

Implementing Multimodal Paralanguage by the ELT Students in Presentational Activity

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Abstrak. Multimodal paralanguage is related to multi resources of nonphonemic properties in communication activities. As part of the non-verbal aspect, paralanguage is considered a crucial technique for the success of the presentational activity. In this case, a group of ELT students at a certain university had concerns about transferring information that caused their presentation performance. Therefore, this study aims to reveal the implementation of paralanguage components by entailing multimodal features in conveying effective meaning. The subject of this study is a representative group of ELT students at a certain university. Qualitative research is used with observation and recording as the data collection method. The steps in analyzing the data are adopted from Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014), including data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion (drawing or verifying). The findings revealed distinctive components of paralanguage used by the students during the presentation. The implemented components include voice qualities, vocal characteristics, and vocal segregation. Multimodal features are implemented as a strategy for improvisation in communication. Furthermore, this study can be advantageous as a reference for each person who will act as a presenter or speaker to enhance their presentational skill.

Keywords: Multimodality; Multimodal Paralanguage; ELT; Presentational Activity

How to Cite: Fatwassani, R., Mujiyanto, J., Hartono, R., Astuti, P. (2022). Implementing Multimodal Paralanguage by the ELT Students in Presentational Activity. *ISET: International Conference on Science, Education and Technology*, (2022), 839-843.

INTRODUCTION

Presentational activities have become a favorite technique in the teaching and learning process. For the students, conducting a presentation allows them to practice all language system areas (vocabulary, grammar, and discourse) and skills (listening, speaking, reading, and writing). It is because presentational tools have special features in facilitating language transfer. The available features in presentational tools provide various ways of communicating, such as using multiple language modes to express what the presenter or speaker wants to say or inform. For instance, a presenter might be found using pictures, symbols, or gestures during the presentation to support their oral communication. The goal is to ensure that the presenter's idea, information, or expression is transferred correctly to the audience, listener, or interlocutor. So that they can comprehend the presenter's intended meaning.

A phenomenon of certain university students is being investigated when they improvise their presentational skills by implementing a learning strategy called multimodal paralanguage learning. In this case, the student has previously been introduced to the strategy. They have learned that multimodal learning generally

means using more than one language mode to enhance communication performance. Theoretically, the view on the concept of multimodality has been conveyed by (Jakobsen & Tonnessen, 2018; Moreno & Mayer in Altas, 2014) as a meaning-making process that entails multiple modes of communication to represent verbal (spoken or written) and nonverbal language (gestures, gaze, facial expression, tone, postures). Meanwhile, paralanguage is part of nonverbal communication in multimodality, such as tone, pitch or manner of speaking (Qiang, 2013). Lirola (2020) added that a multimodal context contributes to more understanding, creativity, dynamic views, and flexibility in presentational activity between the presenter/speaker and audience/interlocutor.

It is reasonable for the students to implement the strategy as their purpose in conducting a presentation is to ensure the messages can be delivered and received effectively. Ayuningsih, Mahmud, Salija, & Muhayyang (2022) mentioned that the use of paralanguage in communication helps the presenter create effective interaction with the audience. The entailment of multimodal features in representing meaning also brings different views.

This research focuses on the students' implementation of multimodal paralanguage in

the presentational activity. The combination of multimodal and paralinguistic strategies represents the gap in this research to others. Many studies have been conducted in terms of multimodal or paralinguistic separately, but a few research studies are concerned with combining both variables. Therefore, this study is expected to have a big deal as a reflection to the students, teachers, and readers for creating an interactive presentation using multimodal paralinguistic.

METHODS

This was descriptive qualitative research. This research investigates the implementation of multimodal paralinguistic by ELT students who participate in a classroom presentational activity. The data were taken from two representative groups of presentation students at one University in Semarang, Indonesia. Each group consisted of four students. Non-participant observation and video recordings were used in collecting the data. A selected classroom was chosen because it studied English intensively and employed English as an instruction tool. The activities were organized twice following the meeting schedule of two selected groups, with 30 minutes of duration given to each group. The presentation processes were observed and recorded accordingly.

