

Why Should Rubrics be used to Evaluate Oral Presentations?

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Abstract

'Why should instructors use rubrics to evaluate oral presentations?' Assessing oral presentations is a complex ritual, as it involves multiple activities that need to be monitored simultaneously. A rubric is an assessment tool that is transparent and can also transcend the subjective bias of English language instructors. While using rubrics in evaluating oral presentation is nothing new, the few available studies in the Bangladeshi context suggest that this practice might not be very familiar to instructors and learners, particularly in an EFL country like ours. The primary focus of this paper is to find out the potential of rubrics in evaluating English oral presentations in Bangladesh, especially in private universities. At the same time, this paper looks at teachers' perspectives regarding rubrics in evaluating oral presentations. The outcome of this study, on the one hand, suggests that the proper use of rubric can have a positive effect on learners' preparation and performance of oral presentations by gradually increasing their metacognitive awareness, and on the other hand, benefits EFL instructors in terms of justifying students' evaluation and providing constructive feedback.

Keywords: Rubrics, oral presentation, transparency, feedback

1. Critical Implication

A rubric, with its multifaceted implications, is widely used as an assessment tool in teaching and learning. Supported by strong evidence of benefitting both teachers and students, this assessment tool may be used for formative and summative purposes. On the other hand, oral presentations benefit tertiary level learners in English as a foreign language (EFL) context to a great extent as it essentially plays a crucial role in grooming and developing English proficiency for academic and professional purposes. The medium of instruction of all the 107 private universities of Bangladesh is English, where individual or group presentations are an integral part of the taught courses in graduate and undergraduate programmes, irrespective of the discipline. This is how effective an oral presentation is in private universities of Bangladesh; therefore, it needs to be evaluated so that the learners can make the most of this skill. Oral presentations, if evaluated by using rubrics, can document the process of evaluation, help the students perform better by notifying them about the expected criteria beforehand (Jonsson, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Kerby & Romine, 2009; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013) and provide constructive feedback after the performance (Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Reddy, 2007).

Even though using rubrics for evaluation is quite prevalent in higher educational institutions, very few studies on this topic are available in an EFL country like Bangladesh. Therefore, this paper aims to find out whether teachers use rubrics as an assessment tool to evaluate English oral presentations in Bangladeshi private universities, and if they explain the criteria of rubrics to their students beforehand, and keep a record of the evaluation process. It also delves into

information if the students can perform better by knowing about teachers' expectations and gradually improve their English oral communication skills through teachers' feedback based on the documented record. In other words, this paper looks at the significance of using rubrics in evaluating oral presentations in English in private universities of Bangladesh.

2. Literature Review

This section looks at the relevant literature on rubrics pertaining to oral presentations in English as a foreign language (EFL) context at the tertiary level. Furthermore, it looks at the benefits of using rubrics in providing transparency as an evaluation tool and the benefits of feedback.

2.1 Significance of rubrics for assessing oral presentations

Assessment and evaluation go hand in hand in education. The use of rubrics in higher education marks a significant development towards a better understanding of assessment and evaluation (Brookhart & Chen, 2015; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). Rubrics not only specifies the levels and criteria for evaluating a task or any performance but also provides the necessary information to the students about what is expected from them, thus simplifying the complexities of the evaluation process and eventually leading to a successful assessment (Brookhart, 2018; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). Thus, it might even be termed as tangible evidence.

Being a determinant of measuring students' progress, assessment in education has a profound impact on students' gradual improvement (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Studies have shown that formative assessment provided with constructive feedback can positively improve students' future performance (Black & William, 2010; Dixson & Worrell, 2016; Dolin, Black, Harlen, & Tiberghien, 2017). However, evaluating a task or performance, especially in the classroom, as a part of formative

assessment can sometimes be tricky, as it requires considerable attention to multiple aspects simultaneously. Furthermore, students perform better when they know how their performance will be evaluated (Brookhart & Chen, 2015; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Wolf & Stevens, 2007). In such cases, the use of rubrics has shown its effectiveness by acting as guidelines for both the teachers and the students (Brookhart & Chen, 2015; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Uddin, 2014).

