

Oral presentation and autonomous learning through technology

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The increasing popularity of technology in recent times has created changes in the field of teaching. The role of computer in language instruction has become an important phenomena among language teachers. This tendency has led us in Sri Lanka to introduce computers in language teaching. This development in technology has changed the role of the student and the teacher. According to King (2002) oral presentations have been widely adopted by EFL teachers to promote oral proficiency. Not only does it involve a large amount of class time to conduct oral presentations, a relaxed and low threat learning environment is also an important factor. It also explores how oral presentations using multimedia promote autonomous learning and team work.

Data were elicited from 25 adult learners who followed the Business English Course Preliminary stage conducted by the English Language Teaching Unit at University of Colombo. These are students who scored below 40 marks at the Placement Test conducted to diagnose the level of the students. Oral presentation is one of the assignments which is done using powerpoint. The students have to find information such as the company organizational structure, the services / products, benefits and so forth for the presentation. Finding such information and learning to use computers pave the way for autonomous learning. Using computers transforms the way of teaching. A knowledge of how to use Powerpoint is necessary for the teacher as students had to email the slides for the teacher to give the comments. Class time is allocated for students to present their work in class where peer assessment is given. Questionnaires based on the likert scale were administered to the students at the end of the course.

This study attempts to investigate how technology promotes autonomous learning and other skills of language learning through oral presentations.

Keywords: Oral Presentation, Autonomous Learning, Multimedia