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FACULTY OF EDUCATION, PSYCHOLOGY AND ART
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**PRESENTATIONS TO IMPROVE STUDENTS' SPEAKING SKILLS
IN FORM 7**

DIPLOMA PAPER

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RIGA 2016

LATVIJAS UNIVERSITĀTE
PEDAGOĢIJAS, PSIHOLOĢIJAS UN MĀKSLAS FAKULTĀTE
SKOLOTĀJU IZGLĪTĪBAS NODAĻA

**PREZENTĀCIJU IZMANTOŠANA SKOLĒNU RUNĀŠANAS
PRASMJU PILNVEIDEI 7.KLASĒ**

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RĪGA 2016

DECLARATION OF ACADEMIC INTEGRITY

I declare that this study is my own and does not contain any unacknowledged work from any source.

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10 January, 2017

ABSTRACT

The aim of the present Diploma Paper is to examine if the presentations can help to improve speaking skills in form 7 English lessons. The theme of the Paper was chosen as the author of the paper considers speaking skills as the main to pay attention to. The present Diploma Paper explores the theme of using presentations as one of the successful methods to improve students' speaking skills in form 7 English lessons.

The research method was a case study in Riga Classical gymnasium and target group was form 7 students. The following data collection methods have been chosen: observation, questionnaire for the students and questionnaire for the English teachers.

The research results have demonstrated that presentations help to improve speaking skills. Results of observation have proved that there is a positive dynamics in speaking fluency of form 7 students. Making presentations broaden students' vocabulary, improves pronunciation and grammar. Analysis of questionnaires shows that students agree that presentations helps to improve their speaking skills and teachers use oral presentations to improve speaking skills.

Keywords: speaking skills, presentations, dynamics, form 7 learners, improvement

ANOTĀCIJA

Diplomdarba mērķis ir pārbaudīt vai prezentācijas palīdz pilnveidot 7. Klases skolēnu runāšanas prāsmes angļu valodas stundās. Šāda diplomdarba tēma tika izvēlēta, jo darba autore uzskata runāšanas prasmes par vienām no galvenajām, lai pievertu sev uzmanību. Diplomdarbā tiek pētīta prezentāciju izmantošana kā viens no veiksmīgākajiem veidiem, kā pilnveidot skolēnu runāšanas prāsmes 7. klasē.

Atsēvišķa gadījuma pētījums tika veikts Rīgas Klasiskajā ģimnāzijā un pētījuma mērķa grupa bija 7. klases skolēni. Kā datu vākšanas metodes bija izvēlētas skolēnu vērošana, skolēnu un angļu valodas skolotāju anketēšana.

Pētījuma rezultāti parādīja, ka prezentācijas palīdz pilnveidot skolēnu runāšanas prāsmes. Vērošanas rezultāti pierādīja, ka ir pozitīva dinamika skolēnu runāšanas veiklībā. Prezentācijas paplašina vārdu krājumu, uzlabo izrunu un gramātiku. Anketēšanu analīzes parādīja, ka skolēni piekrīt tam, ka prezentācijas pilnveido runāšanas prasmes un skolotājas izmanto tās.

Atslēgvārdi: runāšanas prāsmes, prezentācijas, dinamika, 7.klases skolēni, pilnveide

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INTRODUCTION

Nowadays, teacher is not the person who gives knowledge to the students, but it is a person who helps students to develop or improve different skills that may help them in real life. Author of the Diploma Paper has chosen speaking skills as the main skills teachers have to pay attention to. Speaking skills are the basics for communication. The author is sure that there is a need to develop and improve speaking skills to build confidence in students, to help them to use English language in everyday situations, to give them an opportunity to continue their studies abroad.

Speaking is the main tool of communication in a language. English speaking skills are necessary today, because English nowadays is spoken all over the world. According to Esther (2014) a person with better speaking skills will definitely succeed in studies and will have more chances when applying for the job. Employers always prefer the candidate who possesses excellent speaking skills. Nowadays, in Latvia employee needs to know at least 3 languages: Latvian, Russian and English to perform the duties fully. Esther (2014) claims that a person with good language skills will be considered and selected because he or she will be able to communicate properly with everyone and even with people from foreign countries.

According to Esther (2014) speaking skills is inevitable for personal and organizational growth. A good speaker must pose a broad vocabulary, speak clearly. The ideas should be effectively expressed. The language of the good speaker has to be accurate and clear for the audience.

Some students do not like to speak, especially in front of the audience. They do not have an opportunity to use English outside the classroom. The only way for them to practice English speaking skills is to do it during the lesson.

Presentation is the practice of showing and explaining the content of a topic to an audience. People memorize information better when they work with the information individually, by finding and analysing it. Preparing a presentation includes searching for the information, selecting essential one, creating a visual material that will be understandable for the audience. The presenter has to speak clearly, confidently. While preparing a presentation students find and learn new words or expressions, it means they broaden vocabulary, pay attention to grammar, work with the pitch of the voice and intonation. When making an oral presentation students have to think about language that includes vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. One more thing they have to pay attention to is their behaviour in-front of the public. It means that students must have an

eye contact with the audience, think about their appearance, gestures and be ready to answer different questions. In author's opinion, oral presentations have positive impact on students' proficiency level.

The aim of the Diploma Paper is to examine how the presentations can help to improve speaking skills in form 7 English lessons.

In order to reach the aim, the author brings forward the following **objectives**:

To study and analyze theoretical literature on speaking skills;

To study and analyze theoretical literature on presentations;

To explore how presentations could help to improve speaking skills in form 7 English lessons;

To analyze students' dynamics in speaking;

To find out how teachers of English language improve their students' speaking skills.

To reach the aim of the Diploma Paper, the author concentrates on the following **research questions**:

What is the connection between speaking skills improvement and presentations;

What are the advantages and disadvantages of using presentations to improve speaking skills in form 7.

The chosen **method of research** is a case study in secondary school. The chosen sample is form 7 students. Research takes place during the March and April.

The following **data collection methods** have been chosen: observation (to observe students' dynamics during two months of using presentations), questionnaire for the English language teachers to explore how they improve students' speaking skills and if they use presentations to improve speaking skills, questionnaire for the form 7 students to find out their attitude towards presentations as a method to improve speaking skills.

The first chapter *Methodology of Teaching Speaking Skills through Presentations at Intermediate Level* discusses the definition of *speaking* and its main aspects, *presentations* and its usage for improvement of students' speaking skills.

The analysis of the questionnaires and observation results are provided in the **second chapter** *Analysis and Interpretation of Case Study Results*.

It is essential to understand the role of the speaking skills, the ways to develop or improve them and the role of the presentation in the process of improvement of students' speaking skills.

1. METHODOLOGY OF TEACHING SPEAKING SKILLS THROUGH PRESENTATIONS AT INTERMEDIATE LEVEL

The process of teaching foreign language is complicated. Task of the teacher is to work with all four language skills and to prepare students for the further life when they will be able to speak fluently, and clearly express their ideas. According to the English language curriculum, aim of the subject is to build students' communicative competence as they would be able to use language to study, communicate and cooperate in a changing multicultural world. In Latvia English is taught from the form 1. During five years students are provided with the knowledge base they will need further in their studies. In form 6 they already have to speak and they are able to discuss the topic, but in smaller scale. In form 7 students are able to analyze, to discuss different topics, to ask and answer questions. Speaking is "the process of building and sharing meaning through the use of verbal and non-verbal symbols, in a variety of contexts" (Chaney, 1998, p.13).

According to Jeremy Harmer (2001), there are language features that are necessary for spoken production. Harmer writes about "connected speech" that includes modified, omitted, added or weakened sounds. Teachers have to think about activities to improve students' connected speech. The second element Harmer (2001) points out in his book is "expressive devices". When students see the term, students understand that it is connected with changings of pitch and stress, varying of volume and speed, as well as using emotions and paralinguistic features. Students have to expend at least some to be competent communicators. One more element is "lexis and grammar". In that case teachers have to provide students with appropriate phrases that have different functions, as well as help to improve their speech so it is grammatically equitable. The last one, but also important is "negotiation language". As Harmer (2001) says "effective speaking benefits from the negotiator language we use to seek clarification and to show the structure of what we are saying" (Harmer, 2001).

In our country children learn 2, 3 or 4 languages at school. For example, Russian spoken children start to learn Latvian in form 1 or earlier. At the same time they start to learn English language and often, in form 4 or 5, German or French languages are added. Modern children are using computers, tablets, are playing games and watching foreign cartoons. More often games and cartoons are in English, as well as different programmes children are using in their phones or computers. This helps learners to

perceive the English language at the lesson better. It might be claimed that many students come to the language classroom with the base.

In this chapter the author of the paper will describe speech and characterize presentations. Author of the Paper is convinced that presentation as a method can help to improve all language features that are mentioned to lead students to effective spoken production.

1.1 Speech as a Tool to Communicate

Cambridge Dictionary defines the verb “to speak” as “to say words, to use the voice, or to have a conversation with someone” and “to be able to talk in a language”. It is possible to affirm that speaking is complicated phenomena. To begin with, it accomplishes the function of communication between people. Speaking is one of the most important kinds of human activities.

Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary defines the noun “communication” as “the act or process of using words, sounds, signs, or behaviours to express or exchange information or to express your ideas, thoughts, feelings, etc., to someone else”. Respectively, it means that the task of a teacher is to teach students to speak, so later they will be able to communicate in English.

“Oral language is the child’s first, most important, and most frequently used structured medium of communication. It is the primary means through which each individual child will be enabled to structure, to evaluate, to describe and to control his/her experience. In addition, and most significantly, oral language is the primary mediator of culture, the way in which children locate themselves in the world, and define themselves with it and within it” (Cregan, 1998, as cited in Archer et al. 2012)

There are several techniques and methods how to teach English. Every teacher has a chance to choose the best one for them and their students. Teachers choose techniques and methods of teaching according to their aim and objectives, resources they have access to, and learners. Teachers have to understand what are needs, capabilities and age features of their learners.

Speaking is generally thought to be the most important of the four skills. Anyway, students are not able to speak English in primary and secondary school, in spite of the fact that teachers work with this skill and try to help students to develop it.

According to Bilash (2009) a lot of what people say is for a specific purpose and language is used in order to fulfil it. Each purpose is known as a language function.

British linguist Michael Halliday provided one of the best explications of language functions, used the term to mean the purposive nature of communication, and outlined seven different functions commonly known as “Halliday’s Functions of Language (1972)”. These are listed below:

FUNCTION	USED TO	DEMANDS OF LANGUAGE
Instrumental	Expressing needs/Getting things done	Asking, Requesting, Explaining
Regulatory	Influencing the behaviour, feelings/attitudes of others	Setting tasks, Managing, Negotiating, Directing, Instructing, Controlling
Interactional	Getting along with others	Initiating, Sympathising, Reconciling, Encouraging, Arguing, Empathising
Personal	Expressing individuality and personal feelings	Stating opinions, Confronting, Expressing thoughts and feelings, Recounting experience
Heuristic	Seeking and learning about the social and physical environment	Interrogating, Discussing, Asking, Querying, Investigating, Clarifying
Imaginary	Creating stories, games, new worlds and new texts	Storytelling, Anticipating, Predicting, Imagining, Playing, Experimenting
Representational	Communicating Information	Telling, lecturing, Stating facts, Sharing skills, Commenting, Imparting knowledge, Informing

First four functions: instrumental, regulatory, interactional and personal help students to satisfy physical, social and emotional needs.

Heuristic, imaginary and representational functions help students to come to terms with their environment.

Author of the paper divides 7 functions of language into two categories. Instrumental regulatory and interactional functions are expressed by basic knowledge of students when they have an opportunity to speak using a framework. Personal, heuristic, imaginary and representational are already about conveying own thoughts, looking for ways to learn something new and creating.

Teacher can use different kinds of tasks to work with every language function.

Instrumental function in the classroom can be used by having students clarify the instructions.

Regulatory function can be used by having students role-play everyday routines or teach each other.

Interactional function can be used by having students working in groups or pairs on different tasks.

Personal function can be used by making students share their personal opinion or experience.

Question – answer format is used in heuristic function of language. Students ask questions to learn something new.

Imaginary function can be used in the classroom by having students creating their own stories or to create new games and tasks with already known words, expressions.

Representational function can be used in the classroom by having students making oral presentation and sharing their knowledge with other students.

Diploma paper is about using presentations. In that case it is possible to point out language functions that appear while preparing for and making a presentation. Personal function is about sharing personal opinion. When students make a presentation they share their personal opinion on topic with the audience. Heuristic function mostly appears at the end when audience have a chance to ask questions to the speaker to specify information or learn more. Representational function is about presenting. Presenters state facts, inform the audience about something, tell the information that seems important. After the presentation audience have an opportunity to comment presentation or to add more information.

1.1.1 Psychological Barriers in Speaking

When coming to the language classroom, learners already have a base of knowledge from the native language that will help in process of learning foreign language. Nevertheless, students and people in general have fear of speaking, especially foreign language. According to the information from the psychological dictionary, psychological barrier is a mental state that appears as a passive attitude that hinder to perform the action. Emotional mechanism of psychological barriers strengthens negative feelings such as: shame, feeling of guilt, fear, anxiety, low self-esteem (e.g. fear of stage).

According to the survey that was reported in the 1977 edition of *The Book of Lists* by David Wallechinsky, Irving Wallace, and Amy Wallace, 41 % of people have a fear of speaking in front of the audience.

According to Miller (2015) there are 7 reasons why people are afraid to speak in front of the audience. “The Fear of Public Speaking is consistently listed as one of the most common fears people have. It holds many back from reaching their potential” (Miller, 2015).

Miller (2015) emphasizes the following reasons:

- Person feels uncomfortable when people are watching him or her in real. Most of our conversations are one-on-one. Mostly, we have phone calls when we do not see the person we are speaking to. Increasingly, we communicate by email and text. This interaction does not let us see or hear the other person.

There could be different reasons for feeling uncomfortable. One of the reasons that might come out when speaking about form 7 students is appearance and complexes.

- Not knowing the topic. It is important to speak to the audience when you know a lot about your topic, but if the speaker is not prepared well, there is a fear of making a failure.

- Not knowing the structure of presentation. It is important that audience is able to follow the speaker, to understand the presentation and its message.

- Not practising. Speaker has to practice a lot to make a great presentation. It is not possible to make a good presentation without preparation. If the speaker thinks that he or she is not well prepared, there is a fear to speak to the audience.

Teachers must give students enough time to prepare. Students have to find information, analyze it, practise their speech at home and prepare for the speech psychologically.

- Something situational. If the audience is rather big there is a fear to present. If someone is waiting for the good result of speaker, it is necessary to impress the audience, it also makes person to be afraid of public speaking.

In case with form 7 students, they are afraid of being evaluated for their speech both by teacher and other students.

- The fair of failure. To my mind, it is the biggest problem for secondary school students too. Students are thinking a lot about the mark, about the evaluation of the teacher, as well as evaluation of their classmates. They are afraid to fail because of the classmates’ reaction. For students who are 12-14 years old it is important what their friends or classmates think about them and every failure may lead to the stress.

- Next aspect is connected with many questions speakers ask themselves. It is important for speakers not making themselves to think too much. Speaker has to concentrate on the presentation. It should be easy to understand, interesting and giving an opportunity for listeners to learn new information.

Teacher has to pay attention to every reason why student could be terrified. While preparing students for public speaking it is important to teach them to emphasize important aspects of their speech and not to pay attention to details that may distract them and lead to the stress. Author of the Paper is convinced that it is difficult task for teachers. It requires individual approach to every student. Teacher must understand what fears every student may have and has to find the right method how to help students to overcome fears and persuade them in necessity of improvement of speaking skills.

Educator Jack C. Richards (s.d) claims that psychological barriers in speaking relate to affect. It refers to a number of factors that influence language learning and use. Among them are: basic personality traits, such as shyness, and long-term factors, such as attitudes towards learning, as well as constantly fluctuating states, such as anxiety, boredom, enthusiasm, apathy.

Author of the paper considers that teacher's task is to work with students from early years, paying attention to every student's personality traits to understand what problems might appear during the study process, especially doing speaking tasks (dialogues, presentations, public speaking).

Brennan (s.d.) points out that there are strategies to overcome psychological barriers. It is possible to find the different ways of overcoming different barriers.

It could be cooperative work of the teacher and student. Teacher has an opportunity to give an advice how to get rid of these problems and student can choose whether to do it or not.

According to Brennan (s.d.), self-doubts that include lack of confidence, disbelieves, suspicion and questions could be overcome by substitution of positive affirmations. It is about programming thoughts. Students have to think that everything would be good and they will succeed. "If you work on your self-doubts, you will gain more confidence to tackle other challenges and learn new skills. You will also have the confidence from knowing that you have overcome a psychological barrier" (Brennan, s.d.).

Second fear is a fear of failure. As it was mentioned before, students are afraid to make a mistake, they are afraid of being evaluated. Often, making only one mistake

leads to fear to do the task afterwards. Brennan (s.d) identify strategies to overcome fear of failure. These strategies are listed below:

- Take actions. It means that person have to act. In case with form 7 students, teacher has to find a way to make students act, even if they are strongly against;
- Ask yourself, "What would you do if you knew you could not fail?" In work with students this question can be used every time during lessons (e.g. when writing a test);
- Do not give up. Sometimes it requires to try to do one thing several times to find the right way and correct mistakes.
- Do not take a failure personally.

Author believes that it could be difficult to use this strategy with students. Young learners are not able to understand it because when they make a mistake they are thinking only about it.

These strategies can be used in work with students. Form 7 students are young, but it is possible to explain them and help to overcome their fears.

1.2 Assessment of Learners' Speaking Skills

Assessment is an integral part of the process of learning. Teachers use different types of assessment during lessons. According to Thornbury (2005) assessment could be both formal and informal, and take place at the beginning of the course, at the end of the course and during the course as well. At school teachers assess students at the beginning of the year by giving a placement test, at the end of the term by giving an achievement test, during the year by preparing different kinds of tests (written and oral tests). If it is easy with written tests when teacher knows the right answers and check students' knowledge on the topic, there is a problem with assessing speaking tasks. There are teachers that feel unsure as to how to do this.

