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## TOP: Fostering ESL Students' Overall Speaking Performance Using Topical-Based Oral Presentation

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### Abstract

The ability to communicate verbally permits humans to communicate with one another. For students with a variety of first languages, English is one of the languages with the increasing requirement. Developing speaking skills is always viewed as a difficult and time-consuming process that necessitates a significant amount of effort. This study aimed to investigate the use of topical-based presentation (TOP) in enhancing ESL students' speaking performance overall. The participants were 30 form four students from a secondary school. The research design used in the present study was action research. One pre-assessment and post-assessment were administered before and after the treatment. A set of questionnaires with 15 closed-ended Likert-scale items were used for data collection. This questionnaire was performed after the treatment to learn how students felt about the tactics that they used to improve their speaking talents during the course of the study. The data acquired was analysed using a paired sample t-test, which revealed a substantial improvement in students' speaking ability between pre and post assessment performance, with a t-value of 18.137 and p. value =.00001, 0.005. The findings of the study showed that TOP helped the students to improve their overall English-speaking skills. The students also saw TOP as a beneficial tool for improving their speaking ability, according to the findings. The pedagogical principles presented in this study are hoped to assist educators in effectively using topical-based oral presentations to improve their students' English language abilities, particularly in speaking.

**Keywords:** Topical, Oral Presentation, Speaking Performance, ESL Students, Secondary School

### Introduction

People in Malaysia must learn English because it is used in so many aspects of daily life, including industry, education, and management fields. Our country is one of the nations in the globe where English is officially used as a second language, and becomes an important part of the Malaysia's educational system (Thirusanku & Yunus, 2014). It occurs at a rapid pace, and it has resulted in the English language gaining the status of "global trade language," as it has been described. The English language has evolved into a worldwide language, with many people all over the world speaking it as their first or second language. In Malaysia,

English is regarded as a second or foreign language. As a result, it is expected that all Malaysian students will learn the language for at least eleven years in school, from kindergarten to university level (Ansari, 2015)

The absence of communication skills among many Malaysian students has become a national problem. If Malaysia wishes to produce a future of global communicators, ESL knowledge is essential (Rusli et al., 2018). According to past research, teachers' ideas on how to teach oral communication skills in the English classroom rarely become actuality. Many teachers urge students to speak up before they are prepared, and they are required to use linguistic knowledge that they have not yet readily comprehended (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). Learners' speaking performance will suffer as a result of insufficient of language competence. Teachers' views may not correspond to their students' learning environments. Their pedagogical goals and teaching methods are contradictory, making it impossible for them to put their views into action in the language classroom. A lot of students possess poor language competence level. As a result, the teachers are required to move to teacher-centered classroom practise (Ahmed, 2018). This means that, the teachers cannot include communication practice in in their teaching fully even though they have planned for it. It is because the they have to prepared the students for the exam. As a result, the focus in the classroom shifts from the student to the teacher, and this results in a less student-centered learning environment.

### **Problem Statement**

During teaching and learning at SMK Dato Haji Talib Karim, the researcher observed students having difficulty speaking. Unfortunately, most of them have difficulty communicating, and they prefer to be quiet and withdrawn. Students' speaking abilities will decline as a result of their inability to communicate effectively in the target language. Consequently, they are hesitant to communicate in English, some students prefer to remain silent during English class. The researcher employed topical-based oral presentations (TOP) in teaching and learning to speak to students in the classroom to alleviate problems caused by the challenges. As a result, the researcher's goal in this study is to look into the usage of TOP in to help ESL secondary students improve their speaking skills.

### **Topical-based Oral Presentations (TOP)**

Normally, oral-presentation technique applies to train people to practice speaking in front of a big crowd. The main aim is to teach people the presentation skills when presenting about any information to the audience such as eye contact, fluency and style of communicating with others. This is the research gap that found by the researcher where oral-presentation is widely applied in working sectors to train the employees' soft skills. In this study, oral-presentation technique was modified as topical-based oral presentation (TOP). Top is used to enhance ESL students speaking skills. It shows students' knowledge of a specific topic. The teacher chooses the topic, but students can also choose it themselves. The students should therefore present their topical-based oral presentations in front of the other students one by one in the blended learning classroom. Students conduct a small amount of study about the topic and discuss with their fellow students and present important information about the chosen topic to listeners through an oral presentation.

### Objective of the Study

This study has looked into the use of TOP in English classes for secondary school students. The objectives of this study are to:

- i. To investigate the impacts of using TOP on students' performance of speaking the language in the ESL classroom
- ii. To find students' viewpoints towards the use of TOP technique to speak the targeted language.

### Conceptual Framework

The researcher's goal in this study is to take an action that will increase ESL secondary students' ability to speak English by using TOP style. The researcher in this study would explain about TOP to the students in order to prepare them for this technique. The researcher then instructed the students to develop a presentation based on the topics provided, which they were to present to their classmates through the face-to-face classroom or the Google Meet portal. The intervention would be held for 14 weeks. Vygotsky's Sociocultural Theory and the Communicative Language Teaching Approach led the research. The conceptual framework is shown in Diagram 1.

