

IMPROVING EFFECTIVE COMMUNICATION IN STUDENTS' CLASSROOM PRESENTATION

Dita Surwanti,

Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa,
e-mail: ditasurwanti@ustjogja.ac.id

Abstract

This research was conducted to improve the effective communication in students' classroom presentation. Based on the phenomena happened in classroom presentations, the researcher found that there was a tendency in doing slide reading during presentations. Thus the researcher formulated this research question: "How can effective communication be achieved in students' classroom presentation?" Since it was a practical problem that should be solved together by the researchers and the participants, thus action research was applied to solve the problem. There were several theories used to answer the research questions; theory of communication, communication skills and speaking skills. This research was conducted using three cyclical processes. Based on the classroom observation, there were improvements in doing classroom presentations. The participants had given clear and unambiguous explanation, congruent material, accurate message, and feedback although there was still weakness in the criteria of giving specific examples.

Keywords: classroom presentation, effective communication

INTRODUCTION

Communication is a fundamental part of human existence. When people communicate, they use language to accomplish some functions, such as arguing, persuading, or promising. Speakers will choose particular way to express their argument not only based upon their intention and level of emotion, but also to whom they are addressing and what the relationship with that person is.

According to Anderson and Dobson (2016), communication is the process by which people give, receive or exchange information with others. It can involve speaking, listening, or writing. Communication has two types which are spoken communication and written communication. Spoken Communication is an informal one which is normally used in personal conversations, group talks, etc. while written

communication is formal communication, which is used in schools, colleges, business world, etc. (Surbhi, 2018).

In communication, to form the smoothness of conversation for both listeners and speakers to understand each other, it is necessary for them to possess a set of abilities as function to transfer the meaning. If listeners cannot translate linguistic signals that are sent by speakers, it will be difficult to achieve the communication goals. Actually, the goals of communication are the most important thing in the communication, so, take and give messages between the speakers are necessary. Furthermore, to achieve the goals of communication, the speakers have to master language vocabularies or any competencies to convey the meaning easily.

Since communication is a process, it is insufficient for students to have only knowledge of target language forms, meaning, and functions. Students must be able to apply this knowledge when they negotiate meaning. It is through the interaction between speaker and listener that meaning becomes clear. The listeners give the speaker feedback as to whether or not they understand what the speaker has said. In this way, the speaker can revise what he/she has said and try to communicate his/her intended meaning again, if necessary.

In students' performance, especially in classroom presentations, the students are expected to be able to express themselves in English at advanced level of proficiency, such as presenting a project both in group and individual, and many others. Although the students are at advanced level of proficiency, they still find some difficulties to present some particular topics in appropriate way. Based on the phenomenon that the researcher saw in classroom activities especially in students' presentations, 'Slide Reading' occurred repeatedly. They also found some difficulties in expressing their own ideas in the target language without depending on the slide when they had classroom presentations.

In relation to action research, where the basic concern is to solve practical problem, 'slide reading' during presentation is considered as one of practical problem that happened when the students did presentations in the classroom. During their presentation, the students tended to focus more on slide reading. This habit became

practical problem in the classroom presentations. To solve this practical problem, action research was conducted to help the students to form the effectiveness in giving presentation.

Students' presentation is considered as successful if the goal of communication can be achieved. In achieving effective communication, they need to apply the sending skills. By applying the sending skills for effective communication, students have to present a topic clearly and unambiguously, completely and specifically, congruent, with the existence of feedback, and accurately in giving information.

The participants of the research were students in extensive reading class of Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa in the academic year of 2018/2019. Based on the problem identification above, the question pointed out in this research is: *"How can effective communication be improved in students' classroom presentation?"*

The purpose of conducting this research was to achieve effective communication. In order to achieve that, students must be able to send messages that correctly represent their ideas, beliefs, feelings, opinions, reactions, needs, goals, interests and resources without depending on the slides. During classroom presentations, the students were not allowed to read the slide but they had to try to use the presentation program/ PPT only as a supporting media to facilitate their presentation.

