



## **Multimodal and Reflective Pedagogies in Enhancing EFL Academic Presentation Skills: A Case Study**

**Rika Andayani<sup>1</sup>, Hanip Pujiati<sup>2</sup>, Imas Wahyu Agustina<sup>3</sup>**

<sup>1,2,3</sup>Pendidikan Bahasa Inggris, Fakultas Bahasa dan Seni, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Jakarta, Indonesia

Email: <sup>1</sup>rika.andayani@unj.ac.id, <sup>2</sup>hanifpujiati@unj.ac.id, <sup>3</sup>iw.agustina@unj.ac.id

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### **Abstract**

*Academic presentation skills are crucial components of academic literacy in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, yet many students continue to experience challenges in delivering effective academic presentations. This study explores how EFL students' academic presentation skills are enhanced through classroom-based instructional practices. Employing a qualitative case study design, the research was conducted in an undergraduate EFL classroom at English Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, Indonesia. Data were collected through classroom observations, students' academic presentation videos, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews. The data were analyzed thematically to identify patterns related to students' skill enhancement over the course of the instructional process. The findings reveal that students' academic presentation skills were enhanced through iterative presentation practice, explicit instruction on presentation structure and language use, and reflective activities that encouraged self-awareness and peer feedback. In addition, the integration of visual and verbal resources supported students' confidence and clarity in presenting academic content. This study highlights the importance of pedagogically structured support and reflective learning in enhancing EFL students' academic presentation skills. The findings offer practical insights for EFL lecturers seeking to design effective academic presentation instruction and contribute to the growing body of qualitative research on academic literacy development in higher education.*

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

In higher education context, academic presentation skills play an essential role in helping students communicate ideas, research findings, and disciplinary knowledge in spoken academic settings. Academic presentation skills become an integral part of students' academic lives. They provide opportunities for students to communicate ideas, research findings, and disciplinary knowledge effectively in spoken academic settings. Academic presentations are no longer viewed merely as classroom activities. They function as key sites where students demonstrate understanding, construct arguments, and engage with academic audiences. In English as a Foreign Language (EFL) context, delivering an academic presentation is often a demanding task. Students are required not only to use English accurately but also to organize content logically, articulate ideas clearly, and engage listeners through appropriate verbal and non-verbal strategies. The ability to present academically in English is further included as a core academic literacy skill that supports students' academic success and future professional readiness [1]. The complexity of these linguistic, cognitive, and performative demands makes academic presentations one of the most challenging yet essential components of EFL learning in higher education. These phenomena make academic presentations a challenging component of EFL learning.

Recent studies have increasingly explored EFL students' academic presentation skills by focusing on specific dimensions such as speaking anxiety, digital scaffolding, and instructional interventions. Several studies have examined affective factors, particularly public-speaking anxiety, and self-confidence, demonstrating their significant influence on fluency and audience engagement. Other recent works have emphasized the role of multimodal resources—visual design, gesture, posture, and vocal variation—in enhancing presentation effectiveness. However, recent research indicates that many EFL university students continue to experience substantial difficulties when performing academic presentations. Those challenges include limited control of academic vocabulary and grammatical structures, excessive reliance on memorization, ineffective slide design, restricted use of gesture and eye contact, and high levels of speaking anxiety [2]. These challenges often result in presentations that are linguistically accurate but communicatively weak, or conversely, confident but lacking academic rigor. Consequently, academic presentation tasks frequently become sources of stress rather than opportunities for meaningful learning. Recent studies have explored various instructional approaches to enhance EFL students' presentation performance. These include structured presentation training, repeated practice with feedback, peer assessment, and the incorporation of digital and online learning modes [3]. Empirical findings reveal that interventions can lead to improvements in students' confidence, clarity, and overall presentation delivery. Systematic presentation practice combined with reflective activities positively influenced students' oral communication skills [4], while another researcher highlights differences in presentation outcomes across synchronous and asynchronous learning environments [5]. Current studies have shown that many EFL students struggle with academic presentations. These findings prove that academic presentation skills do not develop naturally over time, but require deliberate and sustained pedagogical support.