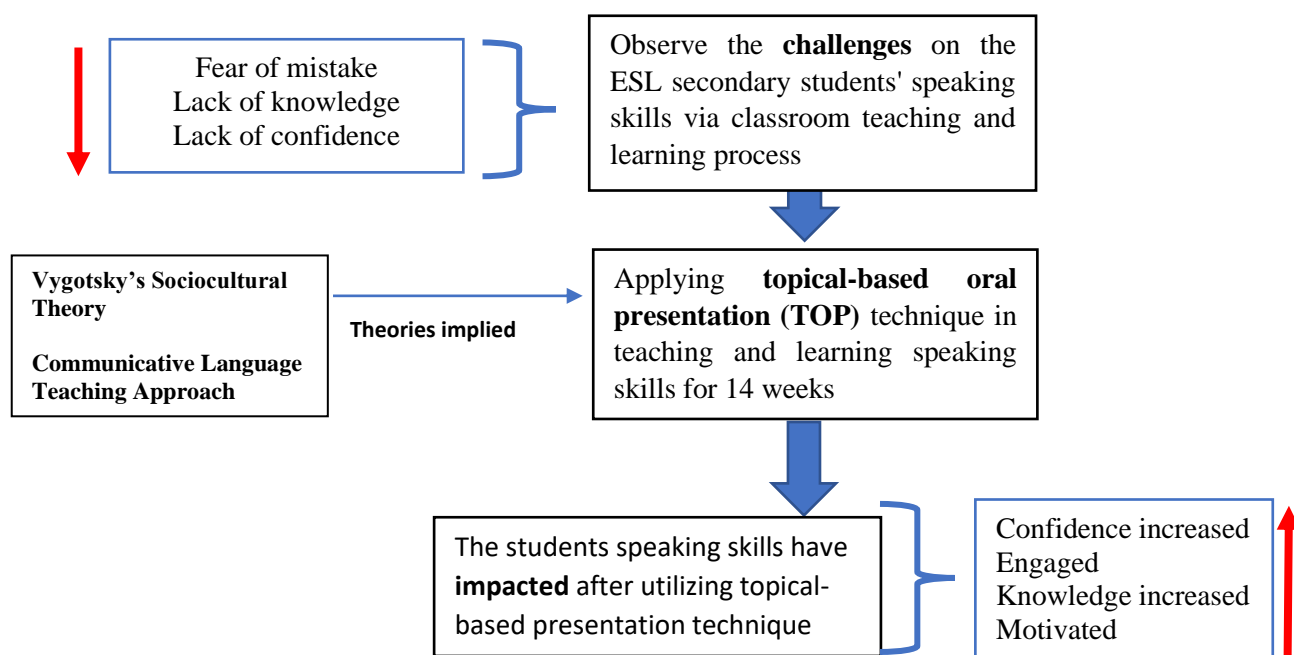


Diagram 1: Conceptual Framework

### Literature Review

#### The Importance of English Speaking

For English language learners, it can be difficult to communicate in English, especially if they do not have a strong command of the English language. Fortunately, there are several resources available to help them (Tom et al., 2013). Understanding and getting along with other people is a critical linguistic ability that allows people to interact and socialise with those in their immediate social circle. A speaker must follow the cultural norms of the discourse community in order to be considered a member. For the Malaysian Education System,

speaking is an important part of its English curriculum. Academic and professional pursuits in Malaysia frequently necessitate the usage of English. In verbal communication we can refer to things like attending meetings, training sessions, and seminars as well as talking about daily professions or commitments, presenting verbal speeches, and talking about everyday scenarios in which the activities are carried out orally. In order to ensure that communication was as effective as possible, English was used as a stand-in for the local languages (Shahariah et al., 2018). The ability to speak effectively in English is becoming increasingly important for Malaysians who are looking for work. Speaking is the cornerstone of all communication and one of the most fundamental language qualities a person can possess (Zulkurnain & Kaur, 2014)

### **Learners' Challenges in Speaking English**

It can be difficult for English language learners to communicate in English, even more so if they lack a strong command of the language. The most frequently encountered difficulty among students is a lack of confidence in their abilities to speak in English. Participants in English-language activities must demonstrate a certain level of interest on their part in order to be successful. For the purposes of this discussion, intrinsic and extrinsic components are defined as those that motivate and inspire students to be constantly engaged and pushed to study and participate in English-related activities (Azlan et al., 2019).

Additionally, learners are fearful of making errors when speaking English. They choose to communicate in their home tongue rather than the target language when they are unable to express themselves in English. The students have a hard time communicating in English because they lack vocabulary. In his book, Tom et al (2013) asserts that 2,500 words are sufficient to meet the needs of native English speakers in 95 percent of cases. It would be good to have a working grasp of the top 1,500 most common terms in English, while the top 200 most basic phrases would provide a great deal of conversational endurance. As a result, when students lack the vocabulary to participate in typical and casual classroom interactions, they choose to avoid speaking in their second language (L2).

The interruptions from one's own language can also be a problem when learning a new language. Mohtar et al (2015) stated English-learning students have been identified. The environment outside the classroom can hinder students' ability to speak in English. Students conversed in their native tongues while outside during recess. Teachers believe that additional hands-on activities in the classroom will encourage students to communicate in English with others. According to Susilawati (2017)'s research, Students rely primarily on their native language for verbal output. In addition to their native tongue, the students' incapacity to speak effectively in English is due to a variety of factors. As a result, students were found to use their mother tongue to interpret and produce words, as well. It demonstrates that respondents have a significant difficulty communicating verbally, and they all feel that English is essential, particularly as a means of communication.