There are some benefits offered by this research; practical benefit and theoretical benefit. For practical benefit, the result would be very helpful to create progress in students' learning process especially in forming the effectiveness of communication in classroom presentation. For theoretical benefit, the result of this research hopefully could help lecturers, teachers, and students to have a better understanding about how to achieve effective communication especially in classroom presentation.

1. Communication

Communication is the process by which we give, receive or exchange information with others. It can involve speaking, listening, or writing (Anderson and

Dobson, 2016). There are two types of communication; they are spoken communication and written communication. Again, according to Anderson and Dobson (2016), the characteristic of spoken communication are: speaking to someone is more personal, the speaker's message is instantly relayed, the speaker's feelings can be expressed more easily, and the receiver's initial reaction can be judged. Whereas, the characteristic of written communication are: writing provides a permanent record, it is good for complex subjects, and the document can be carefully planned and drafted in advance.

Based on Johnson and Johnson (2006), in emphasizing communication skills to students, it is possible to divide these skills into two categories which are: sending and receiving skills. Each student must be able to send messages that correctly represent her ideas, beliefs, feelings, opinions, reactions, needs, goals, interests and resources.

Sending Skills cover the students to be clear and unambiguous in presenting ideas and feelings (clearly using personal pronoun and aware that the audience knows about the speaker's thought and feeling), to be complete and specific in giving information (clear statements of information), to be congruent (using both verbal and non-verbal messages), to get feedback from the audience (aware on how the audience interpret and process the messages), to paraphrase accurately the content of messages and feelings of the speakers in giving information (re-state the speakers' words to show his or her own understanding).

Receiving skills cover the students to be able to receive message accurately so that they can understand the other person's ideas, beliefs, feelings, and so on. Through sending and receiving skills, students can clarify their mutual goals, provide relevant information and intuitions to each other, reason, coordinate their behavior, share their resources, give help and assistance to each other, and spark each other's creativity.

2. Speaking

Speaking is one of the skills that have to be mastered by students in learning English. It is important for students to know definition first. Many experts define

speaking in different ways. Brown and Yule (2001) state in their book that “Speaking is to express the needs-request, information, service, etc.” The speakers say words to the listener not only to express what is on their mind but also to express information they need.

In developing speaking skills, students are expected to have the ability to express ideas smoothly, without hesitation, repetition, or in appropriate pause. That is why developing speaking skills means developing students’ communicative competence (Mukminatien, 1999). According to Larsen (2008), *communicative competence* involves being able to use the language appropriately to a given social context.

RESEARCH METHOD

Action research based on Riel (2016) is a process of deep inquiry into one's practices in service of moving towards an envisioned future aligned with values. Action Research is the systematic, reflective study of one's actions and the effects of these actions in a workplace context. As such, it involves deep inquiry into one's professional action. The researcher uses data collected to characterize the forces in ways that can be shared with practitioners. This leads to a reflective phase in which the designer formulates new plans for action during the next cycle. The chart below is the example of cycles in action research.

Figure 1: Action Research Cycle

Based on the figure above, the researcher formulated the each cycle of this action research into following actions. First, the researcher studied the practical problems and planned the solution. Second, solution based action was taken. Third, from the observation in class the researcher collected and analyzed evidence on what happened in the class. The fourth, reflection was done to check whether the solution given was appropriate to solve the problems or not. If the problems still occurred, the researcher had to propose further plan and continued to conduct the next cycle.

The research was conducted in extensive reading class in the academic year of 2018/2019 and took time from October to November 2018. The subjects in this study were 81 students (four classes: A1, A2, B1, B2) of the fifth semester of undergraduate degree of English Education Department of Universitas Sarjanawiyata Tamansiswa, Yogyakarta. The data was gathered from classroom observation. The students in each class were divided into 5-6 groups consisted of 2-4 students. Every week in each class, two groups presented the selected journals. This action research was conducted in three cycles in three weeks. The observation data was gathered in observation sheet considering the types of sending skills (clearly and unambiguous, complete and specific, congruent, feedback, and accurate) and receiving skills.

