong-Fillmore (1989), and educational environments, as discussed by Boonkit (2010) and Brooks and Wilson (2014), in facilitating language proficiency and academic development.

The literature indicates that AOPs significantly impact students' communication proficiency and skills. Miles (2009) observed an improvement in oral communication skills through oral presentations in elective courses. Tsai (2011) found that multimedia-enhanced presentations bolstered students' speech preparation and language skills in EFL contexts. Similarly, Živković (2014) reported that oral presentations improved communicative competence in Serbian EFL engineering students, highlighting their preference for such methods to develop workplace-relevant skills. Collectively, these studies suggest that AOPs are a valuable tool in enhancing various aspects of communication proficiency in EFL learning environments.

Previous studies have shown that oral presentations can positively impact EFL students' speaking abilities. Hammad (2020) demonstrated improvements in speaking performance for an experimental group through oral presentation interventions. Barry (2012) found that video feedback on presentations enhances self-assessment and future performance. Aliyu et al. (2019) observed a reduction in speaking anxiety with oral presentations. Despite these findings, research on the effect of AOPs on oral communication strategy use remains scarce, which this study seeks to address by examining AOPs' influence on managing speaking challenges in the target language. Accordingly, the research question (RQ) addressed in this study is:

RQ: What is the effect of AOPs on students' oral communication strategy use in addressing speaking problems in the target language?

To address this RQ, the following hypotheses were formulated in this study:

H_0 : *The students' AOPs are not more effective in their oral communication strategy use to handle speaking problems in the target language than those conventional EFL classes led by lecturers.*

H_1 : *The students' AOPs are more effective in their oral communication strategy use to handle speaking problems in the target language than those conventional EFL classes led by lecturers.*

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1. Research design

This study aimed to investigate the effects of AOPs on EFL students' oral communication strategy use to overcome their speaking challenges. A quasi-experimental, non-randomised design with a control group was employed. Two EFL groups were selected based on their SCSP scale scores, and both groups were given a pre-test and post-test to assess their strategy use. The intervention group received 30 minutes of AOPs per week for 12 weeks, while the control group received conventional lecturer-led classes. The treatment was only administered to the intervention group to isolate the effects of AOPs. The students in the intervention group were required to apply AOPs during their oral presentations. The control group, on the other hand, did not receive any treatment, and their strategy use was assessed through conventional classroom activities. According to Creswell (2002) and Rose and McKinley (2020), quasi-experimental designs are appropriate when randomisation is not possible, and both groups are subjected to pre-test and post-test measures. A summary of the study design is presented in Table 1.

Table 1. *Intervention Components of AOPs*

GROUPS	TEST	PROCEDURE	TEST
Intervention Group	Pretest	AOPs	Posttest
Control Group	Pretest	Conventional classes	Posttest

To ensure the internal validity of the study, both groups were comparable in terms of their age, gender, and English proficiency level. Moreover, the study was conducted in a natural classroom setting to enhance the external validity of the findings.

Prior to the study, the demographic profiles of the groups were analyzed through chi-square and independent samples t-tests. The results of the tests confirmed that the two groups were similar in terms of their demographics (see Table 3). To determine the difference in total SCSP scale scores before and after the interventions, the effect size was calculated using GPower 3.1. The effect size was found to be 0.74, and the post hoc analysis indicated that the study had a power of 86%, which is considered an acceptable level for group comparisons (Creswell, 2002; Maciejewski, 2020).

3.2. Study setting and participants

The present study was conducted at an English Language Teaching (ELT) department of a state university in Türkiye. The intervention was carried out in the Listening and Pronunciation I course, which is one of the introductory courses provided to students at the beginning of their degree programs. The participants were selected using purposive and convenience sampling methods, which refer to selecting individuals who can provide the required data and including those who are easily accessible to the researchers, respectively (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2009). A repeated cross-sectional design was employed to collect the

data, which eliminates the possibility of conditioning effect and initial contact with other respondents (Lavrakas, 2008).