### **CEFR and Speaking Skills**

Several innovative pedagogical approaches are included in the Malaysian Education Blueprint 2013-2015 to help students improve their English proficiency in all four areas. Various unique teaching and learning methods are included to help students enhance their spoken English skills, with an emphasis on the relevance of English in the classroom. One of its key goals is to

implement a "Malaysian English language education system based on the Common European Framework of Reference for Languages" in Malaysia (CEFR). It is through the CEFR (Common European Framework of Reference for Languages) that countries like Malaysia and the United Kingdom are able to establish language proficiency standards for its citizens (Zaini, 2018).

### **Theories Related**

#### **Socio-cultural Theory**

Lingua Franca's writings on the socio-cultural theory of language acquisition are one source of inspiration for this communicative approach to language instruction (Vygotsky, 1978). Using a second language (L2) in a real-world context is one of the most significant conditions for language acquisition, according to socio-cultural theory. Because socio-cultural theorists believe that language is a social phenomenon, students must be able to communicate in the language they are learning in order to succeed as L2 learners (Rusli et al., 2018).

#### *The Communicative Language Teaching Approach*

Learners' natural language acquisition mechanisms are triggered when they partake in real-world communication, which is enabling them to utilise the language. The emphasis on developing meaningful and relevant communication at all levels distinguishes communicative approach-guided classroom activities (Richards, 2018). As a consequence, a larger emphasis on skills instead of systems may be placed, classes may become more student-centered, and authentic materials may be employed. According to Toro et al. (2018), giving students authentic communicative settings is the finest selection where the teachers can make it since the students may need to communicate with genuine knowledge and language and phrases will arise as a result of the scenario. A high level of vocabulary knowledge, linguistic information that allows students to extend and use language in every scenario, and enthusiasm play a crucial part in enticing students to orally socialise are all critical to students' success in the classroom.

### **The Use of Oral Presentations in Developing Students' Speaking Skills**

Oral presenting is a useful tool that, when used correctly, can give a plethora of opportunities for language learners. Meaningful language activities, such as oral presentations, can assist students in improving their conversational skills (Nguyen, 2020). One advantage of giving an oral presentation to students is that it helps them acquire key communicative skills. Language learners benefited from oral presentations because they improve the communication between language learning and use. It also essential that they apply all four talents in a realistic context (Li, 2018).

Oral presentation has a beneficial impact on psychological components of language learners because it inspires them to present the oral works in front of their peers, which enhances their self-esteem and lessens their nervousness. Additionally, students can have fun learning opportunities that support engagement with others while presenting in the second language (Brooks & Wilson, 2018). There are additional benefits to utilizing the oral presentations in the classroom. Group presentations are beneficial for English learners since they require the students to collaborate on a project. The presentation, for example, has a favourable impact on learners' gaps in language learning. It also provides a bigger view of student aptitude and performance so as to give a more objective assessment of their performance (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021).

Students will be able to pronounce words more accurately if they use the presentation approach. Before giving a class presentation, students should practise. They made every effort to enunciate the words correctly. While given the opportunity to share opinions on certain themes, most students showed higher enthusiasm when employing the presentation method. This is a platform for students to practise presenting their ideas to others, as well as a necessary step in learning how to speak. It aided pupils in becoming more self-assured in their use of English and motivated in their study of the language (Nguyen, 2020).

### **Methodology**

The researcher used classroom action research to figure out how a specific strategy solves specific problems. This study aims to improve the instructional strategies by exemplifying how using a topic-based oral presentation, so that the students can improve their speaking skills. The study took place over the course of fourteen weeks, divided into two equal seven-week cycles. The researcher reflected on, evaluated, and described the impact of implementing topical-based oral presentations in strengthening students' speaking skills and helping them comprehend, the subject she was researching more clearly in this stage. The researcher could see if the action activity had improved the situation. The researcher analysed the findings of observation, which includes analysis and evaluation of the findings.

### **Participants**

This study is conducted at a secondary school. The participants in this research are 16-year-old form 4 students. This class had 30 students. There are 7 male students and 23 female students. The researcher chose that class as a participant because the students rarely spoke English, were docile, and were afraid to make mistakes. The participants were chosen based on their performance in the classroom-based assessment. Students with band levels ranging from 2 to 4 out of 6, were designated as intermediate level. As a result, the researcher's actions reflect purposive sampling.

### **Instrumentation**

#### **Classroom-based Speaking Performance Assessment**

For this action research, a quantitative approach was employed to collect data. The classroom-based speaking performance assessment was the first instrument employed in this investigation. The assessment was done before and after intervention to differentiate the data before and after utilizing topical-based oral presentation to enhance their English-speaking ability. The data were largely used to improve the intervention's implementation during the teaching and learning phase of speaking skills.