Oral presentation being a speaking activity frequently practiced for formative assessment, is an acknowledged way to develop oral communication skills (Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Harun, Islam & Rahman, 2016). Effective oral communication skills have impacts on both academic and professional fields (Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008; Tsang, 2017; Živković, 2014). However, when the presentation is conducted in a foreign language as a part of an academic assessment, it becomes quite challenging for a non-native student to express through a language which he/she does not use on a regular basis (Harun et al., 2016, p. 137). Nevertheless, this particular practice may improve students' English oral communication skills, especially public speaking skills, to a great extent when it accompanies an analysis of performance. Rubric, being a document for both keeping record of students' performance and providing feedback, can be a potential tool to provide such an analysis of performance (Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Reddy, 2007; Wollenschlager, Hattie, Machts, Moller, & Harms, 2016).

2.2 Private Universities in Bangladesh

At present, both public and private universities in Bangladesh are functioning side by side towards common ends, that is, to ensure higher education to the ever-growing population. Public universities are government-funded institutions, whereas private universities are privately funded.

Before 1992, higher education had been only limited to the public sector of Bangladesh (Ahmed, Iqbal & Abbasi, 2018). The increasing demand for higher education and the infrastructural limitations of public universities created a serious 'demand-supply gap' that ultimately resulted in opening the private sector in higher education (Ahmed et al., 2018, p. 4). The enactment of the Private University Act in 1992 led to the inception of private universities in Bangladesh (Ahmed et al., 2018). However, to cope with emerging issues concerning quality assurance, transparency, and accountability within the administrative bodies of private universities, the Private University Act of 1992 was subsequently replaced in 2010 (UGC Profile, 2016, p. 34). North South University, the first private university of Bangladesh was established in 1992 (see Monem & Baniamin, 2010) and the continual establishment of private universities successively outnumbered the public universities over the course of the next couple of decades. Currently, there are 107 private, 49 public, and three international universities in Bangladesh (UGC, 2020). The medium of instruction of public universities is primarily Bangla, the national and official language of this country. The medium of instruction of all private and international universities in Bangladesh is English, and oral presentation is an essential part of private higher education in this country, as already mentioned earlier. Furthermore, with the exception of National University of Bangladesh (which operates through the 2300 colleges) and Bangladesh Open University (the only distance learning institution of this country), and Islamic Arabic University (which provides BA and MA madrasah programs), more students study in private universities of Bangladesh than public institutions of higher learning (excluding colleges and madrasahs) (see Chowdhury, Absar & Quader, 2020).

2.3 Assessment and Evaluation at Tertiary Level in Bangladesh

The National Education Policy 2010 proposes several strategies regarding assessment and evaluation at tertiary education in Bangladesh. These strategies include uniformity in the evaluation system for both public universities and private universities, prioritizing continual evaluation and assessment, and a uniform grading system (NEP, 2010). 'Continual evaluation, homework and mid-term examination' mentioned in National Education Policy (2010) are part of formative assessment in tertiary education, whereas summative assessment denotes the overall end-of-semester or end-of-year examination (Dolin et al., 2018). Even though formative assessment or assessment for learning seems to be emphasized more in higher education, both formative and summative evaluations are significant to assess the students continually (Dixson & Worrell, 2016). Evaluation at the tertiary level in Bangladesh lacks transparency, and in most cases, evaluators are not held accountable for their evaluation process (Islam & Arefin, 2017; Nurunnabi, 2018). Furthermore, a unified standard among the higher education institutions to improve the quality of higher education has still not been set because of the 'lack of understanding of the current state of education quality and mainly due to the gap between public and private universities in terms of education quality (Mazumder, Karim & Bhuiyan, 2012). Thus, there is a visible difference in the quality of tertiary level education catered by various higher education institutions of Bangladesh (Mazumder et al., 2012).