A total of 73 participants were included in the study. The intervention group comprised 35 students who were studying 1st grade in the ELT department during the fall term of the 2016-2017 academic year. The control group consisted of 38 students who were studying 1st grade in the ELT department during the fall term of the 2017-2018 academic year. However, four students from the control group did not participate in the study and did not attend classes regularly, so they were excluded from the analysis. Ultimately, 69 students were included in the study. Prior to commencing their education studies in the faculty, all participants completed a year of intensive English language education in the preparatory classes at the university's School of Foreign Languages, achieving a proficiency level of B2.

Before the faculty education, they all took one year of intensive English language education at the preparatory classes in the School of Foreign Languages Education of the university, and they all finished this compulsory education at the B2 level. The participants' demographic profiles in both groups were comparable, and there was no significant difference between the groups in this regard ($p > 0.05$). Table 2 provides a summary of the participants' demographics.

Table 2. *Demographic profiles of the participants*

DEMOGRAPHIC PROFILES	INTERVENTION GROUP (N=35)		CONTROL GROUP (N=34)		<i>p</i>	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>n</i>	%		
Sex	Female	26	74.3	24	70.6	0.731 ^a
	Male	9	25.7	10	29.4	
EFL Experience (Years)	1-5 Years	7	20.0	7	20.6	0.304 ^a
	6-10 Years	14	40.0	19	55.9	
	11-15 Years	14	40.0	8	23.5	
Age ($\bar{x} \pm SD$)	21.20 \pm 4.52		20.08 \pm 2.39		0.208 ^b	

Note. SD: Standard deviation.

^a Obtained from the chi-square test.

^b Obtained from the independent-samples *t*-test.

3.3. Measurement tool

In this study, the SCSP scale of the Oral Communication Strategy Inventory (OCSI) was used as the pre-test and post-test. Developed by Nakatani (2006), the SCSP scale consists of 32 items divided into eight main dimensions, including social affective strategies (SAS), fluency-oriented strategies (FOS), negotiation for meaning while speaking strategies (NMWSS), accuracy-oriented strategies (AOS), message reduction and alteration strategies (MRAS), nonverbal strategies while speaking (NSWS), message abandonment strategies (MAS), and attempts to think in English strategies (ATES). Participants were asked to rate their responses to each item on the scale on a scale of 1 ('never or almost never true of me') to 5 ('always or almost always true of me').

The original scale had a Cronbach's alpha value of .86, indicating high internal consistency. For this study, the Cronbach's alpha was .75 for the pre-test and .84 for the post-test, indicating acceptable internal consistency (Nakatani, 2006).

3.4. Procedure

3.4.1. Intervention group

At the beginning of the term, the intervention group students were given a pre-test. The lecturer then presented a sample AOP based on the book 'Ship or Sheep' (Baker, 2006) - a core component of the curriculum. These AOPs were structured to enhance the students' oral communication strategies, focusing on aspects such as fluency, accuracy, and nonverbal communication. The presentation was interactive, and the teacher and students interacted throughout the lesson using questions and answers. The lecturer employed various strategies, such as minimal pairs, minimal sentences, sample dialogues, and teaching the target sound in English, to facilitate learning. Each student in the group then selected a target sound or topic in the coursebook to prepare an academic oral presentation. The students were then given several weeks to design their AOPs, with each academic oral presentation lasting in 30 minutes. In the subsequent weeks, 3-4 students presented their target sounds or topics in turns every week. The intervention lasted for 12 weeks, and a post-test was administered to the students at the end of the intervention. A sample academic oral presentation outline of the intervention is presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Intervention Components of AOPs

AOPs	DURATION
Warm-up: The topic of the week is introduced through audio-visual materials.	1-3 min
Minimal pairs/sentences: Sample minimal pairs and sentences in the target language are introduced.	5-10 min
Stress/intonation: The introduction of word stress, sentence stress, and intonation in the related topic	5-10 min
Dialogues: Sample dialogues involving target sounds or topics are practiced.	5-10 min
Closure: Topic of the week, activities, and procedure are briefly summarized.	1-3 min

The additional activities outlined are integral to the AOPs and serve dual roles: enhancing oral communication skills and providing pedagogical models for teaching academic subjects. These activities are essential components that contribute to the effectiveness of AOPs in our specific context of training future EFL teachers.