Despite these advances, the existing literature remains limited in three important ways. First, many recent studies adopt quasi-experimental or intervention-based designs that prioritize measurable outcomes, offering limited insight into how students *experience* and *negotiate* multimodal and affective demands during authentic academic presentation tasks. Second, affective factors and multimodal elements are often examined separately, leaving their interaction underexplored in real classroom contexts. Third, little attention has been paid to the contextual specificity of teacher education programs in non-English-dominant countries, particularly how institutional culture and pedagogical expectations shape students' academic presentation practices.

Nowadays, academic presentations have been viewed as academic literacy and multimodality. There is still a lack of in-depth qualitative research that explores the enhancement of EFL students' academic presentation skills as a dynamic, multidimensional process. Few studies examine how linguistic development, multimodal presentation elements (such as gesture, eye contact, and visual design), and affective factors (such as anxiety and self-confidence) interact within authentic classroom contexts over time. While these studies provide valuable evidence of effectiveness, they often offer limited insight into how students experience the process of improvement, how different dimensions of presentation competence develop in relation to one another, and how learners interpret the pedagogical practices intended to support their growth. While such studies are valuable, they often provide limited insight into how students experience the process of developing academic presentation skills, or how classroom practices shape that development over time. Qualitative studies that explore these processes in depth remain relatively limited. This gap is particularly noticeable in higher education EFL classrooms, where academic presentations are closely connected to students' academic identities and future professional practices. There is a clear need for qualitative, classroom-based studies that examine how academic presentation skills are enhanced through weekly teaching and learning activities, from both pedagogical and student perspectives.

This study addresses these gaps by focusing on English education students at Universitas Negeri Jakarta (UNJ), a major teacher-training institution in Indonesia. This context is significant in the global EFL landscape because students are simultaneously positioned as language learners and future English teachers, requiring them to master academic presentation skills not only for assessment purposes but also as pedagogical models for their future classrooms. Using a qualitative case study design, this research foregrounds the novelty of integrating multimodal aspects and affective factors within the development of academic literacy. By tracing students' multimodal choices and emotional responses across the preparation and delivery of academic presentations, the study offers a process-oriented and contextually grounded contribution that complements recent outcome-focused research and extends global discussions on EFL academic presentation pedagogy. To answer this gap, this study explores the enhancement of EFL students' academic presentation skills through a qualitative case study conducted in an undergraduate EFL classroom. By examining classroom practices, students' presentation performances, and their reflective experiences, this study seeks to offer a deeper understanding of how academic presentation skills develop in context.

The findings are expected to contribute to discussions on academic literacy and provide practical insights for EFL lecturers seeking to design more effective academic presentation instruction in higher education.

## 2. METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative case study design to explore how EFL students developed their academic presentation skills within the context of a real classroom. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate since this study aimed to understand students' experiences, perceptions, and learning processes rather than to quantify learning outcomes. Qualitative inquiry appropriate to investigate complex educational practices where meaning is constructed through interaction and reflection. Thus, a case study design allows the researcher to examine academic presentation development holistically, capturing the interplay between instructional practices, student engagement, and classroom context. Some qualitative case studies have recently been used in EFL research to investigate the development of academic speaking and presentation skills in higher education settings.

The study was conducted in undergraduate English Education Study Program, Universitas Negeri Jakarta where academic presentation is one of the compulsory courses. Throughout the course, students were required to deliver several academic presentations, receive feedback, and engage in reflective learning activities. Participants were selected through purposive sampling, as this approach enables researchers to focus on information-rich cases that are closely aligned with the research objectives. The research participants consisted of 40 EFL students who demonstrated consistent participation in presentation tasks. This selection allowed the study to capture varied learning experiences while maintaining the depth necessary for qualitative analysis [6].

The classroom-based instructional practices in this study were implemented through a structured, yet flexible instructional sequence grounded in principles of task-based learning and multimodal pedagogy. The instructional process was conducted over six instructional sessions across one academic semester, with each session lasting approximately 100 minutes. The instructional stages consisted of four main phases. First, the preparation phase focused on topic selection, audience awareness, and content organization. During this stage, students analyzed sample academic presentations and discussed key features of effective delivery, including verbal clarity, visual design, and audience engagement. Second, the design and rehearsal phase emphasized multimodal planning, where students developed presentation slides, practiced gestures and vocal delivery, and received formative feedback from peers and the instructor. This phase also addressed affective factors by incorporating guided reflection and low-stakes rehearsal activities to reduce presentation anxiety. Third, the performance phase involved students delivering their academic presentations in class, followed by structured peer and instructor feedback focusing on content clarity, multimodal coherence, and emotional regulation. Finally, the reflection phase encouraged students to reflect on their learning experiences, challenges, and emotional responses through reflective journals and group discussions. This staged instructional design allowed the researcher to observe how students' multimodal choices and affective experiences evolved throughout the academic presentation cycle.