2.4 Oral Presentation in EFL Context

As a speaking activity, oral presentation in English can significantly improve the language proficiency of EFL (English as a Foreign Language) learners (Farabi, Hassanvand, & Gorjian, 2017; Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Several studies in the EFL context demonstrate that even though oral presentation in

English is quite challenging for the EFL learners, it positively impacts their English language learning (Al-Nouh, Abdul-Kareem, & Taki, 2015; Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008). According to Harun et al. (2016), oral presentation in English has a phenomenal effect on developing EFL learners' language proficiency as it makes them autonomous, confident and motivates them to present their oral communication skills before others. In the tertiary education sector of Bangladesh, English oral presentation is highly regarded because having oral proficiency in an EFL context like Bangladesh is prioritized in the competitive job sector (Harun et al., 2016). Higher educational institutions in Bangladesh, especially the private universities, thus, include an oral presentation in English from the very beginning of tertiary education to prepare the students for the professional sector (Harun et al., 2016; Islam & Ahmed, 2018; Jahan & Jahan, 2008). However, students of tertiary level education in Bangladesh generally find English oral presentations quite challenging and at the same time, the teachers also perceive that most of the students' oral presentation performance is not up to standard (Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008). Jahan and Jahan (2008) identified some major reasons why the EFL learners have difficulty in English oral presentation. In a study (2008) on tertiary level students of Bangladesh, they pointed out that lack of speaking assessment in previous levels of education, students' lack of practice, and teaching techniques are mainly responsible for Bangladeshi EFL learners' difficulty in oral presentation in English. Similarly, Harun et al. (2016) mentioned that oral proficiency in English is neglected in primary and secondary levels of education in Bangladesh. The study (2016) also shortlisted some major challenges freshers face at the tertiary level when performing oral presentations in English. The challenges include stage fright, fear of speaking English and lack of fluency in English-some of which might be overcome through practicing oral presentation (Harun et al., 2016).

2.5 Evaluation of Oral Presentation

Evaluation of oral presentation in English can be done either subjectively or objectively (Al-Issa & Al-Qubtan, 2010). Subjective evaluation can sometimes be biased and thus, it may lack credibility, whereas objective evaluation is more credible than its subjective counterpart (Holmes & Smith, 2003). In order to increase the credibility of evaluation in case of oral presentation in English, it is necessary to fix evaluative criteria based on which presentation would be evaluated (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). Furthermore, to ensure transparency of evaluation and improve students' performance of oral presentation in English, the teachers must give their students a clear idea about the evaluative criteria beforehand (Otoshi & Heffernan, 2008). Evaluative criteria for oral presentation in English may vary in accordance with the learning outcome of the oral presentation. To ensure validity, reliability and consistency in evaluation, the use of various assessment tools like rubrics, rating scale, checklist, etc., has been proved to be effective (Brookhart, 2013; Kerbi & Romine, 2010; Mazdayasna, 2012).

Some factors have been found to have a close association with the evaluation process. If taken into consideration while evaluating oral presentation, these factors can benefit both the teachers and the learners in attaining objective evaluation. Murillo-Zamorano and Montanero (2017) argue that in the case of improving oral presentation, peer assessment and feedback with the help of a rubric can be more effective than teacher's assessment. Otoshi and Heffernan (2008) opined that to increase the reliability of assessment, oral presentation needs to be evaluated by both teachers and learners.

2.6 Rubrics

Rubric, in general, refers to a set of instructions (Cambridge Dictionary, 2020). In the education sector, it has a number of meanings (Dawson, 2015; Reddy & Andrade, 2010).

Rubric has been interpreted in various ways depending on its usage (Dawson, 2015). It can be commonly defined as a student-centered assessment tool having a set of definite criteria with descriptive performance levels for those criteria (Brookhart, 2013, 2018; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). It assists the assessors in distinguishing the quality of performance (Panadero & Jonsson, 2020) and at the same time facilitates both the assessor and the learners in achieving the desired outcome. A rubric has two distinctive features, namely evaluative criteria and description of various performances from lower to upper levels or upper to lower levels (Brookhart, 2013, 2018).

