ORAL PRESENTATION IN TEACHING: ATTRACT OR DISTRACT?

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Abstract

Teaching technique is one of factors that support a successful learning. One technique which is commonly used by the lecturers is oral presentation. However, and interestingly, not all lecturers have the skills to present their message effectively. This mix-method research is aimed to describe how effective lecturers in delivering their presentation. The writer used observation, interview and questionnaire in collecting the data. A total number of 38 lecturers of Faculty of Educational Sciences of Muhammadiyah University of Jakarta participated in this study. Based on both the interview and the observation, it was found that: 1) most of the lecturers do not know how to become good presenters, i.e. focus on slides while presenting the materials, do not conclude their materials at the end of the session, etc., 2) most of the lecturers do not know how to run an effective presentation, i.e. put too much images, pictures, sentences on their slides, use unimportant sound effects, etc. Surprisingly, the results of a 5-scale presentation skills self-evaluation questionnaire showed that 60% of the lecturers assessed themselves as effective presenters.

Keywords: oral presentation, slides, effective presentation

INTRODUCTION

It cannot be neglected that technology gives great impacts in the teaching and learning world. "Over the years, technology has changed the way that teachers and students are able to show each other things" (Harmer:2009). In higher education, in which the lecturers need to accommodate their students with various techniques of teaching, oral presentation becomes one commonly used way. PowerPoint, as one of presentation softwares, increases presenters capacities to present visual material such as pictures, graphics, charts, words, etc. in a dynamic and interesting way.

In the context of teaching, giving presentation is aimed at delivering information about the materials taught. The lecturers should compose their materials as effective as possible, design their best slides in order to present the materials correctly and in a good order. Therefore, both personal and language skills are needed in delivering presentation.Unfortunately, not all lecturers understand how to make an effective presentation and or how to become good presenters. Moriarty and Duncan (1995) cited in "English for Effective Oral Presentaion Skills" (2009:8) said that people who are good speakers and presenters become important, even powerful, because of that skill.Thus, even it is only in a classroom scale, lecturers should have skills and strategies for having effective presentation in order to achieve as great an influence as possible to the students.

Ineffective presentation such as having no eye-contact with the students, depend too much on slides, put inappropriate images, pictures or charts, put too much texts and use unnecessary sound effects will totally distract students' focus. The objective of teaching will not be achieved as what it supposed to be.

LITERATURE REVIEW
Oral Presentations

Preparing good oral presentations reflects an art that consider the needs of audience, well planning and attention to delivery. It is stated on http://www.monash.edu.au/lls/llonline/quickrefs/11-oral-presentations.xml that: "Presentations are also one of the most fruitful sources of personal growth in university education. For both our study and future work purposes, it is important to develop skills and confidence in giving oral presentations". In the context of EFL teaching and learning process, the teachers need to have effective oral presentations in order to serve the class with clear explanations of one subject-teaching.

Kaul (2005:22) gave her best ideas that the purpose and need of making a presentation is to either tune team and group members to your manner of thinking of, to provide information. Our presentation should get the message across in a fashion in which it is understood and remembered. Further, she elaborated some advantegous of making a presentation as follows:

- Helps in projecting of the presenter
- Provides a platform for sharing ideas
- Facilitates learning
- Aids in building confidence

In relation to oral presentations, Snytnikova (2012) proves her best opinion that the aim of giving and receiving oral academic presentations is to develop a pattern of language interaction within the classroom. She conducted her of academic presentations on students of the Department of Natural Sciences of Novosibirsk State University. As the result of the study, students obtain their first experience in giving and receiving oral academic presentations on biology.

Effective Presentations

Whatever the size of our audience or students (in teaching context), planning the presentation is strongly suggested. Lecturer's presentation is geared towards the students. If the students get something valuable from the presentation then full credit is given, but if it cannot accommodate any merit in the talk, both the presenter and content of the presentation are shunned.

"A good presentation is one in which the content and its design appeals to the audience; a bad presentation, one in which the content is not in tune with the expectations and needs of the audience" (Kaul:2005).

Slides Design in PowerPoint

One of the softwares that is mostly used in a presentation is PowerPoint. Refers to its name, through some points the presenters are expected to have 'power' in delivering the message of their presentation. What presenters should bare in their minds is that they use the slides only as the 'medium' of their presentation. At the time lecturers plan or design slides, the only one concern in their mind is: the presentation should be a success and students get the idea of their explaination.