Thornbury (2005) states that testing speaking has difficulties. Firstly, it is time consuming in comparison with test on grammar. Secondly, "if all the students of a class have to be interviewed individually, the disruption caused, and the time taken, may seem to outweigh the benefits" (Thornbury, 2005, p.125). Author of the Paper is convinced that it requires at least one lesson (40 minutes) to listen to all students in the classroom, whether it is an oral test or speaking tasks. Thirdly, as Thornbury (2005, p.125) claims, "different testers may have different criteria for judging speaking,

differences that are less acute when it comes to judging writing or grammar knowledge, for example". It means that every person has own point of view. One listener will assure that speech is decent, other will find inaccuracies and will not be satisfied with it.

Thornbury (2005) highlights two main ways to assess speaking: holistic scoring and analytic scoring. Holistic scoring means "giving a single score on the basis of an overall impression" and analytic scoring means "giving a separate score for different aspects of the task" (Thornbury, 2005, p.127).

According to Thornbury (2005) holistic scoring is quicker and is adequate for informal testing. Analytic scoring takes longer, but takes a variety of factors into account and is more reliable. Thornbury (2005) states that four or five criteria is maximum to assess speaker appropriately.

Kaye (2008) states that teachers can assess phonological features of language. "Speakers need to be able to produce the phonological features of speech well enough to be understood, so it is fundamental that these are included in evaluation in some way" Kaye (2008). Phonological features include individual sounds, stressed and weak sounds, rhythm and intonation patterns. Second criteria could be rules of language. "Speakers need to be able to understand and obey the rules of structure, lexis and discourse when they speak" Kaye (2008). In that case teachers can pay attention to the vocabulary, grammar rules and if the speech is coherent and cohesive. Thirdly, it is possible to assess paralinguistic devices. Paralinguistic devices are essential for successful communication. Teachers can pay attention to gestures, eye contact and facial expressions. However, problems may appear. According to Kaye (2008) it is difficult to describe gestures, poses, eye contact in a framework of evaluation. Fourth criteria for assessing speaking skills could be communicative functions. Kaye (2008) provides details teachers can pay attention to:

- Does the speaker use intonation and stress effectively to support the message?
- Does the speaker use the right functional language (exponents) to express the message?
- Does the speaker manage volume and tone appropriately to support communication?
- Does the speaker use pauses, repetition and noises appropriately to support communication?

Kaye (2008) points out that most aspects of spoken language could be evaluated formally. Teachers have to find tasks that allow to measure the communicative competence in general. As it was already mentioned, teachers have to think about the

ways to reduce emotional factors as stress and nerves. Teachers need to think about equipment, time and space.

Oral presentations is one of the tasks to assess speaking skills. Student has to give a presentation on a topic, explain or describe something.

1.3 Definition of Oral Presentation

According to the Merriam-Webster Dictionary, simple definition of presentation is “an activity in which someone shows, describes, or explains something to a group of people”. At the same time, oral presentation could be defined as a brief discussion of the topic with the aim to transmit knowledge or to lead to a conversation.

According to Baker (2000) oral presentation is like a formal conversation, speaking to group as a natural activity. Oral presentation is a part of spoken language. The purpose of this activity is to communicate and according to Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) “understanding the true purpose of your presentation can help you to prepare and deliver it more effectively”. Speakers are able not only to speak, but to support their talk with different visual aids (pictures, graphs and others).

Presentation should be structured carefully. Meloni and Thompson (1980) state that if oral presentation is guided and organized, it will give the students a learning experience and teach them an important skill which will play a large role in their future life.

As it is stated in Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) “doing presentation is a good learning experience”. Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) describe benefits of making presentations. It is written that “as with the variety of purposes, the benefits of student presentations will be influenced by the situation but they can be summarized as providing opportunities for:

- Student – centred participation in their learning
- Developing new knowledge and different perspectives on a topic
- Practice in a known environment/situation
- Increasing confidence to speak and present in front of the audience
- Developing a wide range of communication and presentation skills
- Preparation of skills needed in the workplace”

According to Esther (2014) the ability to make impressive and effective presentation is an important quality a person must develop to succeed in carrier. Person

needs a constant practice to develop this skill. Wrench et al. (2012) provide a public speaking pyramid.

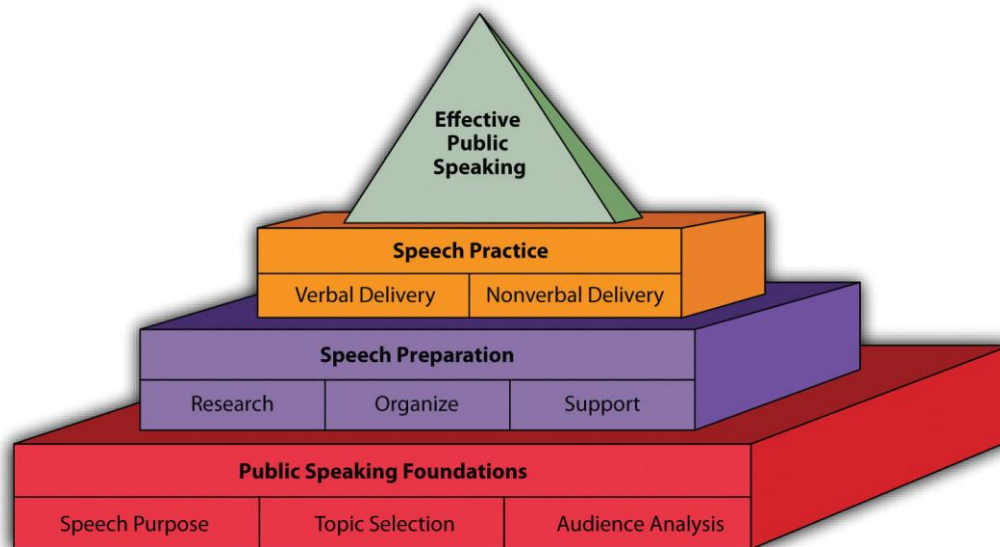


Figure 1.3 *Public Speaking Pyramid*

This pyramid shows all steps speaker has to go through to become successful in speaking. Speech purpose is about types of oral presentations. Speaker has to understand if the purpose is to share facts or to give opinion and coerce audience to act. If the topic is not suggested, speaker has to think which topic will be interesting and useful for the audience. Before preparing a speech it is necessary to understand who is going to listen to the presentation. Wrench et al. (2012) suggest question to ask yourself before preparing a presentation:

- Who are my audience members?
- What characteristics do my audience members have?
- What opinions and beliefs do they have?
- What do they already know?
- What would they be interested in knowing more about?
- What do they need?

It is about age, nationality, professions, knowledge and interests of the members of audience.

When preparing a speech person is autonomous. Everything is depending on speakers abilities and will. Task of the speaker is to search for information and analyze it. Speaker should think about language features to use during the speech. As it was mentioned before, if the speech has to be assessed, evaluator will pay attention to pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, as well as gestures, facial expressions and eye contact.

It is essential that speech consists of three parts: introduction, body and conclusion. Speaker has to organize information according to these parts.

According to Wrench et al. (2012) after research and organization of the speech it is important to finish it by adding support materials to make the speech completely understandable to the audience.

Speech practice is crucial step to the effective presentation. A lot of practice may improve language, as well as help to overcome fear of speaking, as it was said before. Wrench et al. (2012) point out that verbal delivery is not about reading a speech from the paper, but it is about having a contact with the audience speaking to them. Verbal delivery requires a lot of practice. It is essential to unexperienced speakers to train at home before speaking in front of the audience. Nonverbal delivery includes eye contact, gestures, movements and other different ways of nonverbal delivery of the speech. Preparing an oral presentation requires time, practice, will and hard work.

Oral presentations are divided into types.

1.4 Types of Oral Presentation

As it is stated in Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) understanding the style of presentation will help to examine the main goal of giving presentation. According to the aim of the presentation the speakers can appoint the type of the presentation. There are two basic types of oral presentations: informative and persuasive. The main difference is that informative presentation provide facts, but persuasive presentation express an opinion.

1.4.1 Informative Oral Presentation

This type of presentation has a primary goal, which is to make the audience learning new information. The speakers use an informative speech in this type of presentations (Chivers, Shoolbred, 2007, p.5). “An informative speech conveys knowledge, a task that you’ve engaged in throughout your life” (Wrench, et al. 2012, p.480). The aim of the informative presentation is to communicate with the audience and give them as much information as possible in a limited time. The purpose of informative presentation can be to describe a new political event or to give a report about a given topic in a form of research (Chivers, Shoolbred, 2007, p.5).

In this type of presentation speakers use an informative speech to explain a concept, instruct the audience, demonstrate a process, or describe an event in the academic setting. Speakers are able to choose the topic themselves. Chivers and Shoolbred (2007, p.5) say: “this type of presentation is used in many organizations where students or employees are expected to report progress at key stages of a project.” Wrench et al. (2012) point out that an informative speech does not attempt to convince that audience that one thing is better than other.

According to Wrench et al. (2012) information has to be accurate and keep the listener interested in the topic.

Besides the main goal of informative presentation to make audience to learn something new, there are some more details speaker has to pay attention to. If speaker achieves three main goals: accuracy, clarity and interest, it means he or she succeeded in informative speaking. Firstly, it is accuracy. To be accurate means to be sure that information is current. (Wrench, et al. 2012). In that case students have to check their information and sources they look for it. Secondly, it is clarity of the speech. It relies on logical organization and understandable word choices. (Wrench, et al. 2012). Students have to be sure that all words are known to them and listeners, as well as their speech is coherent. Thirdly, the speech should be interesting for the audience. Listeners will benefit more if they are interested and can give sustained attention to the speech, and this is unlikely to happen if they are bored (Wrench, et al. 2012). It means that it is necessary to think about listeners while preparing a presentation. It is important to consider age, personal traits and interests. In general, informative speaking is based on the facts that are reported in the way audience can learn something completely new. Informative speaking is not about expressing opinion. Some people may consider the presentation boring because of the facts. When preparing an informative presentation speaker has to think about the audience and make the presentation clear and interesting.

Wrench et al. (2012) provide number of principles to achieve the desired effect. Firstly, it is important to determine the right level of complexity, so the presentation is not too simple or too complicated. Speaker has to be sure that all terms, facts and words are known to the audience. If not, it is important to explain, or not to use them at all. Secondly, speaker should avoid unnecessary jargon. If the topic is complicated, speaker has to avoid terms that are difficult to understand. If there are many difficult terms in the speech, it becomes boring and hard to perceive. Next principle is about creating concrete images. There are words that have many interpretations. Task of the speaker is to find the word so the audience will understand the thought correctly.

Speaker has to keep information limited. Speaker would not succeed by overloading the audience with information. Speaker has to use definitions, explanations and examples to make the speech clear. Fifth principle to make presentation clear and interesting is to link current knowledge to new knowledge. According to Wrench et al. (2012) it is about providing new and interesting facts about well-known thing. Informative presentation should be memorable, relevant and useful. It is important because the aim of the informative presentation is to give the audience an opportunity to learn something new.

Wrench et al. (2012) identified several categories of topics speaker might use to create an informative presentation. In informative presentation it is possible to speak about objects that include people, institutions, places; people that played a significant role in history; events that occurred once, or repeated events; concepts that are abstract ideas; processes.

1.4.2 Persuasive Oral Presentation

Persuasion is defined as “an attempt to get a person to behave in a manner, or embrace a point of view related to values, attitudes, and beliefs, that he or she would not have done otherwise” (Wrench, et al. 2012, p. 506). According to Chivers and Shoolbred (2007, p.3) in this type of presentation, speakers need to have a confident content and present it in a clear way. In addition, the speakers should try to show the audience that they have a confidence. Tracy (2008) claims that task of the speaker is to motivate listeners to feel, think and act in a different way as a result of speaker’s words. Speakers can use some emotions when it is necessary. Moreover, Tracy (2008, p.9) states that persuasive presentation has three elements, which are:

- **Logos**

In persuasive speech the topic should be logical. “It is important that everything that you say fits together like links in a chain or pieces of a jigsaw puzzle to form a coherent statement or argument” (Tracy, 2008).

- **Ethos**

Ethos is speaker’s personality and beliefs. According to Tracy (2008) it refers to your character, ethics, and your believability when you speak. Increasing your credibility with your audience before and during your speech increases the likelihood that listeners will accept your arguments and take action on your recommendations (Tracy, 2008, p.9).

- **Pathos**

Pathos refers to emotional content of the speech. Speaker will succeed if can motivate listeners to change their thinking or to take a particular action (Tracy, 2008, p.10).

The persuasive presentation is a complex process where speaker has to be logical and motivate the audience to think, feel, analyze and act.

According to Wrench et al.(2012) there are four claims that can be used in persuasive presentation: definitional, factual, policy and value.

“Definitional claims are claims over the denotation or classification of what something is” (Wrench et al. 2012). It is a process of arguing for what something is or what something is not. Factual claims set out to argue about truth or falsity. Some factual claims are simple to answer, but there are some that cannot be answered absolutely (Wrench et al. 2012). Policy claims are the most common form of persuasive speaking. As it is stated by Wrench et al (2012) policy claims are statements about the nature of the problem and the solution that should be provided. It is a good opportunity to make students analyze and think about the problem, as well implement their own solutions. The final type is value claims. According to Wrench et al. (2012) value claim is where the speaker is advocating a judgement claim about something (e.g. it is right or wrong, it is beautiful or ugly).

Wrench et al (2012) point out that each of four claims lead to different types of persuasive speaking. Speaker has to understand which claim is advocating to understand the best methods of persuasion.

All types of oral presentations may contribute to the process of speaking skills improvement.

1.5 Using Presentations for Learners' Speaking Skills Improvement

Oral presentation skill is essential in social life, education and professional life as well. Tracy (2008) states that when person is able to speak to an audience he or she will succeed in achieving goals.

Chivers and Shoolbred (2007) claim, “There are many reasons why students are asked to give presentation and these will be influenced by their academic course and situational and organizational factors”. Oral presentation is successful way to improve students’ speaking skills as well as increase their autonomy. Girard, Pinar and Trapp (2011) found that using oral presentations in their classroom lead to greater class

interaction and participation, contributed to their learning of class materials, developed listening skills and improved students' public speaking skills.

Oral presentations is an authentic way of practising English. This is important because speaking tasks that have no relation to real-life language use “are poor preparation for autonomy” (Thornbury, 2005, p. 91).

According to King (2002) oral presentations is one of the student-centered activities that is included in lesson plans to improve students' oral proficiency.

As it was mentioned earlier, the use of presentations has benefits. According to Chivers and Schoolbred (2007) the fact that oral presentation is student – centered is influential. When students are asked to give an oral presentation it is one of the few times in the language classroom that the students themselves have direct control of both the content and the flow of the classroom (Apple & Kikuchi, 2007). Students have an opportunity to choose what they are going to talk about, they can select the language items they will use during their speech and to choose the way how to explain the topic to their classmates. Although, author of the Paper is making a research on speaking skills improvement, it is important to notice that presentations require students to use all four skills: speaking, writing, reading and listening. Students improve writing skills when they write their speech or make notes, as well as if they prepare visual presentation (for example, power point presentation or poster presentation). Reading skills could be improved while searching for the information. Students have to read, analyze and find out the most important parts. Listening skills could be improved when students act as the audience members. They listen to each other presentations, evaluate each other and ask questions.

Author of the Paper is assured that making presentations is stimulating for the students because they have an opportunity to share something they are interested in with their classmates and teachers, as well as it can provide students with additional motivation to study English.

Working with students on oral presentation is difficult task for the teacher. As it was mentioned before teachers have to emphasize language aspects, pay attention to psychological part of the task. Furthermore, teachers spend more time to prepare lesson, create an evaluation criteria and think how to make the process more attractive to students.

Teachers change their roles. Traditional role of the teacher changes to the role of facilitator of learning. According to King (2002) teacher becomes guide, organizer, consultant and supporter.

2. ANALYSIS AND INTERPRETATION OF CASE STUDY RESULTS

The analysis of theoretical sources on the methodology of teaching speaking skills through presentations shows that making oral presentation on English lessons helps students to improve their speaking skills, to broaden their knowledge, to raise their motivation to study English. Making presentations help students to overcome their psychological barriers and complexes.

While preparing presentation students have to pay attention to many criteria. They have to think about topic, speech purpose, analyze audience, practice verbally and nonverbally. If student works hard, he will succeed in presenting and improve speaking skills, as well as writing, reading and listening skills.

In order to understand the influence of the presentations on improvement of students' speaking skills, author of the Diploma Paper carried out a case study in spring of the Year 2016 in Riga Classical Gymnasium. The chosen data collection methods were observation, evaluation and two questionnaires (for students and for the teachers of English language). The chosen research sample was eleven students of form 7 and four teachers of English language.

To reach the aim, author of the Diploma Paper built up a plan of presentations for 2 months (March and April), worked out an evaluation criteria according to research aim and objectives, created an evaluation checklist to use it during students' presentations to evaluate fluency of the speech, confidence, grammar, pronunciation and vocabulary.

After the pilot teaching, author of the Paper prepared a questionnaire for students to understand their attitude towards presentation as one of the tools to improve speaking skills.

Besides the observation, author of the Diploma carried out a questionnaire for English language teachers. Teachers were asked about improvement of the speaking skills (which activities they use to improve speaking skills). It was important to understand how much attention is paid to the speaking skills during English lessons and find out teachers' attitude towards use of presentations to improve speaking skills.

2.1 Findings of Observation

Author of the Diploma Paper considers speaking skills as the most important skills to improve. It is important to start working with speaking skills as early as possible. They are essential, because students will face presentations and public speaking during their studies both at school and university, at work and in everyday life as well. To have a high level of speaking skills means that person will succeed in studies and later will have more chances when applying for the job. Author of the Paper has chosen form 7 students for some reasons.