2.7 Rubrics in Evaluation

Rubrics are used for multiple purposes including scoring, guiding instructional design, providing feedback and ensuring transparency (Wolf & Stevens, 2007), but first and foremost rubrics are used for evaluation purposes (Brookhart, 2013). Rubrics help teachers evaluate objectively by giving structure to observation instead of judging haphazardly (Brookhart, 2013, p. 5). Thus, the evaluation process gains more credibility (Dickinson & Adams, 2017). Furthermore, the use of rubrics has been reported to have increased the validity and reliability of assessment to a great extent (Brookhart & Chen, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Reddy & Andrade, 2010). In a review of rubric studies, Brookhart and Chen (2015) found numerous instances of empirical research which show positive results of rubrics in achieving consistent and reliable judgment. The study (Brookhart and Chen, 2015) also shows considerable evidence of rubrics producing valid and useful scores for grading and evaluation.

2.8 Rubrics in Transparency

Sharing assessment criteria with students either for the sake of accountability or for communicating expectations has

become commonplace in the education sector (Jonsson & Prins, 2019). This practice along with making the students aware of the assessment purpose, is often considered as transparency (Jonsson, 2014, p. 840). Through specific evaluative criteria, rubrics make teachers' expectations regarding any particular assessment accessible to the students and thus it enhances the transparency in evaluation (Jonsson, 2014). Studies on rubrics confirm that transparency in evaluation through the use of rubrics has a positive impact on students' performance (Allen & Tanner, 2006; Andrade & Du, 2005; Jonsson, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Kerby & Romine, 2010; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). In a review on empirical research on rubrics, Jonsson and Svingby (2007) concluded that one of the significant benefits of using rubrics is that they make 'expectation and criteria explicit' to the students and such transparency in turn promotes learning. Another study also supports the positive effect of transparency (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Even though there is the possibility of 'criteria compliance' replacing learning and the chance of promoting 'instrumentalism' as consequences of transparency through assessment criteria (Torrance, 2007), transparency has more positive values than the negative ones and issues such as criteria compliance and instrumentalism can be avoided if teachers implement transformative approach in assessment (Balloo, Evans, Hughes, Zhu, & Winstone, 2018).

2.9 Rubric as a medium of feedback

Feedback based on rubrics is specific and constructive (Stevens & Levi, 2005), and thus it becomes more effective than general feedback. Several studies on rubric feedback demonstrate that rubrics make student-learning effective by aiding in the feedback process and rubric feedback has a positive impact on students' performance (Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Reddy, 2007; Wollenschlager et al., 2016). Rubric feedback can develop self-regulated learning

because it helps learners self-assess (Reddy, 2007; Sterling et al., 2016). Wollenschlager et al., (2016) gave evidence that rubric feedback becomes quite beneficial to the students when a rubric can answer students' learning goal, their current performance, and most importantly, how they can improve their performance in the future. They (2016) further argued that even though transparency of learning goals is the primary aim of a rubric, it is not enough to improve students' performance; rather, rubric feedback benefits students most when it provides information related to improving individual performance.

As one of the significant aspects of formative assessment is to promote effective learning through feedback (Black & William, 2010; Dixson & Worrell, 2016; Dolin et al., 2017, p. 58), many a time rubrics have been used in formative assessment (Jonsson & Panadero, 2016; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007).

2.10 Rubrics in Bangladeshi Context

Rubrics, both in practice and research, seem to be still quite an unexplored area in the academic context of Bangladesh. Only one empirical study on rubrics in Bangladeshi context has been found. In a quasi-experimental study, Uddin (2014) found a noticeable impact of rubrics on students' performance. Both the teachers and the students seemed to have a positive attitude towards the use of rubrics (Uddin, 2014). Another study (Chowdhury, 2019) discusses some basic details of rubrics and its application in teaching, emphasizing how it impacts assessment, feedback and learning. Other than these studies, hardly any virtual evidence has been found on the practical use of rubrics in Bangladesh. Those include a small number of workshops for promoting the use of rubrics that have been reported to take place in a few universities (BELTA, 2019; BRAC University, 2009, 2014).