Data in this study were collected from multiple sources to gain a comprehensive understanding of how academic presentation skills developed over time. Classroom observations were conducted during presentation-focused sessions to document instructional practices, student interactions, and observable changes in students' presentation behavior. Observation is one of an essential method in classroom-based qualitative research because it enables researchers to examine naturally the implementation of teaching and learning processes that may not be fully articulated by participants themselves.

In addition, students' academic presentations were video recorded and collected as key performance artefacts. Video data made it possible to closely examine both verbal and nonverbal dimensions of presentation delivery, including fluency, organization, gesture, eye contact, posture, and slide use. Research has shown relationship between speaking anxiety, fear of negative evaluation, and self-efficacy in EFL contexts, which can negatively affect oral performance and engagement in tasks such as presentations [7]. Recent studies in EFL academic presentation research emphasize the importance of video-based data for capturing the multimodal nature of speaking performance in authentic classroom contexts.

Reflective journals and semi-structured interviews were used to explore students' perspectives. Reflective journals allowed students to express their thoughts, emotions, and perceived challenges after completing presentation tasks, while semi-structured interviews provided opportunities to probe these reflections in greater analysis. This combination of reflective writing and interviews has been shown to be effective in EFL research, as it supports the exploration of both cognitive and affective dimensions of learning.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, following the flexible yet systematic procedures outlined by Braun and Clarke in 2021. First, the researcher familiarized herself with the data through repeated reading of interview transcripts, observation notes, and reflective journals. Second, initial codes were generated inductively to capture meaningful features related to multimodal practices and affective experiences. Third, the codes were examined and grouped into potential themes by identifying patterns across data sources. Fourth, these themes were reviewed to ensure internal coherence and clear distinctions between themes. Fifth, the themes were refined and named to reflect their conceptual significance. Finally, the themes were reported with representative excerpts to illustrate participants' experiences. To enhance methodological transparency, the coding process from raw data to final themes is summarized in Table 1.

**Table 1.** Coding Process from Raw Data to Final Themes

Data Source	Raw Data Excerpt	Initial Codes	Categories	Final Themes
Interview	"I felt nervous when presenting, but the visuals helped me stay focused."	presentation anxiety; visual support	affective regulation	Affective factors in academic presentation
Observation	Frequent hand gestures aligned with slide content	gesture use; visual-verbal alignment	multimodal delivery	Multimodal meaning-making
Reflective journal	"Practicing with peers made me more confident."	peer rehearsal; confidence building	instructional support	Classroom mediation of presentation skills

Thematic analysis was chosen because it allows for rich interpretation while remaining grounded in participants' voices and experiences, which is central to qualitative inquiry in applied linguistics. The researchers employed several strategies to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Data triangulation was achieved by comparing insights across classroom observations, presentation recordings, and student reflections, which helped strengthen the credibility of the findings.

### 3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

This section presents and discusses the findings regarding the improvement of EFL students' academic presentation skills. The participants were 40 undergraduate students enrolled in the English Education Study Program, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Jakarta, who took the Academic Presentation course in 16 meetings. Data were collected through presentation video recordings, classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews. The analysis revealed four interconnected themes: (1) students' developing awareness of academic presentation structure, (2) challenges and progress in multimodal presentation practices, (3) emerging academic literacy practices, and (4) affective and performative constraints in oral delivery.

#### 3.1 Developing Awareness of Academic Presentation Structure

The findings prove that students gradually developed a clearer and more in depth understanding of the structural organization of academic presentations over the course of the semester. During the first couple of meetings, most students tended to approach presentations as content delivery tasks rather than as structured academic communication. They frequently moved directly into the main topic without providing contextual background, clearly stating objectives, or signaling how ideas would be developed. Classroom observations showed minimal use of signposting expressions, resulting in weak transitions between sections. Besides, students' performance indicated limited audience guidance. Consequently, presentations often appeared fragmented and difficult to follow, despite students' efforts to cover the required content.

