The Application of Multimedia-Based Presentation in Improving Students' Speaking Skill

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Although speaking is one the important skills, it is not easy to have this skill. English teachers have used various techniques to improve students' speaking skill. So far, however, there has been little discussion about the role of multimedia-based presentation in improving students' speaking skill. This action research taking place at a private university in Serang, Banten investigated the use of multimedia-based presentation to improve speaking skill. The findings showed that students' speaking and presentation skills improved and their confidence to speak in front of the class increased. Students also learned technology which is beneficial for their study and future career. This study, therefore, suggests that teachers consider this aid in teaching-learning processes.

Keywords: multimedia-based presentation, speaking skill, classroom action research.

Meskipun berbicara adalah salah satu keterampilan yang penting, tidak mudah memperoleh kemampuan ini. Guru bahasa Inggris telah menerapkan berbagai teknik untuk memperbaiki keterampilan berbicara siswa. Namun sejauh ini diskusi tentang peran presentasi berbasis multimedia masih jarang. Penelitian tindakan yang mengambil tempat di sebuah perguruan tinggi di swasta di Serang, Banten ini meneliti tentang penggunaan presentasi berbasis multimedia untuk meningkatkan kemampuan berbicara. Hasil penelitian ini menunjukan bahwa kemampuan berbicara dan presentasi siswa meningkat, juga kepercayaan diri siswa ketika berbicara di depan kelas. Siswa juga belajar menggunakan teknologi, yang bermanfaat untuk kuliah dan karir mereka di masa depan. Oleh karena itu penelitian ini mengusulkan kepada guru untuk mempertimbangkan penggunaan multimedia dalam pembelajaran.

INTRODUCTION

In the second half of the 20th century, education technologies were one of the most popular and developed areas in the world. Computers, which have entered the school life in the late 1950s in developed countries, are constantly developing day by daythroughout the world. Today, they have become more powerful, faster, easier to use, more convenient and cheaper, and they can also process and store much more data. Romi and Zoabi (as cited in O'Hara, 2011), who investigated the impacts of computer technology on the self-esteem of dropout youth, report that "technology can have a positive effect on student attitudes toward learning, self-confidence, and self-esteem" (p. 3). With regard to learning, a study by Sanaoui and Lapkin (as cited in Stepp-Greany, 2002) revealed that technology encouraged the development ofschool students' independent learning in French, with its findings showing that over 85% of the students agreed that the instructor interacted with them to facilitate difficulties in the computer use.

Technology is the product of human being that can be helpful to enhance education, especially in the learning and teaching processes. In other words technology is one of the tools that can be applied effectively in learning activities and may encourage individuals' motivation. Multimedia is a part of technology that can facilitate students to be involved in learning process with their own preferred ways. Multimedia is a term frequently heard and discussed among educationaltechnologists today. It covers the combination of computer hardware and software that allows students to integrate video, animation, audio, graphics, and test resources to developeffective presentations on an affordable desktop computer. Using computers and every kind of technological equipment may give students the sense of freedom and encouragement.

One of the objectives of English curriculum in most non English speaking countries, including Indonesia, is to make students able to communicate with people around the world. One of the communication forms is giving presentation. However, in the Indonesian context, there seems to be some problems arising in the classroom regarding presentation skills. The first problem is students still lack vocabulary and English grammar to improve an oral English presentation. Second, they lack self confidence in performing an English presentation. Third, many schools still lack technology such as computer, English learning software, and LCD or projectors that can help enhance students' learning activities. Finally, there seems to be a lack of highly qualified human resources in teaching presentation skills in the Indonesian EFL context. This study, therefore, focused on the use of multimedia-based

presentation and the suitable materials for performing an oral English presentation. The following two questions were posed in this study:

1. What are the suitable materials which meet the students' needs to improve their speaking skill?

2. How can the multimedia-based presentation be effectively used to improve the students' speaking skill?

Multimedia in the Language Classroom

The use of multimedia technology in education has created a significant impact on the development of learning instruction and the methods of communicating information to learners. Collins, Hammond, and Wellington (2002) describes multimedia as "the way of presenting material (often learning material) which involves three or more of the following media within a computer environment: speech or other sound; drawing or diagrams; animated drawings or diagrams; photographs or other images; video clips; text i.e. the printed word" (p. 3). A similar idea is proposed by Agnew (as cited in Neo& Neo, 2009) who states that "multimedia has been shown to affect students' motivation and self-esteem levels, as well as allow them to become creative and self-directed thinkers" (p. 254).