Finkelstein (2010), in http://www.ellenfinkelstein.com proposed 3 components of an effective presentation:

1. Content; should be logical, simple, and clear.
2. Design; should be legibility.
3. Delivery; should engage the audience, keep the eye contact and use slides only as support for the presentation.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Mix-method between qualitative and quantitative methods is applied in this research. The writer used "Presentation skills self-evaluation" questionnaire to assess how effective the lecturers assess themselves as presenters. It is a 5-scale questionnaire consisting of 20 statements in which 5 refers to 'always' and 1 refers to 'never'. This questionnaire is a ready-made one published by Language Education and Training Centre National Institute of Public Administration Jakarta (2009). Besides, observation and interview are also used as supporting instruments in this study.

A total number of 38 lecturers from 5 study programs, i.e. English education, Mathematics education, Early Childhood education, Indonesian Language and Literature, and Primary Level Education participated as the objects of the study.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the writer's observation during the teaching and learning time in the class, most of the lecturers do not know how to design an effective PowerPoint. They put too much text on slides, put unnecessary images or pictures, used too small fonts, used very soft colors, and apply a distracting sound effects.

The interview done by the writer showed that most of the lecturers do not know what is meant by 'effective presentation' and they do not really concern how slides supposed to be designed. They used PowerPoint to make them easier in reading the materials discussed rather than reading course books. They thought what as long as all materials are stated on the slides then the process of teaching is done.

Interestingly, lecturers' responses toward "Presentation skills self-evaluation" questionnaire showed that 33% (scale 5) lecturers determined that they always have good preparation for their presentation and 27% of them in scale 4. It means that 60% lecturers are categorized as effective presenters. 20% of lecturers are in the middle scale (3) which means that they are not really bad in doing the presentation. Only 20% lecturers which can be considered as bad presenters (13% in scale 2 and 7% in scale 1).
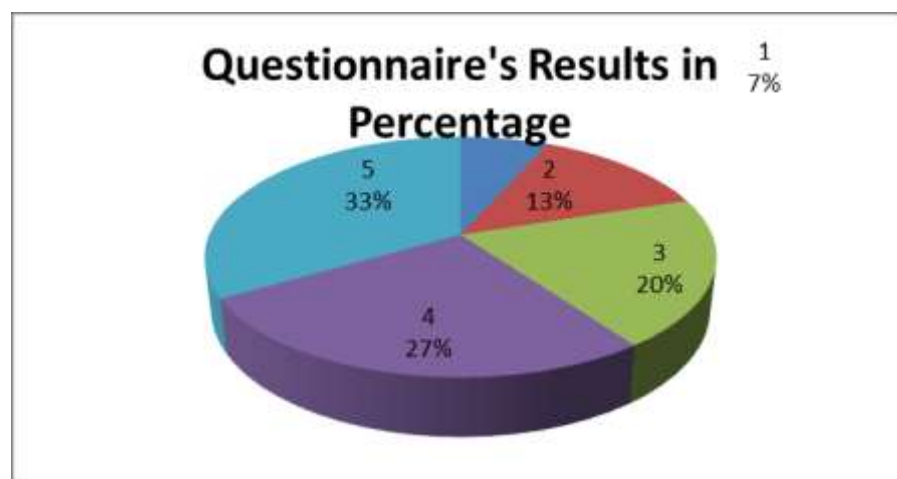
CONCLUSION

Technology gives great impacts to the process of teaching and learning. Nowadays, most of the lecturers in higher education apply oral presentation technique in delivering their materials. PowerPoint as one of this softwares play a major part in the successful of presentation besides the presenters themselves. Unfortunately, not all lecturers have both personal and language skills in order to achieve an effective presentation.

The findings of this study showed that based on the writer's observation, most of the lecturers are still considered as ineffective presenters in which they put too much texts, pictures, images, graphs, etc. on slides besides sometimes used an disctracting sound effects. The lecturers also used slides as they usually used the course-book; keep on reading the slides while presenting the materials. The interview resulted a conclusion in which most of the lecturers do not really concern with the effectiveness of having good presentation. Vice versa, "Presentation Skill Self-Evaluation" showed that 60% lecturers assessed themselves as good presenters.

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