Firstly, form 7 students are able to speak and prepare presentations, paying attention to grammar, vocabulary, and they are able to analyze information.

Secondly, students have never done public speaking and presentations before. So, they had no practice. On the one hand, it is good because it is possible to obtain objective results. On the other hand, it may cause problems. Some students were stressed and nervous. There were cases when students refused to come in front of the class, because of the fear to fail.

Thirdly, this is the age when children are not completely self-confident and are afraid of others' evaluation. It means that they are thinking about classmates' reaction to their speech. It is essential to help them to fight their fears as soon as possible.

At the beginning of the empirical research author chose topics for presentations according to the lesson themes and topics in coursebook *Challenges 3* by Pearson Longman, and built up a plan for 2 months taking number of lessons, weekends and spring holidays into account. It is important to give students time to prepare, to find necessary information, to analyze the information and choose the most interesting and useful. Students need plenty of time to practice. Every time students had about a week to prepare a presentation. The process started with introducing evaluation criteria. There were 4 criteria attention was paid to:

1. Fluency of the speech. Students have to speak fast, but connecting phrases in sentences in a way to stay clear for the audience.

2. Confidence of the speaker. Students try not to stress and are feeling certain about the speech.

3. Grammar. Attention was paid to the students' grammar during the speech, as well as grammar on slides if students used visual aids.

4. Pronunciation. Students pronounce words correctly. Everything was clear to the audience, as well as choice of the words.

5. Vocabulary. Words, students use during presentation, have to be known to the audience. It is important that everything is understandable.

Students were asked to evaluate each other as well. They had to be critical and try to pay attention to grammar and pronunciation.

Having evaluation checklist during every presentation helped to see and analyze students' dynamics on four criteria. Sample of the checklist to evaluate students' speaking skills can be found in Appendix 1.

Every criteria was evaluated from 0 to 4 points.

These are points for assessing students' fluency.

0 points - student is not ready to speak

1 point - speech is slow, stumbling, nervous, and uncertain. It is difficult for a listener to understand;

2 points - speech is slow and often irregular. Sentences may be left uncompleted, but student is able to continue;

3 points - speech is mostly smooth but with some hesitation and unevenness caused by rephrasing and word search;

4 points - Speech is effortless and smooth with speed that comes close to that of a native speaker.

These are points for assessing confidence.

0 points – student is not ready to speak;

1 point – student is nervous and it is hard to speak. Speech is quiet.

2 points – occasionally student is nervous and loses an eye contact with the audience, but is able to speak loudly and clearly;

3 points – student is not nervous and his speech is clear and loud;

4 points – student is active and assured. Student speaks loudly, clearly and keeps an eye contact with the audience during the whole speech.

These are points for assessing grammar.

0 points – student is not ready to speak

1 point – it is difficult to understand student. It is a problem for student to express the idea because of grammar mistakes;

2 points – student is able to express ideas and responses adequately, but often displayed inconsistencies with sentence structures and tenses;

3 points – student is able to express ideas and responses fairly well, but made mistakes in tenses, however is able to correct them;

4 points – student is able to express ideas and responses with ease in proper sentence structure and tenses.

These are points for assessing pronunciation.

0 points – student is not ready to speak

1 point – it is difficult to understand the student because of the unclear pronunciation and quiet speech;

2 points – sometimes student is unclear in pronouncing the words, but generally clear;

3 points – pronunciation is good and does not interfere to understand the thought;

4 points – pronunciation is clear and easy to understand.

These are points for assessing vocabulary.

0 points – student is not ready to speak;

1 point – student is not able to choose adequate vocabulary to express his or her ideas clearly to the audience;

2 points – vocabulary is rather broad, but student repeat the words set of times;

3 points – student's vocabulary is adequate and refers to the topic. It is easy for the audience to understand;

4 points – rich, accurate and impressive vocabulary that completely refers to the topic and is known to the audience.

During two months 5 presentations were prepared by students.

First presentation was on March 10. The topic of presentation was *My favourite book*. Two people from the group were not ready to present. Student 2 was not able to speak because of the stress. Student 4 was not ready because he forgot about the task.

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.1, the results of assessing fluency of the speech during the first presentation are not high because of the lack of experience in making presentations and speaking in general. Although, there was one student with the highest points.

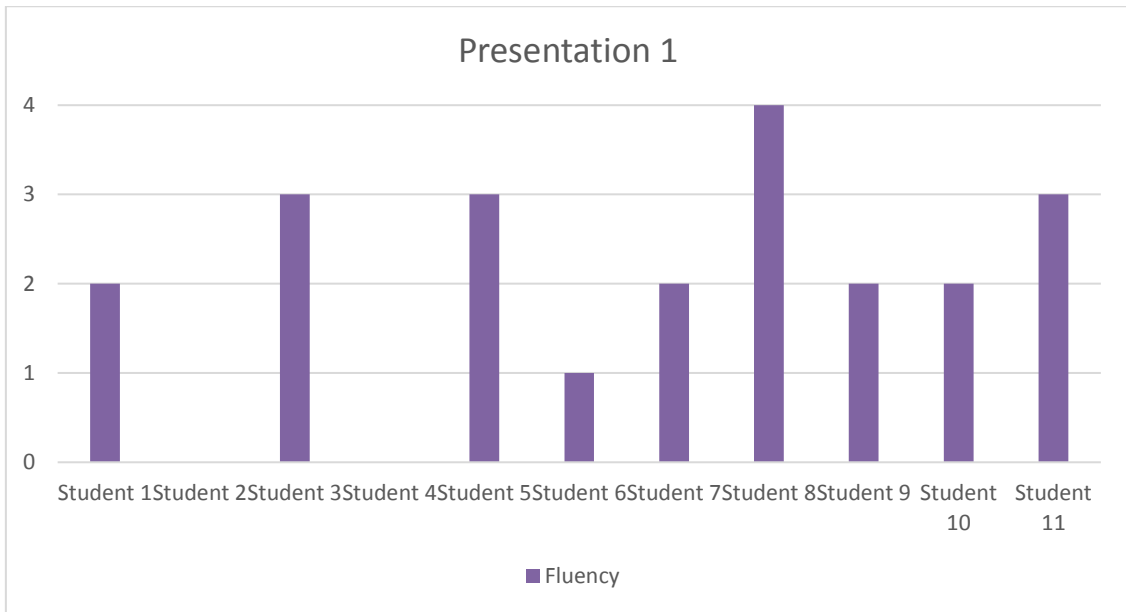


Figure 2.1.1 Presentation 1. Fluency of the speech

Figure 2.1.2 shows students’ confidence during the first presentation. In general, results are high. It means that students in group were self-confident and were not stressful, despite it was first presentation.

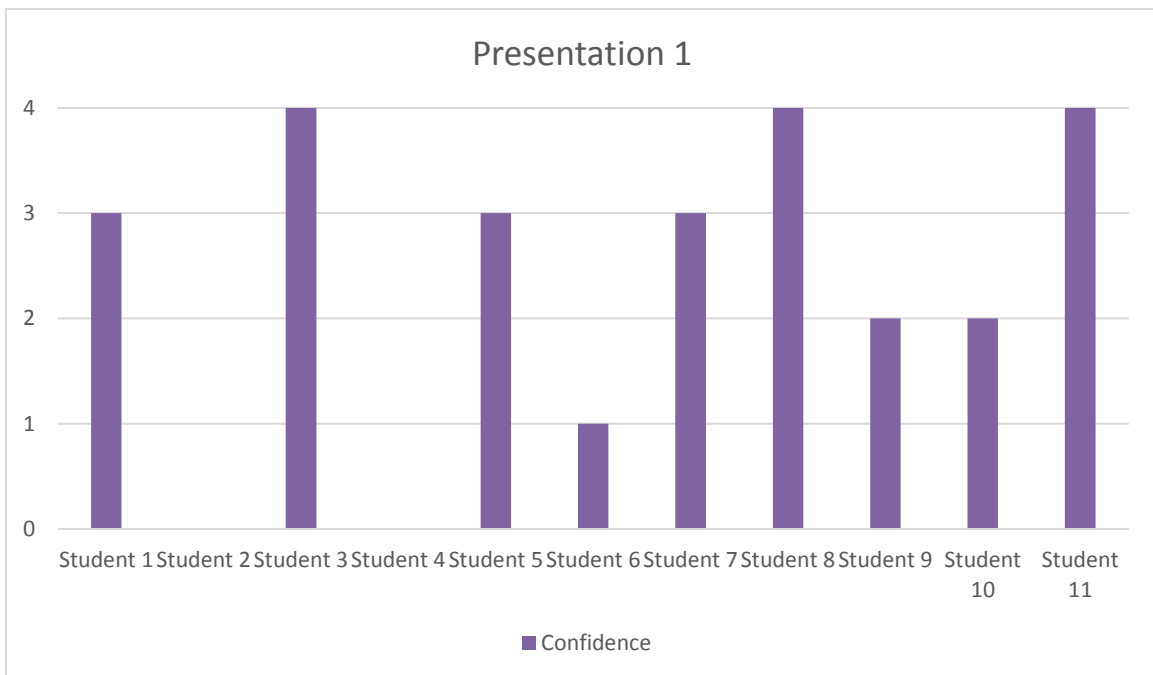


Figure 2.1.2 Presentation 1. Confidence of the speaker

Figure 2.1.3 illustrates results of assessing grammar during the first presentation. It was predictable that no one of students will get highest points. Although 4 of 9 students got three points for this criteria. The problem could be that it was difficult for students to pay attention to grammar while speaking.

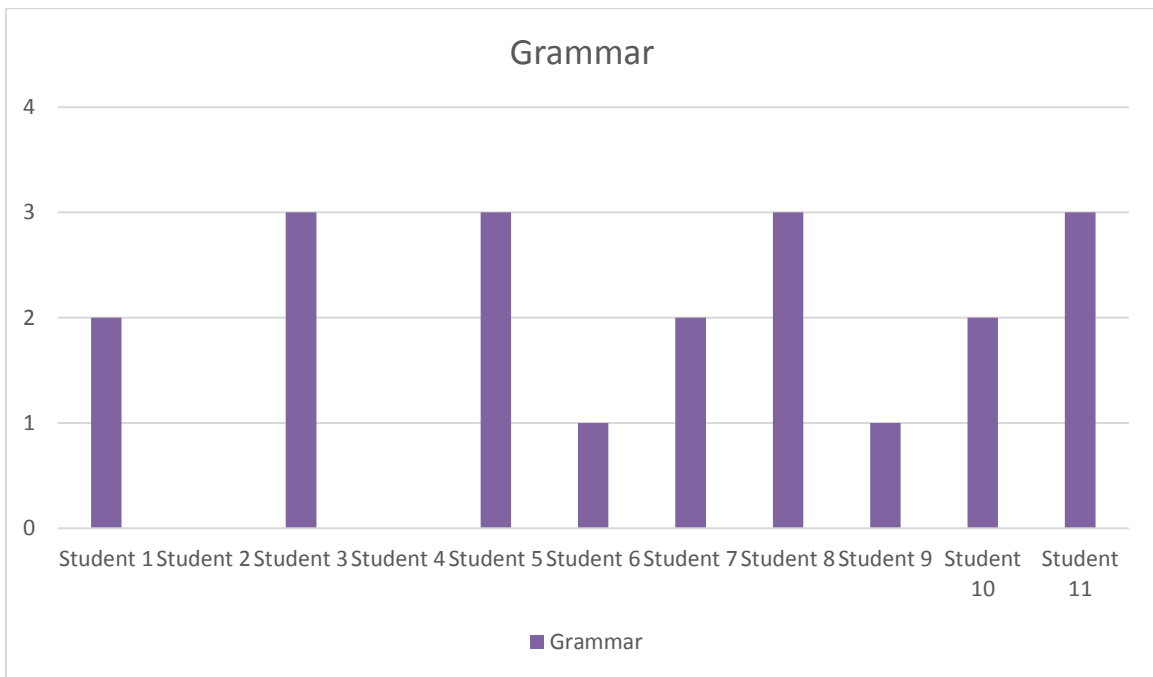


Figure 2.1.3 Presentation 1. Grammar

The results of the assessing vocabulary during the first presentations are high. Only two students from 9 got 1 point for this criteria. More than half of students got 3 points for vocabulary. It means that during the presentation students used appropriate words that were understandable to the audience.

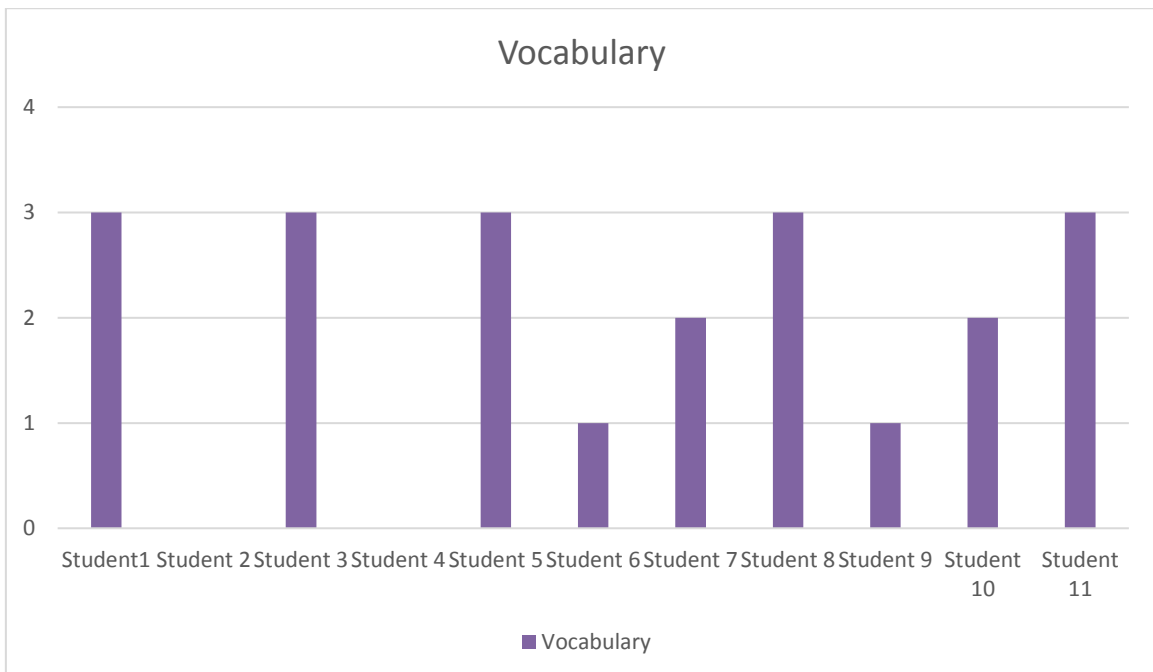


Figure 2.1.4 Presentation 1. Vocabulary

Chart shows the results of assessing pronunciation during the first presentation. In comparison with other criteria pronunciation was assessed with highest points. The

results are good because English teacher worked a lot with students' pronunciation before.

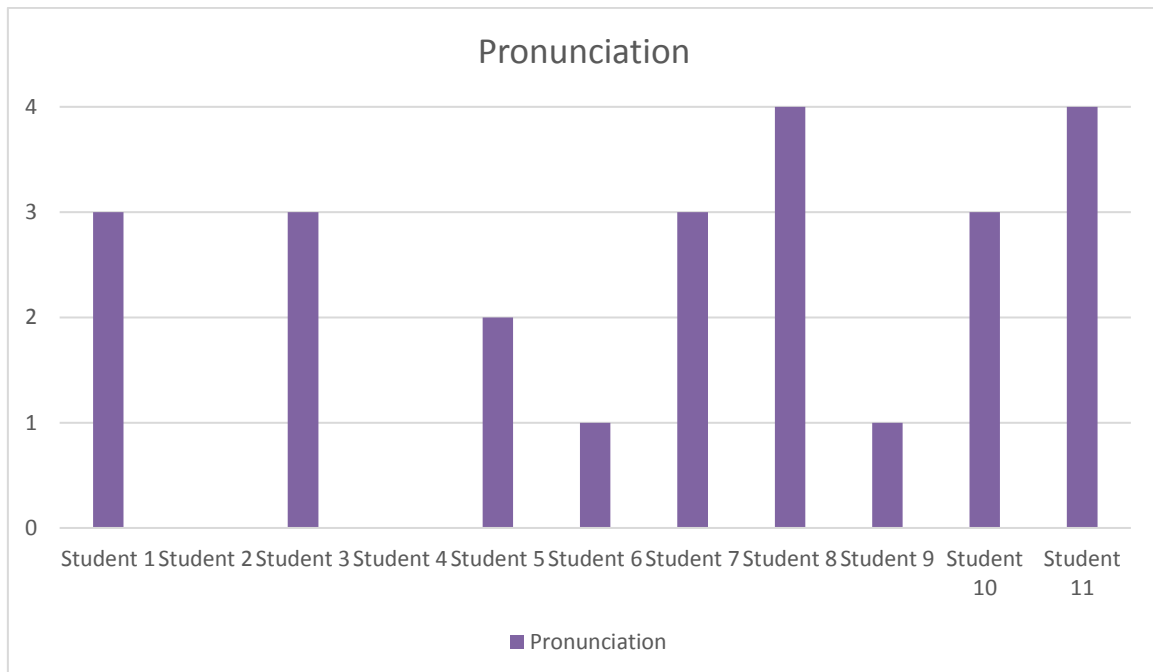


Figure 2.1.5 Presentation 1. Pronunciation

Second presentation was on March 23. Topic of the presentation was *Great inventions*. Students' task was to make a presentation about one invention they believe to be great. Student 10 was absent that day.

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.6, results of assessing fluency during the second presentation differ from the results of the first presentation. Students showed highest results. Two students from the group became more fluent after the first presentation.