Drawing on Nakatani's (2006) Inventory, the AOPs were broken down into specific components, each targeting different facets of oral communication:

1. **Introduction and Topic Selection:** Students were guided on how to select topics that are both engaging and academically relevant.
2. **Research and Content Preparation:** Students conducted research to gather content for their presentations, learning how to cite sources and integrate evidence into their arguments.
3. **Speech Delivery Techniques:** Emphasis was placed on the effective use of voice

modulation, intonation, and pacing.

4. **Nonverbal Communication:** Students were trained on the use of gestures, facial expressions, and visual aids to complement their verbal communication.
5. **Feedback and Revision:** Peer and instructor feedback were integral parts of the AOPs, enabling students to refine their presentations based on constructive criticism.

3.4.2. *Control group*

To measure the effectiveness of the intervention, a control group was also included in this study. At the beginning of the term, the pre-test was given to the students in the control group. They received conventional instruction based on the coursebook for 12 weeks, which included 36 course hours in total. The coursebook involved the same content with a similar sequence of the topics followed in the intervention group. Each activity took approximately 5 minutes to complete. It involved audio-visual activities, mainly in question-answer, matching, labelling, and fill-in-the-blank formats. The design of the coursebook was suitable for teacher-led courses in which teacher-student and/or student-teacher interactions were observed. Accordingly, the lessons were delivered by the instructor in a conventional way. In this study, the conventional stands for the lessons in which the teacher is the central figure in classrooms, s/he directs the activities, little or no interaction is observed between students, interaction is primarily unidirectional between teacher and students or student and teachers, and sequences of the activities based on a coursebook are strictly followed. Finally, after 12 weeks of instruction, the post-test was administered to the control group students to evaluate their oral communication strategy development.

3.4.3. *Ethical issues*

The study followed ethical guidelines based on the 1964 Helsinki Declaration and its subsequent updates. The participants were informed of the procedures, confidentiality of their identities, and their right to withdraw from the study. They also gave written consent to participate in the study. All ethical procedures were strictly adhered to throughout the study.

3.5. **Data analysis**

The data analysis for this study began by examining the SCSP scores using the IBM SPSS 26.0 statistics software. To conduct inferential statistics, an independent samples t-test and chi-square test were employed. The assumptions for inferential statistics were met, and measures of skewness and kurtosis were used to assess the distribution of numerical values. Levene's test was used to analyse the homogeneity of variances, and an independent samples t-test was utilized to compare the two groups. A paired sample t-test was then conducted to evaluate the repeated measurements in the same group. The effect size of the difference between the groups was calculated using Cohen's d formula. The Independent-Samples t-Test for Cohen's d is calculated by calculating the mean difference between two groups and then dividing the result by the pooled standard deviation. Cohen's d values of 0.20, 0.50, and 0.80 obtained from the calculations indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes respectively (Cohen, 1988). In this study, a p-value of less than 0.05 was considered statistically significant.

