

Does the perceived utility of rubrics boost speaker confidence? A study in business organization courses

¿La utilidad percibida de la rúbrica aumenta la confianza del orador? Un estudio en asignaturas de organización de empresas

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ABSTRACT

In a real academic context, taking the classroom as a reference, this research analyzes the utility that students on two university degree programs give to a rubric for preparing oral presentations. It also assesses the effect that the rubric utility has on the relationship between confidence as a speaker and self-assessment of oral presentation competence. This research was carried out with a sample of 202 university students of Business Organization subjects from two university degrees: Labour Relations and Human Resource Management and Civil Engineering. In both cases, students were required to give an oral presentation on a topic selected by the teacher. One month before presenting in the classroom, students were asked to complete a questionnaire and were provided with a rubric. Finally, after the oral presentation, each student rated his/her overall performance. To analyse data, component analysis with varimax rotation, correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were applied. The results show the greater the perceived utility of the rubric, the greater the influence of confidence as a speaker on self-assessment of oral presentation performance. The rubric is useful in guiding the preparation of the oral presentation, although it seems that the perception of utility is greater for female students than for male students. From a theoretical perspective, the findings suggest that when students perceive the rubric as a credible and reliable guiding tool, a greater correspondence is observed between their perceived abilities and the grades they assign to themselves. From a practical standpoint, providing opportunities for discussion between students and teachers regarding rubric standards can enhance oral communication skills.

Keywords. self-assessment; confidence; oral communication; university; rubric.

RESUMEN

En un contexto académico real, tomando como referencia el aula, esta investigación analiza la utilidad que los estudiantes de dos titulaciones universitarias otorgan a una rúbrica para preparar presentaciones orales. Asimismo, evalúa el efecto que la utilidad de la rúbrica tiene sobre la relación entre la confianza como orador y la autoevaluación de la competencia en presentaciones orales. Esta investigación se realizó con una muestra de 202 estudiantes universitarios de asignaturas de Organización de Empresas de dos titulaciones universitarias: Relaciones Laborales y Gestión de Recursos Humanos e Ingeniería Civil. En ambos casos, los alumnos debían realizar una exposición oral sobre un tema seleccionado por el profesor. Un mes antes de la presentación en el aula, se pidió a los estudiantes que cumplimentaran un cuestionario y se les proporcionó una rúbrica. Por último, tras la presentación oral, cada alumno calificó su actuación global. Para analizar los datos, se aplicó el análisis de componentes con rotación varimax, el análisis de correlación y el análisis de regresión jerárquica. Los resultados muestran que cuanto mayor es la utilidad percibida de la rúbrica, mayor es la influencia de la confianza como orador en la autoevaluación de la realización de presentaciones orales. La rúbrica es útil para orientar la preparación de la presentación oral, aunque parece que la percepción de utilidad es mayor en las alumnas que en los alumnos. Desde una perspectiva teórica, los hallazgos indican que, cuando los estudiantes perciben la rúbrica como una herramienta de orientación creíble y fiable, se observa una mayor correspondencia entre sus habilidades percibidas y las calificaciones que se otorgan a sí mismos. Desde el punto de vista práctico, ofrecer oportunidades de discusión entre estudiantes y profesores sobre los estándares de la rúbrica puede mejorar las habilidades de comunicación oral.

Palabras clave. autoevaluación; confianza; comunicación verbal; universidad; rúbrica.

INTRODUCTION

Oral presentation competence has been recognized as one of the key transversal competencies required for a successful career. Knowing how to communicate and being able to present or defend a project in front of an audience is a key competence in the labour market (Grieve et al., 2021). However, oral presentation is an activity that generates fear, not only for students but for the population in general. In the case of students, the situation is aggravated when the oral presentation is evaluated. Therefore, it is necessary to use tools and strategies to reduce the fear of public speaking and to improve students' performance. The fear of public speaking can arise from the lack of clear and precise criteria regarding what is to be assessed. One of the strategies that can be used by teachers to avoid this problem is to clarify students' expectations by communicating the evaluation criteria in advance. Knowledge of the criteria could help students to prepare better and, as a result, improve their performance and, therefore, their grades. To make the evaluation criteria explicit, one of the most used tools are rubrics.

Another key competence for professional success is critical thinking (Andrews et al., 2025; Cardon et al., 2024). Self-assessment is shown to be a key factor in this regard (Nieminen & Boud, 2025; Köppe et al., 2025). Self-assessment implies a person's capacity to critically evaluate his/her own performance, and it is related to the competencies of autonomous learning and critical reasoning (Boud & Falchikov, 1989; León, Panadero & García-Martínez, 2023). According to Klenowski (1995) self-assessment consists of a person's evaluation of his or her abilities, identifying his or her weaknesses and strengths with the aim of improving performance. While this definition of self-assessment emphasizes the formative aspect of self-assessment as a way to promote learning (Andrade, 2019; Köppe et al., 2024; Violanti & Kelly, 2023), self-assessment can also be employed for summative purposes, allowing students to assign their own grade (Taras, 2016).

Self-assessment of oral presentation competence is influenced by different variables such as confidence in public speaking and the existence of incentives, i.e., whether the result of the self-assessment counts towards the final grade (Aryadoust, 2015; De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012). However, the literature reviewed has not analysed whether the perceived rubric utility can help students to perceive that their performance is better and, therefore, to increase their self-assessment scores. In addition, previous work has not analysed whether the rubric utility can intensify the relationship between confidence in public speaking and self-assessment scores. Transparency of assessment criteria and learning goals is not enough to establish effectiveness. It is important to know whether the rubric provides useful information to their users (De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2009; León, Panadero & García-Martínez, 2023). In this sense, this work pursues three objectives:

- To assess the utility that students grant to the rubric for preparing oral presentations.
- To analyse the direct effect of a set of variables (speaker confidence, the existence of incentives and the rubric utility) on the self-assessment score of an oral presentation.
- To assess the moderator effect of the rubric utility on the relationship between the confidence as a speaker and the self-assessment score of an oral presentation.