3. Methodology

Methodology is often the backbone of an empirical study, and needs to be comprehensively documented and explained. This section mainly focuses on the research design, participants and sampling technique, theoretical framework, instruments, and data collection procedure.

3.1 Research Design

The focus of the study was to find out how oral presentation in English is being evaluated in the private sector of higher educational institutions in Bangladesh. It emphasized the use of rubric in evaluating English oral presentations in an attempt to explore how the evaluation process is being conducted in private universities of Bangladesh and whether rubric is used while evaluating or not. The study followed the qualitative paradigm and used a triangulation method of data collection which includes class observation, course instructors' interviews, and students' focus group interviews. As this research focused on the evaluation process at tertiary level education, data was collected from university teachers and students, and through their class observation. The classes that were chosen to be observed were the ones in which individual students gave short oral presentations in English for about two to five minutes without using multimedia facilities.

3.2 Participants

The participants of the research were 10 teachers and 48 students from 5 private universities of Bangladesh. All the teachers had been conducting English oral courses at the undergraduate level and the students had been enrolled in those English oral courses. The students were part of the eight classes observed, and those classes were taken by the teachers who had been previously interviewed.

3.3 Theoretical Framework

The collected data of this study was analysed using a theory, a concept associated with a theory and a feature of rubrics. The concept of "scaffolding" (Wood, Bruner & Ross, 1976) which is associated with Vygotsky's idea of ZPD (1962, 1978) had been used to analyse data of this research. According to this concept, the students perform better when their instructor assisted them in performing any specific task (Hammond & Gibbons, 2005). Rubric, if provided to the students before performing any task, can be regarded as guidelines for them. As the study attempted to examine whether or not the students get proper instruction with or without the help of rubrics before performing oral presentation and if they are getting benefitted by it, the theory of scaffolding had been used to analyze how far the students are assisted by their instructors and to what extent their performance is being improved with the scaffolding.

Flavell's (1979) "metacognitive theory" is the theory that has been applied to analyse the data of this study. According to this theory, an individual learner's awareness of his/her cognition usually improves his/her performance (Schraw & Moshman, 1995). Rubrics, if appropriately applied, can be used as an effective tool for providing feedback. This study looked into whether the teachers give constructive feedback to the students after their performance of oral presentation and how the students view the feedback. Through the metacognitive theory, the data related to providing and receiving feedback has been analysed to understand whether it helps develop students' metacognition.

"Rubric as a means of providing transparency in assessment" (Allen & Tanner, 2006; Andrade and Du, 2005; Jonsson, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Kerby & Romine, 2010; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013)-derived basically from rubric's distinctive feature of stating evaluative criteria with descriptive levels of performance-is the evidence-based characteristic of the

rubric that had been applied in this study for analyzing data. This particular characteristic of rubrics emphasizes that rubrics play a significant role in clarifying the demands of any particular assessment and give the students a clear idea regarding what the assessment is about, how the evaluation works and what are being expected from them (Allen & Tanner, 2006; Andrade and Du, 2005; Jonsson, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Kerby & Romine, 2010; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Data concerning teachers' instruction on oral assessment and students' understanding of the assessment and its specification from the given instruction had been analyzed through this characteristic of rubrics.

3.4 Instrumentation

Interview questions were used as an instrument to collect data from both the teachers and the students. Two specific sets of questions had been made for them. The interview questions were informal and semi-structured. There are eight questions for the university teachers' interview and seven questions for university students' focus group discussion. Another instrument for the research was a checklist for class observation.