4. RESULTS

The study's second hypothesis (H_2) was that AOPs are more effective in improving students' oral communication strategies to overcome language difficulties than conventional EFL classes led by lecturers. The SCSP scores of both the intervention and control groups were presented in Table 4 for the pre-test and post-test applications. The results of the pre-test showed that both groups had similar SCSP scores for all sub-dimensions ($p > 0.05$), except for the sub-dimensions of NMWSS and ATEs ($p < 0.05$). In contrast, the intervention group had significantly higher SCSP scores in the post-test compared to the control group in terms of TS, FOS, AOS, and NSWs ($p < 0.05$). Further, there was a significant increase in the SCSP scores of the intervention group in the post-test compared to the pre-test ($p < 0.05$), except for the sub-dimensions of MRAS, MAS, and ATEs ($p > 0.05$). Conversely, no statistically significant difference was observed in the SCSP scores of the control group in the post-test compared to the pre-test ($p > 0.05$). The pre-test and post-test results after the intervention for both groups are presented in Table 4. These findings confirm the first hypothesis of the study that AOPs are more effective in improving students' oral communication strategies to overcome language difficulties compared to conventional EFL classes led by lecturers.

5. DISCUSSION

5.1. Interpretation of the main findings

The study's primary contribution lies in its demonstration that AOPs significantly enhance the use of oral communication strategies, specifically in Time Saving (TS), Fluency Oriented (FOS), Accuracy Oriented (AOS), and Nonverbal Supporting (NSWS) strategies. This aligns with Farabi et al. (2017) who observed improved speaking skills through guided AOPs, and with Tsai (2011), who found multimedia support beneficial in speech preparation and language skills development. Hammad (2020) further supports this with evidence of enhanced speaking test performance due to AOPs. The effectiveness of AOPs, as shown in this study, offers substantial empirical evidence reinforcing the pedagogical value of oral presentations in language learning. Moreover, the improvement seen in the intervention group underscores the potential of AOPs to foster practical communicative competencies that are vital in real-world language use. Barry (2012)'s work on the benefits of self-review via video recordings complements this by suggesting self-assessment as a powerful tool for continuous learning. Collectively, these findings not only support the inclusion of AOPs in language curricula but also highlight the need for more nuanced research into the mechanisms by which AOPs facilitate language acquisition and proficiency.

This study reinforces the literature on the positive influence of AOPs on language learning, particularly in enhancing the use of oral communication strategies in the target language. Our results, which demonstrated the intervention group's superior performance in Time Saving (TS), Fluency Oriented Strategies (FOS), Accuracy Oriented Strategies (AOS), and Nonverbal Supporting Strategies (NSWS), align with prior research (Aliyu et al., 2019; Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Lu & Liu, 2015) and extend our understanding of AOPs' role in

