

COMPONENTS OF PUBLIC SPEAKING: THE FACTORS THAT MAKE STUDENTS INTERESTED IN ENGLISH SPEECH AND TEACHING

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Abstract: *This study tries to find out which components of Public Speaking actually make the students interested in English speech and English teaching. This is a descriptive qualitative study where the data for the research were collected through a self-administered questionnaire distributed to all students of the fourth semester at English Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis, Riau. The technique used to collect the data was done by asking the students to watch a video of a speech and then answer the questionnaire given. The questionnaire was set based on relevant literature review and also focused on condition of the students based on daily observation done by the writer during his teaching Public Speaking subject to the students. After collecting the data, the writer sorted the data by summarizing and choosing the specific category, displaying and verifying the data analysis and making the conclusion from the finding data. The findings of this research are hoped to give another point of view to English lecturers to realize certain parts of teaching that actually can make it more interesting for the students. The result of this study shows that Story Telling and Body Language performed by a speaker or a lecturer are among the most interesting aspects that make them interested in an English speech or teaching. Beside, this study also reveals that lack of Pauses and Visual Aids performed by the lecturers make their teaching become less interesting.*

Key Words: *Components of Public Speaking, English Speech, English Teaching*

INTRODUCTION

Developing good public speaking skills is very important for everyone - not only for business purposes, but also for personal and social life

(Nikita: 2011). Job interviews, product presentations, meetings, training, or even when we are asked to give a brief words in our friend's birthday party, public speaking skills are needed. Not

only for a business professional or a politician, public speaking skills are also needed for a teacher in his/her teaching everyday.

For teachers, as well as lecturers, public speaking is one of their significant academic skills. As Mukalel (2007:156) says that a teacher is essentially a public speaker. They not only have to face their class but also other audiences on several occasions.

Lecturers, as everyday public speakers to their audience (students), must have the ability to deliver interesting speech (teaching). To make the students interested in their speech is very important for lecturers so that the teaching-learning process can run more effectively.

For English lecturers, or any lecturers who use English in their teaching, the ability to deliver an interesting speech in English in front of the students is very important. Lecturers who have that capability can make their students more interested in their classes. In contrary, the lecturers who do not have such skills will make their teachings become boring, accept less attentions from the students and failed in gaining their teaching targets.

Therefore, it is important for English lecturers to master and practice the 'Components of Public Speaking' such as: *Story Telling, Body Language, Tone of Voice, Pauses* and *Visual Aids* for their everyday teaching (Nikita: 2011).

Since these components of public speaking are important for lecturers, the writer is interested to know which component/s actually make the students at English Study Program of State Polytechnic of Bengkalis (Polbeng), with their own local characteristics and English proficiency level, interested in an English speech (teaching).

Based on the above situation, this study tries to look from the students' point of view towards:

1. Which components of public speaking from an English speech actually make the students more interested?
2. How is the English Teaching performed by the lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng? Which components of public speaking are there, and which are not?

The findings of this research are hoped to give another point of view to

English lecturers or to the lecturers who deliver their teaching in English at Polbeng, in general, to understand certain parts of teaching that actually make their students interested. Besides, it is also hoped to give information to them about which components of Public Speaking are actually missing from their everyday teaching.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Public Speaking

According to Lucas (2012), Public Speaking is defined as oral communication or presentation ; which is usually delivered formally in front of audience in a formal context. Furthermore, he states that Public Speaking skills empower us to communicate ideas and information in a way that all members of the audience can understand.

Then, he continues, "Throughout history, people have used public speaking as a vital means of communication". Public speaking generally can be applied to all types of majors and occupations and is seen by employers as a necessary skill for job seekers.

No matter what our interests are, developing speaking skills will help us

for our personal, professional, and social life.

Teachers as Public Speakers

The ability to communicate effectively is one of important characteristics of being an educator. Although someone may be an expert on a certain subject, but if he/she cannot communicate it well, the audience cannot get much.

A teacher is, actually, an everyday public speaker who has to acquire the ability to give his best speech (teaching) in front of the audience (students) in his daily teaching-learning activities. As it was stated by Mukalel (2007), teacher is essentially a public speaker. They not only have to face their class but also other audiences on several occasions.

Furthermore, Mukalel says that Public speaking is one of academic skills for teachers. Academic skills are techniques that contribute to the academic development and perfection of individual. By public speaking we not only mean the ability of rhetoric, but also means the ability to face the audience, talk to them using acceptable and formal language, and communicate to them units of information in a most economic and intelligible manner.

It also means that a teacher or a lecturer has to understand and able to apply many aspects in public speaking theoretically and practically in their teaching, including the components of public speaking.