Keeping these objectives in mind, this research is carried out in a real, non-experimental context, taking the classroom as a reference, in different courses, and therefore, different conditions, and introducing the student self-assessment. In addition, a previously tested, reliable, and valid rubric, has been used to assess the competence of oral presentations.

This rubric was used both for formative and summative purposes. For formative use, students could prepare their presentation in advance and assess themselves critically. Besides, this self-assessment had, as will be seen later, summative use in part of the sample analysed, which adds the possibility of assessing the results under different conditions. The results obtained suggest that the utility of the rubric as perceived by the students interacts positively with confidence in a way that makes the students self-evaluate with higher scores.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Oral presentation competence and self-assessment

According to the literature, one of the competencies that university graduates should possess is the ability to deliver high-quality oral presentations. This is because oral presentations are a requirement in most professional fields that university degrees provide training for (Morreale, Valenzano & Bauer, 2017; Nadolski et al., 2021). De Grez, Valcke & Roozen (2009) define oral presentation competence as the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to speak in public in order to inform, self-express, to relate and to persuade. Therefore, oral presentation competence requires, among other things, mastery of the language and the space in which the presentation is made and the ability to deliver appropriate messages according to the type of audience.

Oral presentation competence is valuable both in the academic context where oral forms of assessment are used and in the business world (Cardon et al., 2024; Morreale, Valenzano, & Bauer, 2017; Ortiz, Region-Sebest, & MacDermott, 2016). Additionally, in a turbulent competitive environment, continuous improvement is essential to ensure both academic and professional success. Self-assessment is one of the competencies needed to ensure continuous learning. In this sense, being able to critically self-assess is necessary to detect weaknesses and to improve performance. In fact, when students evaluate their own performance, they may increase confidence in their own learning (Boud et al., 2013) and improve involvement in their learning process (Andrade, 2019; Violanti & Kelly, 2023; ~~Yan and Brown, 2017~~).

Literature shows that self-assessment of oral presentation competence improves the acquisition of this competence and enhances self-regulated learning (De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012; Falchikov, 2005). It should be considered that assessing oral presentations is difficult because it involves different dimensions, not only knowledge and ability, but also attitudes, whether to inform, express, relate concepts or persuade audiences (Van Ginkel et al. 2015). Therefore, to assess this competence, it is important to consider the affective, cognitive, and behavioural aspects (Tsang, 2020).

Because of this difficulty, the evidence shows that the accuracy of student self-assessment is especially low compared to assessment from other sources (e.g., peers and teachers) (Bolívar-Cruz & Verano-Tacoronte, 2018; González-Betancor et al., 2019; De Grez, Valcke, & Roozen, 2012). Despite that, the literature emphasizes the importance of using self-assessment because of the aforementioned benefits (Boud and Falchikov, 1989; Köppe et al., 2024; León, Panadero & García-Martínez, 2023; Panadero, Jonsson & Botella, 2017).

Confidence as speaker and self-assessment

Confidence is one of the positive characteristics of a competent speaker (Quinn & Goody, 2019). The relationship between confidence and fear is often ambiguous in the literature, and confidence is often presented simply as the opposite of fear (Smith et al., 2022). According to Méndez et al. (2004), the public speaking confidence is a construct with two dimensions: confidence in public speaking (i.e., a consequence of a positive appraisal of the speaker's abilities, which turns the public speaking situation into a reinforcing event) and fear of public speaking (i.e., which turns the public speaking situation into a negative experience).

Oral presentations are one of the most common activities in the university context and one of the most feared tasks (Grieve et al., 2021; Smith & Sodano, 2011). In higher education context, many students exhibit fear when speaking in public, leading them to engage in strategies to avoid these situations (Gaffney & Kercksmar, 2016; Nash et al., 2016). Specifically, women have traditionally reported higher levels of public speaking fear than men (De Paola et al., 2021).

If students improve their public speaking confidence (either by increasing the speaker's confidence or decreasing their fear), students' perception of their performance level should improve and, therefore, the score they give themselves on their own performance (self-assessment score)

in the oral presentation competence increases (Tsang, 2020). Considering the aforementioned arguments and the work of Méndez et al. (2004), the following hypothesis is formulated:

H1. Public speaking confidence is positively related to oral competence self-assessment score.

H1a. Speaker confidence is positively related to oral competence self-assessment score.

H1b. Speaker fear is negatively related to oral competence self-assessment score.

Summative assessment and self-assessment

Self-assessment can be summative or formative. Self-assessment is formative when its goal is that students critically assess their performance on a certain task, to improve it without an impact on their marks (Violanti & Kelly, 2023). On the other hand, it is summative when it results in an adjustment in the student's marks. Nieminen and Tuohilampi (2020) argue that summative self-assessment builds on the formative self-assessment model by allowing students to engage in self-assessment through constructive feedback on both their performance and their self-assessment skills. At the culmination of the summative self-assessment model, students determine their own grades.

