

Development and Cross-Contextual Transfer of Confidence in Oral Presentations

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Abstract: Oral presentations are an important component of higher education today, yet many university students find them challenging, particularly those with introverted personality traits. This case study examined how learners with introverted traits develop confidence in oral presentations and whether that confidence transfers across contexts. Data were collected through in-depth interviews. The findings showed that repeated practice increased the confidence of participants with introverted traits in academic oral presentations but had limited short-term effects on confidence transfer across contexts. Differences in speaking context and audience affected the development and expression of confidence in new settings. This study offers suggestions for learners with introverted traits and identifies directions for applied psychology research on confidence transfer in oral communication.

Keywords: personality, confidence transfer, oral presentation

1. Introduction

In higher education, oral presentations are widely used as course assignments. They serve not only as assessment tools but also as an important bridge between academic learning and workplace practice. Oral presentation assignments are intended to develop core competencies such as clear and logical reasoning, effective verbal communication, and teamwork. However, little research has examined how confidence developed through academic presentations transfers across contexts. This study therefore explored how learners with introverted personality traits build confidence in oral presentations and transfer that confidence to other settings. The findings may inform future applied psychology research on confidence in oral communication.

Based on the research rationale described above, this study had the following objectives:

1. To examine how learners with introverted personality traits perceive academic oral presentation assignments.
2. To examine the mechanisms through which oral presentation assignments influence the transfer of confidence across contexts among learners with introverted personality traits.

2. Literature Review

Oral presentation and public speaking skills have become essential competencies in higher education. Research has identified a gap between students' current public speaking abilities and the skills required in the workplace (Stowe, Parent, Schwartz, & Sendall, 2012). To address this gap, higher education institutions have increasingly incorporated public speaking instruction into their curricula to help students develop confidence and communication skills before entering the workforce. Studies of confidence in oral presentations have identified differences between introverted and extroverted individuals. Efrat and Zait (2024) demonstrated that personality traits influence interpersonal communication skills and that extraversion plays an important role in confidence in oral expression. Martín-Raugh, Roohr, Leong, Molloy, McCulla, Ramanarayan, and Mladineo (2023) reported that perceived extraversion was associated with higher oral communication scores. Ünal and Pamuk (2025) found that extraversion was a significant negative predictor of public speaking anxiety, suggesting that extroverted individuals experienced less anxiety, whereas introverted or neurotic personality traits and agreeableness positively predicted such anxiety. Regardless of personality type, however, practice and preparation remain essential. Roslim, Nimehchisalem, and Razali (2023) found that students across personality types reported that adequate preparation time substantially reduced their anxiety about oral presentations. Although research has advanced our understanding of how confidence in oral presentations develops in educational settings (Smith & Sodano, 2011; Okoro & Cardon, 2024), little is known about how such confidence transfers to other speaking contexts.

3. Materials and Methods

3.1 Research Participants

The participants were three Taiwanese undergraduate students with introverted personality traits, as identified using the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI; Briggs & Myers, 1987). All participants were third-year students with experience in academic oral presentations and at least one of the following: interviews for transfer to another academic department, internship interviews, part-time job interviews, or part-time work experience.

3.2 Qualitative Research Approach and Analysis

This qualitative study examined how oral presentation assignments influence the transfer of confidence across contexts among learners with introverted personality traits. The study was conducted over one academic year (two semesters) and included six individual in-depth interviews using a semi-structured interview guide. The participants, coded A-1, A-2, and A-3, described their experiences with academic oral presentations and confidence transfer across contexts in response to the interview questions. The contexts examined included interviews for transfer to another academic department, internship interviews, part-time job interviews, or part-time work experience. Participants' confidence in oral presentations was assessed using the Public Speaking Self-Efficacy Scale (Warren, 2011). Their views were documented, and the interview data and records were analyzed using protocol analysis, a method of analyzing verbal data within a content-analysis framework.

4. Results and Discussion

Drawing on the in-depth interviews, this study examined how oral presentation assignments influenced the transfer of confidence across contexts among learners with introverted personality traits. Repeated practice increased participants' confidence in academic oral presentations but did not lead to clear short-term transfer of confidence across contexts. Nevertheless, accumulating oral communication experience in different settings helped build confidence to some extent. These effects are discussed below:

A. Repeated practice increases introverted learners' confidence in academic oral presentations.

I feel more confident after giving several oral presentations in front of an audience. However, I still need a full script and have to rehearse lots of times in advance. My mind often goes blank when I am on stage, so I recite the script from memory. Even after I leave the stage, I may not remember what I said during the presentation. (A-1)

At first, I felt very stressed and nervous about giving presentations, but after presenting every week, I gradually became used to it. (A-2).

B. Practice in academic oral presentations has limited effects on confidence transfer across contexts among introverted learners.

From my experience giving presentations at school, I probably became more aware of things such as how to dress appropriately and the need to smile during an interview. (A-1)

I still feel nervous during job interviews. I worry that I will not answer the questions well, and I do not dare tell my supervisor how I feel about working overtime. (A-2)

I really wanted to secure an internship at a place I liked, so throughout the interview, I was afraid of saying the wrong thing. (A-3)

C. Oral communication experience across contexts helps build confidence.

There are more customers on weekends, and I sometimes talk until my voice becomes hoarse. ... After a while, I realized that customers tend to ask similar questions. (A-2)

During my internship, speaking with customers felt very different from giving presentations to my classmates. It took me a long time to adjust. (A-3)

D. Introverted learners require targeted practice in specific contexts to transfer confidence in oral communication.

The interviewer asked questions I had not prepared for. Unlike a presentation, I did not have much time to prepare for the interview and had to respond on the spot, so my answers were not as good as I wanted them

to be. Only after leaving the interview room did I realize that I could have given much better and more complete answers. (A-1)

I would definitely receive a different score on a written test for I would have more time to think. During an interview, as in a presentation, my mind goes blank, but I still have to say something even if my answer is not very good. It is difficult to think clearly in such an anxious situation, especially when several people are staring at me. (A-1)

5. Conclusion

Oral presentation assignments are widely regarded in higher education as an important bridge between academic learning and workplace practice. The goal is for confidence developed in one setting (the source context) to transfer to a new speaking situation (the target context). This study found that repeated practice increased learners' confidence in academic oral presentations and helped them build confidence for future academic presentations. However, learners with introverted personality traits may struggle to transfer confidence developed in a specific practice setting to a new speaking context. Confidence in oral communication is context dependent: the content, audience, and opportunity to prepare may differ substantially across settings. As a result, experience with academic oral presentations had limited effects on confidence transfer across contexts. Confidence developed in one speaking setting does not automatically transfer to a substantially different communication setting. Such transfer may require targeted practice in the intended context or sufficient similarity between the source and target contexts. Systematic preparation and targeted communication training may help learners with introverted traits accumulate experience in target contexts, strengthen their confidence, and apply their skills more effectively. Future research should examine interactions between learner characteristics and specific speaking contexts, as well as the factors that sustain confidence over time and promote its transfer to new communication settings.

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