Table 4. Pretest and Posttest Results of the Participants

SCORES	INTERVENTION GROUP (N=35)		CONTROL GROUP (N=34)		Levene's Test for Equality of Variances		t	p	^c Effect Size
	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	Median(Q ₁ , Q ₃)	$\bar{x}\pm SD$	Median(Q ₁ , Q ₃)	F	p			
TS	Pretest	3.50(3.34-3.71)	3.50(3.42-3.85)	3.61(3.37-3.85)	3.57(3.42-3.85)	1.044	0.311	-1.343	0.184 ^a
	Posttest	3.90(3.62-4.21)	3.90(3.62-4.21)	3.63(3.33-3.91)	3.53(3.39-3.91)	0.816	0.370	3.052	0.003^a
	<i>p</i>	<0.001^b	0.851 ^b						0.74
SAS	Pretest	3.56(3.16-4.00)	3.50(3.16-4.00)	3.81(3.66-4.33)	3.83(3.45-4.33)	0.043	0.836	-1.620	0.110 ^a
	Posttest	4.02(3.66-4.33)	4.00(3.66-4.33)	3.75(3.50-4.16)	3.91(3.16-4.16)	2.348	0.130	1.915	0.060 ^b
	<i>p</i>	<0.001^b	0.636 ^b						0.45
FOS	Pretest	3.56(3.33-3.83)	3.66(3.33-3.83)	3.70(3.53-4.16)	3.66(3.45-4.16)	0.000	0.996	-1.108	0.272 ^a
	Posttest	4.26(3.83-4.66)	4.33(3.83-4.66)	3.85(3.50-4.16)	4.00(3.50-4.16)	0.054	0.816	3.414	0.001^a
	<i>p</i>	<0.001^b	0.169 ^b						0.84
NMWSS	Pretest	3.55(3.25-4.00)	3.75(3.25-4.00)	3.88(3.58-4.25)	3.87(3.50-4.25)	0.191	0.663	-2.520	0.014^a
	Posttest	3.87(3.50-4.25)	4.00(3.50-4.25)	3.91(3.56-4.25)	3.87(3.50-4.25)	0.244	0.623	-0.241	0.810 ^b
	<i>p</i>	0.013^b	0.862 ^b						0.07
AOS	Pretest	3.60(3.40-4.00)	3.60(3.40-4.00)	3.85(3.62-4.25)	3.80(3.60-4.25)	0.924	0.340	-1.812	0.074 ^a
	Posttest	4.09(3.80-4.60)	4.20(3.80-4.60)	3.83(3.45-4.20)	3.80(3.55-4.20)	1.769	0.188	2.053	0.044^a
	<i>p</i>	<0.001^b	0.888 ^b						0.50
MRAS	Pretest	3.65(3.33-4.00)	3.66(3.33-4.00)	3.59(3.46-4.00)	3.66(3.25-4.00)	1.853	0.178	0.459	0.648 ^a
	Posttest	3.69(3.33-4.33)	3.66(3.33-4.33)	3.52(3.25-4.00)	3.66(3.00-3.66)	1.827	0.181	1.122	0.266 ^b
	<i>p</i>	0.790 ^b	0.549 ^b						0.27
NSWS	Pretest	3.54(3.00-4.00)	3.50(3.00-4.00)	3.79(3.75-4.50)	4.00(3.37-4.50)	0.585	0.447	-1.270	0.209 ^a
	Posttest	4.24(3.50-5.00)	4.50(3.50-5.00)	3.66(3.00-4.00)	3.75(3.00-4.00)	0.538	0.466	3.361	0.001^a
	<i>p</i>	<0.001^b	0.499 ^b						0.81
MAS	Pretest	2.95(2.50-3.50)	3.00(2.50-3.50)	2.72(2.74-3.11)	2.50(2.18-3.11)	1.614	0.208	1.357	0.179 ^a
	Posttest	3.05(2.25-3.75)	3.00(2.25-3.75)	2.78(2.66-3.25)	2.75(2.25-3.25)	2.282	0.136	1.457	0.150 ^b
	<i>p</i>	0.511 ^b	0.671 ^b						0.36
ATES	Pretest	3.68(3.00-4.00)	3.50(3.00-4.00)	3.22(3.22-3.99)	3.50(2.50-4.00)	9.405	0.003	2.338	0.023^a
	Posttest	3.67(3.00-4.50)	4.00(3.00-4.50)	3.32(3.22-3.82)	3.50(3.00-4.00)	0.694	0.408	1.682	0.097 ^b
	<i>p</i>	0.926 ^b	0.639 ^b						0.40

Note. SD: Standard deviation. Bold *p* values are statistically significant.

^a Obtained from the independent-samples *t*-test. ^b Obtained from the paired-samples *t*-test.

^c Effect size was calculated using Cohen's *d* formula.

language proficiency. Notably, this study elucidates the ‘why’ behind these improvements: AOPs provide a practical and interactive platform for learners to actively engage with and apply the target language, which is fundamental to strategy acquisition and skill development. Our findings echo the work of Farabi et al. (2017), Tsai (2011), Hammad (2020), and Barry (2012), highlighting oral presentations as a catalyst for enhancing speaking skills. While informative, the study’s context-specificity and the short-term observation period suggest caution in generalization and call for further research into the long-term impacts of AOPs across diverse educational settings.

