Freshmen's Difficulties and Strategies in English Oral Presentation at English

Language Education Department

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Abstract.

One of the methods commonly used by the lecturer is a presentation. Presentation is one of the ways to give chance for the students to practice their ability and master the course. The presentation is chosen by the lecturer as the learning method of the course to look students' improvement and understanding about the material. The aims of this study are to find out the freshmen's difficulties of English oral presentation and to find out the freshmen's strategies to overcome their difficulties in doing English oral presentation. This study applied qualitative research design, and interview was used as the data collection method. The researcher interviewed three first year students (freshmen) at English Language Education Department in a private university in Yogyakarta. The participants of this study were chosen based on the lecturer's recommendation. The result showed that the participants stated their difficulties in doing English oral presentation and also their strategies to overcome the difficulties. The difficulties are time management problem, nervousness problem, grammatical problem, gaining audience's attention problem, topic mastery problem, and remembering the idea problem. However, the participants also gave their strategies to reduce their problem in doing presentation. The strategies are having good time management, doing self-relaxion, focusing the sight on one point, making some jokes, learning grammar, practicing the presentation, and mastering the topic material in doing oral presentation.

Keywords: learning method, English oral presentation, difficulties, strategies

Background of the study

Oral presentation activities provide an opportunity for the learners to develop their speaking skills. According to King (2002), presentation is an effective activity that has been broadly adopted by English Foreign Language conversation teachers to promote students' oral proficiency. The process of students presenting in front of the classroom provides them an activity to practice their speaking skills. In long term context, oral presentation could help student to express their opinions and ideas in front of audiences more confidently. It will build confident personality to face their career later. Supported by King (2002), "presentation, if properly guided and organized, provide a learning experience and teach lifelong skills that will be beneficial to learners in all school subjects and in their careers later" (p. 402).

Based on the researcher's preliminary observation by asking direct question to the student in various backgrounds and department in one of private universities in Yogyakarta, it is found that oral presentation used in various department. The departments usually use oral presentation to gain the students' understanding about the topic and the material. It is usually also beneficial to be an assessment to the student in final project of the courses. Those departments use presentation in several ways. It depends on the lecturer's will. That is what makes differentiates problem in one department to another department. For instance, when engineering student should present the presentation, they might have difficulties in presenting and elaborating the formula. On the other hand, the problems faced by EFL students are quiet more challenging. The first problem is usually they must understand the material and master it, even it is written in English. For EFL students, they must understand the sentence to master the topic. The second problem is EFL students should deliver the presentation using English. Delivering the presentation using target language is a thing that other department rarely use this method. That is one of the problems faced by EFL students.

Oral presentation has been implemented in English Language Education Department (ELED) in one private university in Yogyakarta. The lecturers usually use oral presentation to measure students' speaking ability. The lecturers is use oral presentation with a purpose to promote students' speaking skill. Supported by Nadia (2013), teachers could use oral presentation as a technique to encourage students to speak. According to Zaine (2015), presentation is a way for students to speak in public; presentation makes students speak louder and explain the slides for the audiences. They can speak more using the target language in the classroom. Those practicing opportunities have a major effect to them to make students speak English fluently. The lecturer gives them the opportunity to use English language freely, to make mistakes, and to learn from those mistakes. Thus, it can be concluded that presentation creates student to have many opportunities to speak.

Furthermore, based on the researcher's preliminary observation at ELED, this department still continuously uses the presentation techniques as their teaching and learning method. The lecturers in this department require the students to do a presentation starting from the first semester to the seventh semester. There are courses utilizing the presentation technique in the teaching and learning activity. Those courses are Listening and Speaking for Formal Setting, Listening and Speaking for Academic Purposes, Listening and Speaking for Daily Conversation, Listening and Speaking for Career Development, Capita Selecta On Grammar 4, Principles of Teaching and Learning, Second Language Acquisition, Teaching English As Foreign Language, Material Design, Language Research, Research Methodology, and Academic Presentation. There are many courses applying presentation in the first-year semester; there are Listening and Speaking for Formal Setting, For Academic Purpose, For Daily Conversation, and For Career Development.Therefore, freshmen must be ready to do an oral presentation. As the college students, they have to be ready to conduct presentation on their own whether they have experienced the presentation or not.