Although the literature shows doubts about the use of self-assessment for summative purposes (Andrade, 2019; Nieminen, 2022), few studies have specifically measured the effect of such self-assessment or self-grading on the self-indulgence shown by students. If students have an incentive to self-assess, by its summative use, it is possible that they will tend to be more self-indulgent with their grades (Andrade, 2019).

Since it is generally accepted in the literature that students give themselves higher scores when those affect their grades in their courses, the next hypothesis is formulated as follows:

H2. Summative assessment positively influences self-assessment score of oral presentation competence.

Rubrics utility and self-assessment

Using rubrics for self-assessment has grown in popularity in recent years (Jonsson et al., 2025). Rubrics make available the criteria for assessing the success of an activity to the students (Krebs et al., 2022). They describe the different performance levels, commonly by behavioural descriptions, and permit students to compare their performance against the criteria included in the rubric (Panadero et al., 2017).

Thus, rubrics are useful in guiding students before starting an activity, contribute significantly to the self-regulation of student learning (León et al., 2023) and to the assessment of their own work (Krebs et al., 2022). This greater transparency in the assessment criteria of an assignment increases students' confidence in being able to achieve the requirements of the activities (Jonsson, 2014; Panadero & Jonsson, 2020, 2013). Besides, when the self-assessed task counts toward final grades (i.e., summative self-assessment), rubrics help to increase the number of students using planning strategies to prepare presentations and improve performance perception (Jonsson et al., 2025; Panadero & Romero, 2014).

However, despite the reported advantages, there are also drawbacks that may affect the rubric utility from the students' perspective. Probably the most important is that students may find discrepancies between what they believe is a good presentation and the criteria shown in the rubric (Tsang, 2018). Thus, students might think that they have made a presentation in which they have shown enthusiasm, but the teacher considers that they have not been enthusiastic enough. Or students might think that by addressing their peers informally they are being approachable to the audience, but the teacher might think it is an inappropriate style.

As indicated above, performing an oral presentation is a complex competence that requires attention to a varied set of elements, which makes teaching and learning it very difficult (Tsang, 2018). Therefore, clear guidelines and performance criteria can facilitate effective learning of this competence (De Grez et al., 2009; Nadolski et al., 2021; Ritchie, 2016; Tsang, 2018).

Using a rubric, however, cannot guarantee learning or correct performance in oral presentations (León et al., 2023). It is important to note that transparency of the assessment criteria used by teachers can be helpful, but the rubric should provide information that students find useful (De Grez et al., 2009; Roozen, 2009; Tsang, 2018). Students tend to have a distant attitude towards

the evaluation and the instruments used to the extent that the criteria are not clear or are not very explanatory to build good presentations (De Grez et al., 2012; Jonsson et al., 2025). In this sense, Panadero and Romero (2014) point out that, when students do not know or not understand the assessment criteria, self-assessment is less reliable.

Therefore, having a valid and reliable rubric provides useful criteria for students, on the one hand, to better prepare oral presentations and, on the other hand, to be able to self-evaluate (Van Ginkel et al., 2017). If students perceive that they have received clear and useful information about the assessment criteria, they are likely to feel that they have performed better and that consequently higher scores are self-awarded.

H3. Perceived utility of a rubric has a positive influence on the self- assessment score of oral presentation competence.

A student who experiences low confidence as a speaker may assign himself a low grade even though his performance was objectively good. Therefore, the less confident students are the ones who most need guidance for a public speaking activity (Pekrun et al., 2009). In this regard, it could be said that when assessment processes are well designed, students reduce their fear and academic results improve (Nash et al., 2016). Accordingly, giving students clear guidelines in advance through rubrics will help modulate their fear and consequently increase their self-assessment scores (Panadero & Jonsson, 2013; Panadero & Romero, 2014).

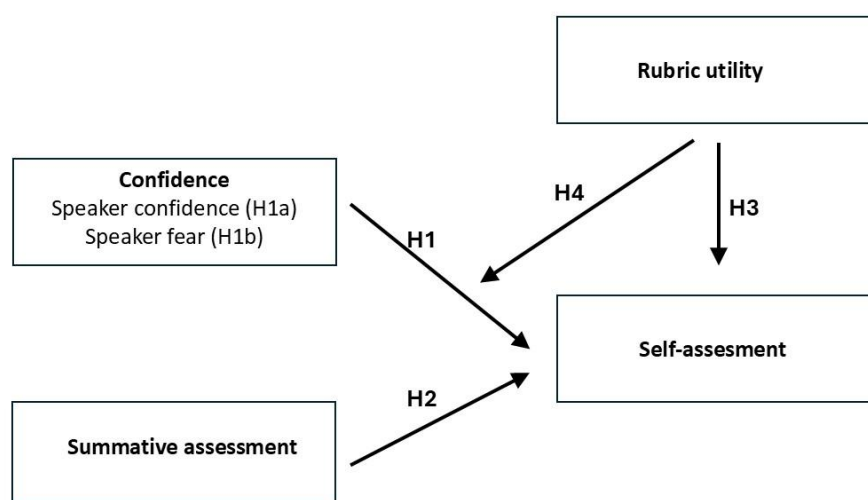
As fear of public speaking can contribute to better preparation and improve overall performance, it is logical to think that students who lack confidence in public speaking can benefit from a useful rubric (Van Ginkel et al., 2015, 2017). This effect is even enhanced for students who show greater confidence in public speaking.

Therefore, the following hypothesis is formulated:

H4. Perceived utility of a rubric moderates the relationship between confidence as a speaker and self- assessment score, so that this relationship is stronger among students who perceive high utility than among those who perceive low utility.

Figure 1 shows the proposed research model.