It's a tool for assessing students' progress. All the participants were required to complete a pre- and post-speaking assessment. Following the pre-speaking assessment, participants participated in fourteen-week English speaking intervention activity. The results of the pre- and post-speaking assessments served as the primary point of comparison in the study. Students chose topics from the teacher and discussed them with their peers as part of their speaking performance assessment. After finishing the discussion, students offered their thoughts on the topic in front of the class or via a digital platform. This assessment was divided into two parts: the first assesses the students' overall performance, and the second assesses the students' grammar, communication competence, and vocabulary throughout the

speaking performance. The assessment form was used to assist the researcher in selecting students who were suitable for the study's conditions. The assessment was used to determine the students' language level. It also gave the researcher a better sense of their competence. According to the pre-speaking assessment, learners with scores between band 2 and 4 were classified as intermediate. The students were assessed both before and after the intervention. Data was collected, analysed using SPSS software and reported in tables using percentages.

### Questionnaires

A set of questionnaires with 15 closed-ended Likert-scale items were created for data collection in Google Form. This questionnaire was performed to learn how students felt about the tactics that they used to improve their speaking talents during the study. The Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale paradigm was used to create this questionnaire (FLCAS), which was designed by (Horwitz et al., 1986) . Only 15 statements were changed from the original text, all of them are linked to attitudes concerning English skills and English training. The first section, Section A, asked respondents to fill in information about their personal backgrounds. The students were then requested to response to the questions in Section B by circling the appropriate scales such as 'strongly agree,' 'agree,' 'disagree,' and 'strongly disagree' to determine their thoughts on the strategies used to develop their speaking skills.

### Reliability and Validity

Respondent validation is used in this study to improve accuracy by providing participants the questionnaires and speaking assessment form for explanations and confirmation. The participants are shown the data gathered from all study instruments to ensure that the researcher accurately recorded and interpreted their thoughts and statements.

This study used a conceptual framework, classroom-based assessment and questionnaires, as well as topic-based oral presentation exercises, to collect data. To guarantee that the conclusions are consistent and credible, the data is compared and double-checked. A group or peer check from the same course is another method for ensuring the research's reliability.

### Results

#### 1. Pre and post speaking assessment results

Table 1

*The score of pre speaking assessment*

Participants	Overall Performance	Grammar	Vocabulary	Communicative Competence	Total Score
Student 1	3	2	3	2	10
Student 2	3	2	3	2	10
Student 3	2	2	2	2	8
Student 4	3	3	3	3	12
Student 5	2	2	2	2	8
Student 6	3	3	3	3	12
Student 7	3	3	3	3	12
Student 8	2	2	2	2	8
Student 9	2	3	3	2	10



Student 10	2	2	2	2	8
Student 11	3	2	3	2	10
Student 12	3	3	3	3	12
Student 13	2	2	2	2	8
Student 14	3	2	3	2	10
Student15	4	3	4	3	14
Student 16	3	2	2	2	9
Student17	3	2	2	2	9
Student18	3	2	3	2	10
Student 19	2	2	2	2	8
Student 20	4	3	4	3	14
Student 21	3	2	3	2	10
Student 22	3	2	3	2	10
Student 23	2	2	2	2	8
Student 24	4	3	4	3	14
Student 25	3	2	3	2	10
Student 26	4	3	4	3	14
Student 27	2	2	2	2	10
Student 28	4	3	4	3	14
Student 29	2	2	2	2	8
Student 30	3	2	3	2	10

Table 2

*The Score of Post Speaking Assessment*

Participants	Overall Performance	Grammar	Vocabulary	Communicative Competence	Total Score
Student 1	4	3	4	3	14
Student 2	4	3	4	3	14
Student 3	4	3	4	3	14
Student 4	5	4	5	4	18
Student 5	3	3	3	3	12
Student 6	4	4	4	4	16
Student 7	5	4	4	4	17
Student 8	4	3	3	3	13
Student 9	5	3	4	4	16
Student 10	4	3	4	3	14
Student 11	5	3	4	3	15
Student 12	4	4	4	4	16
Student 13	3	3	3	3	13
Student 14	4	3	4	3	10
Student15	5	4	5	4	18
Student 16	4	3	3	3	13
Student17	5	3	4	3	15

Student18	5	3	4	3	15
Student 19	4	3	3	3	13
Student 20	5	4	5	4	18
Student 21	5	3	4	3	15
Student 22	5	3	4	3	15
Student 23	4	3	3	3	13
Student 24	5	4	5	4	18
Student 25	4	3	4	3	14
Student 26	5	3	5	3	16
Student 27	4	3	3	3	13
Student 28	5	3	4	4	16
Student 29	4	3	3	3	13
Student 30	5	3	4	3	15

Table 3

*The Score Difference between Pre and Post Speaking Assessment*

<b>Participant s</b>	<b>PRE-ASSESSMENT SCORE</b>	<b>POST ASSESSMENT SCORE</b>	<b>SCORE DIFFERENCE</b>
Student 1	10	14	4
Student 2	10	14	4
Student 3	8	14	6
Student 4	12	18	6
Student 5	8	12	4
Student 6	12	16	4
Student 7	12	17	5
Student 8	8	13	5
Student 9	10	16	6
Student 10	8	14	6
Student 11	10	15	5
Student 12	12	16	4
Student 13	8	13	5
Student 14	10	10	0
Student15	14	18	4
Student 16	9	13	4
Student17	9	15	6
Student18	10	15	5
Student 19	8	13	5
Student 20	14	18	4
Student 21	10	15	5
Student 22	10	15	5
Student 23	8	13	5
Student 24	14	18	4
Student 25	10	14	4