The steps adopted by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014) were used to analyze the data. After conducting observation and recording, the comprised data from conversations and activities were transcribed as the beginning step. In the next step, the transcribed data were then selected according to the related themes of the research questions. The data were qualitatively described and examined concerning the students' multimodal paralinguistic components and features implementation in this step. The results of described and examined data will be displayed as data findings. In the last step, data then be validated by concluding data findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This section displays the findings and discussion about ELT students' implementation of multimodal paralinguistic that covered paralinguistic components, entailing modes of multimodal text when conducting a presentational activity. Following DeVito (2013, 1988), the paralinguistic components include voice qualities, and vocalization (vocal characteristics, and vocal segregation).

Meanwhile, the findings on multimodality entailment are based on Kress (2010) types of multimodal modes, including linguistic (written), audio, visual, spatial, oral (spoken), and gestural.

Voice Qualities, Visual Mode, and Gestural Mode

The data findings of voice qualities concern several aspects, including pitch, rhythm, and pronunciation. However, not all of the aspects represent voice qualities in one extraction example. Meanwhile, gestural represent multimodal is seen in some moments of presentation. Below are some extracts of the represented aspects shown by the students of group 1 in presenting Powerpoint:

Extract 1: Introduction session

Pre A: Assalamu'alaikum Warahmatullahi Wabarakatuh. Good morning, thank you for the chance given to our group. Well, in this occasion, our group would like to discuss about "illegal shark fishing". Before we start, let me introduce our group member.....

Aalright! (gesturing strong body) let's start with the first presenter,.....

Context situation:

A selected group starts the presentation with *Presenter A* speaking first. Powerpoint slides have been set. *Presenter A* speaks English fluently in her Javanese dialect style, plain tone but clear, Smiling in some moments while speaking, showing a gesture of a strong body, inhaling and exhaling for several moments.

Extract 1 above displays the implementation of voice qualities entailing oral and gestural modes. *Presenter A* speaks in standard pitch sound. She tried to control the rhythm of her speaking. She expresses her feeling by smiling at several moments because she is excited about the audience's enthusiastic responses. She also shows gestures of readiness.

Extract 2: Presenting topic session

Pre B: So, what you have seen from the video?..... The purpose of this video was to inform us the use of shark fins and what we can do or how to make something with shark fins. And also shark fins has many uses for human, like food. However, we have to careful because some shark are very vicious. With its body size and character, shark is categorized as predator animal.

Context situation:

Presenter B talks about shark fins. The presenter displays a hyperlink of video

documenter on his Powerpoint slide. The video contains of shark fishing impacts. After watching the short video, *Presenter B* continue presenting with the following slides. He speaks English with a smooth rhythm.

Extract 2 above displays the implementation of voice qualities entailing oral and visual modes. Considering the context, *Presenter B* speaks with a clear pitch sound and smooth rhythm. He tends to persuade the audience that his statement is true and acceptable.

Vocal Characteristics, Vocal Segregation, and Gestural Mode

The data findings of voice characteristics refer to the speaker's speaking style. In Indonesia, each people has a dialectical speaking style that affects them when speaking English. Some voice characteristics have been identified, such as laughing, high/slow intonation, and hesitant intonation. Meanwhile, vocal segregation refers to filler or short non-lexical utterances that indicate the presenter's situation or condition while speaking. Some examples of vocal segregation have been identified, such as mmm, eeee, anu..., and hssst. In addition, the gestural mode seems implemented to add more messages. Below are some extracts of the represented aspects shown by the students of group 2 in presenting Powerpoint:

Extract 3: After the presentation, the discussion session

Pre D: We have seen the video on the slide (silent for about 5 seconds). Aaemm, we should act to protect our environment. Waste, trash, garbage, and litter are problems in our country. We need to change our habits. Try to learn from Japanese people.

Aud A: Hmm, Yea, yea. I think eee... it's dangerous. You can see around us that trash is spread in our environment. And makes our environment so dirty. In our daily activity where you visit some places, the tourism spot or whatever, you find it everywhere. Pemerintah harusnya lebih giat mensosialisasikan budaya peduli sampah kepada masyarakat. (in my translation: "The government should be more active socializing the garbage caring customs to the society").

Pre D: Well, true. It is better if we are not looking for aaa...emm...

Pre D: Apa bahasa Inggrisnya kambing hitam? Black goat? Nah, itu dah. (grinning, laughing)

Context situation:

This is a second group. They present a topic about "Garbage is our big problem". Extract 3 represents an example of conversation between a presenter and audience in discussion session.