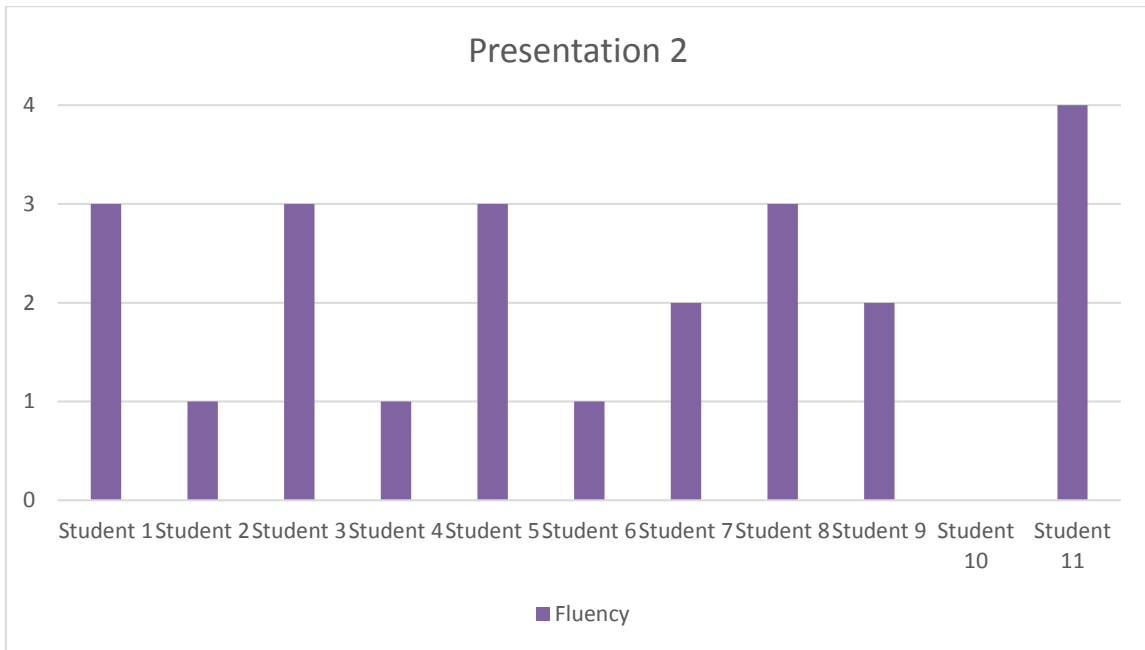


Figure 2.1.6 Presentation 2. Fluency of the speech

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.7, results on assessing confidence during the second presentation are high. Six students got 3 and 4 points for this criteria. Results were not deteriorated.

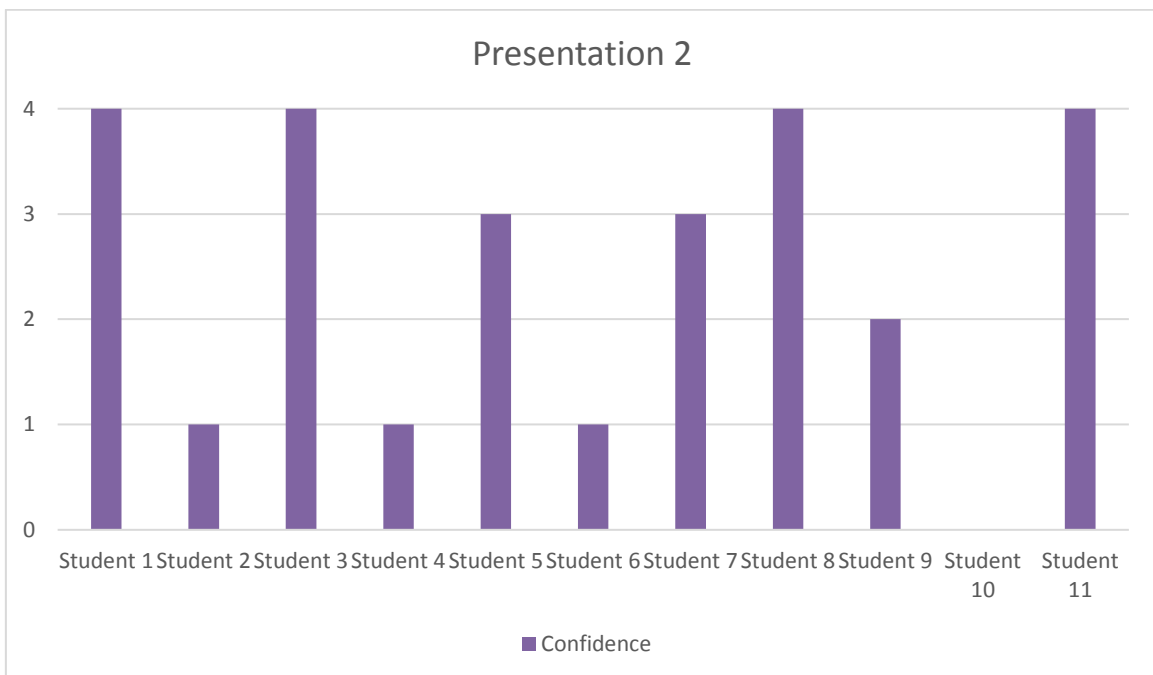


Figure 2.1.7 Presentation 2. Confidence of the speaker

Figure 2.1.8 represents results of assessing grammar during the second presentation. In general, results are not high. There was a student who lowered results.

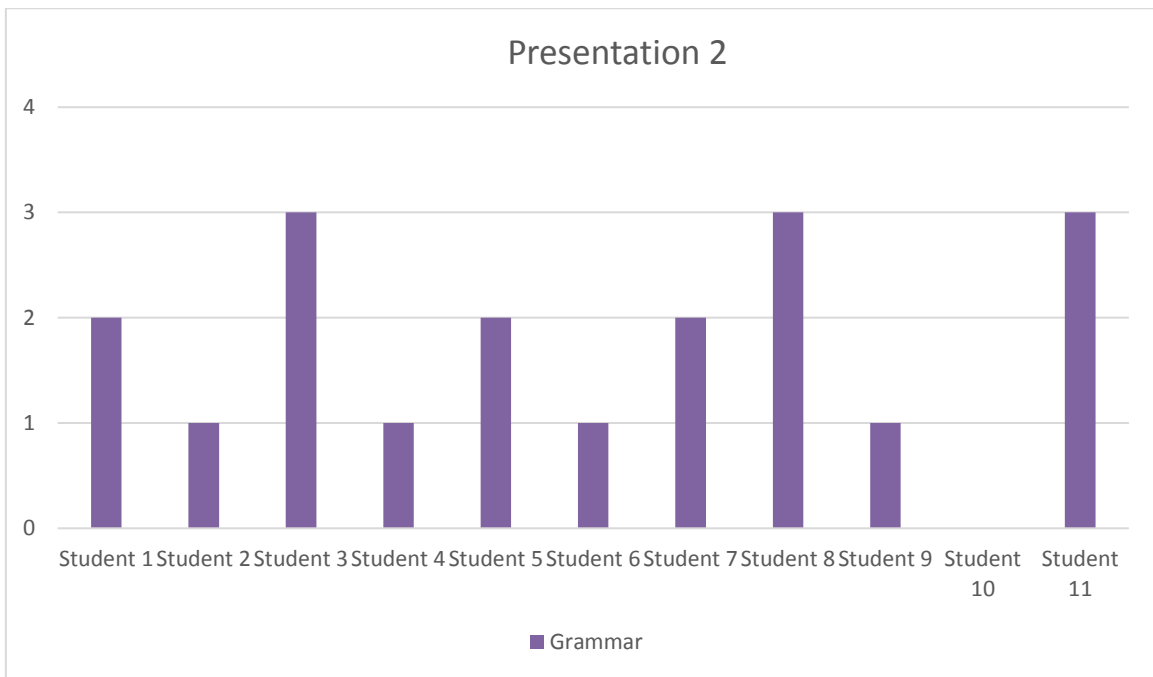


Figure 2.1.8 Presentation 2. Grammar

Next chart illustrates the results of assessing vocabulary. Results do not differ from the results of the first presentation.

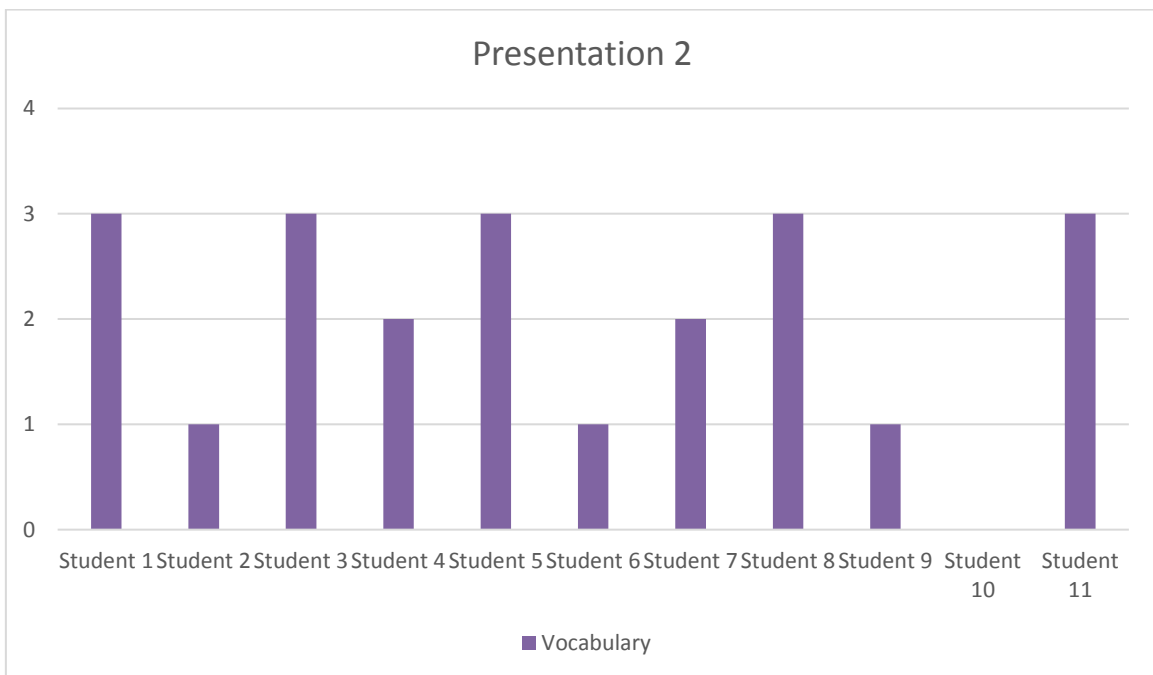


Figure 2.1.9 Presentation 2. Vocabulary

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.10 results of assessing pronunciation during the second presentation are high. Most of the students got 3 and 4 points. No one got less than 2 points. Results of assessing pronunciation are higher in comparison with the first presentation.

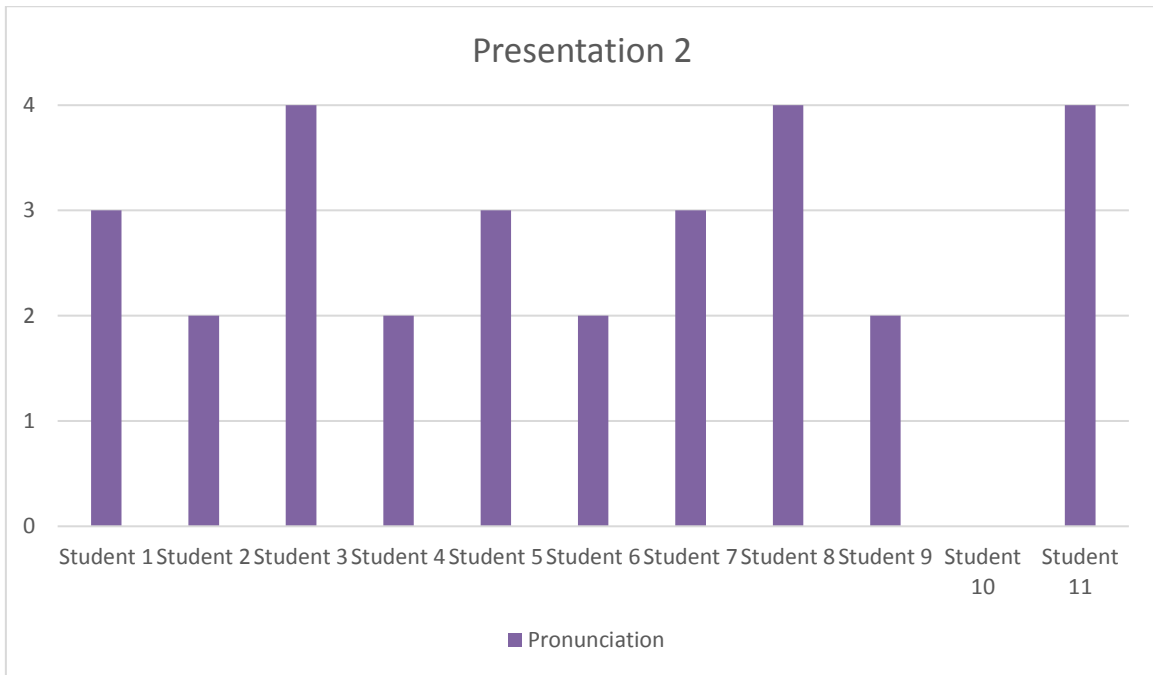


Figure 2.1.10 Presentation 2. Pronunciation

Third presentation was on April 1. The topic of presentation was *People who contributed to the development of humanity*.

Student 2 was not ready to speak and student 7 was absent that day.

Next chart shows results of assessing fluency during the third presentation. In comparison with the first and second times, some students increased their results. Unfortunately, as it happened during the second presentation, 3 students of 9 got only one point for the criteria.

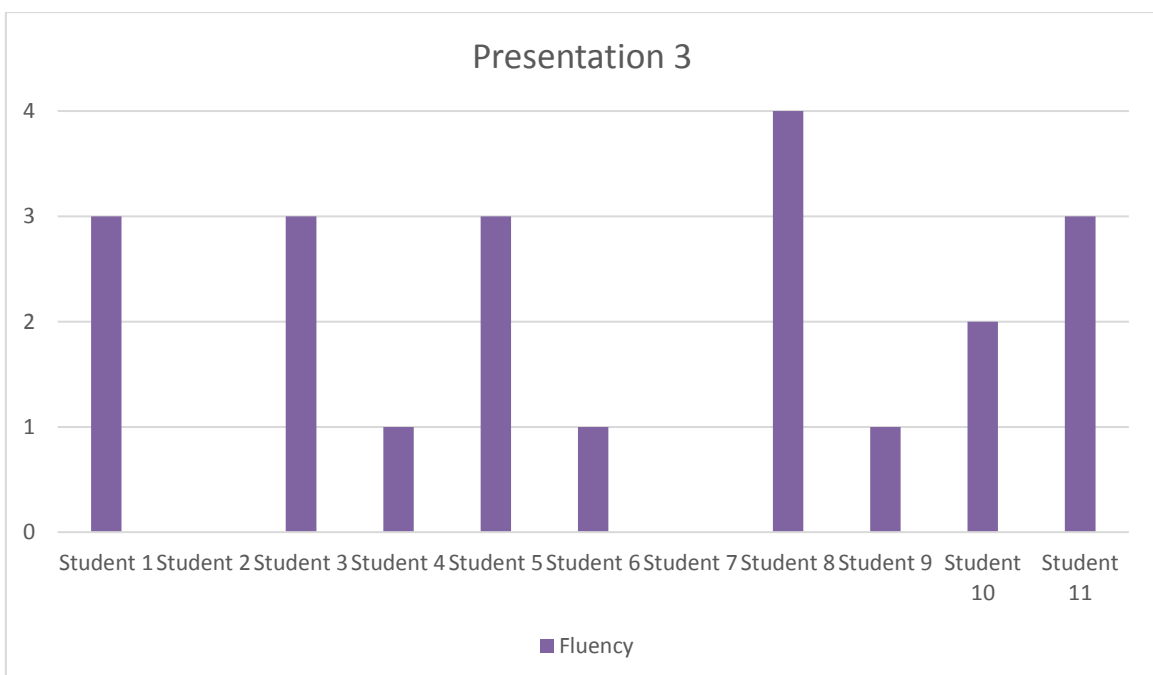


Figure 2.1.11 Presentation 3. Fluency of the speech

Figure 2.1.12 illustrates the results of assessing confidence of students during the third presentation. The results of assessing confidence are high, but do not particularly differ from the previous results.

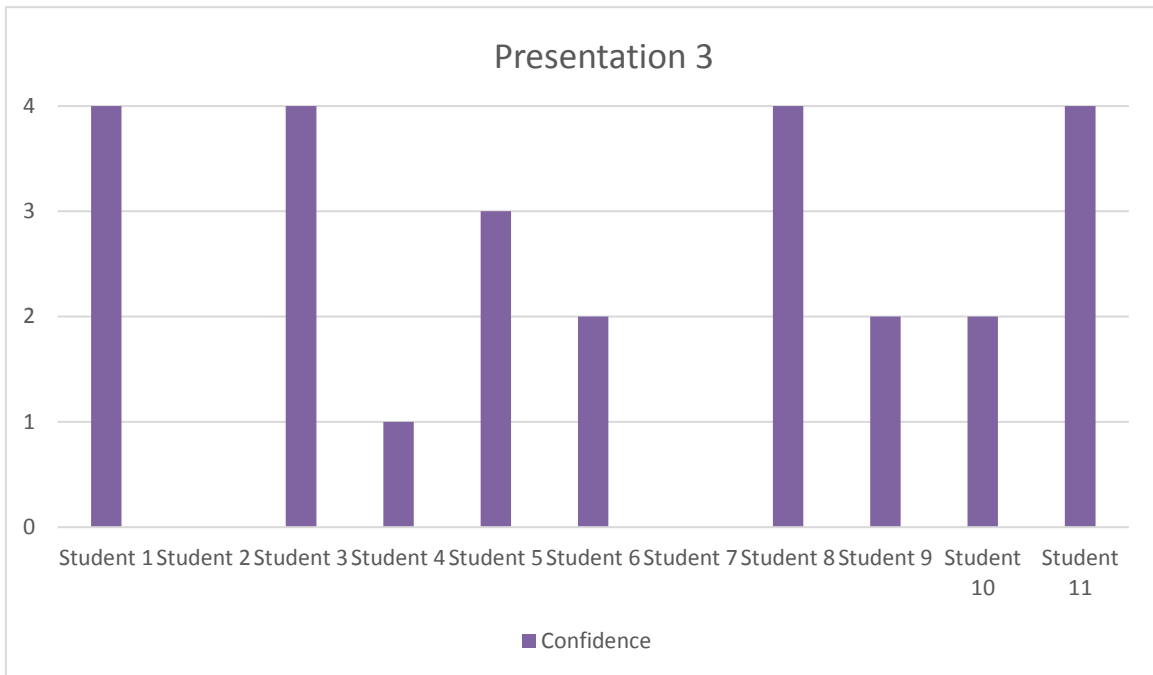


Figure 2.1.12 Presentation 3. Confidence of the speaker

Next chart displays the results of assessing grammar. The results are higher in comparison with first and second presentations. So far the highest points are not received.