In the next following weeks, students increasingly demonstrated awareness of conventional academic presentation stages by structuring their talks more systematically. Students began to include opening statements to introduce topics, explicitly stated presentation purposes, organized key points in a logical sequence, and provided brief summaries to conclude their presentations. These changes suggest that students were not merely memorizing presentation formats but were starting to internalize the rhetorical logic of academic spoken discourse. Further, reflective journals revealed that students became more conscious of the relationship between structure and audience comprehension. Several students demonstrated clearer organization and it helped them manage nervousness and feel more in control during presentations. One student explicitly reflected that "*having a clear opening and conclusion makes me feel*

*more confident and helps the audience understand my topic,”* indicating the affective benefits of structural awareness.

Students demonstrated a growing awareness of the importance of organizing academic presentations in a clear and systematic manner. Initially, several participants perceived presentations primarily as speaking activities rather than structured academic texts. However, through classroom-based instructional practices, they began to recognize the significance of conventional academic presentation components, such as introductions, main arguments, and conclusions.

One participant reflected on this shift in understanding:

*“Before this class, I usually started my presentation without a clear introduction. I just explained the topic directly. Now I understand that I need to explain the background and purpose first so the audience can follow my presentation.”* (Interview, S2)

This awareness was also evident in students’ reflective journals, where they articulated a more deliberate approach to organizing content:

*“I learned that an academic presentation is not only about speaking fluently, but also about having a clear structure, like opening, main points, and closing. When I followed this structure, my presentation felt more organized.”* (Reflective Journal, S4)

Classroom observation data further supported this development. During later presentation sessions, students explicitly signposted structural elements such as topic introduction and transitions between points. One student noted:

*“When I prepared my outline, it helped me stay focused during the presentation. I knew what to say first, what to explain next, and how to conclude my presentation.”* (Interview, S5)

These excerpts illustrate that students’ awareness of academic presentation structure developed through guided practice and reflection. Rather than viewing presentations as spontaneous speech, participants began to conceptualize them as structured academic performances, indicating an important shift in their academic literacy development.

This developmental pattern supports previous research that views academic presentation skills as an integral component of academic literacy rather than a peripheral speaking activity. Spoken academic genres require explicit instruction because their rhetorical structures are often unfamiliar to EFL learners [8]. Similarly, academic literacy involves learning how disciplinary knowledge is conventionally organized and communicated, including in spoken forms [9]. The students’ gradual improvement observed in this study emphasizes the view that structural competence in academic presentations does not emerge naturally but develops through sustained practice, guided instruction, and formative feedback.

Furthermore, the findings suggest that repeated exposure to structured presentation assignments allowed students to participate more meaningfully in academic communication practices. From a qualitative perspective, this shift reflects students’ increasing engagement with academic discourse conventions and their growing sense of legitimacy as academic speakers. In this case, students not only presenting materials in English, however, they also began to position themselves as presenters who guide audiences through arguments in a purposeful manner. This aligns with sociocultural perspectives on learning, which highlights academic skill development as a process of participation and socialization into disciplinary practices [10]. Generally, the students’ improvement in structural organization underscores the importance of sustained pedagogical support in helping EFL students develop academic presentation competence as a core aspect of their academic literacy development.

### 3.2 Multimodal Challenges in Academic Presentations

The data collected in this study revealed persistent and substantial challenges related to students’ multimodal presentation practices. Analysis of presentation video recordings showed that most students relied heavily on text-dense slides, frequently reading directly from them during their presentations. Rather than functioning as visual support, slides often contained lengthy explanations and complete sentences that mirrored written texts. This practice reduced opportunities for spontaneous oral elaboration and limited students’ ability to engage with their audiences in a more interactive manner. As a result, presentations tended to resemble oral reading activities rather than dynamic academic oral presentations.

Additionally, the non-verbal aspects of communication remained underdeveloped throughout the semester. Classroom observations consistently revealed that many students demonstrated minimal gestures, limited eye contact, and restricted physical movement. Students often remained in fixed positions, focusing their gaze on slides or notes rather than on the audience. Voice delivery was similarly constrained; many students spoke in a relatively flat tone with little variation in intonation, stress, or emphasis, even when presenting key ideas. These patterns contributed to reduced audience engagement and weakened the overall communicative effectiveness of the presentations.

