Enhancing University Students' Academic Presentation Skills through Mnemonic-Based Strategies

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ABSTRACT

In university-level education, academic presentations serve as a crucial component in fostering active learning and communication skills. Despite their significance in supporting the teaching and learning process, many students still find it challenging to deliver effective and structured presentations, particularly when required to adhere to academic conventions and clarity of expression. This study aims to explore how mnemonic-based strategies improve students' academic presentation skills through an in-depth analysis of a specific group of learners. This study employed a qualitative research methodology using a case study approach. The participants in this study consisted of five students from the English Language and Literature Study Program, Faculty of Communication and Business, who were purposefully selected. Based on the five selected students, several problems in delivering academic presentations include: 1) lacking confidence during the presentation; 2) presenting unstructured points; 3) being unable to present without reading from the text; 4) struggling to create effective and engaging PowerPoint slides; and 5) failing to convey the main points clearly. After being introduced to the mnemonic-based strategy, the five students were able to deliver their academic presentations effectively and confidently. The findings indicate that a single keyword was sufficient to trigger recall and effectively support students in delivering their academic presentations.

Keywords: academic presentation, communication skill, memonic-based strategy, qualitative research, student's challenge

INTRODUCTION

In the university context, communication serves as a fundamental skill that significantly impacts both academic success and professional preparedness. Among the various communication competencies, academic presentations hold particular importance, as they require students to express ideas clearly, engage critically with academic content, and respond constructively to feedback.

Through communication, individuals will be able to express their thoughts, feelings, and needs, as well as understand other people's perspectives (Yudintseva, 2023). In today's increasingly connected world, effective communication is key in many aspects, from education to work, facilitating individual development and the advancement of society as a whole (Chavez et al., 2024).

Regarding communication, one of the things relates is the delivering the academic presentation. The effective presentation delivery in the academic area is essential for conveying knowledge, demonstrating understanding, and engaging an audience. A well-delivered presentation reflects not only mastery of content but also clarity of thought, logical organization, and the ability to adapt messages to diverse academic audiences. It helps students build credibility, improve persuasive skills, and develop confidence in public speaking—skills that are crucial for academic success, research dissemination, and future professional communication (Khasinah et al., 2024; Gedamu & Gezahegn, 2022; and Mi Sook Park 2024).

In the matter of education; especially higher education, the role of academic presentation for students is something that should be done properly and correctly (Phong et al., 2023). A smooth academic presentation plays an important role for students in their lecturing as it is an effective tool to convey research, ideas, and arguments in a clear and structured way.

By presenting an academic presentation, students can develop crucial communication skills, including the ability to speak in public and interact with audiences, which are needed in both academic and professional environments. On the other hand, the essence of a good academic presentation allows students to demonstrate a deep understanding of the material studied, as well as the ability to analyze and convey information in an engaging way. With this ability, students not only enhance their learning capabilities, but also build confidence and credibility among peers and lecturers, contributing to future academic and career success (Ohnishi & Ford, 2024).

In academic contexts, students frequently face difficulties in delivering presentations, which can be attributed to several factors, including a lack of confidence, limited vocabulary, inadequate organization of ideas, and anxiety related to public speaking. These difficulties often lead to unclear message delivery, reduced engagement with the audience, and an overall ineffective presentation. This

implies that the intended message of the presentation was not effectively transmitted to the audience (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021).

Based on the above issue, it surely needs the specific strategies to improve the skill of delivering the presentation toward the students. Many researchers have stressed the significance of employing Mnemonic-Based Strategies to develop EFL learners' practice in Academic Presentation Skills (Gibbons, 2022).

Several studies have shown that mnemonic strategies can significantly enhance students' ability to retain and retrieve academic information. For instance, Conderman, (2020) found that mnemonics help students organizing and recalling complex content more effectively, particularly in inclusive classrooms.

Similarly, Menasria & Rouabhia (n.d.) reported that mnemonic-based learning improved language retention and comprehension among university students. On the other hand, Sarıoğlu & Karatepe (2024) also demonstrated that the use of acronyms as mnemonic devices led to higher student engagement and better academic performance.

Despite these promising findings, limited research has specifically investigated how acronym-based mnemonic strategies can be systematically applied to improve students' academic presentation skills, especially in higher education contexts. This study aims to fill that gap by exploring the effectiveness of acronym-based strategies in enhancing university students' presentation abilities.

In the mnemonic strategy, there will be the formation of a word by taking the first letter of each word in a series of information and arranging them into a new word or abbreviation (Bila & Yaotsiuan, 2023). As such, acronyms help condense complex information into something shorter and easier to remember and retrieve.