On the other hand, when students presented a presentation in the class, sometimes the student have a problem to deliver the idea of presentation. It might be caused by their difficulties in the presentation. Based on the researcher's observation in the class, the researcher experienced, and the researcher's preliminary observation interviewing some students, those difficulties are usually fearing to speak in front of public, having less confidence, having nervousness, and having lack of vocabulary. It is probably because they are in their first-year or any other reason. First-year student might have some new ideas or information that is pretty good to present, but most students are not confident enough to deliver their ideas. The students feel that they are lack exercise in speaking English, so they are afraid of making any mistakes. Additionally, students are afraid if they use grammar and pronunciation incorrectly. Generally, they prefer to choose to be silent and keep their ideas and opinions for themselves to share their opinion or ideas in front of people.

Based on the background, oral presentation provides an opportunity to make the lecturers and students meet their learning goal. Oral presention provides a better understanding about the topic of material. That makes oral presentation become popular in high education field. Despite the difficulties might be faced by students, this method really helps the student to gain their confidence to present their ideas in front of the class. It is also helpful to the EFL student in ELED. EFL students at ELED have more challenges to do oral presentation, one of them is they should deliver the presentation using the target language. The presentation could help them to train their ability in speaking the target language. Therefore, this research presents a study of freshmen's difficulties and strategies in doing English oral presentation at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. The researcher conducted this study to know the problems or difficulties of English oral presentation experienced by freshmen and the strategies they did to reduce or solve their problems in oral presentation.

Methodology

This research was conducted at English Language Education Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta. In this study the researcher involved freshmen of English Language Education Department (ELED) of a private university in Yogyakarta as the participants. This study used interview as the data collection method to collect data. Interview was conducted because the researcher wanted to explore information from participants by doing follow up questions and clarifying the answer

Result and Discussion

There are two main points explained in this chapter based on the research questions. The research questions are regarding with the freshmen difficulties in doing English oral presentation and freshmen strategies to overcome the difficulties in doing English oral presentation at English Language Education Department of a private university in Yogyakarta. The finding in the first point of freshmen's difficulties in doing English oral presentation answered the first research question while second point of freshmen strategies to overcome the difficulties in doing English oral presentation answered the second research question. There are six findings in the first point, and seven findings in the second points.

Conclusion

The teaching method used by the lecturers is the key to achieve the course goals. There are many methods which could be used. In ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta, the lecturers use oral presentation method to know the students' speaking skill and students' comprehension about the course. In fact, to conduct a better teaching and learning process, the lecturer sometimes sees the difficulties appear in student's presentation. It is clearly identified by the way they presented their presentation. Furthermore, the

difficulties might become worse when it happens to the freshman. The freshmen should learn a lot of things to do their first English oral presentation. The difficulties occur in various types. The freshman has their own difficulties that usually offend their presentation. Thus, the purposes of this study are to find out the problem in doing English oral presentation and the strategies used by the freshmen to overcome their difficulties.

The first finding of this study is about the difficulties of doing English oral presentation at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. Based on the data gathered from the participants, there are six difficulties faced by the freshmen in doing English oral presentation at that department. Those difficulties are time management problem, nervousness problem, grammatical problem, gaining audience's attention problem, topic mastery problem, and remembering the idea problem.

The second result of this study is about the strategies usually done by the freshmen to overcome the difficulties in doing English oral presentation at ELED of a private university in Yogyakarta. There are seven strategies used by the freshman to overcome their difficulties in doing oral presentation. The number of the strategies is related to the difficulties that the freshman mentioned in the first finding. However, there is one strategy added by the participant as she had other opinion to overcome the problem by herself. Those seven strategies are having good time management to overcome time management problem, doing self-relaxing and focusing the sight on one point to overcome nervousness problem, making some jokes to overcome gaining audience's attention problem, learning grammar to overcome grammatical problem, practicing the presentation to overcome remembering the idea problem, and mastering the topic to help them overcome mastery topic problem in doing oral presentation.

To sum up, the lecturer could use English oral presentation as a teaching method of the course. The oral presentation is one of effective ways to measure students' ability in understanding the topic of the course. There are benefit things that both lecturer and student get when they conduct an oral presentation. However, the difficulties in doing oral presentation may occur for some students. It seems difficult for the student in first year to do presentation well. They might experience some difficulties. Therefore, they should learn to overcome the difficulties by applying one or more strategies. The freshmen have to search any strategies to overcome their difficulties, and it could find in article or research paper.

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