Figure 1. Research model



METHODOLOGY

Participants

This research was carried out with a sample of 202 university students. These students are taking Business Organization subjects in two degrees: Labour Relations and Human Resource Management (LRHRM) and Civil Engineering (CE). In both cases, students were required to give an oral presentation on a topic selected by the teacher. However, the grading of the activity is different depending on the degree. For students in LRHRM, the oral presentation was worth 25% of the final grade for the course. Of this 25%, 15% is the grade awarded by the teacher and 10% corresponds to self-assessment. In view of the results shown in literature (Bolívar-Cruz & Verano-Tacoronte, 2018; Miller & Geraci, 2011), to dissuade students from over-rating their performances, the teacher compared the self-assessments with his/her grades, of which students were warned before the activity was carried out. To calculate the final grade for the course, if the self-evaluations exceeded the teacher's evaluations by 20%, they were equated with the teacher's evaluations. For example, if the teacher grades the oral presentation with 8 points and the student scores 8.5 points, since the difference is less than 20%, the student's self-evaluation score is saved. In another example, if the teacher gives 5 points and the student gives 8, as the difference exceeds 20%, the self-evaluation score is corrected and assigned the value given by the teacher. Nevertheless, it should be clarified that, in this work, the dependent variable is self-assessment and not the corrected grade.

On the other hand, in the case of the students of the CE degree, the activity had a score of 10% on the final grade, without considering the self-assessment marks in the final grade.

It should be noted that the teachers of the subjects are different. Both have extensive experience in training and evaluation of oral presentations, both in the context of classroom and debate activities at the university level.

Table 1 shows the main characteristics of the sample. It is important to note that, primarily in CE, the course corresponds to the first year, while in LRHRM it is taken in the second year. Furthermore, in LRHRM, this course is typically enrolled by older students, which accounts for the variability in this indicator.

Table 1. Characteristics of the sample

	Frequency	Percentage
Degree		
CE	49	24.4
LRHRM	153	75.6
Gender		
Men	92	46.0
Women	110	54.0
Age (years)		
Under 20	51	25.9
20-23	106	53.8
24-25	22	11.2
Over 25	18	9.1

Instrument

A questionnaire was used. This questionnaire measured:

- The degree of confidence shown when speaking in public. The abbreviated Spanish version of the Personal Report of Confidence as a Speaker Questionnaire (PRCS) (Méndez et al., 2004) was used. It consists of 12 items, with a five-point Likert-type response (1 = 'strongly disagree'; 5 = 'strongly agree').

- Previous experience in oral presentations ('experience'). This variable is dichotomous (1= yes; 0 = no).

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- Previous attendance at public speaking courses ('training'). This variable is dichotomous (1= yes; 0 = no).
 - Gender ('gender'). This variable is dichotomous (male = 0; female =1).
 - Age ('age'). This variable is continuous.
 - Rubric utility for preparing the oral presentation ('rubric utility'). It was measured by means of a three-item scale with which the respondent had to indicate his/her degree of agreement on a five-point Likert scale (1 = 'strongly disagree'; 5= 'strongly agree').

Procedure

One month before presenting in the classroom, students were asked to complete the questionnaire and were provided with a rubric. As literature establishes, oral communication competence is very complicated to assess through rubrics, so the reliability and validity of the instrument must be tested. This rubric had been previously used, and its validity and reliability had been tested (Galván-Sánchez et al., 2017) and is available on <https://accedacris.ulpgc.es/handle/10553/25907>. It consists of ten criteria, which reflect the main dimensions that characterize oral presentation competence. Each criterion is described by means of a three-level scale (1 = 'poor', 2= 'acceptable', 3= 'excellent'), in which the requirements for reaching each level are explained in detail. As suggested by the literature (Jonsson et al., 2025; Panadero & Jonsson, 2013), the rubric was thoroughly explained and discussed with the students in a class held in advance (i.e., one month prior to the presentations). In addition, to clarify the meaning of each level and develop standardized assessment criteria, each criterion contains a detailed description of the necessary requirements to reach this performance level and several examples of application in practice were provided. To this end, the teachers illustrated different performance levels according to the rubric, highlighting the aspects evaluated at each level. Likewise, the students had the opportunity to raise questions regarding the interpretation of the criteria and receive specific clarifications. This was done to provide guidance on how to prepare for the presentation, as well, to make all students aware of the criteria for evaluating their presentations. Moreover, the preparation work of the oral presentations was followed up by the teachers through personal tutorials with the students. This approach allowed students not only to understand the evaluation criteria but also to directly observe how they are translated into practice.

All participants were informed that the data provided in the questionnaire could be used for research purposes. They were also informed that any processing of the information for this purpose would guarantee their anonymity. It was also emphasized that completion of the questionnaire was completely voluntary. All students agreed, individually, to participate in the study.

Finally, after the oral presentation, each student rated his/her overall performance on a scale of 0 to 10. To determine this overall score, students were guided by the rubric, although they were not asked to assess each of the dimensions included in the rubric. Therefore, the score given was recorded under the name 'self-assessment', this being the dependent variable used in the statistical analyses.

Data analysis

To analyse data, component analysis with varimax rotation, correlation analysis and hierarchical regression analysis were applied. Statistical package SPSS 27 version was used.

RESULTS

To determine whether students really perceive the rubric as useful, the scores that respondents gave to each of the three items in the scale were analysed, and their mean and standard deviation were calculated (Table 2). Likewise, to have an overall measure, the mean of the three items and their standard deviation were calculated. Students consider the rubric useful, as can be seen from the values in the table.