Computer is also a device that processes information with a great speed and accuracy. Computers process information by helping create the information itself, displaying, storing, recognizing, and communicating information to other computers. In general they process numbers, words, pictures, and sounds. Gunduz (2005) states that "the computer has changed the way the people work, learn, and communicate. It is used by students, teachers, and research scientists as a learning tool all over the world, as well as by individuals at home to study, work and entertain" (p. 195).

Those ideas can be inferred that multimedia and computers are the learning tools which can be effectively applied to encourage the motivation and interest of students. It can give benefits for learners because it can provide some attractive features, engage them in interactive learning atmosphere, and let them feel free to learn with their own ways. Besides, it is believed that multimedia can enhance the learning and teaching processes to be more interesting and innovative and can actively involve students' participation.

There have been some studies (Anggraini, 2010; Schcolnik & Kol, 1999) attempting to improve four language skills through multimedia based teaching. A study by Schcolnik and Kol (1999) has proven that computer applications have been used in many school disciplines and thus changing teaching methodologies throughout the curriculum. This tool

allows students to experience a world of real language opportunity. Through computers, students can do some activities. First, students read source materials. Then they articulate and crystallize their ideas through interaction with their peers and teacher. Finally, they write them on computer slides and share their writing with others in classroom.

Anggraini (2010) conducted her study with regard to the application of technology in classroom. The study revealed that students who applied PowerPoint presentation improved their speaking skill. PowerPoint presentation is a computer-software program that facilitates learners to learn creatively and interactively. The findings of the study showed that before implementing English program and applying PowerPoint presentation as teaching and learning technique, there were 25 out of 37 participants (68%) who performed 'fair' presentation skill, while 12 participants (32%) were categorized as 'poor.' After they were given a model of an effective presentation skill, the results indicated that there were 20 participants (54%) whose performance was categorized as 'very good,' and 17 participants (46%) performed a 'good' presentation skill.

Based on the previous studies, the present study mainly concerned with the application of multimedia-based presentation to encourage students speaking skill. Besides this, it also investigated whether there is a significant improvement of students' performance in oral presentation by applying multimedia based presentation as an innovative technique that can be used in the teaching-learning processes. The findings of this study are expected to give more understanding regarding the use of multimedia in promoting students' speaking skills and give practical know-how for (Indonesian) EFL practitioners interested in this field.

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted action research and took place at the Economics Department at one of private universities in Serang, Banten. There were two majors in the department: Management and Accounting. 30 students at the 4th semester majoring in Accounting participated in this study.

This study did several stages. The first stage was planning. In the planning stage, the researcher obtained consent from the head of Economic Department to conduct action research. Then observation and interview were done to find out the condition of learning process. Finally, the researcher set the evaluation instrument used to measure and assess the students' weaknesses and strengths in speaking.

The next stage was cycle one. In this stage, the researcher set tasks and pattern concerning presentation practice before giving a presentation model and guidelines of how to do a good presentation for the purpose of developing speaking ability. The researcher also observed the activity focusing on how far the effectiveness of the first performance, evaluated the result of the practice, modified the medium or materials of study based on the previous evaluation and observation, and did reflection.

The next stage was cycle two. In this stage, students were given a presentation model and guidelines by applying multimedia-based presentation before they delivered presentation. Peer observer was adopted to help the researcher measure the students' performances. Observation and evaluation were conducted to see the effectiveness of the instruction and the students' achievement. Finally, the researcher did reflection to find out what was still wrong in this stage.

In the stage of cycle three, the researcher collaborated with a peer observer to assess the progress of students' speaking skills. In this stage, students gave the third presentation using multimedia-based presentation. The activity was observed and evaluated to see the effectiveness of this activity and to know the difficulties of using this medium.