The general identification shown in Extract 3 is the use of intonations and facial expressions. *Presenter D* seems to be speaking with hesitant intonation. He looks concerned with grammar, language choices, or expressing an opinion that makes him talk carefully. Meanwhile, *Audience A* seems talking with high intonation. He looks excited in saying his argument by showing criticizing gestures. Then, *Presenter D* responded simultaneously with a hesitant intonation statement and a grinning gesture.

The use of vocal segregation is also displayed in the above conversation. *Presenter D* expresses a sound *Aaemm* to represent caution in saying a statement. He also mumbled the sound *aaa...emm...* to inform that he was thinking and had trouble translating a word. Moreover, he also expresses a feeling of giving up on discovering the meaning of "kambing hitam" ("scapegoat" in English translation) in English by saying *Nah* (meaning in Indonesian context, not English), but not be taken seriously. The last, *Audience A* produce the sound *eee...* seems to show that he is responding and understanding what *Presenter D* said.

The discussion of the above findings revealed multimodal paralanguage as a combination of learning strategies to guide people to communicate effectively, especially in performing presentations. Following Kress and van Leeuwen (2006) points of view, this research aims at proving these strategies can be comprehended and implemented in a real-life situation. They said that every kind of communication is a semi-linear instrument that supports the construction of meaning. In this case, using gestures, visualization, voice qualities, or vocalization is a fundamental aspect of multimodal paralanguage communication since it is crucial in attracting the audience's attention.

As displayed previously, most of the students implemented some combination of paralanguage and multimodal components in joining the presentational activity. The purpose of these combinations is to provide creativity in conveying ideas, meanings, or information. This idea can be accepted because, theoretically, the concept of paralanguage is part of multimodality. Paralanguage is concluded as one of the nonverbal language types which is part of

a multimodal communication system (Martin & Zappavigna, 2019; Norrie in Nugraha et al., 2020). In this research, the findings show some examples that oral communication is the most frequently implemented with adding paralinguistic. They commonly combine the use of voices, vocalization, and gestures.

Meanwhile, a small part of the visual mode of multimodal is displayed on their PowerPoint. The choice of presentation activity as learning media also plays a role in the success of the teaching and learning process. Bucher and Niemann (2012) believe that providing a multimodal presentation supports the speaker to use multiple ways to elaborate their ideas by featuring two or more language components, such as signs, gestures, images, utterances, vocalizations, and so forth.

Discussing the features of paralinguistic, Extract 1-3 showed an example of voice qualities, vocal characteristics, vocal segregation, visual mode, and gestural mode. In voice qualities, the features are represented using standard pitch tone, clear sound, and smooth rhythm. The use of hesitant intonation in vocal characteristics indicates the presenter's careful feeling when speaking. Mumbling some sounds of vocal segregation, such as eee..., aaemm..., and others, mean that the presenters create a specific space of time to discover the missing part while speaking at a glance. In this case, the presenters or students display a state they are trying to control and strengthen their communication. Furthermore, the entailment of visual and gestural modes is the improvisation and strategies used by the presenters to deliver information. Especially when using gestural mode, the presenter might have to express their current feelings to the audience by moving their body or showing facial expressions like holding a breath, having a focused face, smiling, laughing, and so forth. These revealing features align with Adler and Rodman (2006) that paralinguistic components play a part in sending a verbal message through another way of nonverbal communication.

CONCLUSION

Groups of EFL students initiate implementing a multimodal paralinguistic as a learning strategy to enhance their presentation performance. They combine two or more paralinguistic components with multimodal modes to communicate in their practice. Voice qualities, vocalization, and gestures are the most

multimodal paralinguistic features used in their activity. Two video documenters attached to the PowerPoint slides are examples of the visual mode used as supporting media to transfer information. The notion from the above findings opens our perception of communication strategies through multimodal paralinguistic. For EFL students, this strategy can help them elaborate their meanings, ideas, opinions, information, and expressions to their interlocutor through various perspectives. The expectation is to make their interaction flow when joining the presentational activity. Therefore, this research is expected to inspire respective students, educators, researchers, or everyone who benefits from the findings.

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