Table 2. Perceived rubric utility by students

	1 Strongly disagree	2	3	4	5 Strongly agree	Average	S.D.
To guide the preparation of the oral presentation		1.0%	12.9%	39.6%	46.5%	4.32	0.73
To know, during the oral presentation process, to what extent what is being done meets the established criteria	0.5%	4.0%	20.3%	41.1%	34.2%	4.04	0.87
To know the teacher's expectations regarding the oral presentation, by providing criteria for its realization		4.0%	21.8%	42.1%	32.2%	4.02	0.84
Rubric utility						4.13	0.65

Then, whether there might be differences in the perceived rubric utility according to the student's gender, previous experience in oral presentations, training in public speaking and the degree taken (Table 3) were checked. As can be seen, women perceive more than men that the rubric is useful. Likewise, it can also be seen that LRHRM students also considered the rubric more useful than their CE counterparts, probably because the activity in LRHRM awarded higher grades. Therefore, LRHRM students had more incentives to prepare a quality presentation and give themselves a higher grade.

Table 3. Relationship between the rubric utility and gender, previous experience, public speaking courses, and degree

		N	Average	S.D.	t (significance)
Gender	Men	92	4.01	0.62	-2.312
	Women	110	4.22	0.66	(0.022)
Experience	No	9	4.11	0.41	-0.083
	Yes	193	4.13	0.66	(0.934)
Training	No	187	4.15	0.65	1.352
	Yes	15	3.91	0.61	(0.178)
Degree	CE	49	3.88	0.74	-3.092
	LRHRM	153	4.21	0.60	(0.002)

To reduce the speaker's confidence and the rubric's utility scales dimension, principal component analysis (PCA) with varimax rotation was applied. In both cases the Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Test of Sampling Adequacy and Bartlett's Test of Sphericity indicate that the data was adequate for PCA. With respect to the speaker's confidence scale, 2 factors were obtained, retaining more than 59% of the variance (Table 4). The first factor refers to the speaker's confidence ('confidence'), while the second refers to the fear experienced before an oral presentation ('fear'). Cronbach's alpha value shows in both cases a high internal consistency between the items that compose each factor.

Table 4. PCA and reliability of confidence as a speaker scale

	Items	Factor loading	% Variance	Cronbach's alpha
Confidence	I face the prospect of public speaking with complete confidence.	0.851	33.420%	0.883
	I feel relaxed and at ease while speaking	0.810		
	I am not afraid of being in front of an audience	0.750		
	Even though I am nervous just before I start, I soon forget my fears and enjoy the experience	0.702		
	I am totally sure of myself while speaking	0.694		
	My mind is clear when I am in front of the public	0.638		
Fear	When I speak in public, my thoughts get confused and jumbled.	0.764	25.925%	0.824
	I am afraid and tense the whole time I am speaking in front of a group of people.	0.754		
	My posture seems forced and unnatural.	0.718		
	Although I speak fluently with my friends, I can't find words to express myself on the stage.	0.659		
	I feel terrified at the thought of speaking in front of a group of people.	0.606		
	I avoid public speaking whenever possible.	0.409		
KMO: 0.906				
Bartlett's sphericity test: 1056.722				
Significance: 0.000				
Total explained variance: 59.36				

As can be seen in Table 5, the application of PCA to the scale measuring the rubric utility revealed a single factor ('rubric utility'), which retains more than 63% of the variance.

Table 5. PCA and reliability of rubric utility scale

	Items	Factor loading	% Variance	Cronbach's alpha
Rubric utility	To guide the preparation of the oral presentation	0.840	63.646%	0.714
	To know, during the oral presentation process, to what extent what is being done conforms to the established criteria	0.803		
	To know the teacher's expectations of the oral presentation by providing criteria for its performance	0.747		
KMO: 0.658				
Bartlett's sphericity test: 118.299				
Significance: 0,000				
Total explained variance: 63.646%				

The correlation matrix is presented in Table 6, in addition to the means and standard deviation of the non-dichotomous variables that are not obtained from the PCA. The variable 'summative assessment' is dichotomous and reflects whether the self-assessment affects the final grade (value of 1) or not (value of 0). A review of the matrix reveals some of the expected results. Thus, a significant positive association is observed between 'self-assessment' and speaker's confidence, as well as with the 'rubric utility'. Other results are also evident, such as the relationship between the 'rubric utility' and the summative nature of the evaluation ('summative assessment'). This result had already been anticipated. It should be remembered that self-assessment is summative in nature for LRHRM students. Therefore, it is logical that, when faced with a greater incentive, they increase their self-assessment. Public speaking training ('training') also correlates with speaker confidence, although the values are low and do not suggest multicollinearity. The same applies to 'gender' and 'rubric utility'. 'Gender' also correlates to the summative nature of self-assessment ('summative assessment').

Table 6. Descriptive statistics and correlation matrix

	Mean (SD)	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8
1. Self-assessment	22.43 (3.40)								
2. Confidence	---	0.169*							
3. Fear	---	-0.104	0.000						
4. Summative assessment	---	0.260**	0.080	-0.190					
5. Rubric utility	---	0.214**	0.090	0.104	0.212**				
6. Experience	---	-0.084	0.045	0.016	-0.030	0.040			
7. Training	---	0.055	0.226**	0.011	-0.150*	-0.096	0.065		
8. Gender	---	0.033	-0.197**	0.057	0.309**	0.161*	0.124	-0.039	
9. Age	21.64 (3.35)	0.021	0.175*	-0.044	0.170	0.097	-0.095	0.057	0.056

Note: **p< 0.01; *p<0.05

It should be noted that self-assessment has summative effects for LRHRM students. This degree is studied by a higher percentage of women than men, which explains the association between gender and summative self-assessment.