3.5 Data Collection

The study employed a triangulation method of data collection that included course instructors' interviews, students' focus group interviews, and class observation. The teachers were asked the interview questions and their answers were audio recorded. In the same way, students' focus group interviews were recorded. The participants were assured of the confidentiality of their identity. In the case of class observation, necessary notes were taken while observing the classes.

4. Findings

The research findings had been divided into three parts

according to the sources of the data and then the overall findings had been accumulated and analyzed to find out to what extent they matched. The three parts are-

(a) Findings from the teachers' interview:

(i) Using scripted or unscripted criteria: All of the teachers mentioned that they use some specific criteria for evaluating oral presentation. Among them, one teacher specifically mentioned that s/he uses rubrics for evaluation. However, two of them said that they do not strictly follow the criteria. Even though the teachers confirmed that they use criteria for evaluation, only some of them (3 out of 10) use scripted criteria, whereas the others use unscripted ones.

(ii) Informing the students about the evaluative criteria: All the teachers unanimously said that they make sure that the students know about the criteria for evaluating oral presentation beforehand. Two of them also mentioned that they give rubrics to their students.

(iii) Giving feedback on performance: All of the teachers said that they give feedback to the students on their oral presentation performance. Most of the teachers (6 out of 10) mentioned that they give individual feedback. Some of the teachers (2 out of 10) give overall feedback, while others (2 out of 10) give both individual and overall feedback.

(iv) Keeping record of the evaluation process: During the interview, the teachers were asked if they keep a record of the process of evaluating the students' oral presentation. Most of the teachers (6 out of 10) mentioned that they keep a record of the evaluation process by taking notes when the students perform in the classroom. The rest of them (4 out of 10) said that they only keep a record of the formal presentation which will be marked.

(v) Using assessment tools for evaluating oral presentation: When the teachers were asked if they use any kind of assessment tool for evaluating oral presentation, five of them said that they use rubrics. Among the rest, three teachers use

checklists and two teachers said they use personalized tools, which they have adapted from assessment tools like rubric and checklist.

(vi) Advantages and disadvantages of using assessment tools: In the interview session, the teachers were asked to give their opinion about the usefulness of using assessment tools in evaluating oral presentation-whether they find it beneficial or not. In answering this question, most teachers (7 out of 10) said that they find the assessment tools beneficial. In their opinion, the advantages of using assessment tools in evaluating oral presentation can be divided into three sections, namely advantages in terms of transparency, in terms of scaffolding and in terms of metacognition. Other than these, some of the teachers also mentioned that assessment tools could be helpful for providing feedback and they can be beneficial for the novice teachers and help the teachers understand where to focus. However, three teachers opined that using assessment tools like rubric or checklist has more negative effects than positive ones as such assessment tools can hinder students' spontaneity and potentiality.

(b) Findings from the focus group discussion:

(i) Taking preparation for oral presentation: Most of the students (66%) said that they prepare for oral presentation and practice before their performance. The rest 33% (16 out of 48), mentioned that they do not practice their speech instead only focus on the content.

(ii) Getting guidelines from teachers: The students were asked if they get guidelines from their teachers regarding the evaluative criteria beforehand. Most of them (66%) said that their teachers notify them about the evaluative criteria beforehand. However, the rest of the students (33%) mentioned that they do not have a clear idea about the evaluative criteria before giving an oral presentation.

(iii) Following teacher's guidelines: 58% students stated

that they follow their teachers' guidelines while preparing for oral presentation, while 42% mentioned that they either do not follow the teachers' guidelines or do not get explicit instructions from their teachers.

(iv) Getting feedback from teachers: Majority of the students (90%) informed that they get feedback from their teachers on their oral presentation performance. However, 10% of the students said that they do not get any kind of feedback from their course instructor regarding their oral presentation performance.

(v) Types of feedback: Among the students who get feedback from their teachers, 56% mentioned that their teachers give them individual feedback; 14% get overall feedback and the rest 30% get both overall and individual feedback from their teachers.

