

## **ORAL PRESENTATIONS IN ENGLISH AND THE BARRIERS FACED BY BANGLADESHI ENGINEERING UNDERGRADUATES**

\*Nahida Sultana<sup>1</sup>, Fatema Sultana<sup>2</sup> and Mohammad Kamrul Hassan<sup>1</sup>

<sup>1</sup> Chittagong university of Engineering and Technology, Chittagong, Bangladesh

<sup>2</sup> Dhaka university of Engineering and Technology, Dhaka, Bangladesh

### **ABSTRACT**

The ever-growing need for oral communication in personal, social, commercial and professional environments has accelerated the demand for oral presentations in engineering education. Unfortunately, most engineering students are seen struggling for effective performance in oral presentations. Hence, this paper investigates into the setbacks that engineering students as Second Language (SL)/ Foreign Language (FL) learners encounter while delivering oral presentations in English with an aim of suggesting measures to overcome presentation difficulties. It also examines the differences between perceived barriers present among engineering students and real barriers with a view to uncovering the real backdrops which are responsible for their poor performance. The study applies a mixed methods mode of inquiry through questionnaire, observation and interview to collect data from 258 students of five different engineering disciplines in a public engineering university, Bangladesh. The study has found three criteria of barriers, namely presentation skill, linguistic and psychological influencing smooth oral presentation delivery of engineering students among which psychological barrier is proved to be the most challenging one. The results are hoped to shed light on the shortcomings that exist in engineering undergraduates' oral presentation delivery. The findings of the study have important pedagogical implications to practise in order to ensure students' presentation achievements in classroom context.

**Keywords:** engineering undergraduate, barriers, oral communication, oral presentation, performance

### **INTRODUCTION**

Oral presentation is viewed as a planned and rehearsed talk, a partly spoken, partly visual form of communication which is designed to inform or persuade audience (Hyland, 1991). It is an important classroom activity for applying learners' multiple skills practically by dint of which they can prove their potentialities, get ready for the international job market and thus, flourish themselves in the ensuing days. Oral presentation helps undergraduates in achieving communication competency for real life situations to become more successful engineer in future (Kassim and Ali, 2010). In fact, efficiency in oral presentation is considered as one of the mostly sought course learning outcomes required by the Accreditation Board for Engineering and Technology that inspires students to excel in their academic and professional fields (Claire, 2010).

Effective oral presentation skills are very much important and crucial aspects of oral communication that can make or break a communication context. Oral presentation skills refer to the ability to give an oral presentation successfully. Generally, these skills involve gathering knowledge, organizing ideas in coherent order and delivering information before an audience with success. Hyland (1991) classified seven general stages of oral presentation skills. A lot of sub skills fall into under this classification. The seven stages are 1) being aware of oral communication strategies, 2) deciding objectives and gathering facts, 3) organising discourse structure and developing an outline, 4) preparing supporting visual material, 5) rehearsal and feedback, 6) delivering presentation and 7) handling questions.

---

\*Corresponding Author: Nahida Sultana; [chaityengdu@yahoo.com](mailto:chaityengdu@yahoo.com)