Student 26	14	16	2
Student 27	10	13	3
Student 28	14	16	2
Student 29	8	13	5
Student 30	10	15	5

Boxplot

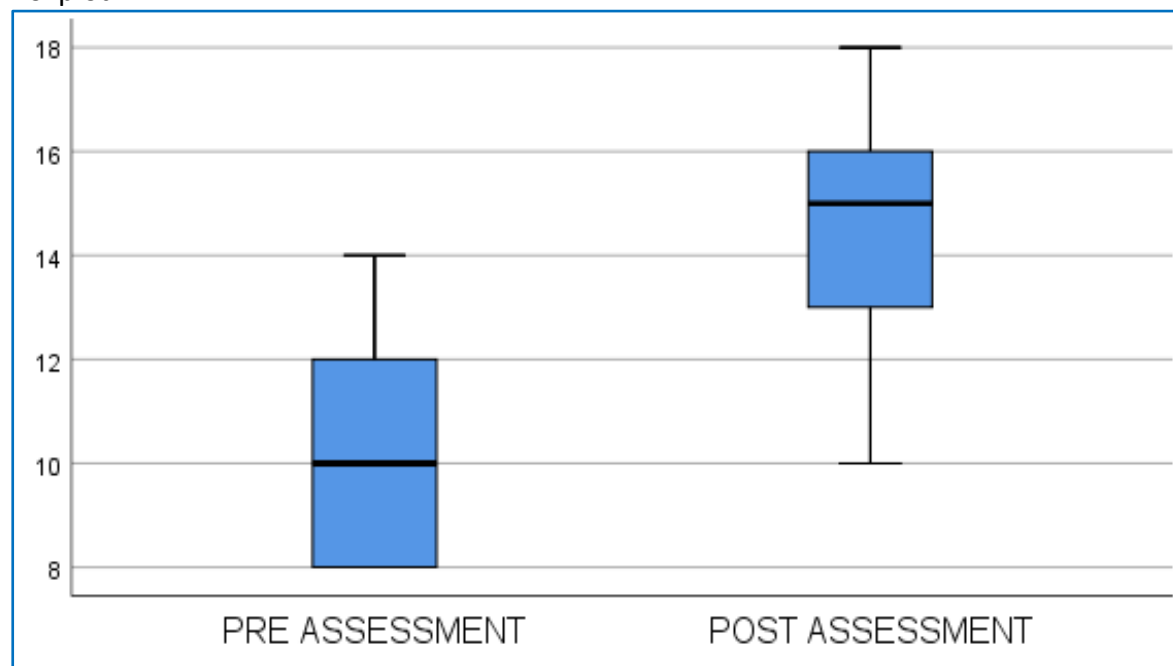


Table 4  
Comparative boxplot of pre and post assessment

From the boxplot, we can see that the center of the post speaking assessment’s score is much higher than the center of the pre speaking assessment. There is slightly more spread in the pre assessment that in the post assessment scores. Both variables appear to be symmetrically distributed.

Paired Samples T-Test

Paired Samples Statistics					
		Mean	N	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
Pair 1	PRE-ASSESSMENT	10.33	30	2.090	.382
	POST ASSESSMENT	14.73	30	1.946	.355

Paired Samples Correlations				
		N	Correlation	Sig.
Pair 1	PRE-TEST & POST- ASSESSMENT	30	.786	.000

Paired Samples Test									
		Paired Differences					t	df	Sig. (2-tailed)
		Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean	95% Confidence Interval of the Difference				
					Lower	Upper			
Pair 1	PRE-ASSESSMENT - POST ASSESSMENT	-4.400	1.329	.243	-4.896	-3.904	-18.137	29	.000

Table 5

Paired sample T-Test on students’ pre and post speaking assessments

The total score for the speaking assessment is 20 points. The students scored between 10 to 14 marks in the pre speaking assessment. Most of the students scored only 10 over 20 marks, which was 36.7% of the assessment. The mean score in the pre speaking assessment is  $M=10.33$  and standard deviation is,  $SD=2.090$ . Mean score was lower than the mean score in post speaking assessment,  $M=14.73$ . Standard deviation of post assessment is  $SD=1.946$ . The low SD value in the post assessment shows that the students’ score mainly fall around the mean score, 14.73. The SPSS Statistics state that the Sig. (2. tailed) value is 0.0001. This means that it is  $p<0.005$ . As a result, it is possible to conclude that the students' speaking assessment means differ statistically substantially before and after the intervention. The difference between the means in the two tests is extreme enough that it is likely to have occurred merely due to a chance, therefore, we can conclude that it is a real difference. The paired samples correlation table adds the information that pre and post-test’s overall performance in speaking performance are significantly positively correlated ( $r=0.786$ ). The average difference between before and after speaking assessments was substantial ( $t_{29}=-18.137$ ,  $p<0.0001$ ). On average, post speaking assessment scores were 14.73 points, which is higher than pre speaking assessment, 10.33 points (95%CI [-4.896, -3.904]). The post assessment result shows that TOP has improved students’ speaking skills.