A hierarchical regression analysis was then performed (Table 7), following the procedure recommended by Gelman and Hill (2006). First, control variables were introduced (model 1). In a second step, independent variables were added (model 2). Finally, interaction terms were incorporated (model 3). These coefficients are standardized. Multicollinearity statistics show no problem in this regard. A value of 10 has been recommended as the maximum level of value of variance inflation (VIF); while the tolerance value should be next to 1, which means a small degree of multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2010). Thus, tolerance levels are very close to 1 in all cases (0.786 the lowest), and the value of VIF is very low in all cases (1.272 the highest).

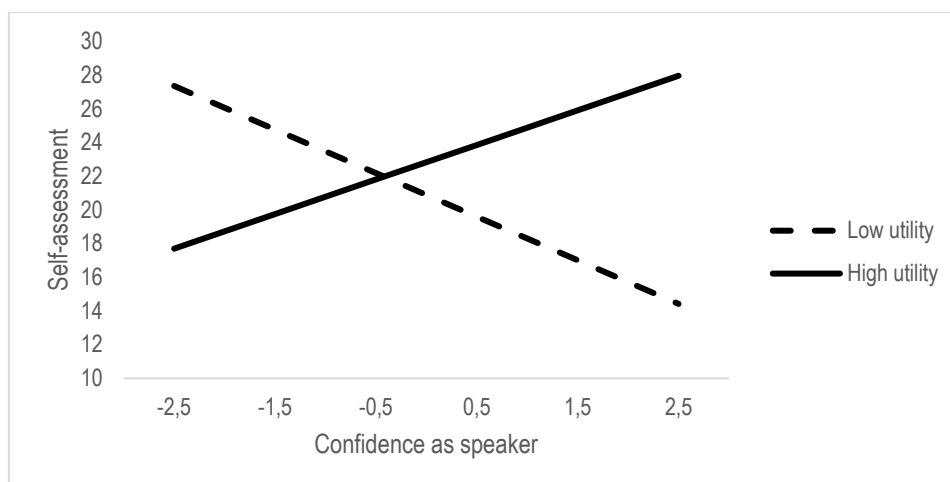
Table 7. Summary results of multiple regression analyses to predict self-assessment

	Self-assessment						Multicollinearity analysis	
	Model 1		Model 2		Model 3		Tolerance	VIF
	B	Sig.	B	Sig.	B	Sig.		
Experience	-0.095	0.206	-0.099	0.164	-0.097	0.167	0.971	1.030
Training	0.063	0.407	0.098	0.189	0.116	0.119	0.873	1.145
Gender	0.055	0.466	-0.031	0.667	-0.025	0.744	0.829	1.206
Age	0.052	0.491	-0.020	0.793	-0.039	0.592	0.928	1.077
Confidence			0.142	0.062	0.093	0.232	0.790	1.265
Fear			-0.104	0.142	-0.069	0.338	0.931	1.074
Summative assessment			0.264	0.001	0.297	0.000	0.786	1.272
Rubric utility			0.182	0.013	0.159	0.030	0.896	1.116
Confidence x Rubric utility					0.159	0.033	0.869	1.151
Fear x Rubric utility					-0.061	0.394	0.936	1.069
	F= 0.756 (0.555) R ² = 0.017		F= 4.071 (0.000) R ² = 0.158		F= 3.829 (0.000) R ² = 0.183			

Table 7 shows the first model is not significant. This means that the combination of variables such as gender, age, etc. do not have a significant impact on self-assessment. The degree of significance increases significantly (measured by F) in models 2 and 3, due to the introduction of the explanatory variables analysed in the theoretical framework. Including the independent variables in model 2 improves the R² coefficient by 0.141, which indicates a greater explanatory power of the model. The existence of summative evaluation, as well as the rubric utility, are significant variables, but not speaker's confidence. Model 3 confirms the moderating effect of rubric utility on speaker confidence, but not on fear.

Figure 2 shows graphically the interaction between the variables analysed. Thus, the greater the perception of the rubric utility, the effect of confidence as a speaker improves the self-evaluation of oral presentations. However, when students consider the rubric does not provide them with useful information, confidence reduces self-assessment.

Figure 2. Interaction plot for self-assessment



Finally, it should be noted that students give themselves higher scores does not necessarily mean that these scores coincide with those given to them by the teachers in the presentations. In fact, although it is not the purpose of this paper, the degree of accuracy of the self-evaluations was assessed, correlating them with the scores given by the teachers. In this case, the overall correlation, measured by Pearson's correlation index, was 0.429, significant at 1%. This correlation is relatively low but is in line with previous studies (León et al., 2023).

DISCUSSION

This work has been guided by three objectives. Firstly, to assess whether the rubric is useful for students to prepare oral presentations. Secondly, to analyse the direct impact of a set of variables (speaker confidence, the existence of incentives and the rubric utility) on oral presentation self-assessment score and finally, to assess whether the rubric utility can moderate the relationship between confidence as a speaker and self-assessment score.

Regarding the first objective, results show that the rubric is useful to guide the preparation of oral presentations, as students perceived to what extent their performance met the established criteria and to know the teacher's expectations regarding the oral presentation. However, some differences were revealed. It was observed that women considered the rubric to be more useful. This may be because, as observed in previous research, and confirmed in this work at the level of correlations, women have higher levels of insecurity about their oral presentation competence (De Paola et al., 2021) and, therefore, having criteria for preparing this type of activity is more useful to them than to men.

