Glancing at Students' Styles In Delivering Presentations

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Abstract

Speaking is a productive skill that is very essential and enables students to convey their ideas. There are many activities involving speaking in a real world. Brown states that the benchmark of successful language acquisition is usually the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language (2001:267). Therefore, preparing students with sufficient speaking ability is inevitable.

There are plenty of activities allowing students to practice their speaking skills. One of them is by delivering a presentation. Brown (2001:274) also mentions that short speech or presentation is classified into extensive speaking performance that is suitable for students of intermediate to advance level of English competence. Before delivering presentations, students have to employ other language skills, such as, reading, writing, or even listening in the preparation stage.

Thus, this paper will report on 1) what preparation students need to do before delivering a presentation, 2) what challenges that students face in the process of making their presentation, and 3) students' style in giving presentations.

Keywords: speaking, ability, challenges

Introduction

Speaking is a productive skill which can reflect students' ability of English. A student considered to have a good command of English if he is able to convey ideas in different kinds of contexts appropriately both in writing and in speaking. This is in line with what Brown states “the benchmark of successful language acquisition is almost always the demonstration of an ability to accomplish pragmatic goals through interactive discourse with other speakers of the language” (2001:267).

Since speaking is a productive skill, it requires good receptive skills as well, such as reading and listening. To be able to talk on different arrays of topics, students need to expose themselves with information. They can get the information through reading different kinds of sources, for instance, magazines, books, brochures, articles, newspapers, flyers, or even they can obtain the sources from the internet. Having sufficient information, students may feel confident to convey their ideas. Besides, through reading, students can also obtain information by listening to rich resources available in their surroundings, for instance, by listening or watching news, movies, informative TV programs, songs, or radio. It is also possible to get information while having a conversation with friends or listening to teacher's explanation in the classroom.

It is inevitable to say that to make students actively practice the language, English should be made compulsory. There are plenty of activities allowing students to practice their speaking skills. One of them is by delivering a presentation. Brown (2001:274) also mentions that short speech or presentation classified into extensive speaking performance that is suitable for students of intermediate to advance level of English competence. Before delivering presentations, students will have to employ other language skills, such as, reading, writing, or even listening in the preparation stage.
Theoretical Review
About Speaking

Speaking is considered difficult. However, comprehending some characteristics of spoken language can make oral performances easy. Brown (2001:270-271) states characteristics of spoken language:

1. Clustering, fluent speech is phrasal, not word-by-word. Learners can organize their output both cognitively and physically through such clustering.

2. Redundancy, speaker has an opportunity to make meaning clearer through the redundancy of language. Learners can capitalize of this feature of spoken language.

3. Reduced form, knowing contraction, elisions, reduced vowels, etc, are important. Students who do not learn colloquial contraction can sometimes develop a stilted, bookish quality of speaking that in turn stigmatizes them.

4. Performance variables, one of the advantages of spoken language is that the process of thinking as you speak allows you to manifest a certain number of performance hesitations, pauses, backtracking, and corrections. Students should learn how to pause and hesitate. For example, during 'thinking time' they can use fillers, such as, uh, um, well, you know, I mean, etc.

5. Colloquial language, students should acquainted with the words, idioms, phrase, of colloquial language, practice them and be able to use them.

6. Rate of delivery, another salient characteristic of fluency is rate of delivery; consequently, students should learn the acceptable speed along with the other attributes of fluency.

7. Stress, rhythm and intonation, this is the most important characteristic of English pronunciation. The stress-timed rhythm of spoken English and its intonation patterns convey important messages.

8. Interaction, this exercises students' the creativity of conversational negotiation.

In line with Brown (2001), Harmer (2007) elaborates classroom-speaking activities as following:

1. Acting from script, students act out scenes that they have written by themselves. They have to prepare the script then they act it out.

2. Community games, there are many communication games, all of which aim to get students talking as quickly and fluently as possible. Two particular categories are:
   a. Information-gap games: on student has to talk to a partner in order to solve a puzzle, draw a picture, to put things in order or find similarities and differences between pictures.
   b. Television and radio games, games from radio and TV often provide good fluency activities, like, in “Twenty Questions” game.