Based on the data interview, students frequently associated their reliance on slides and restricted body movement with anxiety and fear of making linguistic errors. Several participants reported that reading from slides made them feel more secure and reduced the risk of forgetting content or producing incorrect language. Consequently, cognitive attention was directed toward linguistic accuracy and content recall rather than toward audience interaction, gesture use, or vocal expressiveness. This finding suggests that affective factors played a critical role in shaping students' multimodal performance, reinforcing the close relationship between anxiety, language processing, and embodied communication in EFL academic presentations.

Students experienced anxiety during academic presentations, particularly at the beginning of their performance. One participant described this experience as follows:

*“At the start of the presentation, my hands were shaking and I forgot what to say, even though I had prepared the slides well.”* (Interview, S3)

This excerpt illustrates how affective factors, especially anxiety, influenced students' cognitive processing during the initial stage of academic presentation delivery. Students also demonstrated awareness of multimodal resources in enhancing their academic presentations. Visual design, gestures, and vocal variation were frequently mentioned as supportive elements. One participant explained:

*“Using images on my slides helped me explain the concept better, and I used hand gestures to emphasize important points.”* (Interview, S2)

This observation was supported by classroom video data, which showed consistent alignment between students' gestures and slide content during presentation delivery. Another student reflected:

*“When I practiced using gestures, I felt more confident and my presentation flowed better.”* (Reflective Journal, S5).

These findings suggest that multimodal resources functioned not only as communicative tools but also as affective scaffolds that supported students' confidence and engagement.

All these findings highlight the inherently multimodal nature of academic presentations, where meaning is constructed through the coordinated use of verbal language, visual design, gesture, gaze, and voice. The difficulties observed in this study are consistent with previous research showing that EFL learners often struggle to orchestrate multiple semiotic resources simultaneously, particularly in high-stakes academic speaking contexts. Similar studies in EAP and EMI contexts have reported that when students lack explicit instruction in multimodal communication, they tend to prioritize textual accuracy and visual density over embodied and interpersonal meaning-making [11].

Importantly, the findings suggest that multimodal competence does not automatically develop alongside improvements in content knowledge or presentation structure. Without explicit guidance on slide design, gesture use, eye contact, and voice modulation, students may remain text-bound and performatively constrained, even after repeated presentation practice. From a qualitative perspective, this pattern reflects students' partial socialization into academic presentation practices—where cognitive and structural gains precede embodied and interactional development. Thus, the findings underscore the need to see multimodal communication as a core component of academic literacy instruction rather than as an intuitive skill.

### 3.3 Emerging Academic Literacy Practices

Students' development in academic presentation skills was closely intertwined with their emerging academic literacy. In the first several weeks of presentations, students demonstrated limited engagement with core features of academic communication, such as taking an academic stance, elaborating ideas, and demonstrating audience awareness. Most students approached presentations as reading-oriented tasks, focusing primarily on transferring written information from slides to spoken form. Presentation recordings and classroom observations showed that students relied heavily on prepared text, with minimal elaboration or explanation beyond what was displayed on the slides. As a result, presentations tended to sound scripted and informational rather than dialogic or communicative.

This early pattern suggests that students initially perceived academic presentations as an extension of written assignments rather than as opportunities to construct meaning orally for an audience. Such perceptions are common among EFL learners, who often equate successful academic performance with linguistic accuracy and textual completeness rather than clarity of explanation or engagement with listeners. Consequently, students paid limited attention to how ideas were framed, emphasized, or interpreted by the audience, reinforcing the view of presentations as reading tasks rather than spoken academic events.

As the semester progressed, a gradual shift toward more purposeful academic communication became evident in both students' reflective journals and their later presentation performances. Rather than reading slides word for word, several students began to speak more freely by paraphrasing key points, drawing attention to central ideas, and explaining concepts in their own words. In subsequent presentations, some students were observed placing greater verbal emphasis on important ideas, offering brief clarifications, and, at times, adjusting their explanations based on how the audience appeared to respond. These developments suggest that students were beginning to understand that effective academic presentations involve more than linguistic accuracy alone; they require active engagement with content and a growing sensitivity to audience needs. Although these practices were not consistently demonstrated by all participants, the overall trend suggests an emerging understanding of academic literacy as a multidimensional construct. Students began to recognize that effective academic presentations involve positioning oneself as a knowledgeable speaker, interpreting content rather than reproducing it, and guiding the audience through complex ideas. This shift reflects a move away from surface-level performance toward deeper engagement with academic discourse practices.