2. Students’ viewpoints on applying TOP in improving speaking skills.

No.	Statements	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Total respondents
1	I think learning speaking English through topical-based presentation is fun.	36.7%	11	63.3%	19	0%	0	0%	0	30
2	I get the opportunity to share and express my ideas to other classmates	33.3%	10	66.7%	20	0%	0	0%	0	30

	during the presentation.									
<b>3</b>	I feel confident of myself when I speak English during the topical-based presentation in the class.	20%	6	80%	24	0%	0	0%	0	30
<b>4</b>	My knowledge about the speaking topics has increased when I practise speaking using topical-based technique.	23.3%	7	73.3%	22	3.3%	1	0%	0	30
<b>5</b>	I can improve my speaking skills frequently in every topical-based presentation session in the class.	30%	9	66.7%	20	3.3%	1	0%	0	30
<b>6</b>	I like to discuss about the speaking topics given with my friends.	36.7%	11	56.7	17	6.7%	2	0%	0	30
<b>7</b>	I feel that I can improve my speaking skills more independently via topical-based presentation technique in the class.	33.3%	10	66.7%	20	0%	0	0%	0	30

<b>8</b>	I do not pay attention seriously to my mistakes when speaking during topical-based presentation sessions.	26.7%	8	43.3%	13	30%	9	0%	0	30
<b>9</b>	After practising speaking through topical-based presentations, I believe that I can speak English well and fluently.	36.7%	11	56.7%	17	6.7%	2	0%	0	30
<b>10</b>	I find it is better to find the suitable words and phrases to express my ideas after practising speaking using the topical-based speaking technique.	33.3%	10	66.7%	20	0%	0	0%	0	30
<b>11</b>	I find that I could improve myself by speaking grammatically correct English during the topical-based presentations.	23.3%	7	66.7%	20	10%	3	0%	0	30
<b>12</b>	I always try to improve my speaking skills in every session of topical-based presentation.	43.3%	13	56.7%	17	0%	0	0%	0	30
<b>13</b>	I no more feel worry that the audience will laugh at me when I speak English after practising speaking using	23.3%	7	36.7%	11	40%	12	0%	0	30

	topical-based speaking technique.									
<b>14</b>	I have a lot of improvement in speaking English after following the topical-based presentations.	30%	9	66.7%	20	3.3%	1	0%	0	30
<b>15</b>	I have a lot of ideas when speaking English after following topical-based presentation sessions.	20%	6	73.3%	22	6.7%	2	0%	0	30

Table 6

Descriptive analysis of questionnaires on students' views on applying TOP method.

For statement 1 in the questionnaires, 11 students, 36.7% strongly agreed that topical-based oral presentations helped them to learn to speak English enjoyingly, not in a stressful way. 19 students, which is 63.3% agreed with that statement above. Overall, all the 30 students agreed that learning to speak English through topical-based oral presentation was fun for them.

By referring to statement 2, the researcher found that 10 students, 33.3% strongly agreed and 20 students, 66.7% agreed that they shared and expressed their ideas to other classmates during the presentations. All the students believed they could use the knowledge that they gained about the topics given to share with others.

The result of statement 3 in the questionnaire shows that all the students agreed topical-based oral presentation helped them to improve their self-assurance to speak English. 6 students, 20% strongly agreed and 24 students, 80% agreed with the statement in the questionnaire. The results demonstrate that employing this strategy, pupils' confidence in speaking English can be increased. It increased students' confidence in speaking in public by improving their speech performance.

For the statement 4, there were 7 students, 23.3% strongly agreed and 22 students, 73.3% agreed. There was only one student, 3.3% disagreed. Moreover, there were 6 students, 20% strongly agreed that they had a lot of ideas when speaking English after following the topical-based oral presentation method. Another 22 students, 73.3%, agreed with this statement. Only 2 students, 6.7%, disagreed with the statement.

Based on the students' viewpoint for statement 5, we know that 9 students, 30% strongly agreed that they could improve their speaking skills frequently in every topical-based oral presentation session in the class. Another 20, 66.7% students agreed with that statement.

Only 3.3%, 1 student disagreed with the statement mentioned above. Overall, 29 students agreed they could see the improvement in their speaking skills after exposing to the intervention sessions.

There were 10 students, 33.7% agreed that they like to discuss the speaking topics given with their friends in the groups. 17 students, 56.7% agreed with the statement 6. There were only 2 students, 6.7% disagreed that they did not like to discuss the speaking topics with their friends.

For statement 7, 7 students, 23.3% strongly agreed and 20 students, 66.7% agreed that they could improve themselves by speaking grammatically correct English during the topical-based oral presentations. Only 3 students, 10%, disagreed with the statement above. It means most of the students, 27 agreed that they could learn correct English grammar when speaking by applying topical-based oral presentation method. The 3 students felt difficult to learn the grammar rules while focusing on speaking skill on their own and they need more teacher's guidance to understand the grammar rules.

Based on statement 8, there were 8 students, 26.7% strongly agreed that they did not pay serious attention to their mistakes when speaking and 13 students, 43.3% also agreed with the statement. There were 9 students, 30% disagreed with it. Totally, 21 students realised they should not give more attention to the mistakes while speaking. The 9 students really worried about the mistakes that they made during the presentation sessions.

If the students' confidence level increases, it will also increase their fluency of the language. Consequently, 11 students, 36.7% strongly agreed and 17 students, 56.7% agreed with the statement 9, that they could speak English fluently after practising speaking using the topical-based presentation technique. There were only 2 students, 6.7% said that they still could not improve their fluency in speaking the English language. Improving students' confidence level is difficult and time consuming.