It has also been observed that LRHRM students perceive the rubric to be more useful than CE students. In this regard, it should be considered that, for LRHRM students, the self-assessment is part of the final grade of the course. Therefore, this may lead them to give a higher value to the rubric utility, since it helps them to achieve better grades.

While it might be thought that most students would find a rubric useful, it is true that if the rubric is not well designed, is not clear and does not provide meaningful examples, it could be confusing rather than helpful. It is therefore necessary to insist on the use of well-structured, complete, reliable and valid rubrics. As can be seen, the results of this work show significant differences in the utility of the rubric depending on the characteristics of the participants and the contexts in which the subjects are developed.

For the second objective, addressed in H1, H2 and H3, results allow us to accept all of them, although with cautions for H1. Regarding confidence as a speaker, it should be noted that the factor analysis revealed the existence of two dimensions of this construct, confidence and fear, as had already been observed in previous works (Bolívar-Cruz & Verano-Tacoronte, 2018; Méndez et al., 2004). Regarding the relationship between the confidence as a speaker dimension and self-

evaluation, a positive and significant correlation is observed between both variables (H1a). However, the fear dimension does not correlate significantly with self-evaluation (H1b). When considering the joint influence of the two dimensions of confidence and the other variables in the regression model, this influence is diluted. Therefore, H1 can be cautiously accepted considering this.

Regarding H2, the influence of the summative nature of self-assessment on the evaluation of oral presentations is verified, both at the level of correlations and joint influence in the regression model. The results of this study are consistent with the results of previous works (Bolívar-Cruz & Verano-Tacoronte, 2018; Miller & Geraci, 2011). The idea that students give themselves higher scores when there are incentives to do so in the form of grades is reinforced. Therefore, it is necessary to consider self-assessment accuracy under these conditions and to take dissuasive actions such as the one shown in this experience in LRHRM.

Regarding the relationship between the perception of the rubric utility and self-assessment score (H3), the hypothesis has been verified, both at the bivariate and multivariate levels. This confirms that if students consider the rubric provides them with useful information to prepare their oral presentations, they feel they will be able to perform better and, therefore, give themselves a better grade. Does this mean that students evaluate themselves accurately, i.e., in a manner like supposedly more reliable sources of evaluation such as teachers? Not necessarily. But it does mean that rubrics guide them to get closer to the assessment standards proposed by teachers. What would students' performance be like without a rubric to clarify the criteria for them? This is a question beyond the scope of this paper, although it has been widely studied in the literature (e.g., González-Betancor et al., 2019; Van Ginkel et al., 2017) with favourable results for the use of rubrics.

Finally, regarding the third objective, interaction between confidence as a speaker and the rubric utility in influencing self-evaluation score (H4), results confirm this effect, although it is verified only for the confidence and not for the fear dimension. Thus, it is shown that, as students perceive greater rubric utility, the greater the influence of confidence as a speaker in the self-evaluation score. However, even students who show high levels of confidence in their abilities as a speaker, if they believe that the rubric is not useful, their self-assessment score decreases. This may be due, among other causes, to the fact that students observe a discrepancy between their previous conception of what a good presentation is and what the rubric indicates. This has a negative influence on their perception of their performance because they consider that the performance of the presentation does not correspond to previously internalized performance criteria (Tsang, 2018).

In addition, although it is not proposed among the study variables, another relationship that became evident in the correlation analysis is that between public speaking training and speaker confidence. It highlights the importance of training as a mechanism for improving speaker confidence. Training is revealed as a useful element to provide confidence to students (Yan & Carless, 2022), and therefore, to improve performance in the delivery of oral presentations. In future studies, it would be possible to further explore the training models that offer the best results in the improvement of this competency.

Theoretical implications

The findings suggest that rubrics can be powerful tools for promoting students' self-regulated learning in oral presentations, particularly when students perceive these tools as genuinely useful in clarifying expectations and structuring their preparation. When the rubric was perceived as helpful, students with higher levels of confidence as speakers seemed more inclined to give themselves higher self-assessment scores. This observation is consistent with existing literature on transparency and metacognition, which suggests that clearly defined assessment criteria contribute to positive self-regulatory behaviours (Panadero and Jonsson, 2020; León et al., 2023). Furthermore, the results highlight how the summative dimension of self-assessment can lead to some inflation of students' own grades, a trend that has been identified in previous studies of incentive-induced bias (Miller and Geraci, 2011; Nieminen, 2022). These findings reinforce the idea that if self-assessments have a tangible impact on students' final grades, it is prudent to include measures to ensure accuracy, such as comparing the marks given by students with those given by the teacher.

Furthermore, the findings support the notion that speaker confidence is a bidimensional construct composed of "confidence" and "fear," which aligns with previous research (Méndez et al., 2004). This theoretical duality is relevant for understanding how different emotional aspects can

influence the perception of one's own competence. Therefore, this study broadens the theoretical understanding of the moderating role of the rubric in the relationship between self-confidence and self-assessment, highlighting that only the positive dimension of confidence is strengthened when students perceive the rubric as useful.

Rubrics appear to enhance students' ability to make sense of performance criteria in a way that promotes metacognitive engagement. This is consistent with research that highlights the role of transparent standards in enhancing students' confidence and ability to self-regulate (Panadero and Jonsson, 2020). The findings suggest that when students perceive the rubric as a reliable source of guidance, they show a greater correspondence between their perceived abilities and their self-assigned scores. The correlation between the usefulness of the rubric and self-assessment points to the theoretical notion that the clarity and perceived relevance of assessment tools can bridge the gap between teacher expectations and student self-perceptions, thereby strengthening the framework of student autonomy and formative assessment (León et al., 2023). The finding that women valued the rubric utility more than men provides additional insight into how prior attitudes or anxieties can be mitigated by well-designed tools, suggesting that future research could explore how different demographic or situational factors interact with rubric use.