As it had been mentioned before that each cycle in this research consisted of study and plan, take action, collect and analyze evidence, and reflection stage. Each solution to the practical problem was proposed after the reflection stage. These were the proposed solutions:

1st Cycle:

- The presenters had to try to maintain eye contact and body language to the audience, and less seeing the slide
- The presenters had to make simple slides (only phrases and not sentences), so that the presenter had to explain the point in his/her own way of understanding.

2nd Cycle:

- The researcher reminded again about the initial agreement before the presentation.
- The audiences had to ask questions or give feedback during or after presentation, so that there will be interaction between presenters and audience. There must be

at least 3 questions for each group presentation and the researcher promised additional score for those who asked question or gave feedback.

- Since the 1st group needed time to answer the questions or to give responds of the feedback, the 2nd group in a class must be ready to give presentation right after the 1st group's presentation in order to maximize the time efficiency.

3rd Cycle:

- The researcher reminded again about the initial and the following agreement before the presentation.
- Each audience had to write down a short summary for each presentation after the presentation finished.
- There must not be similar types of questions asked to avoid standard questions and to increase students' critical thinking.

RESULT

1st Cycle:

1. Study and plan

First, the researcher and the participants tried to identify the problem of the students' classroom presentation together based on the phenomenon that occurred in classroom. The practical problem that had been found here is that the students tend to focus more on slide reading during individual presentation. Second, the researcher set up the research question on how to solve the practical problem in students' classroom presentation which is slide reading. The first cycle for solving the practical problem which has been agreed both by the researcher and participants was that the presenters needs to try to maintain eye contact to the audience, and less seeing the slide. In addition, the presenters had to make simple slides (only phrases and not sentences), so that the presenters had to explain the point in their own way of understanding. The purpose of applying this solution is to help the presenters to reduce their attention on slide reading. Through maintaining eye contact to the audience, hopefully the presenter can achieve the effective communication. By applying the sending skills for effective communication, the students had to present the selected journal clearly and

unambiguously, completely and specifically, congruent, with the existence of feedback, and accurately in giving information.

2. Take action

The first cycle was done in class A1, A2, B1, and B2 to observe two groups of presenters in each class in presenting selected journals in the classroom. Based on the agreement between the researcher and students, it was approved that the presenters needed to try to maintain eye contact to the audience, and less seeing the slide. The presentation slides must also simple (only phrases and not sentences), so that the presenters had to explain the point in his/her own way of understanding.

3. Collect and analyze evidence

The researcher used observation sheet to collect the data and to put it together based on the criteria of sending and receiving skills. Based on the observation sheet below, there are advantages and disadvantages from the first applied cycle.

Table 1. 1st Cycle Observation Sheet

From the sending skills criteria, it could be figured out that the voice of the presenters in all classes was already clear, and unambiguous. The disadvantage was

that the explanation was not too complete and needed to be more detail/specific. The researcher also observed that some presenters need to maintain eye contact and body language more on the audience. It could also be figured out that the disadvantage/weakness was that the audiences were not fully aware with the presentation. The audiences sit in the class but they did not have any eagerness to ask question or to give feedback. It could be figured out that 5 out of 8 presenters had tried to explain the materials accurately. From the receiving skill, the researcher found difficulty in checking whether the audiences receive the message correctly or not because there were less questions and feedbacks.

4. Reflection

Looking back on the action with the benefit of data, the researcher thought that the audiences had less awareness and did not give enough feedback or ask question. Thus, the researcher needed to formulate further solutions.