Based on the statement 10 in the questionnaires, 33.3%, 10 students strongly agreed that they found it is better to find the suitable words and phrases to express their ideas after practising speaking using the topical-based speaking technique. The other 20 students, 66.7% agreed with the statement above. None of the respondents disagreed with this because they had to prepare themselves with appropriate points and notes based on the topic given for the presentation. Therefore, they learned about the topic that they would present before the presentation.

Above finding for the statement 11, shows that the students had a lot of improvements in speaking English after following the topical-based oral presentation. 9 students, 30% strongly agreed with the statement and 20 students, 66.7% agreed to it. Only one student disagreed with the statement, 3.3%. Overall, 29 students agreed with this statement because they believed that topical-based oral presentation has improved their speaking skills.

Amazingly, there were 13 students, 43.3% strongly agreed and 17 students, 56.7% agreed with statement 12, that they always try to improve their speaking skills in every session of the topical-based oral presentation. All the respondents agreed with this statement.

For statement 13, there were 7 students, 23.3% strongly agreed and 11 students, 36.7% agreed that they were no more feel worry the audience will laugh at them when they speak English after practising speaking using topical-based oral presentation technique. Totally, 18 students agreed that they have the self-esteem to speak the language and do not bother about what others' comments. There 12 students, 40% disagreed saying that they are still feel



worry people will make fun when they speak in English. These students still have the fear and anxiety of speaking the English language with others even though they went through the intervention sessions.

Above finding for the statement 14 shows that the students had a lot of improvements in speaking English after following the topical-based oral presentation. 9 students, 30% strongly agreed with the statement and 20 students, 66.7% agreed to it. Only one student disagreed with the statement, 3.3%. Overall, 29 students agreed with this statement because they believed that topical-based oral presentation have improved their speaking skills.

Last, for the statement 15, there were 6 students, 20% strongly agreed and 22 students, 73.3% agreed that they got a lot of ideas when speaking after following topical-based oral presentations. Only 2 students, 6.7%, disagreed with this statement. The majority of the students agreed because they would be given the time to study about the presentation topics. Hence, they would read, research and collect the important points which are related to the topics by their own. The disagreed students found it was difficult to find the important points for the topics given because they were lack of sources such as internet facility and books. They mainly depended to their group members to get the points for the presentation.

### **Discussion**

There are five main impacts occurred in the students' overall speaking performance after they went through 14 weeks of the intervention session using the topical-based oral presentation method.

#### *a) TOP has increased students' vocabulary for speaking*

The utilization of TOP has increased slightly the students' use of English vocabulary when speaking the language. They could learn a lot of vocabulary beforehand for the presentations and it helped them to speak the language smoothly during the presentation. They found it is better to find suitable words and phrases to express their ideas after practising speaking using the TOP technique. Educators should teach children how to talk with a wide range of language in order to enable them to participate in classroom activities and achieve spoken competency (Khan et al., 2018). This learning environment gave them the chance to learn a wide variety of vocabulary about a topic. Moreover, the students chose simple vocabulary to deliver their speech. By doing this, they could speak fluently using the simple words and phrases. The students also practised their speech before the day of presentations. By doing this practice, they could remember the words and phrases very well. Therefore, they could increase their knowledge on English vocabulary by remembering the sentences. When the students researched about the topics given, they read a lot of articles related to the them. Thus, they learned many new words which are related to the topics.

#### *b) TOP has fostered the students to use correct grammar when speaking.*

Furthermore, TOP skill has encouraged the students to use correct grammar in speaking. Grammar is essential for effective communication and fluency in English (Shakir & Mahmood, 2021). Many students agreed they could improve themselves by speaking grammatically correct English during the topical-based oral presentations. When they research about the topics given, they were exposed to read correct sentence orders with appropriate grammar again and again. This helped the students to learn certain phrases and structures with correct grammar usage. Anyone who communicates in a given language becomes aware of its grammar, whether consciously or unconsciously. Thus, it helped them to track their progress

on the grammar concepts that are most important for them to speak indirectly. Slowly, the student could learn the correct sentence structures and keep away from making a lot of grammatical errors while speaking.

A few students may not absorb it and find it difficult to learn the grammar rules while focusing on speaking skills on their own. The students really worried about the mistakes that they made during the presentation sessions. If students never make mistakes, they will never learn. Learners can benefit from their errors. The more students practise speaking, the better they will become. The more practise the learner gets, the more fluid and accurate his or her speech will be (Marzuki, 2017). Some students memorised the significant points for the speaking and practise speaking before doing the presentations. Thus, they could correct the errors in the sentence parts that they prepared for the presentations. This is an effective strategy for avoiding grammatical errors when speaking.

*c) TOP has enhanced students' communicative competence when speaking*

Communicative competence means the ability of the students to take in effective communication, which includes the speaking skills and understanding that enable the communication to occur to deliver and exchange the messages successfully during the presentation sessions (Susanto, 2012). The students discussed with their friends, exchanged ideas and helped each other for the group presentations. They learnt the automaticity skill in completing the task given. All the students involved themselves and completed the tasks independently. They also used the strategies such as using correct body gestures while doing the presentations. Verbal language is not only important to develop one's speaking skills, non-verbal language such as body language is also important for it. Furthermore, they used the language in their real-life situation by talking to their friends, teacher and family members to develop their language competence skills.