By using the mnemonic strategy, students are able to summarize the key points of the presentation material into short and memorable terms, making it easier for them to deliver and remember when speaking. The mnemonic strategy as a solution to deliver the academic presentation has a useful role, as it focuses on right-brain abilities, which are related to creativity, intuition, and visual information processing. The right brain tends to be more responsive to patterns and associations, so the use of acronyms can help students remember and organize information in a more creative and intuitive way.

By creating memorable mnemonic, students can simplify complex concepts into short terms that contain deep meaning, making them easier for the audience to digest and remember (Raugh & Atkinson, 2021). In addition, acronyms often spark the imagination, allowing students to relate new ideas to their experiences, which can increase understanding and audience engagement.

A theory from Khataee (2022) said the use of the mnemonic strategy of *THIEVES*

is able to help overcoming the comprehension problems and it is beneficial in comprehending of expository texts. In addition, Mohammed (2021) implied that, its usefulness showing that the acronym strategy of *PLEASE* is able to significantly and optimally improving students' writing skills. That strategy also helps students to think systematically and critically. Next, Kabigting (2022) explained that Therefore, implementing the acronym strayegy of *RAFT* in writing instruction has proven to be effective for teaching both persuasive and argumentative essays.

Based on the data presented above, this study aims to explore the effectiveness of optimizing Academic Presentation Skills through the use of a mnemonic-based strategy. The research specifically observes its application among students of the Faculty of Communication and Business as well as the English Language and Literature Study Program during the odd semester of the 2023–2024 academic year. Previous studies have rarely addressed this specific approach in the context of EFL academic presentations. Our study thus aims to bridge this gap by examining how such a strategy can contribute to improving students' performance in delivering academic presentations.

METHOD
Research Design
A qualitative multiple case study approach underpins this study, as it offers a suitable framework for exploring the phenomenon as it occurs in real-world settings (Creswell & Poth, 2018)In connection with the study, the researchers investigated the challenges encountered by EFL university students in Indonesia regarding their Academic Presentation Skills, focusing on both public and private universities.

Participants
The study involved five EFL students from the Faculty of Communication and Language at public and private universities in Indonesia. This number is appropriate for a case study, which prioritizes in-depth exploration over large sample sizes (Yin, 1994). Participants were purposively selected based on criteria such as a minimum GPA of 3.00. Informed consent was obtained to confirm voluntary participation, and pseudonyms were used to protect the identities of both participants and institutions. Demographic details are presented in the table below.

Table 1. Demographic Attributes of University Students

No.	Name	Age	Sex	Semester
1	PRN	22	Male	3
2	IAV	20	Male	3
3	SMH	22	Male	3
4	DAS	19	Female	3
5	SJK	20	Female	3

Data Collection
Data were collected through classroom observations and performance assessments conducted during students'

academic presentations. The researchers observed participants as they applied mnemonic-based strategies, particularly acronyms, in planning and delivering their presentations. A structured observation checklist was used to ensure consistency and focus on key indicators, such as content organization, clarity, and confidence. In addition, video recordings of presentations were analyzed to support qualitative insights. The data collection process was carried out over four sessions within one academic semester, allowing researchers to capture both the initial and developed use of mnemonic strategies.

Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using a qualitative descriptive approach. Observational notes and video recordings were reviewed to identify patterns in students' presentation performance before and after the implementation of mnemonic-based strategies. Key indicators such as content structure, language clarity, delivery confidence, and visual organization were coded and categorized. The analysis focused on tracking improvements and changes in presentation skills over time. Additionally, thematic analysis was employed to extract insights related to students' adaptation and response to the use of mnemonic strategies.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

By using acronyms that form unique and funny words, the human brain is able to easily associate each color with more interesting visual elements, making it easier to remember.

In addition, the involvement of pleasant emotions and associations while learning can improve memory, making the memomry becomes simply to remember.

The statement of (Abdolmaleki & Saeedi, 2024), assumed that, the right brain function, which plays a role in creativity, imagination and holistic processing of information, is very helpful in facilitating the memorization of a lesson by using the acronym strategy. So, the learner will associate it with emotional associations that make it more interesting and memorable.

Naturally, the right brain plays an important role in creating a strong and pleasant connection between acronyms and memory so learning will become practical to memorize and recall (Salleh, 2021).

Students' Academic Presentation Performance before Using the Acronym Strategy.

Referring to the results of preliminary research, five students at the Faculty of Communication & Language under the auspices of the English Literature Study Program at Private University were given the task of delivering the academic presentations first. This is intended to find out how the initial ability of communication skills and symptoms of anxiety that occur. In the results, researchers found a variety of anxiety, nervousness, and unpreparedness in the initial exposure to the practice of exposure to the presentation of coursework

experienced by students shown; both verbally and non-verbally. According to Raja (2022), although many individuals can communicate comfortably in daily conversations, they often feel anxious or fearful when required to speak in front of an audience.