Components of Public Speaking

Nikita (2011) states that there are five components in public speaking that can make you an effective and successful public speaker, including: (1) Storytelling, (2) Body language, (3) Tone of Voice, (4) Pauses, and (5) Visual Aids. Besides bringing good materials onto their speech, public speakers should also own the above components to make their speech successful.

Storytelling

Everyone loves to listen to stories. A good story can give a hypnotic effect to the listeners.

Storytelling can be defined as a structured narrative account of real or imagined events that is widely used in public speaking as a medium for sharing, interpreting and offering the content of the story to the listeners.

Professional public speakers use storytelling in their presentations for a variety of purposes, such as to relieve tension, Make important points of the

presentation memorable, Raise the energy level of the group and emphasize the message.

Body Language

Among all of non-verbal communication, body language is one of the most important aspects. (John, D: 2017). Body language is the express of thoughts, intentions or feelings expressed through physical behavior such as facial expressions, body postures, gestures, eye movements, contact, touch and the use of space.

As Nikita (2011) continues that in many professional and personal situations what you say may have a lesser impact on your listeners than how you say it. In other words, people can forget what we say, but what we express nonverbally while speaking will be always remembered.

Tone of voice

Toastmasters International in its articles called 'Our Speaking Voice' (2011) states that: "Your greatest tool as a speaker is your voice. Every time you address an audience your mind, your body, and your voice act as partners in your effort to communicate with your listeners. When you speak, your voice is the primary link between

you and your listeners. It is the medium of your message”.

It means that our voice plays a critical role in our success as a public speaker. Furthermore, according to an analysis of media appearances by top 120 financial communicators, the sound of a speaker's voice matters twice as much as the content of the message.

According to Nikita (2011), tone of voice in public speaking including: *Pace* (speed), *Pitch* (highness or lowness of voice) and *Volume* (loudness). In the other view, Beebe et.al (2009) states that there are seven features for an effective vocal delivery including *Pronunciation*, *Articulation*, *Volume*, *Pitch*, *Rate*, *Pause* and *Variation*.

Pauses

Morreale (2010) states that, “Even while speaking fairly quickly, a silent pause can be use to emphasize a point and allow your listeners a moment to think about it.

Andrew Dlugan in Sixminutes Speaking and Presentation Skills, article of August 19th, 2012 states that effective use of speech pauses is a master technique. Furthermore, he says that there are several benefits of

effective pauses for example pauses help the audience to understand, help to convey emotion, control the pace in delivery, help to engage audience, and to replace filler words.

Visual Aids

Visual aids or visual helps such as pictures, graphics, flip charts, power point slides, or videos, can be very helpful for audience to understand a speech or presentation more effectively and efficiently.

As Nikita (2011) says that visual aids add impact and clarity to the presentation as they allow a speaker to appeal to more than one sense at the same time, thereby increasing the audience's understanding of abstract concepts and complex data material.

Furthermore she says approximately 83% of learning occurs visually and only 11% through hearing. When it comes to analyzing and committing information to memory our mind places greater importance on visual images and not to the spoken words.

Actually, the content/message is also significant aspect that makes the audience interested in a speech, but for the purpose of this study, the writer tries to focus on something outside the

content – that is the component of public speaking itself.

METHODS

This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative research method. As Travers (2001) says that a qualitative study has strong correlation with activities and behaviors with human groups. A descriptive qualitative method would be suitable in interpreting the data including developing the description of an individual or setting, analyzing the data for themes or categories and finally making an interpretation or drawing conclusions about its meaning personally and theoretically (Creswell, 2013).

Data Collection Method

The data were collected by asking the students to watch an English speech video. The video used here was the video of President Barack Obama's Speech in University of Indonesia in November 10th, 2010. The video was taken from YouTube channel called The Obama White House with the video title of 'Indonesia's Example to the World'. This video was chosen because of some reasons. *First*: The speech contains all the components of Public

Speaking needed for this study, such as: Story Telling, Body Language, Tone of Voice, Pauses and Visual Aids. *Second*, the speech is delivered by one of best public speakers, Barack Obama, whom we had already recognized the quality and the capability. *Third*, there are some other YouTube channels also contains this speech, but the quality of audio and video are not as good as this video.

Together with the video, the students were also given a self-administered questionnaire that distributed to all of them (11 students) of the fourth semester of English Study Program at State Polytechnic of Bengkalis as the object of this study. These students were chosen because: First, they are homogenous in certain level of English Proficiency. Second, they had learned Public Speaking during their Public Speaking class this semester and also already had the knowledge about the Components of Public Speaking.