Data Collecting Methods

Four methods to collect the data were adopted in this study: questionnaire, observation, presentation assessment form, and interview. Questionnaire was adopted to find comments, statements, and perception for needs analysis in order to lead the researcher to apply multimedia-based presentation. The questionnaire asked three points. First, it asked what the students needed to improve their speaking skills. Second, it asked what materials could be used and matched to their field of study. Third, the questionnaire asked what the institution expected from its graduates concerning their English skill. Regarding observation, the researcher attempted to find out how students speaking skill improved. Since this study required students to give English presentation, their presentation was assessed; therefore, presentation assessment form was used to measure the improvement of students speaking performances. Finally, interview was used to find out what students felt regarding the activity. Only ten students were interviewed as samples.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSIONS

With regard to the suitable materials students need to improve their speaking skills, the researcher asked five questions: (a) Does the given material make you comfortable in doing

oral presentation? (b) Does the given material make you feel free to improve your English? (c) Does the given material make you speak actively? (d) Does the given material make you interested in doing an oral presentation? (e) Does the given material make you motivated to practice your English orally?

The findings showed that 5% of the students said the given material did not give any effect on their motivation and interest in learning the language. The majority of them stated that (a) they were not familiar with oral presentation in English and difficult topics, (b) they were not accustomed to giving presentation, (c) they could not express their thoughts in English, and (d) they had problems with vocabulary, grammar patterns, and language expressions. In solving the problems faced by the students, the researcher designed the grammar lessons using the basic form of PowerPoint presentation for their learning materials, gave them a model for oral presentation, and asked them to practice. It is based on what they need to learn for improving their English skills. By learning grammar they expect they can speak better English. Furthermore they should be familiar with the advanced technology such as internet access and computer because they should be able to download their preferred topics and design their own PowerPoint slides with interesting animation, pictures, and sounds in order to make the presentation more attractive and effective.

In the second activity of cycle two, 4.1% of the students said that the grammar lessons could make them feel motivated and interested in order to be able to practice oral presentation, while 0.9% of the students informed that they did not feel free to improve their English and speak actively. This may be because they still lacked understanding English grammar and language expressions. To solve the problems, the researcher provided the guidelines of oral presentation which contained many English expressions and suggestions commonly used for presentation they can learn and practice.

Finally, in the activity three of the third cycle, finding showed that 5% of the students stated they were motivated to learn grammar in order to improve their speaking skills. They were also eager to learn English grammar deeper and have more vocabulary and English expressions. They were getting interested in practicing oral presentation for improving their speaking skills.

In connection with the students' progress of speaking skills, the following cycles inform the findings:

Cycle One

In the planning stage, the researcher planned to design the learning scenario by putting the students into groups, giving them the topics that they had to present, and arranging the schedule time for conducting the research. The given topics were about education, how to be a good accountant, technology in education, health, and computer. Those topics had to be presented by each group for ten minutes. There were six groups which consisted of five students in each group, so each student had two minutes to present their parts of presentation.

In the implementation stage, after having their topics, students presented the topics with their own ways in front of the class. This activity was done before they had the guidelines of oral presentation, watched a good model of presentation, and practiced the presentation. During the activity, the researcher along with a peer observer observed each group to assess the extent to which they used English or Indonesian and to determine whether they were doing presentation well. Their presentation was recorded to know their speaking progress.

In the observation stage, the researcher did some observation. The results of the first cycle showed that 15.53% of the students performed a 'poor' presentation. They were not familiar to practice presentation in English orally, and they did not present their presentation systematically. Besides this, most of them could not design their PowerPoint slides effectively.

Having seen the activity, the researcher observed that there were several things that need to be improved: (a) students faced the problems of delivering their topics in front of the class, they were not accustomed to practice oral presentation in English, (b) they lacked confidence and motivation to learn English, (c) they felt reluctant and frustrated when performing an oral presentation in the classroom, (d) they could not explore their ideas in front of the class because they felt scared to speak, (e) most of them still depended on their handouts when they were presenting their slides, (f) they lacked grammar, vocabulary, and language expressions, (g) they could not present their information in sequent manner because they did not know the rules of doing presentation, (h) they were not familiar with the PowerPoint used for presentation, and the important thing is (i) the time in one meeting was not enough for them to practice oral presentation.

Reflecting on activities in this first cycle, it was found that most students were actually good in non-verbal delivery; however, they were still very confused what to say. The time allotment was also restricted. They did not perform oral presentation well because they felt that the given material or topic was very difficult for them to do presentation in English.