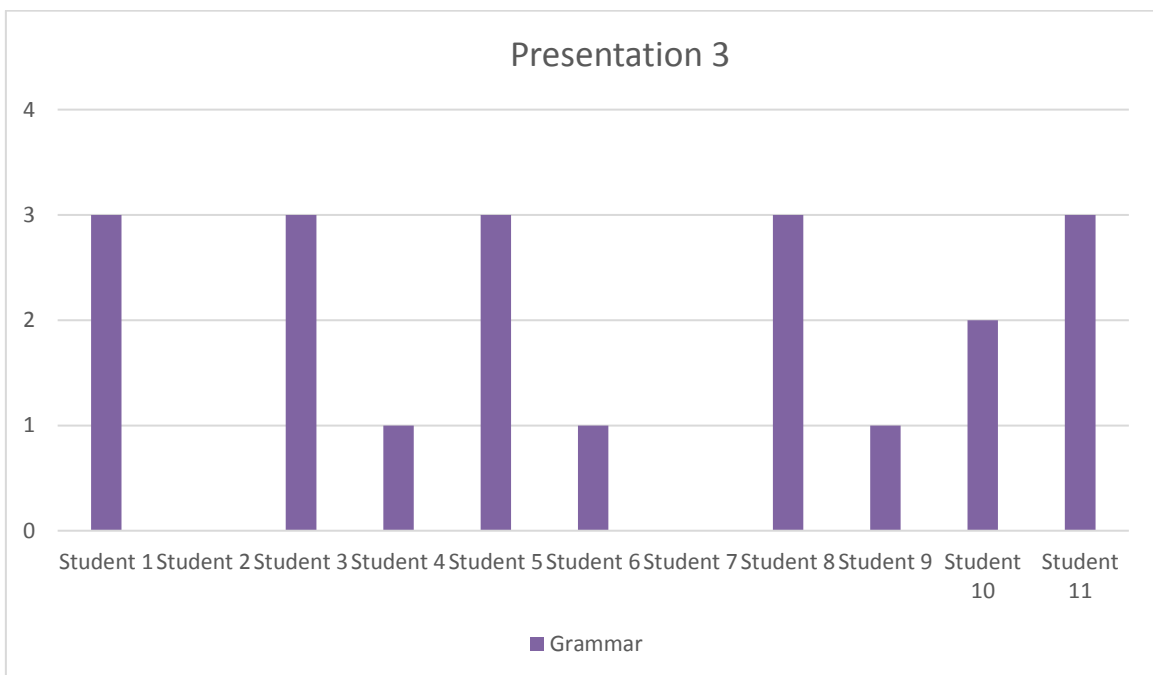


Figure 2.1.13 Presentation 3. Grammar

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.14 the results of assessing vocabulary are higher after first and second presentations. Two of 9 students got 4 points.

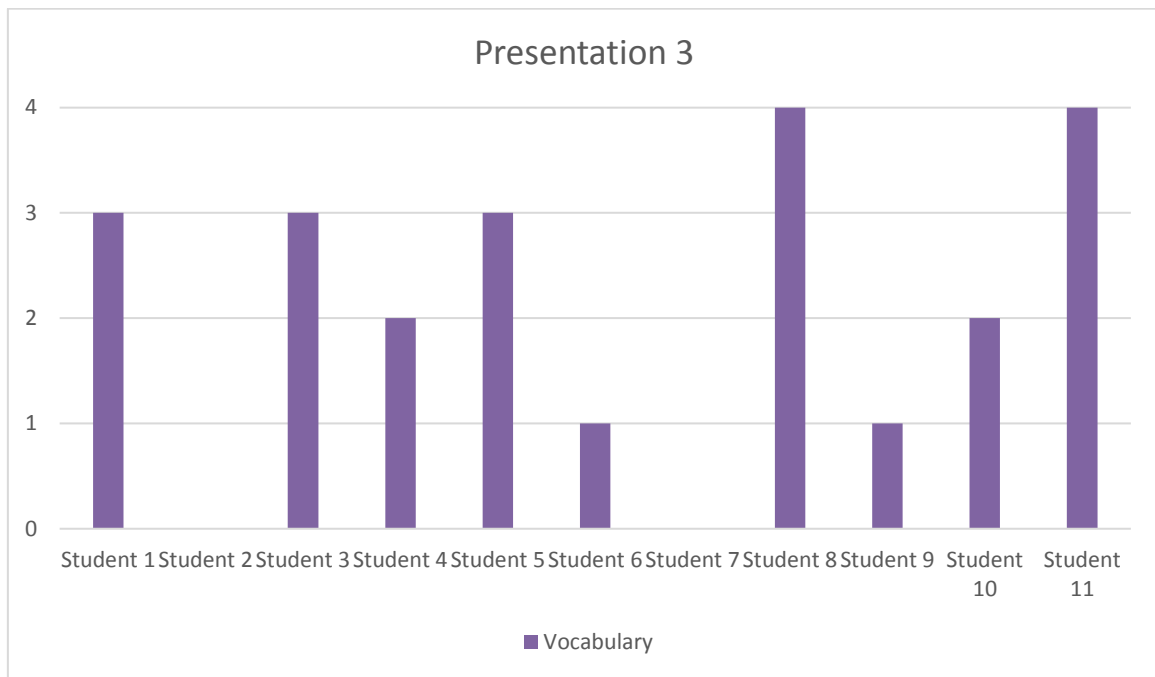


Figure 2.1.14 Presentation 3. Vocabulary

Next chart illustrates the results of assessing pronunciation during the third presentation. The results are high. Most of the students (5 of 9) got 4 points for vocabulary. No one got 1 point for this criteria.

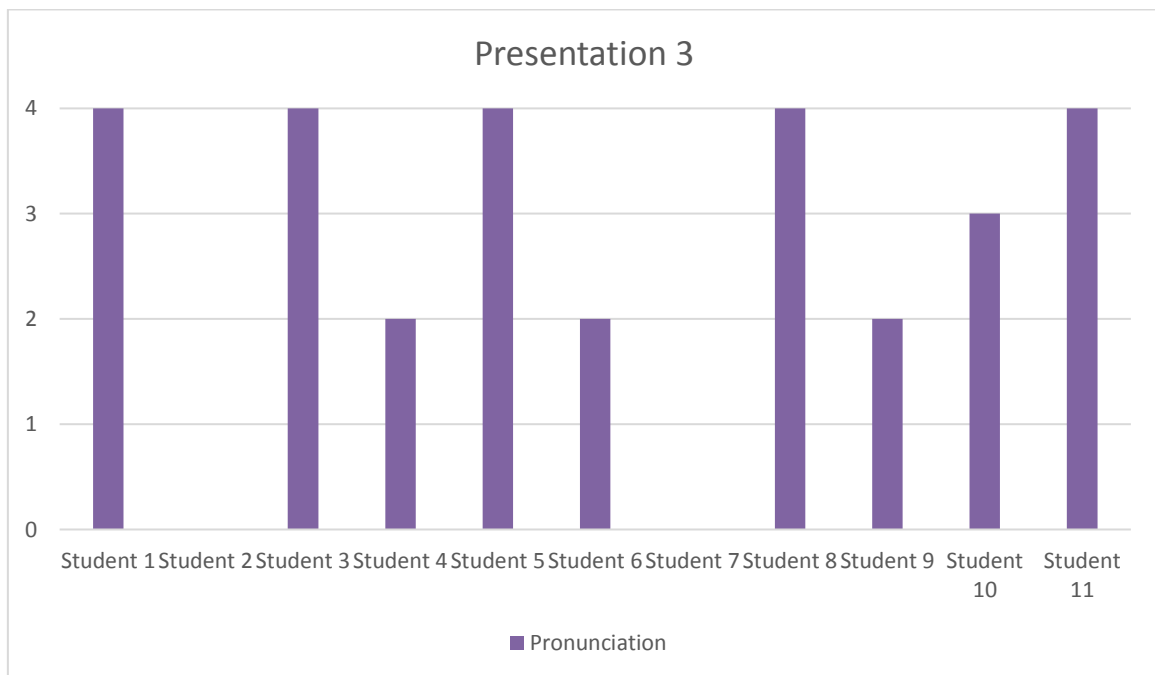


Figure 2.1.15 Presentation 3. Pronunciation

Fourth presentation was on April 7. Teacher gave an opportunity to students to choose the topic themselves. It was made to see if the results would be better when students have no frames and could speak about topic they want to and like. 11 students were ready to present.

Figure 2.1.16 illustrates the results of assessing fluency during the fourth presentation. The results are high. The reason could be that students spoke on a familiar topic. Anyway, two people got 1 point.

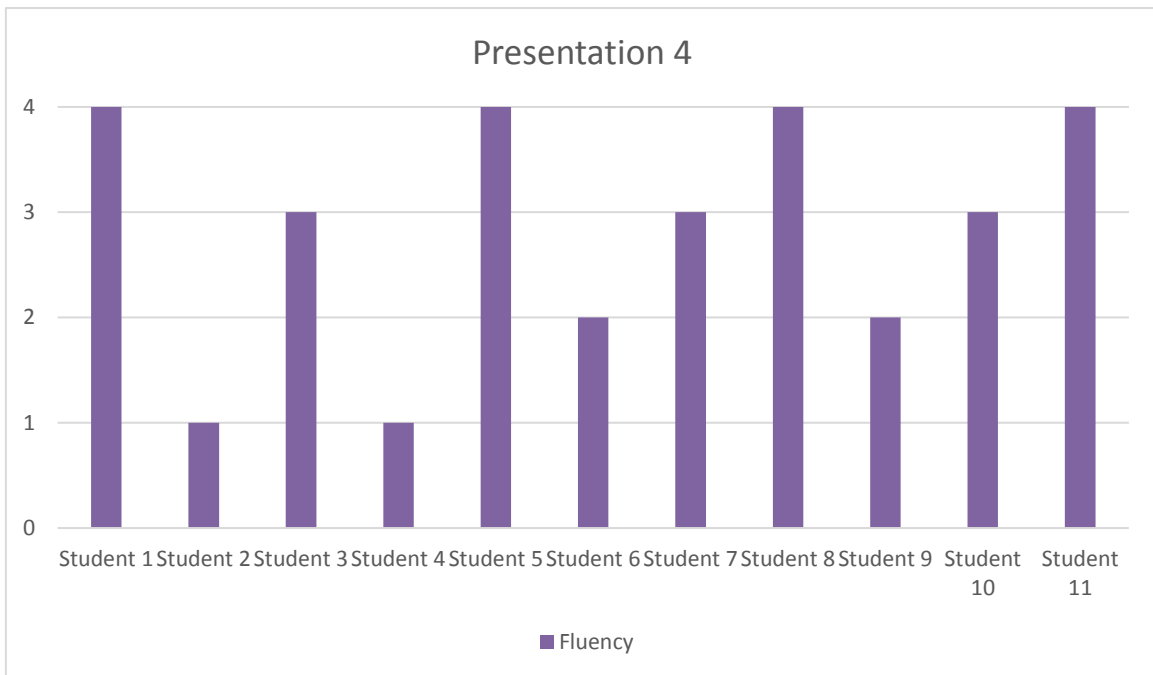


Figure 2.1.16 Presentation 4. Fluency of the speech

Next chart shows the results of assessing confidence during the fourth presentation. Results are high. The results significantly increased comparing to the first, second and third presentation.

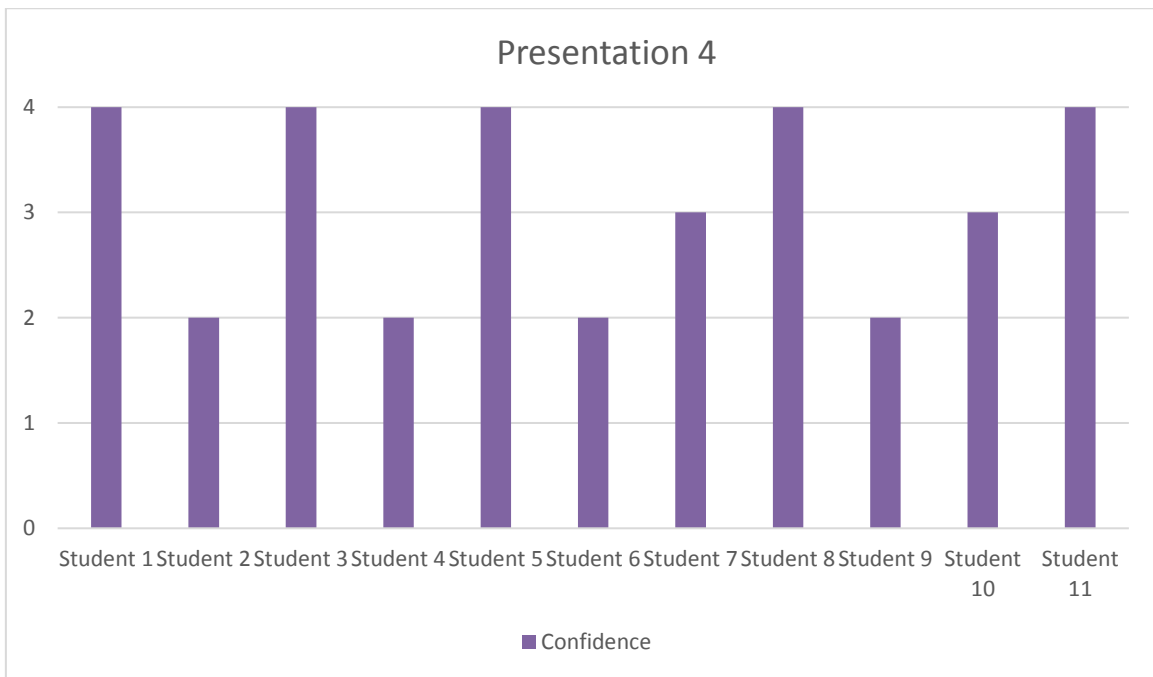


Figure 2.1.17 Presentation 4. Confidence of the speaker

Figure 2.1.18 demonstrates the results of assessing grammar. Level of grammar still is not high, but the results are better in comparison with first, second and third presentations.

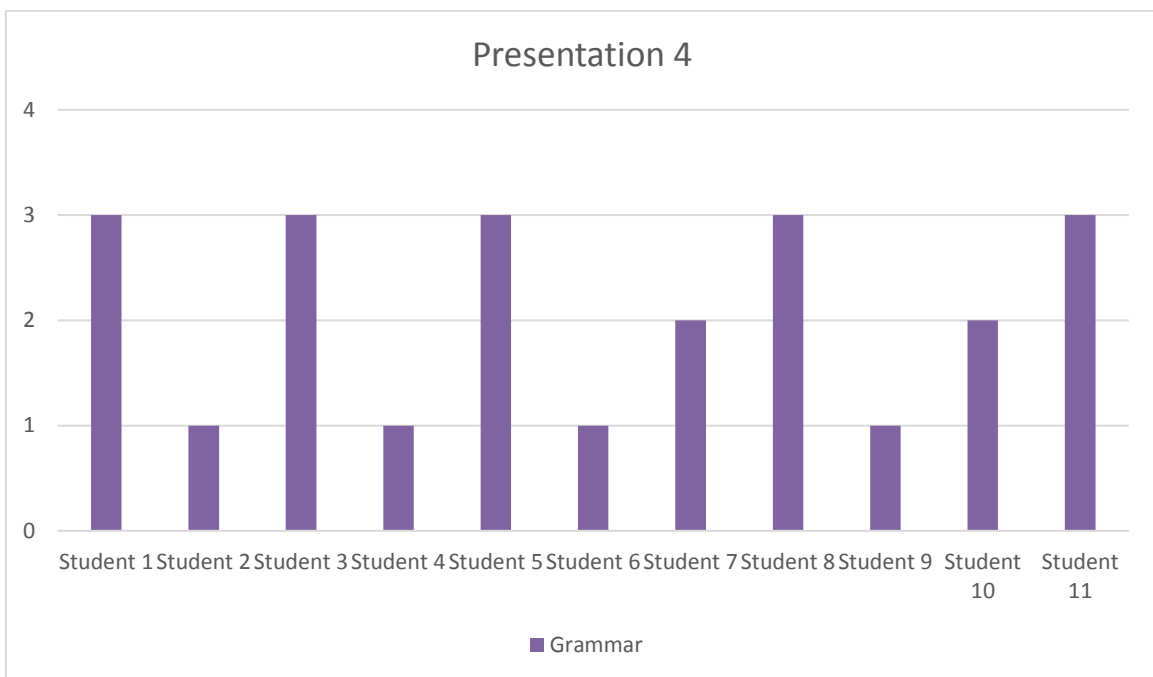


Figure 2.1.18 Presentation 4. Grammar

Next chart illustrates level of vocabulary during the fourth presentation. Results increased after first, second and third presentation. No one got 1 point for this criteria.