(vi) Opinion about receiving feedback: When the students were asked about their opinion on receiving feedback from their teachers, 79% said that they found the feedback helpful. Teachers' feedback on their performance of oral presentations makes them motivated. However, 4% of students do not find the feedback helpful; rather, they feel embarrassed when they get negative feedback. The rest 17%, did not give any opinion, mainly because they did not receive any feedback from their teachers.

(c) Findings from Class Observation:

(i) Teachers' instruction: Generally, an oral presentation is evaluated based on some specific criteria. Therefore, the teachers must give proper instructions to the students regarding the oral presentation. Majority of the teachers (75%) were seen to give instructions to the students before starting the oral presentation. On the other hand, 25% of the teachers did not give any instruction regarding the oral presentation.

(ii) Teachers' activity during the presentation: During class observation, it had been noticed that most of the teachers

(62.5%) were taking notes while the students were performing oral presentations. The rest 37.5% only observed the students' presentation. However, one teacher only marked the presentation but did not seem to take any other notes regarding their performance.

(iii) Giving feedback: It had been observed that apart from a few teachers (25%), most of the teachers (75%) gave feedback on students' performance in the classroom. Among the teachers who gave feedback, three teachers (37.5%) gave overall feedback and the other three (37.5%) gave individual feedback. However, one of the two teachers (T3) who did not give feedback asked the students to meet him/her during office hours to get feedback on their performance. The other teacher (T7), who did not give any feedback, marked the students on their oral presentation performance and disclosed the marks at the end of the class as the presentation was part of their exam.

4.1 Discussion

Oral presentation is quite essential in the EFL context for both academic and professional purposes. In Bangladesh, the emphasis on academic oral presentation starts from the tertiary level (Harun et al., 2016; Jahan & Jahan, 2008). The private universities of Bangladesh include this assessment from the very beginning of university education (Harun et al., 2016). It is necessary to make sure that an assessment such as oral presentation in English is being evaluated in such a way that both the teachers and the students are benefitted by the process. The research suggests that using rubrics in evaluating oral presentation in English at the tertiary level has significant value for both teachers and students. Not only do rubrics clarify the teachers' demand to the students by specifying evaluative criteria with description and value judgment, but it also serves as a document to record students' performance based on which the teachers can give necessary feedback later. Rubrics have been

proved to be an effective means of providing transparency in evaluation because of its nature of relaying information about teachers' expectations (Allen & Tanner, 2006; Andrade & Du, 2005; Jonsson, 2014; Jonsson & Svingby, 2007; Kerby & Romine, 2010; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013). Rubric as a document on specific evaluative criteria might work as a scaffolding to help students learn independently and such self-regulated learning in turn helps them perform better than they could have been able to perform all by themselves (Carson & Kavish, 2018; Jonsson, 2014; Panadero & Jonsson, 2020; Panadero & Romero, 2014; Ragupathi & Lee, 2020; Reynolds-Keefer, 2010). Besides being an assisting tool ensuring transparency and a means of scaffolding for students, rubric plays a significant role in giving feedback. Based on students' performance on oral presentation in English and teachers' interviews, it can be said that feedback given from the rubric tends to be specific, constructive, and informative. Such feedback has a positive impact on students' understanding of their strengths and weaknesses. It drives students' metacognitive knowledge through self-reflection (Reddy, 2007; Sterling et al., 2016).

The purpose of the research was to determine the significance of using rubric in English oral courses at the tertiary level. To get necessary information regarding this matter, university teachers who conduct English oral courses and university students who had taken such courses were interviewed, and classes on oral presentation in such courses were observed. Apart from a few contradictions, data from these three sources shows several benefits of using rubrics in English oral courses at the tertiary level. Primarily it was found that 50% of the teachers use a rubric, 30% of the teachers use checklists and the rest 20% use personalized tools for evaluating oral presentations. Majority of the teachers (70%) think that assessment tools are beneficial. It was found that all the teachers