2nd Cycle:

1. Study and plan

The results of the first cycle showed that on their first week presentations, the audiences had less awareness and did not give enough feedback or ask question. That is why, based on that phenomenon, the researcher formulated the further solutions. First, the researcher reminded again about the initial agreement before the presentation. Second, the audiences had to ask questions or give feedback during or after presentation, so that there will be interaction between presenters and audience. There must be at least 3 questions for each group presentation and the researcher promised additional score for those who asked question or gave feedback. Since the 1st group needed time to answer the questions or to give responds of the feedback, the 2nd group in a class must be ready to give presentation right after the 1st group's presentation in order to maximize the time efficiency.

2. Take action

The second cycle was done again to observe two groups of presenters in each class (A1, A2, B1, and B2) in presenting the selected journal articles based on the agreement above.

3. Collect and analyze evidence

In this process, the researcher still used the observation sheet to help the researcher to collect the data and to put it together based on the criteria of sending and receiving skills.

Table 2. 2nd Cycle Observation Sheet

Class	Group	Types of Sending Skills					Receiving Skill	
		Clearly & unambiguous	Complete & specific	Congruent	Feedback	Accurate		
A1	Group 3:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Good contact and body language	eye responds to feedback	Good to explanation	accurate	3 students asked questions and gave feedback
	Group 4:	Voice was clear but the explanation was ambiguous	explanation was not really complete and specific	Good contact and body language	eye responds	Faced difficulties in responding feedback	A bit inaccurate	3 students asked questions and gave feedback but the questions given were standards
A2	Group 3:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Good contact and body language	eye responds more	Need to give more reasonable answers	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and gave feedback but the questions given were standards
	Group 4:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Less contact and body language	eye responds to feedback	Good	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and gave feedback but the questions given were standards

The researcher analyzed the effect of the second cycle to the students' classroom presentations. Based on the evidence, there are advantages and disadvantages from the second applied cycle. From the sending skills criteria, it could be figured out that there was an improvement but there were still several disadvantages/ weaknesses. The improvements were more questions and feedbacks rose by the audiences. The presenters were also better in responding to the questions and feedback because they had sufficient time. There were 5 out of 8 groups which already gave complete explanation, but almost all had not given specific/detailed examples. There were only 2 groups which gave inaccurate or confusing explanation. The researcher figured out that even the students were actively involved in giving

feedback or asking questions, but most of the feedback or questions were standard. The types of questions asked were similar from time to time.

4. Reflection

The second reflection was done again to evaluate the process in applying the second cycle. Looking back on the action with the benefit of data, the researcher thought that the audiences needed to be triggered more to think critically and ask question to increase their understanding, not just because the lecturer asked them to ask questions. The presenters were also having problems in giving specific explanation about the materials. Thus, the researcher formulated the further solutions.

3rd Cycle:

1. Study and plan

After the researchers and the participants conducted the first and the second cycle, it could be figured out that the practical problems were not totally solved. There were still several problems occurred and the students' classroom presentations has not achieved effective communication yet, although there are some improvements already. The formulated solutions after the 2nd cycle were: the researcher reminded again about the initial and the following agreement before the presentation, each audience had to write down a short summary for each presentation after the presentation finished, and there must not be similar types of questions asked to avoid standard questions and to increase students' critical thinking.

2. Take action

The third cycle was done to observe two groups of presenters in A1, A2, and B1 classes, also one group of presenters in B2 class.

3. Collect and analyze evidence

Again, the researcher used the observation sheet and the students' summaries to help the researcher to collect the data and to put it together based on the criteria of sending and receiving skills.