It has been found that one of the experiences of a student named PRN who said, he did not have confidence and had not been able to control himself when he was going to speak in front of the class when practicing the academic presentation. The following are excerpts of student interviews on behalf of PRN:

> *"When I was in public and delivering my academic presentation, I had a sense of insecurity, shyness, and powerlessness when looking at the audience. In short, I needed a special way to get rid of my self-confidence in public speaking. I want to improve my self-qualification by becoming fluent in performing the presentation well."* (PRN, 2024)

In the explanation above, it is implied that a student named PRN is a person who does not have confidence when speaking in public because he does not have the courage; including to interact with the audience. Then, there is another thing that is almost the same and experienced by IAV, that the first experience of being given an assignment to practice presenting lecture assignments, he felt a communication barrier in the form of not being able to deliver it in an organized and systematic manner.

> *"For some reason, when delivering academic presentations, my presentation is undirected, random, and out of order. The atmosphere is different when I am in front of people and they are looking at me. So, I need special training so that I will not forget the point or direction of my presentation delivery.* (IAV, 2024)

The expression of IAV leads to the inability to summarize the topic in the presentation. This indicates the need for an innovative *treatment* in order to find a clear rhythm in the presentation. In addition, IAV also needs a connecting word between topics in the transition of his academic presentation. Next, there was also a student, SMH, who suddenly forgot or being blank during the presentation of coursework presentations.

> *"The preparation is done and I have also prepared my notes already. Then during the presentation, I would forget if I didn't look at my notes. So, I had a dependency on notes. Actually, I need a way that can divert my memory; that I don't need to rely on my notes."* (SMH, 2024)

Students' arguments on behalf of SMH point to the existence of a habit of relying or entrusting on notes. In practice, the eyes and attention tend to be directed to the notes rather than the audience. This will later have an impact on reducing performance professionalism when

carrying out academic presentation presentations.

Another incident regarding the presentation of coursework exposure experienced by the next student, she is DAS. She said, in essence, using and displaying PowerPoint displays that tend to have too much text or 'power-text'. It is seen as follow:

> "*After I realized, my PPT display was more text (contextual) and it made the audience lose their attention and focus. I realized that my presentation was boring. Some of the audiences I saw and observed tended to get bored and do other things.*" (DAS, 2024)

The existence of *PowerPoint* as the media is useful for conveying points related to the presentation material to be delivered. In addition, the interesting features in powerpoint are intended to display visual effects; such as: animation, images, graphics and other visual effects that have a tendency to be eye-catching.

The last difficulty or mistake during the initial presentation of lecture exposure was a student, she is SJK. She did not remember the important points at the end of the presentation. This kind of student forgot to convey key points or important information.

> "*I have done my academic presentation and when I was at the end of the presentation, I realized that I forgot to briefly explain the main point of my presentation. When I'm perfomrmong the academic presentation, it has: intro -*

> *discussion - outro and I talked too much, then I missed something fundamental in it [my academic presentation]."* (SJK, 2024).

Naturally, human errors and mistakes may occur during the delivery of academic presentations in certain courses. These challenges, however, can be identified and addressed through simple yet effective methods that do not rely on digital tools or gadgets. As mentioned by Policarpio (2023), this solution relies on brain function and enhances cognitive performance, helping to overcome obstacles in delivering academic presentations.

Students' Academic Presentation Performance after Using the Acronym Strategy

Based on the results of research and treatment through acronym strategies, students have been able to display changes in presentation performance. The five students have been given solution, direction, and guidance on the use of acronym strategies in performomg the academic presentation. The acronym strategy leads to effective learning that utilizes the performance of the right brain to remember information more easily and creatively.

By creating abbreviations or acronyms from the initial letters of each word or concept that needs to be remembered, the right brain works by forming visual associations, engaging creativity, and creating patterns that can stick longer in memory. Menasria &

Rouabhia, (n.d.). This strategy taps into the right brain's ability for pattern recognition and visualization, creating a mental link that helps learners recall information in a more intuitive and enjoyable way.

The first student, PRN, has received a treatment using the acronym strategy. PRN has insecurity, anxiety, and nervousness. Therefore, an acronym strategy is needed that is easy to remember and execute for these students. The found an acronym strategy by the researcher is: *SHINE;* which consists of *Smile, Hear, Inspire, Nurture,* and *Engage*. The *Smile* can be interpreted as smiling and being more *approachable*. *Smile* can also help relieve tension and improve mood. Then *Hear* is listening to the audience. Based on Grieve et al., (2021), by paying attention to the audience's responses and questions, students can feel more connected and in a state of connectedness.