This development aligns with contemporary ideas of Hyland in 2021 which states that academic literacy as a socially situated practice that involves meaning-making, identity positioning, and participation in disciplinary communities. From this perspective, academic presentations function as sites where students learn not only how to speak in English, but also how to act, think, and communicate as members of academic communities. The findings also resonate with recent studies suggesting that repeated engagement in authentic academic tasks—such as oral presentations—can support students' transition from text-bound delivery to more interpretive and explanatory academic communication [12].

Through constant presentation practice, reflection, and feedback, students in this study were gradually exposed to the norms and expectations of academic spoken discourse. These activities enabled students to reconceptualize presentations as communicative academic events rather than merely reading aloud activities. From a qualitative side, the findings highlight academic presentation development as a process of academic socialization, in which students progressively negotiate meaning, voice, and legitimacy within higher education contexts.

### 3.4 Affective and Performative Constraints in Oral Delivery

The findings indicate that beyond technical and structural challenges, affective factors played a significant role in shaping students' academic presentation performance. Interview data revealed that many students experienced persistent nervousness, fear of negative evaluation, and low self-confidence when speaking in English in front of an audience. These affective responses were particularly evident during early presentation sessions, where students frequently described feeling anxious about making grammatical mistakes, mispronouncing words, or being judged by peers and instructors. Consequently, students tended to adopt protective strategies, such as limiting eye contact, maintaining rigid body posture, and relying heavily on prepared text.

Classroom observations and video recordings further proved how these affective constraints were manifested in students' multimodal behavior. Students often avoided eye contact by focusing on slides or notes, used minimal or repetitive gestures, and delivered their presentations with little variation in voice, pitch, or emphasis. These behaviors suggest that anxiety consumed students' cognitive and emotional resources, leaving limited capacity for expressive and audience-oriented communication. This finding aligns with the previous research findings indicating that speaking anxiety in EFL contexts can significantly restrict both verbal and non-verbal performance, particularly in high-stakes academic tasks such as presentations.

Affective factors played a significant role in shaping students' academic presentation experiences. Several participants reported feelings of anxiety and lack of confidence, particularly during the initial stage of their presentations. One student stated:

*"I was really nervous when I had to present in English in front of my classmates. My voice was not stable, and I avoided eye contact."* (Interview, S1)

Similar feelings were echoed in students' reflective journals. As one participant wrote:

*"Even though I understood the material, my anxiety made it difficult to speak fluently during the presentation."* (Reflective Journal, S4)

These excerpts indicate that emotional responses were closely intertwined with students' verbal and non-verbal performance, highlighting the importance of addressing affective dimensions in academic presentation instruction. In addition, the data also revealed a gradual shift in students' affective engagement over the course of the semester. Several students demonstrated significantly higher levels of confidence in later presentations, particularly after receiving formative feedback and engaging in reflective practices such as reviewing their own presentation recordings and writing reflective journals. Interview excerpts suggest that constructive feedback helped students reinterpret mistakes as part of the learning process rather than as indicators of failure. Reflective activities also encouraged students to recognize their progress and become more aware of their communicative strengths, contributing to increased self-assurance.

These changes suggest that academic presentation tasks functioned not only as opportunities for skill development but also as sites for identity formation. As students became more familiar with academic presentation norms and expectations, they gradually began to position themselves as legitimate academic speakers rather than hesitant language learners. This shift is significant in EFL contexts, where learners often struggle to reconcile their academic knowledge with perceived linguistic limitations. The findings indicate that repeated participation in presentation practices allowed students to renegotiate their identities and gain a stronger sense of belonging within academic discourse communities.

This pattern supports sociocultural perspectives on learning, which view language development as a process of participation in meaningful social practices rather than mere acquisition of discrete skills [13]. From this perspective, increased confidence reflects not only improved performance but also deeper engagement with academic practices and norms. As students became more comfortable navigating presentation conventions, they increasingly enacted the roles, behaviors, and identities associated with academic speakers. Overall, the findings highlight the importance of addressing affective dimensions in academic presentation pedagogy, as emotional readiness and identity development appear to be closely intertwined with students' ability to perform effectively in academic speaking contexts.