Practical implications

A key implication is the careful design of rubrics that include explicit criteria, realistic examples and clear explanations, thus providing students with a roadmap for aligning their performance with academic benchmarks. This approach can be particularly beneficial for students who struggle with public speaking anxiety, as the guidance provided by a rubric can reduce ambiguity and help them to plan more effectively. The provision of presentation skills training or structured feedback sessions further enhances the usefulness of the rubric by helping students to connect theoretical concepts with practical performance. To successfully achieve this, it is essential to train teachers in the design and effective use of rubrics that not only clearly communicate the evaluation criteria but also provide contextualized practical examples.

Another relevant issue concerns the summative use of self-assessment, as students may inflate their self-reported grades if these are directly included in the final grades. To counter this tendency, teachers could use measures such as moderation or consistency checks to ensure that formative reflections remain honest and productive.

Likewise, the results indicate that female students value the rubric more than their male counterparts, which may be related to higher levels of insecurity reported in the literature on oral communication (De Paola et al., 2021). This suggests that the use of rubrics could be particularly beneficial for promoting gender equity in the development of communication skills.

Ongoing dialogue between students and teachers about rubric criteria, especially when repeated at different stages of task preparation, can encourage deeper engagement and self-awareness. Incorporating opportunities for reflection and open discussion of rubric standards in a low-stakes environment can encourage more balanced self-assessment, ultimately contributing to more robust oral communication skills and ongoing student development.

Limitations and future research

Although the literature recognises the value of rubrics as an element to improve learning (Karaman, 2024), previous research has not determined whether perceived rubric utility can help students to think that their performance is better and therefore increases their self-assessment scores. This paper fills this gap by providing empirical results obtained from an experience carried out in a real classroom context given that the experience takes place in two subjects, both from the same area of knowledge (Business Organisation) taught in two different degrees (CE and LRHRM). Nevertheless, the limitations imposed by not being able to manipulate certain variables, such as the use or not of rubrics, the composition of the groups of students, or the grading system of the subjects themselves, may influence the results of the study. It should be considered that in this work the grading of the oral presentation activity is part of the grading of the two subjects studied. This may be increasing the pressure experienced by students to obtain a good grade. In this sense, it would be interesting to replicate the study under experimental conditions that would allow us to better isolate the influence of the variables under analysis. One situation that could be analysed through an experiment would be to have a control group in which the performance of the oral presentation

did not influence the grade and thus be able to observe what utility the students give to the rubric and how this utility interacts with the levels of confidence as a speaker shown by them.

In this regard, this paper provides modest but significant empirical evidence on a relationship not studied in literature, such as the moderating effect of the perceived utility of the rubric on the relationship between confidence and self-assessment. In the regression models obtained, it is observed that R^2 presents a low value. However, it should be noted that the aim was not to generate a full model to explain self-assessment score. The objective was to analyse the incidence of a set of explanatory variables on self-assessment score and this has been achieved. Future research should consider other variables to propose a model that explains to a greater extent what determines self-assessment score of oral presentation competence. Thus, variables such as the student's previous experience in evaluation activities or the degree of complexity of the activity to be evaluated could be included.

The work presents an experience carried out at a specific moment in time. It would be interesting to replicate the experience with different activities involving oral presentations to analyse the students' learning and the evolution of their perceptions, both those referring to the rubric and to their self-assessment. The quantitative analysis would be carried out in a similar way to the one presented in this work, but it would also be convenient to complement it with qualitative information from both teachers and students through mixed-methods (Scoles et al., 2014).

This work also verified that the perception of the rubric utility increases self-evaluation score. However, it would be interesting, for future experiences, to analyse whether the utility perceived by the students is related to their previous beliefs about what a quality oral presentation should be like, as proposed by authors such as León et al. (2023). In this sense, those students who have different criteria from those shown in the rubric will not find it useful. In line with this argument, it should be tested whether, for these students, offering them a rubric that contradicts their prior beliefs decreases the confidence shown in their abilities and, consequently, decreases their self-assessment.

Likewise, and also related to the adaptation of the rubric to the students' circumstances and contexts, it is essential to consider the specific characteristics of each academic environment. As the same rubric was used in two different contexts — one technical (CE) and one social (LRHRM) — it is possible that different perceptions arose due to differing communication needs in each context. Although, as indicated, the two courses analysed belong to the field of Business Organisation, the rubric could necessitate adaptations that account for these particularities.

Conclusion

These findings underline the crucial role that rubric-based self-assessment can play in shaping students' confidence in oral presentation. By increasing clarity about performance standards and fostering a sense of ownership of the learning process, rubrics enable students to become more actively involved in refining their communicative skills. Although the summative application of self-assessment can lead to score inflation, instructors can mitigate such risks through deliberate calibration measures and consistent feedback. Further research into how personal factors - such as gender, academic discipline or prior training - interact with perceptions of rubric utility could add to the existing body of knowledge, while repeated interventions over the longer term would help to clarify whether these effects persist or evolve. Overall, the evidence points to rubrics as a promising opportunity to advance both teaching and learning practices, to facilitate deeper engagement with academic tasks, and to promote the long-term development of oral communication competence.

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