Besides *Smile* and *Hear*, the next step is *Inspire*. This point emphasizes the importance of delivering an academic presentation that not only informs but also inspires and benefits the audience. Following that, *Nurture* refers to the act of maintaining—specifically, maintaining positive thoughts and building self-confidence throughout the presentation process. Finally, *Engage* means to actively involve the audience. Engaging the audience through questions or interactive elements can have a significant positive impact. The more students interact through questions, the more comfortable and confident they become when presenting a topic.

> *"By applying SHINE, I become more energized, confident, and optimized in executing a presentation. Automatically, I will smile, listen more, inspire, nurture, and engage the audience. When I remember SHINE, I don't get anxious again when running a course presentation."* (PRN, 2024)

The next student is IAV and has formed a more systematic, sequential, and well-organized way. As one of the public speaking's element, a well-organized speech typically contribute to the audience's comprehension and engagement (Abella & Cutamora, 2021). In the presentation, using the *BRIEF* acronym strategy will make the presentation more focused. The *BRIEF* set of words consists of *Background, Relevance, Information, Example,* and *Follow* up. When doing a presentation, the *BRIEF* strategy can be used as a memory reference and stays on track.

> *"With the discovery of the BRIEF strategy, the direction of speech in my presentation became better, organized, and in accordance with the core of my discussion topic. After finishing my presentation, I felt satisfied with what I had said. No more inappropriate lines of discussion!"* (IAV, 2024)

The next student exposure session is SMH, which requires the *CLEAR* acronym strategy so as not to rely on text or devices when carrying out lecture presentation

exposure sessions. A clear presentation also needs a good preparation to perform well (Zabrovskaya & Rubleva, 2022). The word *CLEAR* consists of *Clarity*, *Listening*, *Empathy*, *Assertiveness*, and *Respect*.

> *"When presenting my study, I have used the CLEAR strategy well. At first I need Clarity on the topic I will convey, then I invite the audience to Listen, then I provide a sense of empathy in understanding various perspectives on my study, then I make sure the points in my presentation, and finally I show mutual respect for my presentation."* (SMH, 2024)

Furthermore, DAS as the student has not been able to make a good PowerPoint display. By using the *SLIDE* acronym strategy which consists of *Structure*, *Visual*, *Interaction*, *Delivery*, and *Engagement*. The academic presentation will be clearer, more focused, and more appropriate when remembering *SLIDE* when creating *PowerPoint*.

> *"I was finally able to explain my points well, because I had applied SLIDE before I started the presentation. By using the SLIDE as acronym strategy, I will also use it on presentation opportunities in the next moment so that it becomes structured and systematically in order."* (DAS, 2024)

The last student, she is SJK, while giving a presentation, there are still presenters who have not provided core or main information and speak long without content. By using the *SMART* acronym strategy which is divided into *Specific*, *Measureable*, *Achieveable*, *Relevant*, and *Time-bound*, the points in the presentation are well conveyed and optimized.

> *"Now I remember, when I am delivering my academic presentation after using the SMART acronym strategy, it becomes not too hard or difficult With this strategy, my presentation done well and I did not forget the main points. I have delivered the key in my academic presentation."* (SJK, 2024)

Overall, using acronym strategies is the brain's way of hacking or shortcuts when carrying out the performance of lecture presentation exposure. The use of acronym strategies in student academic presentations is very effective and useful because it helps to more easily remember the important points presented. Acronyms simplify complex information by summarizing it in more concise key words, thus increasing understanding of the material being explained.

In addition, acronyms make the flow of the presentation more structured, making it easier for students to convey the topic systematically and coherently. With acronyms, students are also more confident because they have a clear '*guidance*', which also has the potential to increase audience interaction and engagement.

CONCLUSION

Effective presentation skills are crucial in developing students' overall communication competence, particularly in the English Language and Literature Study Program at the Faculty of Communication and Language. Many students initially struggled with various issues, such as communication anxiety, lack of confidence, inability to maintain eye contact, poor focus, nervous gestures, and ineffective speech delivery—either too flat or too fast. These problems hindered their ability to convey ideas clearly and engage their audience during academic presentations.

However, the implementation of acronym-based mnemonic strategies proved to be a valuable solution. By using these strategies, students were able to recall key points more easily, structure their ideas logically, and present with improved fluency and self-assurance. As a result, their presentations became more organized, impactful, and audience-oriented. This highlights the importance of incorporating practical techniques into the learning process to enhance students' academic communication performance.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTION STATEMENT

The first author was responsible for designing the study, collecting the data, and conducting the data analysis. The second author contributed to the proofreading and language refinement of the manuscript. Both authors read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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