

NLA IN DEVELOPING PRESENTATION COMPETENCE IN ENGLISH B2 LEARNERS

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Abstract: *This article explores the application of the Neurolinguistic Approach (NLA) in developing presentation competence among English B2-level learners. It argues that presentation skills represent not only linguistic output but a neurolinguistic process involving the transformation of declarative knowledge into procedural fluency. Drawing on Claude Germain's theoretical framework, the article examines how repetition, scaffolded input, structured output, and reflective practice contribute to oral performance development. The discussion highlights cognitive, linguistic, and affective dimensions of presentation competence, emphasizing the role of anxiety reduction, feedback, and guided rehearsal in improving fluency, coherence, and communicative confidence. The article concludes that NLA-informed instruction offers a robust pedagogical model for enhancing academic presentation skills in EFL contexts.*

Keywords: *Neurolinguistic Approach, presentation competence, B2 learners, EFL, fluency development, proceduralization, scaffolding, oral proficiency, communicative competence.*

INTRODUCTION

In contemporary English as a Foreign Language (EFL) pedagogy, oral presentation competence has become a central component of communicative proficiency, particularly for learners at the B2 level of the Common European Framework of Reference (CEFR). At this stage, learners are expected to produce structured, coherent, and audience-oriented spoken discourse while demonstrating fluency and grammatical accuracy. However, despite having sufficient linguistic knowledge, many learners experience significant difficulties in delivering effective presentations, especially under real-time communicative pressure.

These difficulties reflect a persistent gap between linguistic knowledge and communicative performance. Learners often know grammatical rules and vocabulary items but struggle to retrieve and apply them spontaneously in extended speech. This gap suggests that presentation competence cannot be understood purely as a linguistic skill; rather, it is a cognitive and neurolinguistic process shaped by memory, attention, and emotional regulation.

Traditional EFL instruction frequently emphasizes memorization of content, scripted speech production, or isolated speaking drills. While these approaches may support accuracy, they often fail to develop fluency and spontaneity. As a result, there is a growing need for instructional frameworks that integrate cognitive, linguistic, and affective dimensions of language use.

The Neurolinguistic Approach (NLA), developed by Claude Germain, offers such a framework. It conceptualizes language acquisition as the gradual transformation of declarative knowledge (explicit awareness of rules and vocabulary) into procedural knowledge (automatic and fluent language use). Within this perspective, oral fluency emerges through repeated meaningful communication, structured practice, and gradual internalization of linguistic patterns.

This article examines how NLA can be applied to develop presentation competence in B2 learners by integrating structured input, scaffolded output, repetition, and reflective learning cycles. It also explores how affective factors such as anxiety and confidence influence oral performance and how these can be addressed through pedagogically informed intervention.

2. Main Body

2.1. Presentation Competence as a Multidimensional Construct

Presentation competence is a complex skill that extends beyond grammatical accuracy and vocabulary range. It involves the integration of linguistic, cognitive, and pragmatic abilities, including:

- Logical organization of ideas
- Use of discourse markers and signposting language
- Audience engagement strategies
- Time management and fluency control
- Spontaneous interaction and question handling

At the B2 level, learners often demonstrate receptive competence but struggle with productive fluency. The main difficulty lies in real-time language retrieval and discourse management, particularly under performance pressure. This indicates incomplete proceduralization of linguistic knowledge, where learners possess knowledge but cannot efficiently activate it during communication.

2.2. Neurolinguistic Approach and Proceduralization of Language

The Neurolinguistic Approach provides a cognitive explanation for this gap by distinguishing between two memory systems:

- Declarative memory, which stores explicit knowledge (rules, vocabulary, grammar explanations)
- Procedural memory, which enables automatic and fluent language use

In many EFL classrooms, instruction remains heavily focused on declarative knowledge, limiting opportunities for procedural development. NLA argues that fluency emerges only when learners repeatedly use language in meaningful communicative contexts until it becomes automatized.

Presentation tasks are particularly effective for this transformation because they require learners to:

- retrieve language repeatedly
- organize discourse coherently
- adjust speech in real time

- respond to audience feedback

Through repeated cycles of preparation, rehearsal, and delivery, learners gradually shift from conscious rule application to automatic speech production.

2.3. Role of Repetition, Input, and Scaffolded Output

Within NLA, repetition is understood as meaningful recycling of language rather than mechanical memorization. In presentation training, repetition occurs across multiple stages:

- drafting content
- rehearsing speech
- receiving feedback
- revising and refining output

Each cycle strengthens cognitive pathways associated with language production and reduces cognitive load during performance.

Structured input also plays a key role. Learners require exposure to model presentations, including academic talks, TED-style speeches, and peer demonstrations. These models help learners internalize discourse structures such as introductions, transitions, and conclusions.

Scaffolded output ensures gradual progression from supported to independent performance. Learners may begin with detailed scripts or outlines and gradually move toward spontaneous delivery. This staged development aligns with the principle of progressive internalization central to NLA.

2.4. Cognitive and Affective Dimensions of Presentation Learning

Presentation competence is strongly influenced by affective factors such as anxiety, confidence, and self-perception. Many B2 learners experience communication apprehension when speaking in front of peers, which negatively affects fluency and lexical retrieval.

From a neurolinguistic perspective, emotional states directly influence cognitive processing. High anxiety can inhibit memory access and disrupt fluency, while positive emotional states enhance recall and performance efficiency.

Therefore, reducing anxiety is essential for effective presentation training. This can be achieved through:

- supportive classroom environments
- structured preparation stages
- peer collaboration
- constructive feedback
- gradual exposure to public speaking tasks

Repeated successful experiences strengthen self-efficacy, which further enhances performance quality.

2.5. Classroom Implementation of NLA in Presentation Training

NLA-informed instruction can be operationalized through a structured pedagogical sequence:

1. Input Stage – Exposure to model presentations and discourse structures
2. Analysis Stage – Identification of linguistic and rhetorical features
3. Guided Preparation – Use of outlines, vocabulary banks, and teacher scaffolding
4. Rehearsal Stage – Repeated practice in pairs or groups with feedback
5. Performance Stage – Independent presentation delivery
6. Reflection Stage – Self-evaluation and peer feedback

This cyclical process ensures gradual internalization of language and continuous improvement in fluency and coherence.

2.6. Implications for EFL Teaching

The application of NLA to presentation training suggests several pedagogical implications. First, oral production should be treated as a developmental process rather than a one-time assessment task. Second, teachers should prioritize meaningful communicative practice over memorization-based instruction. Third, structured scaffolding must be integrated systematically to support learners at different stages of proficiency.

Additionally, emotional and psychological dimensions of learning should be addressed explicitly. Teachers should create low-anxiety environments and encourage risk-taking in speech production. Finally, repeated exposure to presentation tasks is essential for proceduralization and fluency development.

3. Conclusion

The Neurolinguistic Approach offers a comprehensive and cognitively grounded framework for developing presentation competence in B2-level EFL learners. By emphasizing the transformation of declarative knowledge into procedural fluency, NLA explains how learners progress from controlled, hesitant speech to spontaneous and confident communication.

The integration of repetition, structured input, scaffolded output, and reflective practice creates optimal conditions for oral skill development. Furthermore, addressing affective factors such as anxiety and confidence enhances both performance and learner engagement.

Overall, NLA-informed pedagogy provides an effective model for improving academic presentation skills in EFL contexts by bridging the gap between linguistic knowledge and communicative performance.

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