3. Discussion, discussions range from highly formal, whole group stage events to informal small group interactions.

4. Prepared Talks, students make presentations on a topic of their own choice. Such talks are not designed for informal spontaneous conversation; because they are prepared. For students to benefit from doing oral presentations, teachers should invest some time in the procedures and processes they are involved in. Teacher should give students some time to prepare their talks (and helps in preparing them, if necessary). Then students need a chance to rehearse their presentation.

5. Questionnaires, they are useful because, by being pre-planned, they ensure that both questioner and respondent have something to say to each other.

6. Simulation and role-play, this gives great benefit to students. Students simulate a real life encountered, such as a business meeting, an interview, etc. Simulation and role-play can be used to encourage general oral fluency or to train students for specific situation.

As mentioned earlier that students need to practice vigorously their speaking performance, Brown (2001:270-271) elaborate types of classroom speaking performance:

1. Imitative, imitation, given in a small portion of classroom speaking, is carried out to practice intonation contour or try to pinpoint a certain vowel sound and to focus on some particular element of language form.

2. Intensive, this activity is designed to practice some phonological and or grammatical aspects of language.
3. Responsive, a good deal of students' speech in the classroom is responsive: short reply to teacher or student initiated questions or comments.

4. Transactional (dialog), this is carried out for the purpose of conveying or exchanging specific information, is an extended form of responsive language. Conversation or dialog may have more of a negotiative nature to them than does responsive speech.

5. Interpersonal (dialog), this is carried out for maintaining social relationships than transmission of fact and information.

6. Extensive (monolog), this can be done by students of intermediate to advanced level. Extended monolog forms are oral reports, summaries, or short speeches.

Presentation

Brown (2001) categorized presentation into extensive monolog, which is suitable for intermediate to advanced level of students. On the other hand, Harmer (2007) puts presentation as one of prepared-talk activities that is interesting to conduct since students may choose topic to their interest. Presentation is an oral activity that is addressed to audience. Therefore, it is one kind of public speaking activity. Shea (2009: 18-19) states that there are three benefits of public speaking. Following are the details:

1. Practice with all four language skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing)
   - There is naturally a strong focus on speaking; spoken language is vital in delivering a clear, coherent speech. Peer evaluation can promote careful listening. Additionally, students will develop strong reading and writing skills during task preparation.

2. Support development of critical thinking skills
   - Presentation task promotes a variety of critical thinking skills in addition to specific language skills and strategies. Public speaking tasks require students to conduct research and develop support for their arguments.

3. Promote learning. Through their presentations, students are given the opportunity to demonstrate what they have learned.

   Another benefit of public speaking is to train students to speak in front of group of people. They will exercise their confidence. This is a good way for students to practice how to overcome feelings. They generally feel nervous when they have to speak in front of public. The more they have the opportunity the better they will perform and the more ready they will be.

   There are important points that students generally have to do before delivering a presentation. Following are the important points taken from teachingenglish.org:

   1. Ideas / content generation
      - Many students find getting started quite difficult. It is a good idea to give students either a type of public speech that they have to do, or a particular topic. It is often useful to get students working in groups at the planning stage, helping each other to come up with ideas. Therefore, showing students a variety of ways of making notes of ideas works well as not everyone likes the same methods. These could include mind mapping, making lists or writing ideas on post-it notes and then arranging them on a piece of paper into groups.

   2. Structure
      - The teacher keeps reminding them the importance of having a beginning, middle and end. Teacher might then like to give them a standard introduction to use for their first speech, for example, “Good evening. I am x and today I am going to talk about y. I will talk about three main areas, x, y and z”. This then gives them a focus for the structure of the rest of the speech. It can seem a little dry, however, so once they get the idea it is worth experimenting with different styles of beginning — e.g. using jokes and anecdotes. Many students are so relieved to have got to their end of their speech that they rush the conclusion or sometimes completely forget to do one. Again, a suggested format may help them to summarize what they have said.

   3. Body language
      - There are various statistics for how much of our communication is done through our body language — they seem to hover around 70%, which is a massive chunk, so some work in this area is a very good idea. Therefore, informing students the importance of using appropriate body language is important so that they may deliver their speech naturally.