Furthermore, the analysis indicated that AOPs significantly improved intervention group scores across various communication strategy dimensions, including Time Saving (TS), Speech Adjustment Strategies (SAS), Fluency Oriented Strategies (FOS), Nonverbal Means While Speaking Subscale (NMWSS), Accuracy Oriented Strategies (AOS), and Nonverbal Supporting Strategies (NSWS). This aligns with prior findings on AOPs’ multifaceted benefits for learners’ linguistic and strategic competencies (Dekdouk, 2013; Dörnyei, 1995; Huang, 2010; Nakatani, 2012; Ounis, 2016). Our study contributes to this empirical evidence, suggesting that AOPs can effectively enhance students’ communicative strategy use. However, given that the study focused on a single intervention, results might differ with other teaching approaches or interventions. Future research should thus explore a variety of pedagogical strategies to substantiate these findings further.

The study confirms that AOPs enhance the Time Saving (TS) scores in oral communication strategies and the strategies employed by the intervention group to address interaction issues in the target language. This extends prior evidence on AOPs’ role in boosting communication skills, including proficiency, pronunciation, and fluency (Chwo et al., 2010; Craig, 2013; King, 2002; Miles, 2009; Tam, 1997). AOPs emerge as a significant tool for improving strategy use in managing speaking difficulties.

While it may seem self-evident that AOPs would improve strategy use, this study’s empirical substantiation, particularly for prospective EFL teachers, is crucial. It provides detailed insights into the influence of AOPs on different facets of oral communication and offers an evidence-based method for EFL educators to tackle common speaking hurdles, such as engaging in and sustaining dialogue. This study’s empirical findings underscore the practical implications of AOPs in EFL teaching and contribute significantly to the academic discourse on language education strategies.

5.2. Pedagogical implications

The results of this study have several pedagogical implications for foreign language teaching contexts. First, incorporating AOPs into EFL lessons may enhance students’ oral communication strategies in the target language. Additionally, the development of AOPs by EFL learners may improve their fluency and accuracy in the target language. Furthermore, AOPs may facilitate students’ negotiation of meaning in the target language by prompting the use of nonverbal aids, including gestures, facial expressions, and emotional expressions. Thus, designing activities that consider the benefits of AOPs in EFL classes may assist students in overcoming their oral communication difficulties in the target language.

5.3. Suggestions for future research

To advance the current research, future studies can extend the application of AOPs to non-native students to address their speaking difficulties in the target language. Additionally, exploring the interplay between AOPs and other variables in foreign language education can provide a more comprehensive understanding of their effectiveness. A randomized experimental design can be employed to further investigate the benefits of AOPs in diverse educational contexts. Moreover, future research should consider collecting both qualitative and quantitative data to gain deeper insights into the effects of AOPs on EFL students' speaking problems in the target language, especially by exploring students' perceptions.

6. CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that implementing AOPs in a 12-week, 30-minute per lesson format can substantially improve the use of oral communication strategies among students aiming to become EFL teachers. Notably, the AOPs were effective in enhancing multiple dimensions of oral communication, including fluency, accuracy, and nonverbal cues such as rhythm, intonation, and pronunciation. Additionally, the intervention led to significant improvements in students' social and affective strategies, as well as their ability to negotiate meaning in conversations.

The significance of these findings is twofold. First, they offer a practical, evidence-based approach for EFL educators to address the pervasive challenges students face in speaking, particularly in initiating, maintaining, and concluding conversations. Second, this study contributes to the existing body of literature by focusing on the under-researched area of the role of AOPs in oral communication strategy use. In doing so, it provides a nuanced understanding of how structured academic presentations can serve as a powerful pedagogical tool to enhance various facets of oral communication.

While the study's results are promising, they are context-specific, given that the participants were freshmen in a foreign language teaching department at an education faculty. Therefore, additional research is warranted to extend the generalisability of these findings to a broader range of students and educational contexts. Nevertheless, the study stands as a pivotal contribution to EFL pedagogy, offering both educators and researchers valuable insights into the effective teaching of oral communication strategies through AOPs.

7. REFERENCES

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