*d) TOP has increased students' topical knowledge in speaking*

TOP helped the students to be knowledgeable on a particular topic because the students would study and research the topic and gather the related information to be presented before the day of presentation. It has been demonstrated that such a preparatory process increases the likelihood of learners being more engaged in the information, boosting self-control awareness. This pre-processing strategy has been shown to promote student engagement, self-organization awareness, knowledge of the problem, and creative thinking (Tomsett & Shaw, 2014). Therefore, they could increase their knowledge on a wide variety of topics given for the presentation. When students are knowledgeable about certain topics, of course, they can speak confidently. They also had the excitement to talk because they have the knowledge of the topics to tell and share with others. They would not be stuck searching for the ideas when speaking.

*e) TOP has boosted students' confidence level in speaking*

Confidence level is one component to improve on students' speaking skills. TOP has improved the students' confidence level in speaking the English language. When the students worked in groups to complete the task given, they could build-up their confidence level to use the targeted language. Self-confidence is the significantly strong predictor of speaking achievement. Knowing what they are going to say beforehand will help the students to build the courage to speak. Some students were scared to speak in front of the class. However,

after several times of doing presentations, they got the confidence to speak the English language. The learning media used such as Google Meet, PowerPoint slides, Meet Recording and Canva workable to the students' speaking performance by boosting the students' motivation to do the presentations confidently. Visual tools aided in catering to various learning styles. It also aided some students who were less proficient in English but eager to participate in the presentation in becoming valued members of their groups (Brooks & Wilson, 2018).

Overall, the students have a positive attitude towards the use of TOP as a learning activity for speaking. Speaking skills cover all the aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, communicative competence and fluency. Generally, they agreed that doing the oral presentations help them practice speaking skills. A cooperative learning atmosphere is a crucial component in the students' good impressions of presentations. Students that work in such an atmosphere are actively engaged in the topic they are learning as well as dynamically engaged with others. Students worked collaboratively on tasks in which they had to discover, apply, make inferences, and solve challenges (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021).

Although many students believed that presenting topical-based oral presentations were easy to them, some others found they were difficult. However, the researcher could see a slow progress in the students' speaking skills during the intervention sessions. The right time amount is very important to improve all speaking skills during the speaking intervention. There are some factors that make the students feel difficult in delivering the presentations such as psychological factors, presentation skills, and lack of practice (Leong & Ahmadi, 2017). They need to use some strategies to minimize the speaking obstacles and solve them. Most of the students agreed that TOP can develop their language competence. Furthermore, they could convey a meaning easily in communication.

### **Implications of the Study**

Researcher has discovered that TOP can be student-centered, relevant tasks that students love completing based on their experience with the presentations. The presentations, however, necessitate a major investment in terms of classroom time and preparedness. Despite the problems of using the TOP in the language classroom, the researcher believes they may be important exercises in helping students enhance their second language abilities, research skills, creativity, and confidence in speaking in front of others. This activity can be used by students of all levels to help them develop their public speaking and presentation skills. Oral presentation skills are not only included in 21st-century skills, but they are also essential when students enter the workforce (Jackson, 2014). If students' oral presentations are well prepared, arranged, and presented, they will gain confidence in speaking in public and will be useful in their future job.

### **Limitations of the Study**

There was only one group of students who involved in this study, no control group. Due to COVID-19 pandemic, it became difficult to involve a big group of students for this research. Moreover, there was conducted in a blended learning classroom. Some students read their scripts during the presentation of online presentations. It was difficult to control by the researcher. The researcher was the instructor of experimental groups, which could lead to bias in data interpretation.

### Recommendations for Future Study

TOP should be used to teach the new curriculum syllabus, known as CEFR, as it will result in better student results and achievements. The future research can also be done in face-to-face classroom with the big group of students and consider lower proficiency students on how to support them to speak with no obstacles such as anxiety. Furthermore, the researchers can give specific focus on improving specifically any speaking skills such as grammar, vocabulary or fluency. However, in order for topical-based presentations to be successful, teachers must appropriately introduce and teach the numerous macro and micro level abilities needed in delivering a presentation.

### Conclusion

The findings of the study show an incremental growth in the students' overall speaking performance. Overall, TOP increases the students' achievement of English-speaking skills in terms of their grammar, vocabulary and communicative competence skills. The majority of the students have perceived that TOP is a useful tool to improve their speaking performance. TOP brings a spark among the students to speak English. It is the gate of opportunity for students to practice speaking in English.

The current study focuses primarily on the long-term and permanent improvement in ESL students' oral presentation skills at the university study level. Professionals apply their ginned knowledge once they start working. Professionals need good communication skills to ensure efficient communication with their audiences and colleagues. Traditional tactics for developing oral communication skills are rarely compelling; consequently, technology-integrated tools for improving communication skills are considered as intriguing and motivating. To summarise, TOP is extremely beneficial to students' English learning; this practise may be applied to students of all levels in order to help them develop their speaking and presentation skills. If students' oral presentations are well prepared, arranged, and given, they will gain confidence in speaking in public and will benefit them in their future job.

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