

Engagement on Student's Academic Presentation

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Abstract. The basic aim of academic presentations is generally for turning the written ideas into the spoken ones. Most of the ideas presented are in academic or scientific matters. In the university level, the activities of presentations become ordinary ways to share ideas and discussions, mostly done as the output of course assignments. This is why the skill of presentation is important for students, especially in English. Academic presentation for non-native English speakers will be a little bit hard to do, for some students in English Department as well. They will easily share ideas in Bahasa Indonesia or if it is in English, it is easier to have casual conversation rather than having a presentation in English. Students need this kind of experience. The experience that brings them to engage with audience when they do an academic presentation, even if it is inside or outside the classroom, for example an international forum or conference. Choosing the mode that they choose for the presentation is also important to build the audience engagement. It becomes harder when they consider that speaking English during the presentation makes them facing more complicated problems dealing with how to communicate with the audience, both in presentation and question and answer sessions. Forey and Feng (2016) state that engagement is analyzed through four features of engagement in academic presentations: 1) speech signs; 2) involvement; 3) social distance; 4) affect. The features support relevant analysis of engagement visually on the verbal and nonverbal act during the students' presentation. It practically opens the students' mind and knowledge about how to achieve the audience's engagement within their session.

Keywords: engagement, academic presentation

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INTRODUCTION

Presentation is a sort of skill that is compulsory to learn and master in academic circumstances. Students in university level have to start their experience since the beginning of their studies, for example to fulfill some particular assignments of the courses they take. The presentation is aimed to share ideas and knowledge that are already written in the form of academic paper. This is the main part to convince the audience, especially the lecturer to check whether they have the real and actual knowledge about what they write based on the course's instruction. The presentation activities are usually divided into several sessions like opening, presentation, Q&A, and closing. The experience of presenting the paper that they have written is to train their skill and responsibility of the academic assignment. In this stage, the students are challenged to modify their written form of paper into the spoken format.

In academic presentations, the visual element is usually displayed on the screen shared to the audience. The dialogic aspect leads the presenter to attract the audience by asking questions, clarifying something, or even trying to argue. There are several elements that can be shown by academic presenters like former researches, frameworks, audio-visual, and motion picture or

video. The interpersonal utterance leads to the function that enables the speaker and audience's interpersonal relation by choosing the varied features to engage (Mujiyanto, 2017).

The discourse that an academic speaker used at a conference sometimes expands beyond complexities. Social exchange is sometimes unpredictable. Thus, the linguistic features in the networks system of academic presentation is needed to be used. Forey and Feng (2016) adopt Hallidayan Systemic Functional Linguistic (Interpersonal Meaning) and Martin & White's appraisal system focusing on engagement in order to find out the linguistic and visual choice of the academic presenters to convey meaning and relationship with the audience both in monologic (presentation) and dialogic (Q&A session) aspects. Gesture and facial expressions are sometimes more possible to use in order to attract audience's attention and build communication with them instead of the center of element: the content or the words related to the presentation or event (O'Halloran and Smith, 2016).

The way to get attention on stage, attitude expressions, language expressions, and gestures are keys in academic community of spoken presentation stated by Hood and Forey (2005). The total perspective of academic discussion is

strongly applied because the quality of the presentation and Q&A consider the score of the very final project in the end of study in any degree of higher education, especially in Indonesia. Martin and White (2005) propose the appraisal system consists of engagement which provides a framework that opens up or closes down to create solidarity through speech function, for example, an academic presenter tries to ask (interrogative) the audience some questions or even ask them to do something (imperative). Then the analysis of gaze, body direction, gesture, and social distance can be shown through how the presenter choose the features to use, for example, close, medium, or far in the matter of social distance.

The first feature of audience engagement based on Forey and Feng (2016) is Speech function in which Halliday and Matthiessen (2013) categorize the speech/sign functions into demanding information or goods/services and offering information or goods/services. The speech functions are generally realized through the analysis of mood types in the form of interrogatives, imperatives, or indicatives. Related to physical gesture, it can be analyzed whether the presenter does physical movement to exchange information or negotiate meaning. The second feature of audience engagement is involvement. This function is mainly realized by non-verbal resources including gaze (eye contact), body direction, movement, or posture. For example, the speaker's movement can attract the audience attention by waving hands and so forth.

Social distance is the only feature that is considered to be formed in various ways in which it depends on the relationship between the presenter and the audience, for example, students and their peers or students and their lecturer. The parameter of social distance is realized through the physical distance between the speaker and the audience. It is called distant if the presenter is hiding behind the desk and doing the presentation all the time there. Medium distance is when the presenter stands right in front of the audience. Close distance is when the presenter is standing among the audience, talking personally with some of them, or checking whether the audience completed the task or not.