generally evaluate oral presentations based on a few criteria; most of the teachers inform the students about those criteria beforehand; several of them keep regular records of their evaluation of students' performance, and a majority of them give feedback focusing on those criteria. To be more specific, data from teachers' interviews and students' focus group discussion indicate that 100% of the teachers use a format of criteria, either scripted or unscripted, to evaluate oral presentation. All the teachers (100% from the teachers' interview) claimed to notify their students about the evaluative criteria beforehand. However, in this regard, contrast was noticed between the data found from the teachers and the students. 67% of the students informed that they were properly notified, but the rest 33% of the students mentioned that they were partially notified. 58% of the students informed that they prepare according to the criteria or instructions given by their teachers. As for documenting the students' performance evaluation, 60% of teachers keep regular records, and the others keep records occasionally during exams. Data also revealed that the majority of the teachers (100% claimed by the teachers and 75% found during class observation) give either overall or individual feedback on students' performance and 90% students also confirmed that they receive feedback about their performance from their teachers. Moreover, 79% of the students seemed to have a positive attitude towards the feedback they receive from their teachers and they think that the feedback helps them improve their performance.

From the teachers' opinion, several advantages of using assessment tools have been found. Those advantages were categorized in three sets, namely in terms of transparency, in terms of scaffolding and in terms of metacognition. Under the category of transparency in evaluating oral presentation, assessment tools were found to be effective means of specifying as well as verifying the evaluation process, clarifying the grading process, demonstrating students' errors and mistakes, ensuring

impartiality in scoring, and making the outcome of evaluation accessible to the students. Advantages of assessment tools in terms of scaffolding include making the students aware of how they are going to be evaluated, working as guidelines for the students, and guiding them specifically about what to do and what not to do. The third category, advantages in terms of students' metacognition, includes making students aware of how they have been evaluated and making them understand their strengths and weaknesses through specific and constructive feedback. Apart from these three categories of advantages, some other advantages of using assessment tools were found, such as their role in helping the teachers understand where to focus and also helping in providing feedback. The tools are said to be particularly beneficial for teachers who have zero experience in evaluating oral presentations.

In general, assessment tools, especially rubrics, help the students understand their teacher's expectations, assist teachers in gathering and recording data about students' performance, and make it easier for them to give feedback to the students. These data show a number of aspects regarding how a rubric can positively affect students' preparation of oral presentation and how it can help them improve their performance of oral presentation gradually, and how it can benefit the teachers in terms of justifying students' evaluation and providing constructive feedback. Therefore, it is quite evident that both the teachers and the students can be benefitted by implementing assessment tools, especially rubrics for evaluating oral presentation.

5. Conclusion

The present study aimed to find out rubrics' potential for evaluation process concerning oral presentation in Bangladesh, especially in the private sector of higher education. At the same time, it investigated the teachers' view towards the use of

assessment tools, particularly rubrics, in evaluating oral presentations. For this purpose, teachers and students and oral presentation classes were observed from private universities of Bangladesh. The data was analysed by incorporating Flavell's metacognitive theory (1979), the concept of scaffolding (Wood, Bruner, & Ross, 1976) and the underlying feature of rubrics.

If used appropriately, a rubric can be an effective tool for monitoring and evaluating English oral presentations in private universities of Bangladesh. This versatile tool has the potential to ensure better evaluation as it plays a key role in increasing transparency in assessment. Comprehensive knowledge and sound understanding of the evaluative criteria rubrics can work as scaffolding and help learners perform better through self-regulated learning. This learning is fostered through instructors' feedback, which generates learners' metacognitive awareness. In order to cater to job market necessities, universities in the 21st century, whether focusing on outcome-based education or living curriculum, are exploring client-based learning and/or learner-centered education. This trend is emerging in private higher education of the youngest South Asian nation, which has just turned 50. In keeping with this trend, the pragmatic implications of employing rubrics to evaluate English oral presentations in private universities of Bangladesh cannot be understated, and must be explored further.

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