The questionnaire which consists of eight units of questions is divided into two groups. Questions part A, number 1 to 5 are related to the video and question part B, number 6 to 8 are related to the teaching performance of

English lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng.

The questionnaire was started with a general question about whether the speech in the video is easy to understand or not and then whether it is interested or not. Then, the questionnaire continued to ask about more specific questions related to the components of public speaking that the students interested from the speech video. In part B of the questionnaire, the questions focus on the teaching performance given by the lecturers whether the teaching interesting or not for the students. Then, the question continues to ask about the components of public speaking practiced by the lecturers in their teaching.

The questionnaire also provided with some essay questions as to give the room for the respondents to describe more facts about their feelings. The questionnaire was set based on relevant literature review and also focused on condition of the students based on daily observation done by the writer during his teaching on Public Speaking subject to the students.

In other words, this method exposed the students with two

different models of English speeches – Obama's versus the lecturers', and then let the students assess from their own point of view.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Most of the students agreed that the speech delivered by President Barack Obama in the University of Indonesia on November 10th, 2010 was easy to understand. The points of the speech they wrote showed that they understood the content of the speech.

Furthermore, all of the students said that the speech in the video was 'interesting' with 'Story Telling' and 'Tone of Voice' as dominant components of public speaking that the students really interested.

Most of the students thought that the teaching performance given by the English lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng was generally interesting with good points at *Story Telling* and *Body Language*. However, *Pauses* and *Visual Aids* are among the components of Public Speaking that should be given some improvements in their teaching.

This fact was in line with what Nikita (2011) said in her five

Components of Public Speaking which includings Story Telling, Body Language, Tone of Voice, Pauses and Visual Aids as the five aspects that could make a public speaker or public speech is interesting or not for the audience.

Discussion

Which Components of Public Speaking make the students really interested?

The data showed that all of the fourth semester students at English Study Program of Polbeng are ‘interested’ in the speech delivered by President Barack Obama in the video showed to them. The result of this study showed that 72.7% of the students interested in the *Story Telling* and *Body Language* performed by the speaker in the video. Besides, other components such as *Tone of Voice*, *Pauses* and *Visual Aids* seemed not really interested to them with the percentage of only 13.6%, 9.1%, and 4.5% of their interest.

One of interesting things found here related to other factors (out of the five components of Public Speaking) that also made the students interested in the speech was ‘the ability of the speaker in using the language of the

audience (Bahasa Indonesia)’. For example, one of the students wrote, “*Obama can speak Bahasa, I think it is awesome*”, and the other said, “*It was funny when he spoke Bahasa Indonesia, but we felt close to him. I think it made his speech interesting*”.

Besides, some of the students were also interested in other factors such as the speaker’s ‘smile’, sense of humor’, and ‘response towards the audience’s laughter’. As for example, some students said, “*He’s humorist and he responded when the audience laughing. That’s good.*”

In other side, only few of them noted about ‘the content/material of the speech’ or ‘the reputation of the speaker’ as the other factors that make them interested in speech given by President Obama in the video.

How is the English Teaching performed by the Lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng?

The data showed that 45.5% of the students thought that the English teaching performed by the lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng was ‘interesting’ and 27.3% said it was ‘very interesting’.

Among those who said that the lecturers' teaching performance was very interesting or interesting, most of them (81.8%) were interested in the *Story Telling* and *Body Language* performed by the lecturers during their teaching – the two identical components of public speaking that the students also interested in President Obama's speech.

Related to other factors, out of the five components of public speaking, that makes the students interested to the teaching delivered by the lecturers, not many of them giving their opinion. However, some of them noted about the jokes and friendliness performed by the lecturers in their teaching.

In the other side, only 18.2% said 'less interesting' and 9.1% thought it was 'not interesting'.

Furthermore, among those who thought that the teaching was less or not interesting, they noted about the lack of *Pauses* and *Visual Aids* applied by the lecturers in their teaching.

CONCLUSION& SUGGESTION

A lecturer is an everyday public speaker. Therefore, the ability to communicate effectively (public speaking) in front of the students is necessary for the lectures in their everyday teaching performances.

Beside having good lesson plans or preparing good materials for the teaching, there are some other factors which should also be taken into account by lecturers – they are the components of public speaking.

Story Telling and *Body Language* performed by the lecturers while teaching are actually two vital components that make the students interested, more interesting than Tone of Voice, Pauses or Visual Aids.

The lecturers at English Study Program of Polbeng have been generally successful in conducting interesting English teaching for the students. However, there are still some aspects should be improved, such as giving some Pauses while speaking and using interesting Visual Aids for their teaching materials.

Besides, using some of local words or mother tongue of the students in the teaching is another important factor should be considered by the lecturers to make their classes interesting.

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