Next is the feature of affect in which it is realized through how the presenter engages emotion with the audience. The speaker provokes the audience's emotion by telling jokes

or to make empathetic emotion towards something. Student-presenters usually use this mode to kill the feeling of nervous and to manage their skill of presentation in front of many people. Based on the previous studies by Camiciottoli and Fortanet-Gómez (2015), undergraduate students must be trained to have skills in presenting their ideas or research in English because they have to learn formal way of presentation in academic settings to improve their communication skills especially when they graduate and enter the world of the works.

Academic presentation is rarely analyzed and emphasized in spoken varieties, especially student's presentation in which it is important to accomodate the audience (Zareva, 2020). It is also stated by Hyland and Zou (2022) that the presenters have to hook, involve, and lead to the process until it comes to significant conclusions of the presentation essence.

METHODS

Qualitative method is the best way to describe the observation based on the data. The data of the research is the engagement on the student's online presentation and the data resource is the students who presented their assignment in a class of Grammar in Spoken Discourse. One group who becomes the presenters is chosen randomly. Thus, the methods are described into two sub-discussions: data collection and data analysis.

Data collection

The presentations are recorded and replayed to be analyzed based on the audience engagement features stated by Forey and Feng (2016). For the sake of data details, it is necessary to transcribe all of the utterances spoken during the presentation. Thus, the data collected are in the form of spoken and written ones.

Data Analysis

Leading to results, note taking in the observation of replaying and watching the recording intensively are needed. The notes are analyzed and explained in the results and discussion until it leads to a conclusion drawing. All data are presented in the form of words instead of numbers. The notes are considered to be the observation results in which it can lead to the activity of conclusion drawing in the end of the analysis steps.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Communication strategy of choosing the mode of presentation by the speaker is important here. The lecturer can make evaluation dealing with the way how the students present their assignment, instead of content-based only. Presentation can build confident, make the students more fluent in using spoken language in academic or formal format. Previous researches show that formal or academic presentation is more complicated than merely having some casual conversation in the context of using English as foreign language. The stages of learning both spoken and written forms of English are also influencing the output of the students' ability of basic English skills. The two productive skills must be balanced each other. Reading the paper or the power point presentation text is allowed when the students need to emphasize difficult statement or terms. This stage influences the ability of the presenters in achieving audience's engagement. In the classroom, the students try to have engagement with the lecturers and peers. If it is too hard for them to present in front of their peers, it will be harder if they have to present outside the campus' forum.

One of the possible solutions is maximizing the function of online platform to allow audiences from other forum or community or people to watch the students' online presentation. Online presentation seems to have less challenge for students because they can choose reading mode without being known by the audience. They can read the text freely because they perform in front of a camera. But this is also still a practice to add the students' experience dealing with the academic presentation activity that they have to do. Curtis et al (2015) states that it is scientific to analyze the relationship between speaking technique and the level of the audience engagement.

Speech Sign

The first feature of the audience engagement used by the students is speech sign. Because it is a presentation of a course assignment, the only speech sign used is offer, not demand. They share their ideas based on the topic chosen by their group and then they do their roles in the presentation. The speech sign is presented in the form of information, or in the term of the feature, it is called as service instead of goods because they share ideas, not stuffs.

Involvement

The second feature is involvement in which there are some features chosen by the students: gaze, body direction, and pointers. There is no movement because it is an online presentation, so they merely stare in front of the camera device. The gaze of the presenters focuses on the screen, instead of staring at the audience, they focus on the power point presentation shown on the screen. The body direction sometimes unclear because the presenters only show their half of the body in the camera. Hand movements are clearly shown when they want to explain something. The student-presenters' version of pointers sometimes show that they only move what they have written in the assignment in the form of PPT, without simplifying the words, or paraphrasing using their own words in the spoken form. Based on the differences between written and spoken forms of English, their spoken version of English is still text-based.

Social Distance

Social distance of student-presenters in the classroom presentations can be the same because there are classmates and lecturer in which they have already known well. It significantly reduces their anxiety of doing presentation. They think it is easier to face their own friends rather than others who are outside the class. The most interesting audience engagement features found in the student's presentation is affect. They choose humor to attract their classmates' and lecturer's attention.

Affect

The affect naturally raises in this stage. It is mixed with various expression they have chosen: diction, facial expression, and vocal features. They choose to build intense relationship with the audience because of the chemistry they have in the classroom. We can make sure that the affect will be different when they have to do presentation in the different class, even with the same lecturer but different classmates. Affect is considered as individual choice in this feature. People tend to choose the expressions based on the identity of the audience.

CONCLUSION

Communication needs two parts which consider who is the sender and the receiver. As well as writer-reader or speaker-hearer, presenter-audience also has the same process of communication in which it depends on how the

message is sent or not. Presenter deals with the person who becomes the focus of the performance or responsible with the event session, while the audience deals with many people with various aims to attend the event session. In language perspective, the features of audience engagement is important to use and choose, and also analyzed as the contribution of how to communicate formally in academic circumstances.

Student-presenters are the data source that are analyzed and surprisingly most of all the features of audience engagement are used: speech signs, involvement, social distance, and affect. The presentation skill is needed to be improved by student-presenters especially in English because it will be used in any part of life event.

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