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The Teaching of Speaking (Presentation)

Speaking is a series of courses that is compulsory for students of English Department in our institution to take in order to promote their speaking skill. This series consists of ten credits. The first four credits focuses on daily communication, the second four credits focuses on professional context and the last two credits focuses on academic presentation.

Students eligible to take Academic Presentation subject are those who have completed taking daily communication and professional context. This course is the last of the series, which means only be taken by the fifth semester and above (those who repeat or have not taken one). At that semester, students are expected to be of pre-intermediate to intermediate of English competence.

The materials covered three types of presentations or speeches; demonstrative, informative and persuasive. The objectives of the course are:
1. Students know three different types of presentations
2. Students understand the goals of each of the presentation taught.
3. Students are able to develop three types of speeches, and
4. Delivering speech

Following is the stages of presentation lesson:
1. The teacher explains the definition of the type of presentation and give example presentation, which can be from a textbook, internet, or given by the teacher.
2. The teacher gives a transcript or outline of the presentation.
3. Students identify key stages of the example presentation – greeting, introduction, main points in order of importance, conclusion
4. The teacher also gives language gambits like, linking and signaling words ('Next...', 'Now I'd like you to look at...', etc.). Students underline the se in the transcript/place them in the correct order
5. The teacher gives collections of topic which students have to choose as their topic of presentation.
6. The teacher gives students time to develop the topic by making the outline
7. Students are given sufficient time to develop their outline into a presentation; they can search the information needed, data to support their opinion in the speech in the internet (the teaching and learning is conducted in a computer laboratory), books, and other sources.
8. Students develop their presentation
9. Students create power point slide for their presentation and they can use and bring property/realia to show to the audience.
10. Students practice or rehearse the presentation.
11. Students deliver their presentation in front of the class.
12. Audience (peers) give questions and presenter answer the questions.
13. The teacher scores students' performance.

The teacher assesses students’ presentation by applying combination of global assessment scales and analytic profiles. Harmer (2007) defines global assessment scales as a way of specifying scores that can be given to productive skill work is to create pre-define descriptive of performance. An analytic profile is more reliable since students’ performance is analyzed in much detail. The elements scored are mastery of the content, vocabulary, use of grammar, delivery (gesture, body language, intonation)

Preparing Students’ Need to Do before Delivering a Presentation

Presentation is a great way to give students exercise all language skills (speaking, reading, writing and listening) and language systems areas (vocabulary, grammar, discourse and phonology). Through presentation, students may build confidence, and presenting is a skill that most people will need in the world of work. Students who are good presenters are better communicators all round, since they are able to structure and express their ideas clearly.

Before students are assigned to give a speech, the teacher gives explanation on the speech that they have to perform later; for example, the teacher explains what a demonstrative speech is,
the goals of giving this type of speech. The teacher also gives an example of a demonstrative speech and explains how to make an outline and develop it into a speech.

After giving the explanation needed, the teacher asks the students to choose a topic, which they think interesting to develop and share to their friends, from arrays of topics provided. Then, students prepare for the presentation by searching for resources, data, pictures, and any other related things they need to make their presentation interesting and informative. The followings are topics for demonstrative speech that students can choose for their presentation taken from some websites:

1. Clean your teeth.
2. Coordinate clothes for any occasion.
3. Sign for the deaf.
4. Apply decorative stencils.
5. Roll clothes to pack a suitcase.
6. Make stained glass.
7. Read nutrition labels.
8. Defend yourself against an attacker.
9. Plan a home fire escape.
10. Stencil tile.
11. Set up an e-mail account.
12. Change oil in your car.
13. Play the drums.
15. Swing a golf club.
17. Pot flowers.
19. Make a simple children's game.
20. Make peanut butter bars.
21. Splint a broken leg or ankle.
22. Keep a healthy puppy.
23. Succeed in an interview.
24. Hang wallpaper.
25. Shoot a free throw.
27. Use a compass.
28. Hit a baseball.
29. Catch a fly ball.
30. Sell an athletic shoe.
31. Put on scuba gear.
32. Filet a fish.
33. Install a car stereo.
34. Get a slim waistline.
35. Play the saxophone.
36. Apply makeup.
37. Apply Theater make-up.
38. Install a dimmer switch.
40. Call a turkey.
41. Play a guitar.
42. Purchase a new car for the lowest price.
43. Bake cookies.
44. Improve your bowling score.
45. Sew a button on a blouse.
46. Carve a pumpkin.
47. Restore a piece of antique furniture.
48. Serve a tennis ball.
49. Apply, care, and remove contact lenses.
50. Write a resume.
51. Find a rental home or apartment.
52. Set a formal dinner table.
53. Choose car insurance.
54. Build a bookcase.
55. Draw cartoon characters.
56. Make your own valentines.
57. Recycle in your home.
58. Frame a picture.
59. Buy toe shoes.
60. Play soccer.
61. Register for college.
62. Write a children's story.
63. Mow the lawn.
64. Organize your closet.
65. Dye your hair.
66. Plan a little kid party.
67. Make Play dough.
68. Groom your pet.
69. Set up a tent.
70. Make a piñata.
71. Square dance.
72. Refinish a front door.
73. Play a video game.
74. Bunt, or hit a baseball.
75. Plant a vegetable garden.
76. Plan a wedding.
77. Milk a cow.
78. Change a tire on a bike.
79. Budget your monthly income.
80. Wrap a gift professionally.
81. Tie-dye a shirt.
82. Wash your clothes properly.
83. Bathe a baby.
84. Arrange flowers.

After the students choose the topics, they should start making an outline. When they want to develop the outline, they will need to search for information from different kinds of sources, such as books, magazine, internet, and other possible resources. The students have to submit two types of work, the first one is their paper for the presentation in Microsoft word file and the second is slides for the presentation in power point file. This is done in order to see how they develop their writing in the presentation and how are delivering it in the oral presentation.
The next step the students to do is preparing the properties (if necessary, but mostly students bring them to make their demonstrative presentation more informative and clearer. They also need to practice or rehearse so that they can perform better when they do the 'real' presentation in the classroom.

**Students’s Challenges in the Process of Making Presentation**

From an interview with the students, the teacher finds out that they find some challenges in completing their task. The followings are difficulties encountered by students in making academic presentation.

1. Choosing the right topic, they have to make sure that when they choose the topic, they can develop it in such a way so that it is interesting to share to the class. Another is, they also need to make sure the resources are available so that they can search information to support their speech.

2. The writing of the speech; they have to use introduction, body and conclusion format. They have to create the outline, and then develop it into a speech. They find difficulties in putting ideas from different resources together so that they become logical and connecting to one another. They are overwhelmed with myriads of information they have gathered.

3. Another difficulty is dealing with writing; students still find difficulty in constructing sentences, e.g. constructing simple, compound, complex and compound-complex sentences. They need to learn more about the use of connectors when they relate one idea in one paragraph to another paragraph. The use to infinitive and gerund is also troublesome for them.

**Students’ Style in Giving Presentations**

In general, students give positive response to giving presentation activity in the speaking class. They try to finish the task on time. However, students have their own styles in delivering their presentation in the class. The first, they are generally able to greet and open their presentation, by leading the audience to the topic by giving examples, sharing their own experience or asking questions. Secondly, students do extra efforts in making their power points slide as interesting, eye-catching, and colorful as possible. They use interesting backgrounds, importing cute, colorful, bright pictures relevant to the topics. Below are samples of students’ slides (how to plan a wedding and how to bake cookies):
Sometimes they are carried away of putting many pictures in the slide but they do not try to make more meanings or giving more explanation to the pictures presented. Consequently, they do not focus on the topic they tend to elaborate or they do not exploit the use of pictures to assist them to make more informative and clear presentation.

Students’ creativity is high in terms of using pictures and properties. They do make effort to bring properties from home to make their presentation interesting, engaging and at the same time informative, e.g. one student take ‘how to do theatrical make up’ as the topic of demonstrative speech. She brings all the makeup items she needed to show the audience how to make ugly-face make up. And she demonstrate how to do it by becoming the makeup artist and the model. She also demonstrate to make ‘burn skin’ using makeup. The class gives full attention to her because it is something new for them to see such demonstration.

Conclusion

Presentation is an oral activity that allows students to practice their speaking skill. To conduct presentation students will have to employ other skills, like reading, listening and writing. This can also exercise their public speaking and confidence. They can also express their creativity.

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