### 3.5 Discussion and Pedagogical Implications

The findings demonstrate that improving EFL students' academic presentation skills is a complex and gradual process involving structural competence, multimodal awareness, academic literacy, and affective development. Earlier studies prove that instruction focusing on rhetorical organization—such as introductions, signposting, sequencing ideas, and conclusions—significantly enhances students' spoken academic discourse. In this study, students' gradual ability to organize content coherently and guide audiences through their presentations confirms the argument that academic presentations function as a form of academic literacy rather than a purely oral skill. These findings support Hyland's view of academic literacy as a socially situated practice that involves understanding how knowledge is conventionally structured and communicated within academic communities. Thus, the present findings enrich existing evidence that sustained scaffolding and repeated practice are essential for developing structural competence in academic presentations.

The persistent challenges observed in students' multimodal performance—such as reading from text-heavy slides, limited eye contact, rigid gestures, and minimal voice variation—are consistent with previous multimodal studies. Research has repeatedly proved that EFL learners tend to prioritize linguistic accuracy and textual support at the expense of embodied and visual communication. These findings align with the argument that academic presentations are inherently multimodal events requiring the orchestration of verbal, visual, and embodied resources [14]. Without explicit and clear multimodal instruction, learners often default to reading slides as a coping strategy to manage cognitive load and language anxiety. Therefore, the results of this study confirm earlier claims that multimodal competence should be treated as a central component of academic presentation pedagogy rather than as a supplementary skill [15].

This study contributes in adding to the literature by offering qualitative evidence from an Indonesian EFL higher education context, highlighting the need for explicit instruction in multimodal academic communication. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that lecturers should integrate presentation structure, slide design, body language, and voice modulation into academic presentation courses. Additionally, reflective journals and formative feedback seem to be effective tools for supporting students' awareness and confidence development.

#### 4. CONCLUSION

This study investigated the enhancement of 40 EFL students' academic presentation skills in an Academic Presentation course over one semester. The study examined how students developed their presentation abilities through instructional practice. Utilizing multiple data sources—presentation recordings, classroom observations, reflective journals, and semi-structured interviews—the study offers a holistic picture of students' academic presentation development in an EFL higher education context. The findings indicate that students did noticeable progress in understanding and applying the structural conventions of academic presentations. Students gradually became more aware of how to organize content logically, frame presentations with clear openings and conclusions, and guide audiences through key points using signposting. These improvements suggest that academic presentation structure might be utilized as a form of academic literacy that can be developed through explicit instruction, repeated practice, and reflective engagement.

Besides, the study reveals persistent challenges in students' multimodal presentation performance. Despite the improvement in structural organization and content awareness, many students continued to rely heavily on text-dense slides, exhibited limited eye contact, used rigid gestures, and demonstrated minimal variation in voice. These findings highlighted that multimodal competence does not automatically develop alongside structural or linguistic improvement. Instead, performative aspects of academic presentations require targeted instructional attention and sustained practice. The study also underscores the significant role of affective factors in shaping students' presentation performance. Anxiety, fear of making mistakes, and lack of confidence influenced students' reliance on slides and constrained their non-verbal communication. Nevertheless, reflective activities and formative feedback contributed to gradual increases in confidence, allowing some students to begin positioning themselves as more active and legitimate academic speakers.

Furthermore, this study contributes to the growing body of research that views academic presentations not merely as speaking tasks but as complex academic literacy practices involving discourse structure, multimodal meaning-making, and identity development. By providing longitudinal, triangulated qualitative evidence from an Indonesian EFL context, the study extends existing literature and highlights the importance of context-sensitive pedagogy in academic presentation instruction. Pedagogically, the findings suggest that courses on academic presentations should integrate explicit instruction on multimodal communication, including slide design, gesture, eye contact, and voice modulation, alongside structural and linguistic components. Incorporating reflective practices and creating supportive learning environments can further help students manage anxiety and develop confidence in academic communication.

While this study is limited to a single institutional context and one semester of instruction, it offers valuable insights into the gradual and uneven nature of academic presentation development among EFL learners. Future research may build on these findings by examining the impact of targeted multimodal training, exploring longer instructional periods, or comparing different EFL contexts to deepen understanding of how academic presentation skills evolve over time.

In summary, this study demonstrates that enhancing EFL students' academic presentation skills is a multifaceted and gradual process. Meaningful improvement requires not only attention to language and structure but also sustained support for multimodal competence and affective development. By addressing these dimensions holistically, lecturers can better prepare EFL students to participate confidently and effectively in academic discourse communities.

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