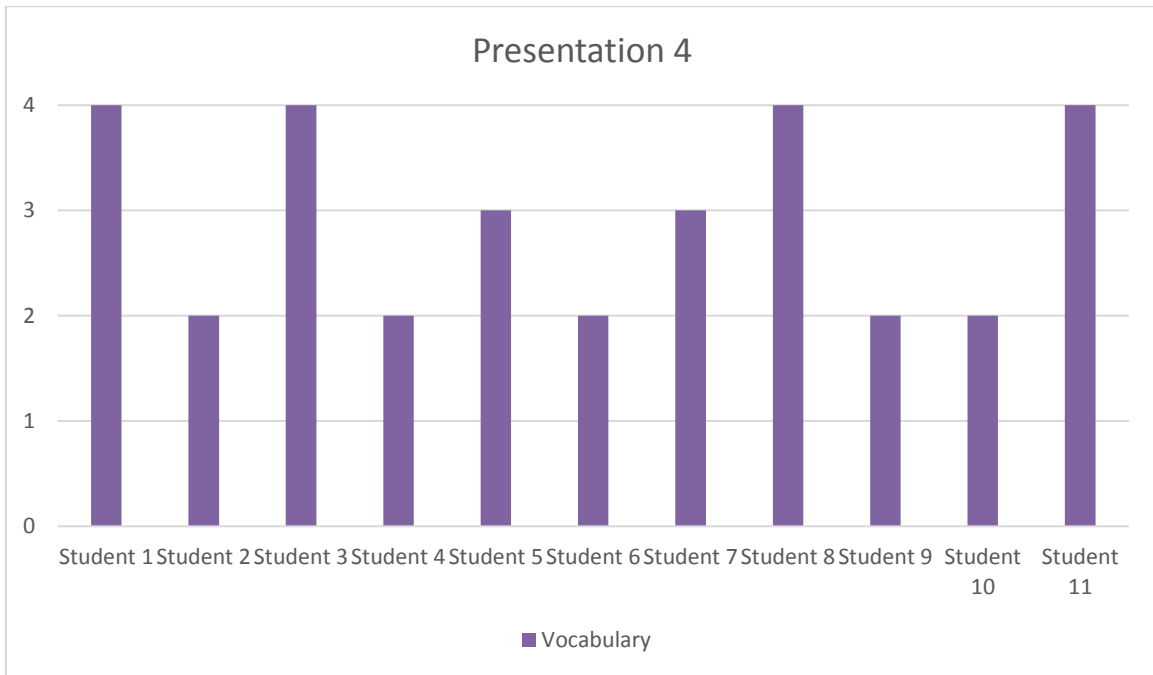


Figure 2.1.19 Presentation 4. Vocabulary

As illustrated in Figure 2.1.20, the results of assessing pronunciation are impressive. In general, the results increased after first, second and third presentation.

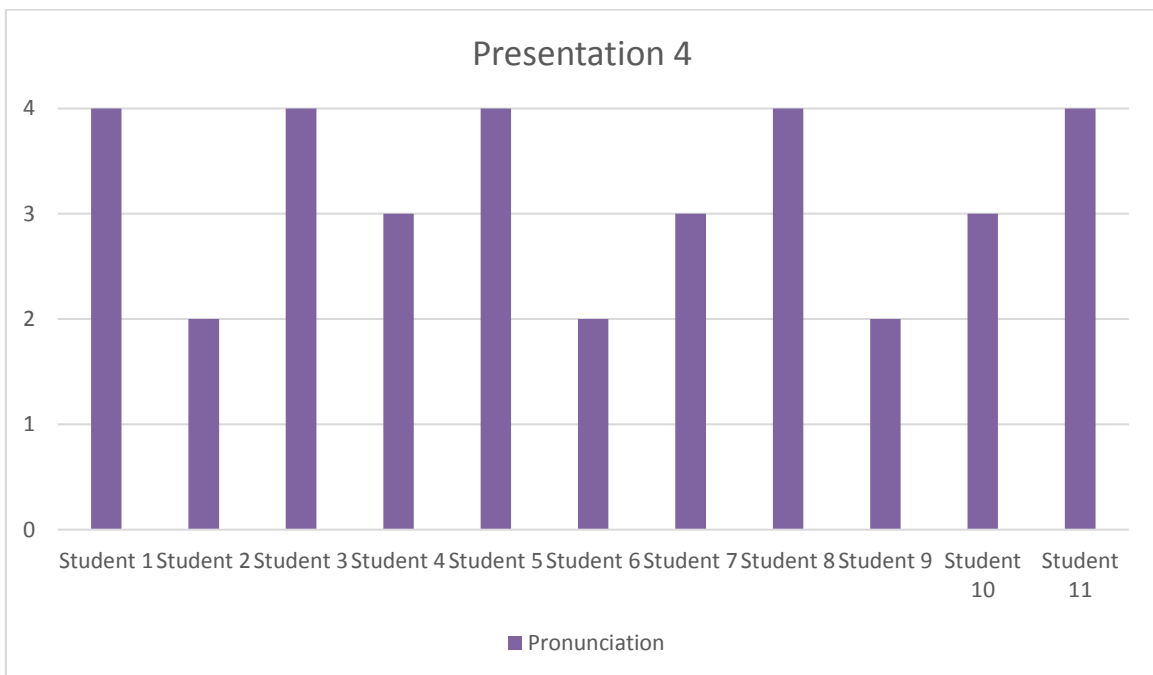


Figure 2.1.20 Presentation 4. Pronunciation

Fifth presentation was on April 21. Topic of the presentation was *Progress is always beneficial*. All students were ready to answer.

Chart shows the results of assessing fluency during the last presentation. Five students achieved the highest result and two students got 3 points. Results show that

speaking fluency of form 7 students increased during two months of making oral presentations.

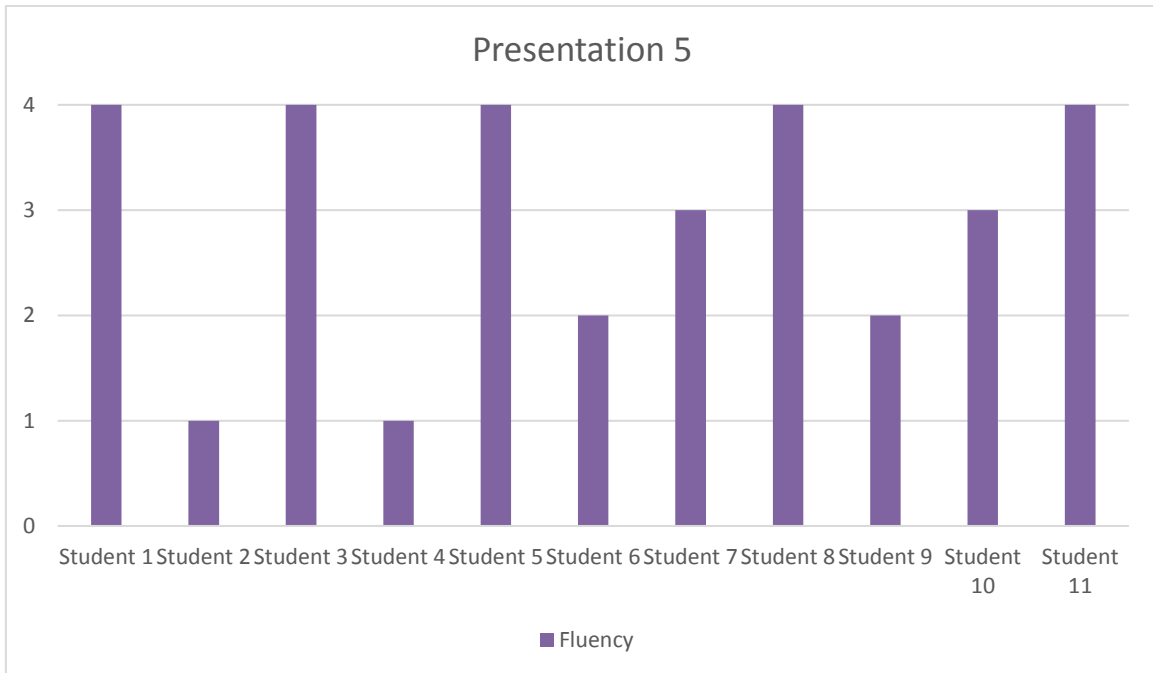


Figure 2.1.21 Presentation 5. Fluency of the speech

Figure 2.1.22 illustrates the results of assessing confidence during the fifth presentation. Six students got the highest points for this criteria. After 5 presentations students of form 7 became more confident.

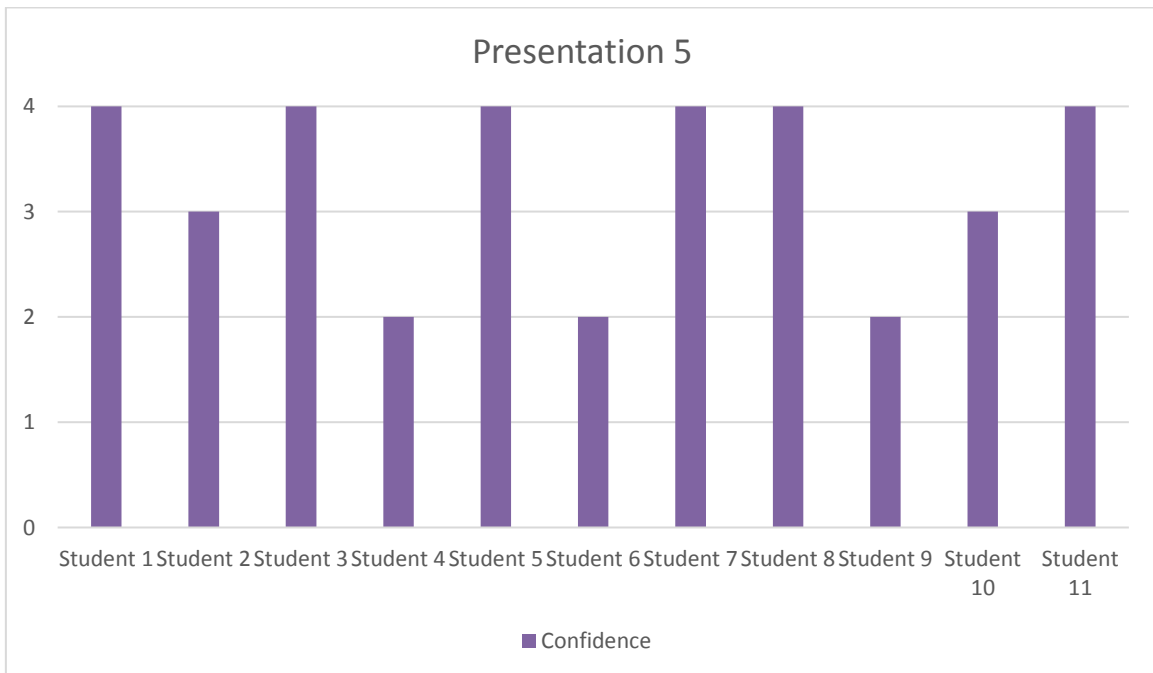


Figure 2.1.22 Presentation 5. Confidence of the speaker

Next figure demonstrates the results of assessing grammar during the fifth presentation. One student got 4 points for the first time for this criteria. Level of grammar increased, but still is lowest in comparison with other criteria.

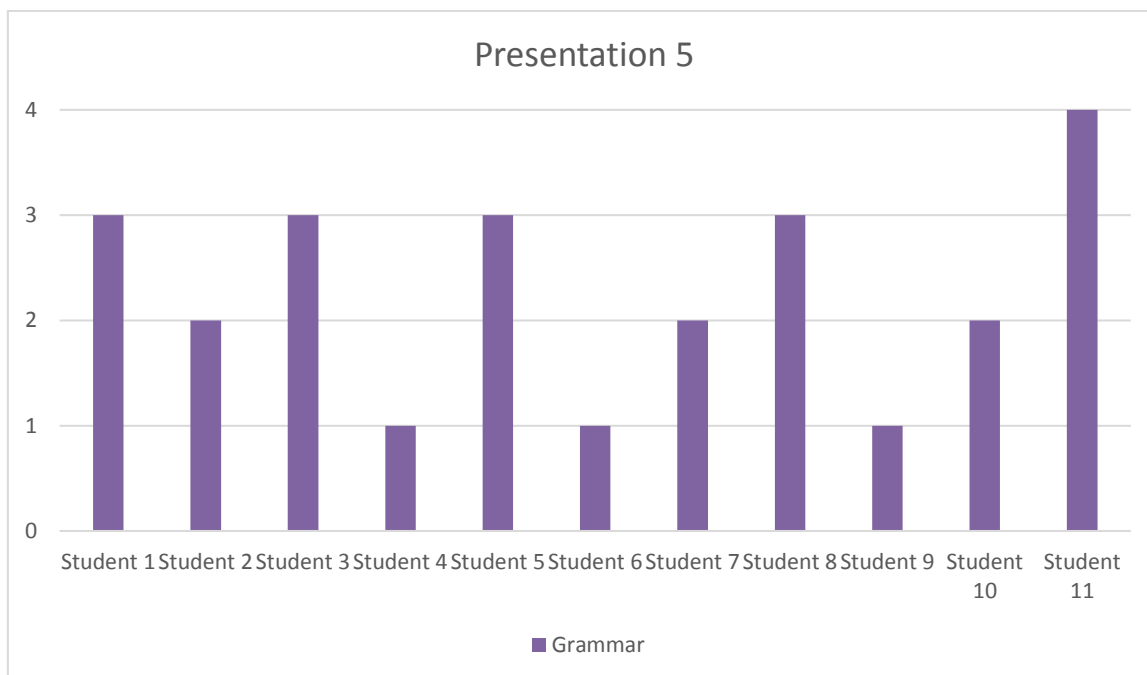


Figure 2.1.23 Presentation 5. Grammar

Figure 2.1.24 illustrates the results of assessing vocabulary. The results are the same as during the fourth presentations, but increased in comparison with first, second and third presentations. After the last presentation level of vocabulary of form 7 students increased.

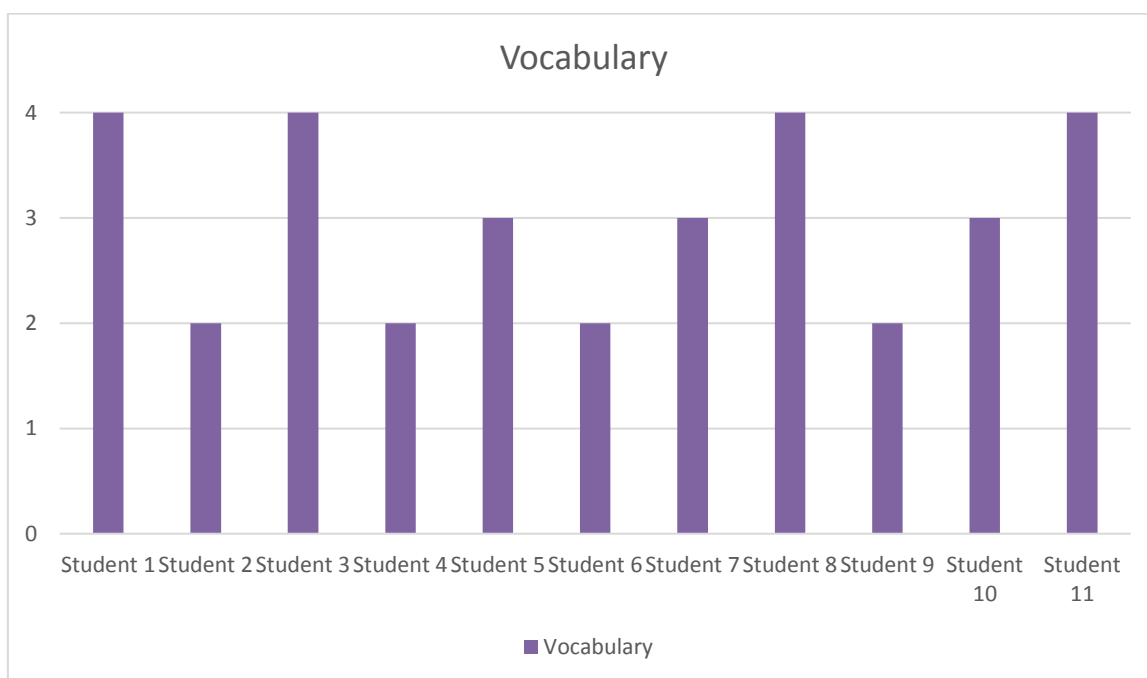


Figure 2.1.24 Presentation 5. Vocabulary

As it is illustrated in Figure 2.1.25 the results of pronunciation after four presentations are extremely high. Every student improved pronunciation by making presentations. In comparison with other criteria, results of assessing pronunciation increased the most.