Table 3. 3rd Cycle Observation Sheet

Class	Group	Types of Sending Skills					Receiving Skill
		Clearly & unambiguous	Complete & specific	Congruent	Feedback	Accurate	
A1	Group 5:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	explanation was not really complete and specific	Good contact and body language	eye Good and responds to feedback	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and 17 out of 23 students wrote accurate summaries
	Group 6:	Voice was clear but the explanation was ambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Good contact and body language	eye Need to give more reasonable answers	confusing explanation	3 students asked questions and 22 out of 23 students wrote accurate summaries
A2	Group 5:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Good contact and body language	eye Good and responds to feedback	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and 12 out of 17 students wrote accurate summaries
	Group 6:	Voice was clear but the explanation was ambiguous	Complete but need more specific explanation	Good contact and body language	eye Need to give more reasonable answers	accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and 13 out of 17 students wrote accurate summaries
B1	Group 5:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	incomplete and unspecific explanation	Less eye contact and body language	Good and responds to feedback	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and 21 out of 24 students wrote accurate summaries
	Group 6:	Voice and explanation were clear and unambiguous	explanation was not really complete and specific	Good contact and body language	eye Good and responds to feedback	Quite accurate explanation	3 students asked questions and 19 out of 24 students wrote accurate summaries
		Voice and	Complete but	Good	eye Good	Quite	4 students asked

Based on the observation sheet on the third cycle, the researcher analyzed the effect of the third cycle to the students' classroom presentation. Based on the evidence, there were still some advantages and disadvantages. The first advantage was that most of the audiences received the messages well as could be seen from the accurate summaries. There were also variations of questions raised by the audiences. There were only 2 groups of presenters which still gave ambiguous explanations and needed to give more reasonable feedback. There was only one group that needed to practice the eye contact and body language and give more accurate explanation. The disadvantage was the presenters still needed to learn how to give specific examples. Most of them were having problems in making specific examples.

4. Final Reflection

Even there were improvements made in this research, it should be admitted that there were still several disadvantages or weaknesses happened in the students' classroom presentations. The goal of effective communication by applying sending

skills on this action research had not been achieved completely. The researcher realized that in conducting this action research, additional time and chances are needed to completely solve the practical problems.

CONCLUSION

After three cycles done, it could be concluded that from the sending and receiving skills, most of the criteria of effective communication had been improved. In the 1st cycle, the sending skills (clear and unambiguous, congruent, and accurate) had improved. In the 2nd cycle the sending skills had improved, but the sending skills (complete and specific) and receiving skills still needed to be developed. In the 3rd cycle almost all the sending skills and receiving skills had improved, but the presenters still needed chances to practice their sending skill (giving specific examples). Thus, it would be beneficial to conduct further research in improving effective communication in classroom presentation, especially on how to be able to give specific examples and clear information.

Based on the research results, it can be suggested that there are several ideas that can be applied to improve the effective communication in classroom presentation. First, presenters have to try to maintain eye contact and body language to the audience and less seeing the slide. Second, the presenters have to make simple slides (only phrases and not sentences), so that the presenter need to explain the point in his/her own way of understanding. Third, the audiences have to ask questions or give feedback during or after presentation, so lively interaction between presenters and audience can occur. There must not be similar types of questions asked to avoid standard questions and to increase students' critical thinking. Fourth, the presenters must be given enough time to answer the questions correctly or to respond the feedback accurately, but time efficiency must also be a consideration. Fifth, each audience/student has to write down a short summary for each presentation after the presentation in order to keep the students' willingness and eagerness to receive or understand the message.

REFERENCES

- Anderson, A. H. & Dobson, H. (2016). *Effective Marketing: A Skills and Activity-Based Approach*. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers.
- Brown, Gillian and Yule, George. (2001). *Teaching the Spoken Language*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
- Johnson, David & Johnson, Rogert T. (2006). *Learning Together and Alone*. Massachusetts: Paramount Communication Company.
- Larsen, Diane. (2008). *Techniques and Principles in Language Teaching*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Riel, Margaret. (2016). *Understanding Action Research*. <http://cadres.pepperdine.edu/ccar/define.html>, retrieved on February 22, 2018.
- Surbhi, S. (2018). Difference Between Oral Communication and Written Communication. <https://keydifferences.com/difference-between-oral-communication-and-written-communication.html>, retrieved on August 2, 2018.