Based on the results of students' responses about the materials, they really wanted to learn English grammar in order to be able to speak English well. The researcher looked more deeply into those problems and decided to provide the grammar lessons in the form of PowerPoint. It was then uploaded into the web-blog of language center, which was designed for learning media. The researcher also gave them a model of oral presentation and the guidelines of oral presentation which aimed to help them express their thoughts in English and deliver their presentation with their preferred ways. In line with encouraging the students' confidence, the researcher provided the extensive exposures, so that they could rehearse oral presentation as much as possible.

Cycle Two

In the planning stage of this cycle, the researcher designed grammar lessons in accordance with what the students requested such as 'too' and 'enough,' passive sentences, conditional sentences, modal auxiliaries, etc. Dealing with the problem of time allotment, the researcher provided extensive classes for their practices in oral presentation. The students had two meetings in two hours in the extensive classes. In these classes, they were given a model of oral presentation and the guidelines of good presentation.

In the implementation stage, the students still worked in group and cooperated to perform better presentation. They were given more practice. Then the researcher gave a good model on how to do presentation in English and familiarized various expressions included in the guidelines of presentation. Moreover, students had some practice on how to design attractive PowerPoint slides. With the help of internet access, they could get many downloadable templates and animations of PowerPoint. During the extensive classes, the students had two meetings in two hours for their practice; then they were required to perform their presentation in one meeting. Each group had ten minutes to present their topics.

Having observed the activity, the results showed that 0.6% of the students did a poor presentation. Some of them said that pronouncing English words was difficult. Most students who did a satisfactory presentation informed that they were getting interested in learning grammar because they thought that without understanding English grammar they could not speak English effectively.

The activity in cycle two showed that students' skill in oral presentation improved. Their presentation slides looked attractive, and they were more active than before. Only a small number of students did a poor presentation due to their weak pronunciation skill. This all can be concluded that because the students were getting motivated to practice oral

presentation, they also felt motivated to design their PowerPoint slides to look more attractive. They also tried to learn more English grammar and expressions.

Cycle Three

Letting the students practice more actively by giving them motivation and more time to rehearse their presentation was the first thing which was more effective for them to get more confidence to express their ideas and deliver their presentation more attractively. Second, in motivating them, the researcher tried to collaborate with a foreign teacher and lecturer to stimulate them to improve their English skills. Third, the researcher taught them simple grammar such as countable and uncountable nouns, types of gerund, question tags, etc. to help them present their topics. Again, each group had 10 minutes to present their topics.

In the implementation stage, the students kept going on presenting their work of PowerPoint in group so that each student could demonstrate his/her ability in speaking and elaborate information in more sequent manner. Each student was given not more than 2 minutes in presenting their parts of PowerPoint presentation. The researcher recorded the progress and improvements of students' performance.

Having observed the activity, the results showed that there was no more 'poor' presentation. A very small number of the students (0.6%) did a satisfactory performance. The majority of the students performed a 'good' presentation. A good presentation means that the students were capable of explaining and giving their information or ideas, were able to present their information in logical and interesting sequence, designed better PowerPoint slides integrated with interesting multimedia such as animations, picture, templates, etc., and did effective presentations. Reflecting on this cycle, it shows that the students were getting interested in learning the language and motivated to practice more presentation. The findings showed that their speaking skills improved, and they could deliver a better presentation.

CONCLUSIONS

As mentioned, some authors have discussed the role of multimedia in improving students' speaking skills. This action research has shown that the notion is true. Multimedia can be included in a speaking class to help students perform better oral presentation. This may be due to the characteristic of multimedia which can be attractive since it can contain animation, sound, figures, etc. However, this is only a teaching-learning aid. Providing students with basic skills such as grammar, vocabulary and a model of presentation is still more important.

This study took place at one of universities in Serang at the Economics Department. One of the limitations is each individual was not given much time to present since they had to do it in group. Further action research may be needed to explore the effects of multimedia in a small EFL classroom, and further studies may be needed to investigate the effectiveness of multimedia-based presentation in different departments or secondary school setting. Finally, a more robust study needs to be done to investigate the role of multimedia in improving students' speaking (presentation) skills.

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