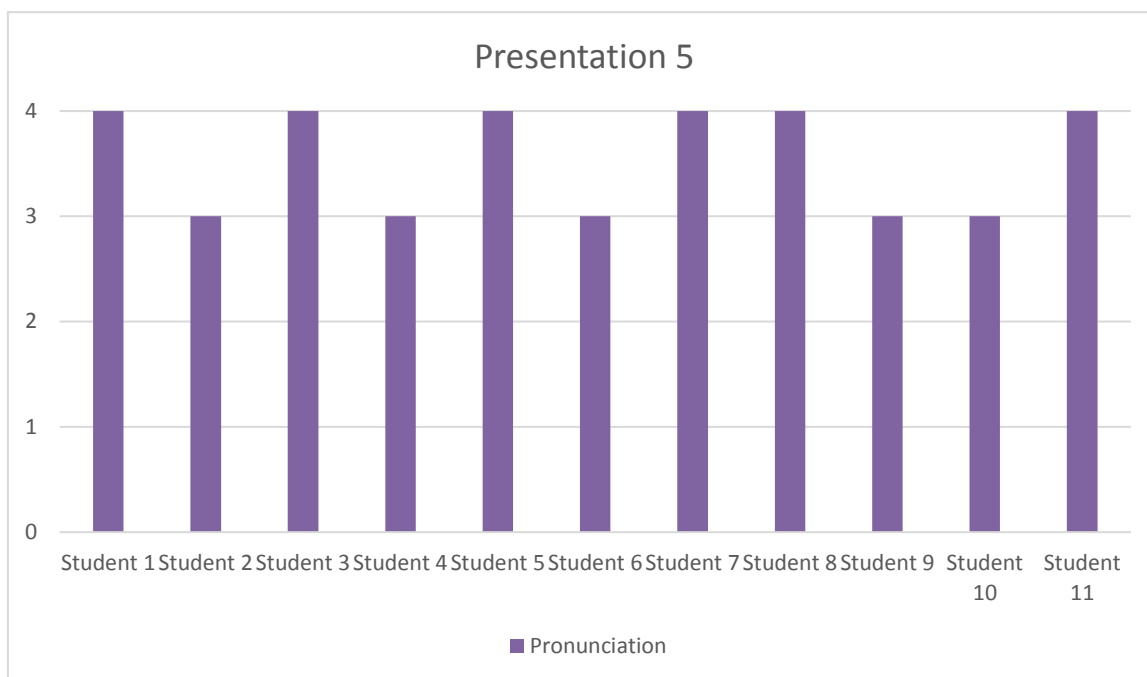


Figure 2.1.25 Presentation 5. Pronunciation

To summarise, the above results of the learners’ observation prove that presentations help to improve form 7 students’ speaking skills. If compare the results of five presentations, the progress is visible.

If compare the results for the every criteria, the most significant results are seen in assessments of pronunciation. Unfortunately, the lowest results were shown in grammar.

Positive dynamics were evident according to every form 7 student that took part in a research. According to the results of observation, it could be concluded that presentations could be used as a tool to improve students speaking skills.

The next subchapter describes the results of questionnaire that was held among students to find out their attitude towards presentations to improve speaking skills.

2.2 Findings of Questionnaire for Form 7 Students

In questionnaire that was held among form 7 students' took part 11 students (2 boys and 9 girls). There were 10 questions. 9 of them were questions with variants of answers, suggested by teacher and 1 opened question. Questionnaire was held to find out students' opinion about making presentations as well as their opinion on the results.

The first question was about making presentations before. Figure 2.2.1 illustrates that most of students gave a negative answer. Two students answered that they do not remember. No one gave a positive answer. It means that students had never made oral presentations before.

Sample of questionnaire held among form 7 students can be found in Appendix 2.

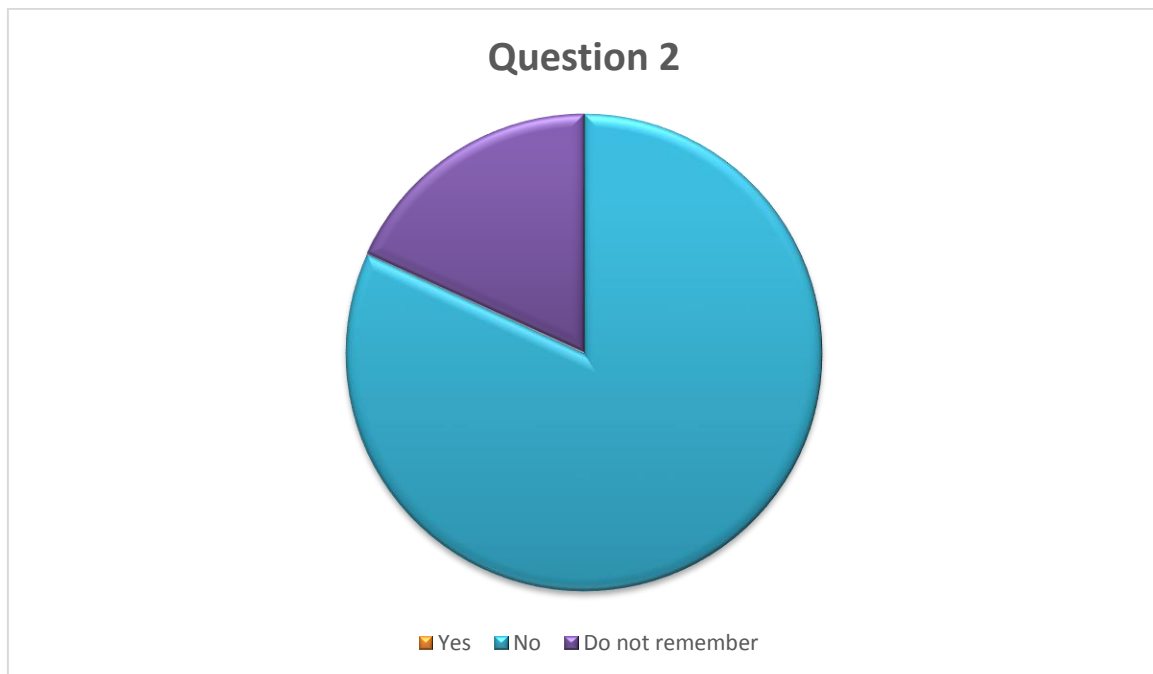


Figure 2.2.1 **Have you ever made presentations before.**

For the third question students had an opportunity to choose more than one answer. As it is illustrated in Figure 2.2.2, vocabulary, information, clear and grammatically correct speech, as well as appearance and gestures are the most important to think about when preparing a presentation.

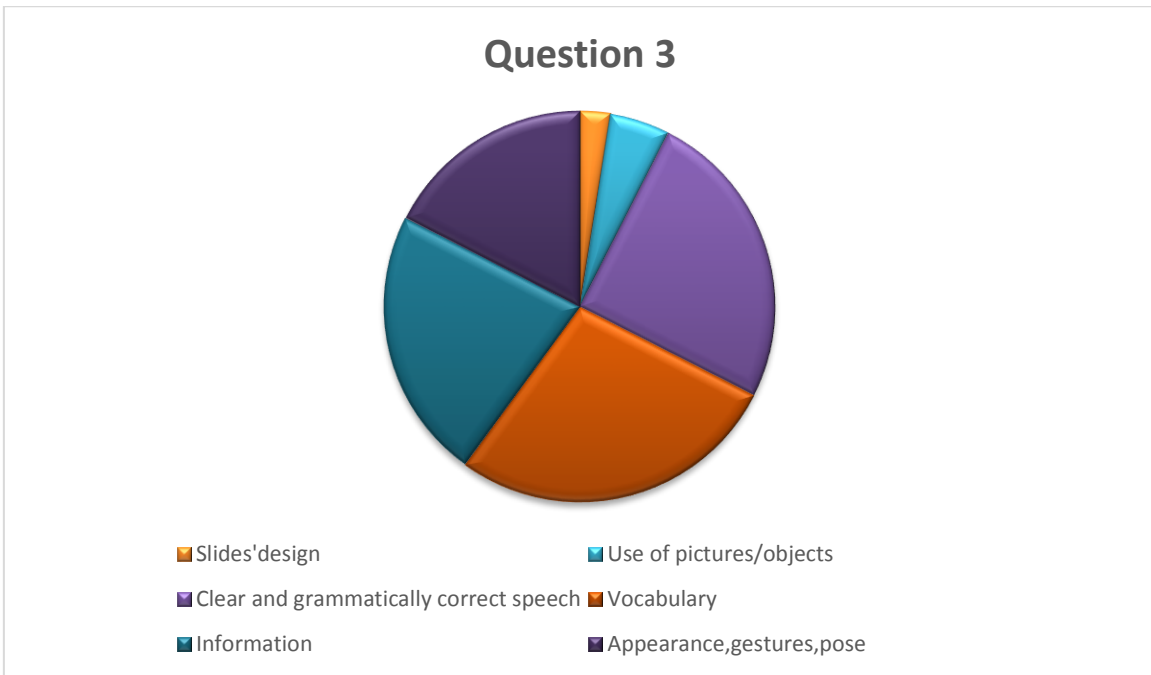


Figure 2.2.2 When preparing a presentation what is important to think about

Question 4 was asked to find out what did students like about making presentations. Every student in the group answered that making presentations is useful for their English language. Many of respondents answered that presentations help to broaden vocabulary. Half of the group seems this activity to be interesting. Few students answered that they like to speak in-front of the audience and look for the information.

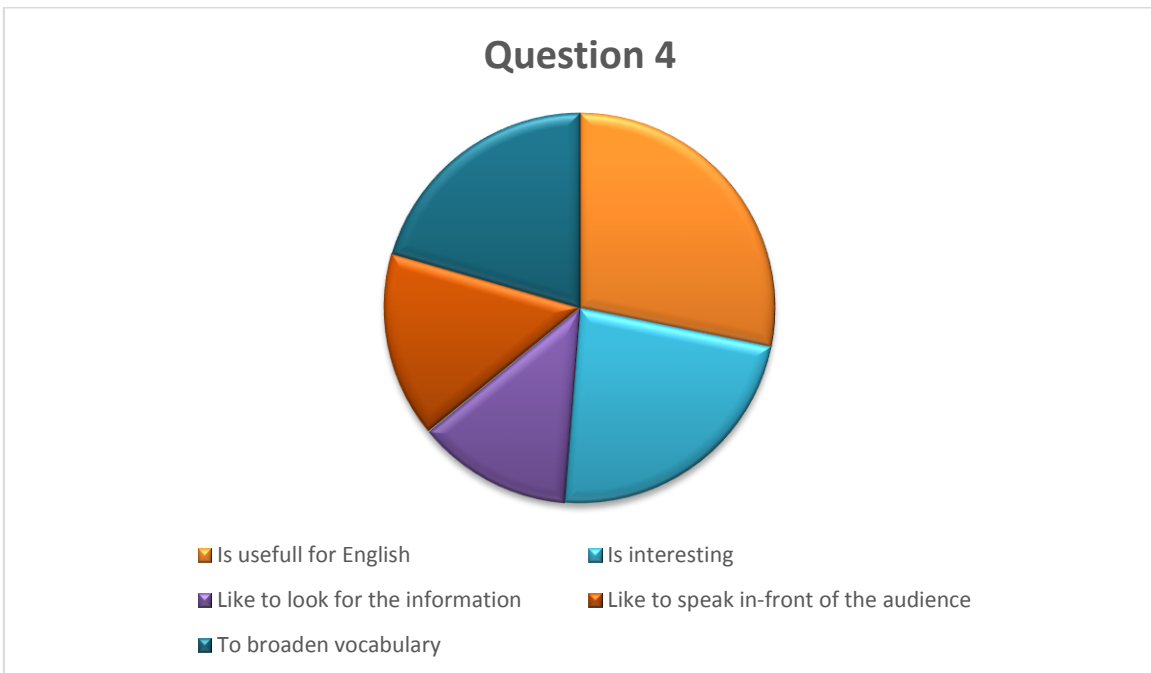


Figure 2.2.3 What did you like about making presentations

Figure 2.2.4 illustrates students' answers to the question about their dislikes of making presentations. Students had an opportunity to choose more than one answer.

The overwhelming majority of students answered that they have a fear to be evaluated by the teacher or by classmates. Many students answered that it is difficult for them to speak in-front of the public and they have a fear to make a mistake. Some students answered that this is a time consuming process. Unfortunately, only one student liked everything about making presentations.

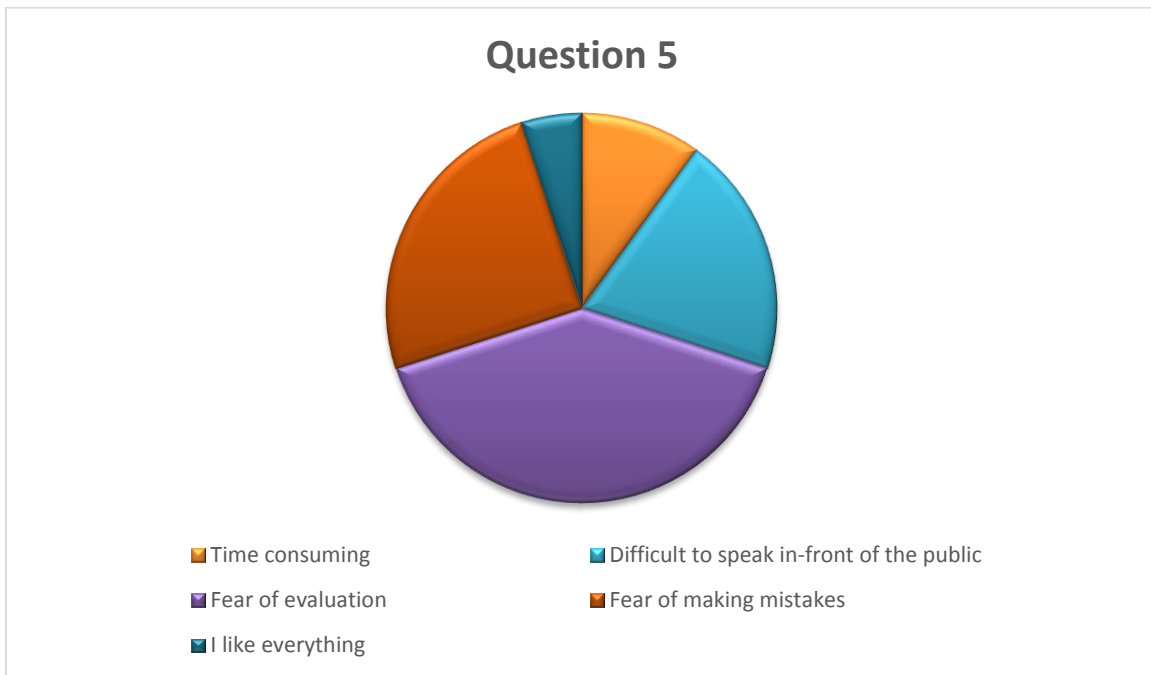


Figure 2.2.4 What you did not like about making presentations

Diagram shows students' answers to the question 6. The question was about achieved results by making presentations. The good indicator is the fact that every student had achieved something. Students learned how to do a presentation, learned new information, learned new words, improved speaking skills. Students are not afraid to speak in front of the audience any more. It is important indicator for the teacher that method brought positive results.



Figure 2.2.5 What you have achieved

Question 7 was asked to students to find out actions that helped them to make presentations. Mostly, students had chosen a lot of practice, positive visualization and teacher's help. Nobody had chosen that analysis of other students' presentations helped them to improve own presentations.

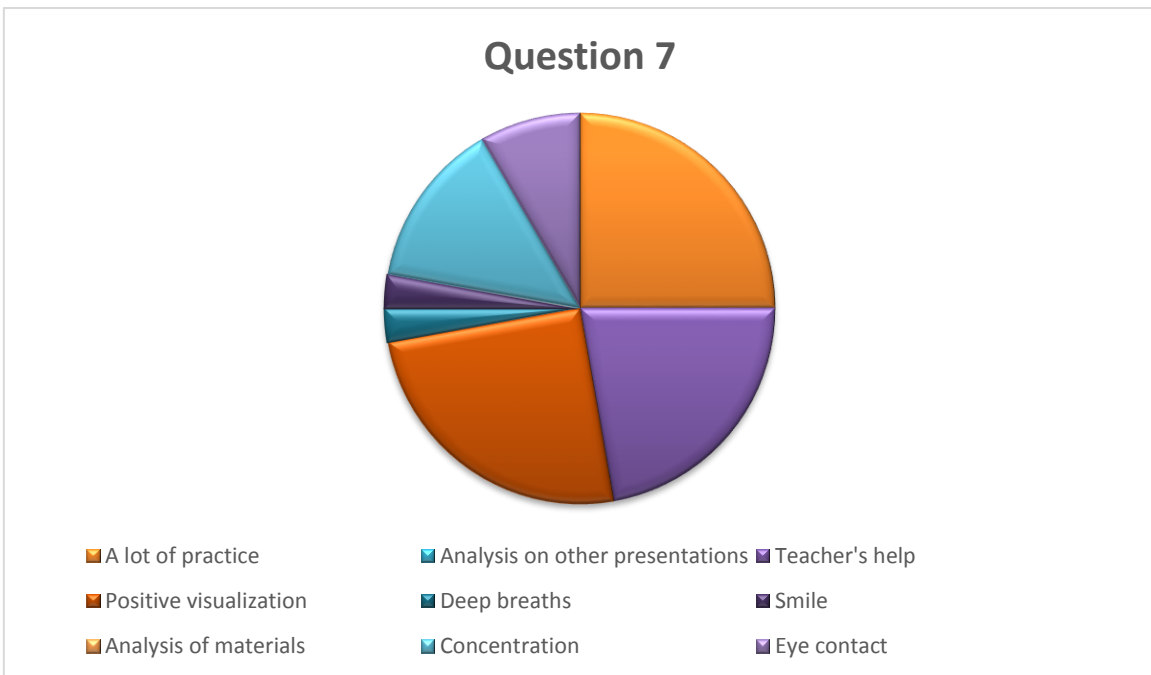


Figure 2.2.6 What helped to make presentations

Question 8 was asked to draw a parallel with the observation results. The overwhelming majority of students answered that presentation about their own chosen topic was easy to prepare. Two students had chosen topic *My favourite book*.

Students had chosen these topics because it is easier to make a presentation about the theme they are already familiar with. Observation results showed that students got high points when they were making a presentation about own chosen topic.

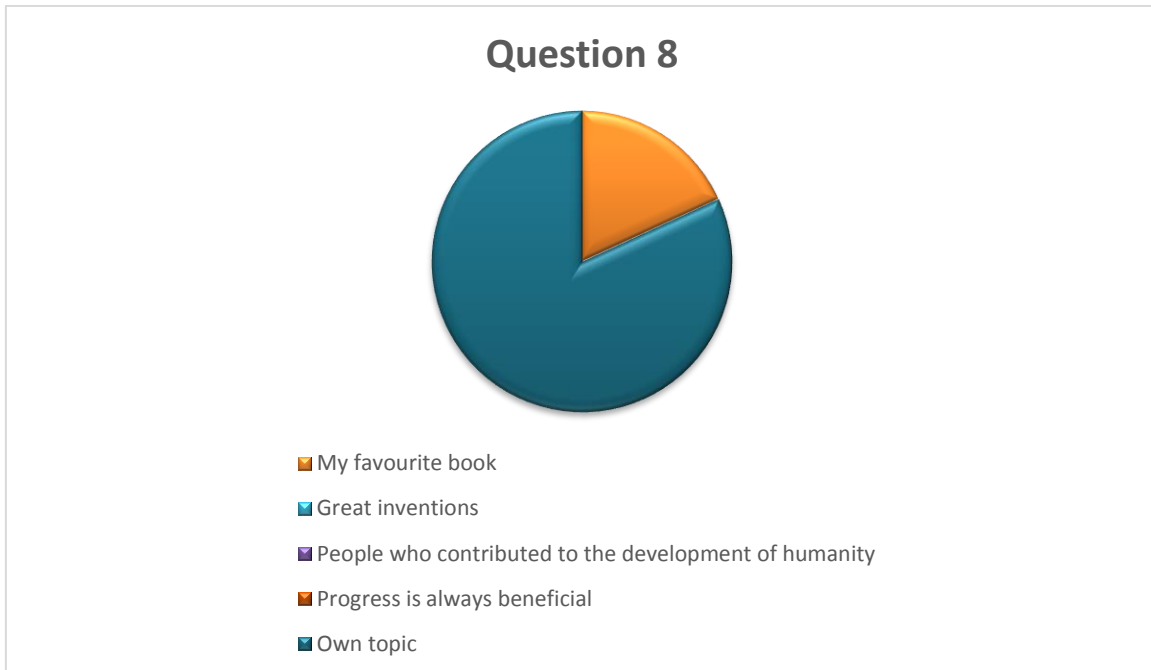


Figure 2.2.7 What presentation was easy to prepare

Question 9 was asked to find out if students want to make presentations further. Nine students answered that they want to continue making presentations. On author's opinion it is a good result. For one student it was difficult to answer. It means that he or she had some doubts. One student does not want to do it. There could be many reasons why the negative answer was given.



Figure 2.2.8 Do you want to make presentations further

Last question was asked to find out if students agree that presentations help to improve speaking skills. The overwhelming majority of students from the group gave the positive answer to this question. It was difficult to answer whether presentations help to improve speaking skills for one student from the group. Author believes that presentations really help to improve speaking skills and other language skills as well.

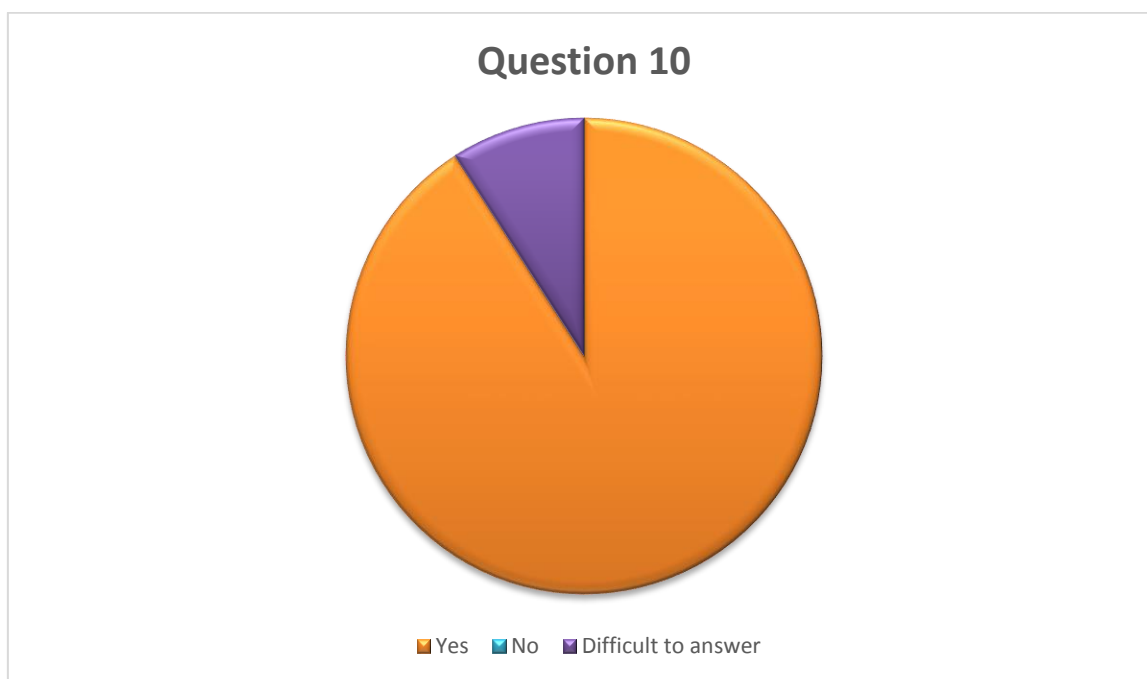


Figure 2.2.10 Do you think presentations help to improve speaking skills

According to the analysis of questionnaire that was held among students to find out their opinion towards presentations during English lessons, several conclusions could be made.

Firstly, students agreed that presentations help to develop speaking skills. They acknowledged that presentations are useful and interesting to make.

Secondly, they pointed out that because of making presentations they had learned new information, new words and are not afraid to speak in front of the audience.

Thirdly, they admitted that it was easier to speak about the topic they had chosen themselves rather than topic, suggested by teacher.

Finally, students gave positive answer to the question about making presentations further.

2.3 Findings of Questionnaire for English Teachers

Author of the Diploma conducted a questionnaire among teachers of English in Riga Classical gymnasium. In total, four teachers of English who had a working experience with form 7 students, filled in the questionnaire. Questionnaire consisted of 10 questions: 5 open-ended and 5 closed-ended questions.

Questionnaire was held to find out teachers' opinion about improvement of speaking skills, about use of presentations to improve students' speaking skills and which activities do they use to improve students' speaking skills. A sample of questionnaire for English teachers can be found in Appendix 3.

The first question aimed to find out teachers' working experience in the field. One of the teachers has working experience from 1 to five years, other three teachers are already working for more than 20 years in the field.

Second question was related to language skills teachers pay more attention to during English lessons. According to answers, teachers try to divide their lessons in the way they can work on improvement of every language skill. However, one teacher pointed out speaking skills as main to work with during English lessons.

All respondents gave a positive answer to the third question. All teachers agreed that it is important to improve students' speaking skills. One of the teachers pointed out that there is no sense to learn language if you do not have an ability to speak. One teacher answered that it is essential to pay attention to speaking skills because nowadays there is a tendency to study abroad. Most often students choose English spoken countries or studies in English. Other respondents agreed that working on improving speaking skills helps to develop language in general (e.g. grammar, vocabulary).

Next question was asked to find out the level of speaking skills among form 7 students. All respondents pointed out that it depends on students and methods of teaching were used from the form 1 to six. Students differ and level of their knowledge and skills as well. Nevertheless, one of the respondents admitted that often students come to the form 7 with the lower level than it should be.

The respondents were to share the activities they use during English lessons to improve speaking skills. Respondents pointed out public speaking, role plays, as well as debates and discussions as the successful activities to improve speaking skills. One respondent added drills. One more respondent mentioned recordings as an activity to help students to improve their speaking skills. The respondents admitted that their students feel comfortable when performing speaking activities.

All respondents use oral presentations during their lessons. The difference is in frequency of use. One respondent tries to use presentations at least once a week. Other respondents use presentations once a month in English lessons.

Finally, the respondents were asked about benefits of using presentations in English lessons. One respondent pointed out that it is interesting activity and it leads to learn new information. Second respondent was completely sure that presentations help students to become more relaxed, to develop not only language skills but their personal features. Third respondent mentioned that preparing a presentation is a task that makes students working individually. Fourth respondent pointed out that preparing a presentation makes students analysing and thinking a lot.

To summarise, the above results of the questionnaire that was held among teachers of English prove that teachers pay enough attention to the improvement of students' speaking skills. The teachers' replies show that they use presentations to develop speaking skills but along with other speaking activities. Teachers pointed out that the use of presentations have several benefits. They admitted that presentations help to develop language in general, as well as develop students' personal features. Presentations force students to become autonomous learners and to think a lot.

As a result, the teachers' replies imply that it is necessary to improve speaking skills in form 7 and it is possible to do by using presentations.

2.4 Analysis of Research Results

The results of the conducted case study, which involved students' observation during presentations as well as the analysis of the results of the students' questionnaires and of questionnaires held among English teachers, enabled the author of the paper to compare the results of empirical part of the research with the ideas covered in the theoretical part of the research and to find answers to research questions proposed to examine how the presentations can help to improve speaking skills in form 7 English lessons.

Research Question One

The first research question sought to find out the connection between improvement of students' speaking skills and presentations. As underlined by many authors in the theoretical part of the present research, oral presentations help to improve

speaking skills. The main aspects how the use of presentations help to improve speaking skills are the following:

- when preparing a presentation it is important to think about clarity of the speech. It relies on logical organization and understandable word choices. Students analyze information and words he or she is using in the speech (Wrench, et al. 2012);
- use of oral presentations in the classroom lead to greater class interaction and participation, contributed to their learning of class materials, developed listening skills and improved students' public speaking skills (Girard, Pinar and Trapp, 2011).

As the results of the case study demonstrate, English teachers use presentations in their classrooms to help students' to improve speaking skills. Presentations help to develop language aspects as well as have impact on students' personal characteristics. When preparing presentations it is possible to learn new words, phrases, to find out new information. Oral presentations is an authentic way of practising English. This is important because speaking tasks that have no relation to real-life language use are not valuable for language learners.

Research Question Two

The second research question related to finding out advantages and disadvantages of using presentations in English classroom. The advantages and disadvantages of using presentations:

- presentations is one of the student-centered activities that is included in lesson plans to improve students' oral proficiency (King 2002);
- when making a presentation speaker has to achieve three main goals: accuracy, clarity and interest. If it happens, speaker succeeds in informative speaking (Wrench et al. 2012);
- when preparing for the speech, speaker has to practice verbal and non-verbal delivery. It helps to concentrate on language items as well as on gestures, facial expressions and eye contact (Wrench et al. 2012).

The results of observation and questionnaires demonstrate that learners are interested in making presentations. They appreciate the opportunity to learn new information and develop their language because they understand the importance of learning English. Besides the language side of the topic, there is a psychological one. Often students have psychological barriers. The task of the teachers is to help them to overcome the barriers. On the one hand, presentations can help students' to overcome

their fears and complexes, but on the other hand, psychological barriers may not allow students to participate in the process of making presentations.

CONCLUSION

The present paper was devoted to the investigation of using presentations to improve form 7 students' speaking skills. The author of the Diploma Paper has studied theoretical literature on speaking skills and presentations, and performed a case study to explore how the presentations can help to improve students' speaking skills, to analyze students' dynamics in speaking when making a presentations, and to find out how teachers of English improve students' speaking skills.

The review of theory and the results of the case study conducted in form 7 in Riga Classical Gymnasium allow the author of the paper to draw several conclusions about the use of presentations to improve students' speaking skills.

To begin with, the research results have demonstrated that speaking skills require improvement because speaking is a main tool for communication. High level of speaking skills will definitely lead to success in studies and will provide more chances when applying for the job.

Both pedagogical observation and the learners' feedback in questionnaires have proved that presentations help to improve speaking skills of form 7 students. As practice shows, making presentations lead to improvement of students' fluency of speaking, confidence, grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation. Form 7 students may have psychological barriers that prevent them from speaking in front of the audience. If teacher find the right way of motivating, students will overcome the psychological barriers and would not have fear of speaking any more. One of the most important aspects to prepare students to speak in real life is to give them as many opportunities as possible to do it during English lessons.

Author of the paper found out that level of students' speaking skills and knowledge in general may not always correspond to the proper level. Teachers should work hard to help students to develop and improve their language skills, so they have an opportunity to use language freely outside the classroom.

Taking into account the above research findings, the author of the paper can give following recommendations to English teachers to improve students' speaking skills:

1. Presentations provide real-life context that is essential for students if they want to use English in further life outside the classroom;
2. Teacher should understand the aim of using presentations during English lessons. Every type of presentation influence different spheres of language;

3. Before suggesting students to prepare presentation teacher should work out evaluation criteria to guide students in the right way;
4. Presentations require students' individual work. The task of the teacher is to prepare students to become autonomous learners;
5. Students can have fears to speak. Task of the teacher is to help students to overcome their fears;
6. All students should be encouraged to participate in the activity, knowing the aim and positive results.

THESES

1. Aim of the English as a subject is to build students' communicative competence as they would be able to study, communicate and cooperate outside the classroom in their further life.
2. Teachers have an opportunity to choose the method to teach speaking skills according to students' needs, interests and personal traits.
3. People may have psychological barriers that cause fear to speak. Teachers should know how to help students to overcome their fears.
4. There are different types of assessment. Teachers have to assign the aim and to create assessment criteria to evaluate speaking skills.
5. Presentation is a structured speech that requires paying attention on several aspects to succeed.
6. Presentations have types. Type is appointed according to the aim of presentation.
7. The main goal of informative presentation is to give as much information as possible in a limited time to make audience to learn something new.
8. Persuasive presentation is made to motivate audience to feel, think and act.
9. Presentation is student-centered activity that requires students to use all four language skills and motivates students to study English.
10. Presentations help to improve speaking skills that require grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation and fluency of the speech.
11. Students are interested in making presentations because they understand that with its help they will learn new information, broaden their vocabulary and overcome their fears of public speaking.
12. Teachers are using presentations to develop speaking skills because this activity provides many advantages e.g. students' individual work and opportunity to use language in a real-life context.

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Online dictionaries:

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www.merriam-webster.com

<http://psychology.net.ru/dictionaries>

Appendices

Appendix 1
Evaluation checklist (Sample)

Date
Name
Topic

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Notes
Fluency						
Confidence						
Grammar						
Pronunciation						
Vocabulary						

Date
Name
Topic

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Notes
Fluency						
Confidence						
Grammar						
Pronunciation						
Vocabulary						

Date
Name
Topic

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Notes
Fluency						
Confidence						
Grammar						
Pronunciation						
Vocabulary						

Date
Name
Topic

	0 points	1 point	2 points	3 points	4 points	Notes
Fluency						
Confidence						
Grammar						
Pronunciation						
Vocabulary						

Appendix 2
Questionnaire 1 (Sample)

Presentations to improve students' speaking skills in form 7

Questionnaire

Dear students,

Please, fill in the questionnaire about your practice of making presentations during March and April. All data will be used for my Diploma Paper. All information is anonymous.

10 questions offer you variants of answers, but you can also write your own variant if needed and 1 question is open-ended.

1. You are
 - Boy
 - Girl

2. Have you ever made presentations before? (in form 4-6)
 - Yes
 - No
 - Do not remember

3. When preparing a presentation what is important to think about? You can choose more than 1 answer.
 - Design of the slides (e.g. not to have a lot of text on slides) if visual aids are used.
 - It is good to use pictures or objects in your presentation
 - Clear and grammatically correct speech
 - Vocabulary (words have to be known for the audience)
 - Information (if it is current and interesting for the audience)
 - Appearance, gestures and pose

4. What did you like about making presentations? You can choose more than 1 answer
 - It is useful for my English
 - It is interesting

- I like to look for the new information
 - I like to speak in-front of the audience
 - It is a good opportunity to broaden (расширить) vocabulary
 - Another answer
-
-

5. What you did not like about making presentations? You can choose more than 1 answer

- It is time consuming
 - It is difficult for me to speak in-front of the public
 - I am afraid of the evaluation of the teacher or other students
 - I have a fear of making a mistake
 - I like everything about making presentations
 - Another answer
-
-

6. Hopefully, you had achieved some results. What are they? You can choose more than 1 answer

- I know what is presentation and how to do it
 - I am not afraid to speak in-front of the audience any more.
 - I have improved my speaking skills
 - I have learned new words
 - I have learned new information
 - I have not learned anything
 - Another answer
-
-

7. What helped you to make presentations? You can choose more than 1 answer

- A lot of practice at home or before the lesson
- Analysis of others' presentations
- Teacher's motivation and advices
- Using of positive visualization/positive emotions (when you think that everything will be ok and you will not fail)

- Taking deep breaths
- Smile to the audience
- Trying to analyze material and not to cover too much
- Trying to concentrate on the speech and not to think about evaluation
- Eye contact with the audience

8. Which presentation was the most easy to prepare? Why?

9. Do you want to make presentations further?

- Yes
- No
- It is difficult to answer

10. Do you think that presentations help to improve students' speaking skills?

- Yes
- No
- It is difficult to answer
- Another answer

Thank you for you answers. Have a nice day!

Appendix 3
Questionnaire 2 (Sample)

Dear teacher!

Please, fill in the questionnaire about improving speaking skills at intermediate level. All data will be used in my Diploma Paper. The name of the Diploma Paper is *Presentations to Improve Students' Speaking Skills in Form 7*. Your help is highly appreciated.

1. How long have you been teaching English?

- 1-5 years
- 6-10 years
- 11-20 years
- more than 20 years

2. Which skills you pay more attention to during your lesson?

3. Is it important to teach speaking skills?

- Yes
- No

4. If you gave a positive answer to the previous question, please, describe why we should teach speaking skills in the classroom?

5. Describe the level of form 7 students' speaking skills.

6. Do your students feel comfortable when participating in speaking tasks?

- Yes
- No

7. Which activities do you use to improve your students' speaking skills?

8. Do you practise the use of oral presentations to improve your students' speaking skills?

Yes

No

9. How often do you use presentations in your English lessons?

Every lesson

Every second lesson

Once a month

Once a term

Once a year

I do not use presentations

Other answer _____

10. In your opinion, what are the benefits of using oral presentations in English classrooms?

Thank you for your time and effort!