

Original Article

Business English Presentation: Problematic Issues among Students of Business with Non-English Background

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Abstract – The present study is intended to probe problems and approaches encountered and employed by students when performing business English presentation. They are taking Diploma 3 Study Program and Diploma 4 Study Program of Business Administration Department at State Polytechnic of Malang, Indonesia. It is admitted that those students are having no English background in their daily situation. The problems and approaches are viewed from two different perspectives: the students and the teacher. The data are obtained through questionnaire, interview, and observation. The findings confirm that most students are in favor of Business English presentation. However, some prominent problems are clearly spotted. The students somehow employ some approaches as well to overcome their problems.

Keywords - Business English, Non-English Background, Presentation, Problems, Approaches

I. INTRODUCTION

As English has become a language used within the global community, the necessity to use it in almost every aspect of human's life is definitely vital. English has bridged the gap between people from all over the world with different background (Sukitkanaporn and Phoocharoensil, 2014). Thus, in a more challenging sense, English functions to express and receive information, communication, persuasion, negotiation, and socialization (Anandha, 2019).

In the world of business, English plays even more significant role. The launch of the Asean Economic Community (AEC) has utilized English into a greater extent (Sukitkanaporn and Phoocharoensil, 2014). Given such a fact, acquiring English as a language used worldwide is unavoidable. Thus, proficiency in English and skill in presentation is essential to meet the demands of the global market (Datu, 2017). In this sense, business communication

skills are indispensable to one's career and his organizational success (Komar, 2019). They add that business presentation has been the frequent form of business communication practice. In other words, presentation has become one of the skills necessitated in business world.

Most students taking Business Administration Department at State Polytechnic of Malang are of those with no English circumstance in their daily situation. They might find Business English presentation quite problematic. Most of them seem to be hesitant to do so. Some presentation weaknesses like: reading the notes or slides all the time, getting stuck to speak up, not involving much, and other possible poor performances of presentation are frequently noticed. However, it is never identified distinctly the real presentation problems encountered by students. Most of the time, the only claim set forth by most English teachers is merely their English proficiency. It is only one side claim, somehow.

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II. REVIEW OF RELATED LITERATURE

The students who are exposed to effective presentation skills during their class instruction gain more improved presentation capability required for their professional competence in the workplace (Sukitkanaporn & Phoocharoensil, 2014). Moreover, they suggests that points to be more concerned in dealing with oral presentation include the delivery (accurate pronunciation, pace, organization, intonation and clearliness) and content of presentation. A study by Indrianti (2018) found that business presentation is of a benefit for the students' future, either to apply for a work or to develop a career. In this sense Then, it is also previously analyzed that skills employed in English courses, including the ESP classes, like Business English



ones, are primarily led to oral communication or speaking skills (Indrianti, 2019).

A good presentation is normally supported by slides for presentation. The widely used slide template is Power Point Presentation. A study by Anandha (2019) emphasized that the power point media can be of a supporting tool to help students clarify their presentation. Anandha (2019) adds the use of power point in the students' presentation which benefits both the students and teacher in a sense that power point presentation requires students' another skill, the use of technology, rather than just a language learning, and power point aids a communication assessment tool for teachers.

A. Business Presentation in English

English, practically, has been a foreign language in an Indonesian circumstance. However, as this country also put a commitment as an international community, acquiring English is indispensable.

According to Thittongkam (2011), a foreign language, not to mention English, takes an essential part in business as it is used to communicate with customers, competitors, employers, or even colleagues. In addition. Acquiring foreign language is to promote understanding, communications, and negotiations, particularly in the business world.

Communication skills are highly demanded nowadays, especially for students in the tertiary levels. Thus, they demand lot of opportunity to develop and practice communication skills since such skills are beneficial for their future, such as to give presentations at conferences, symposia or other meetings (Živković, 2014).

Presentation, according to Hanifa & Yusra (2018), is regarded as a part of extensive speaking performance. Presentation is an activity which requires processes of preplanning, preparing, and structuring talks performed either in formal or less formal situation to a small or large group of people Bereczky (in Hanifa & Yusra, 2018). Some studies have indicated that communication skills predominantly are characterized with presentation (Sukitkanaporn & Phoocharoensil, 2014). Business presentation is included among the oral presentation genres (Kaur and Ali, 2018).

B. Students' Problems in Performing Presentations

Thornbury (in Hanifa & Yusra, 2018) classify factors contributing to a presentation success into three categories, namely cognitive factor, affective factors, and performance factors. Cognitive factors, in this sense, include: familiarity with the presentation topic, the genre, and the interlocutors (those who take parts in the conversation). Furthermore, affective factors are of: the feeling in regard to the topic and/or the participant, and self-consciousness. Finally, the

performance factors deal with planning and rehearsal time, time pressure, and environmental condition.

Teachers can also be a contributing factor toward students' presentation success. In this sense, teachers play multi-faceted roles. They take part in preparing detailed guidelines, organizing groups, helping students to select topics, guiding their research and helping them learn the use of various visual aids, providing feedback on the sequencing of ideas, and evaluating their performance (King, 2002 cited in Živković, 2014). In addition, Živković (2014) puts forth the role of teachers as learning facilitators, creators of social and intellectual climates, leaders and coordinators of learning process.

Al-Hebaish (2012) highlighted the importance of self-confidence in speaking a foreign language since it will gear learners to be ready to speak in public, work hard, perform well and achieve academic success. In contrast, he adds, low self-confident learners will feel uncomfortable, afraid, frustrated in the classroom resulting in less effective and satisfactory academic achievement in general.

Therefore, crucial problems in performing presentation cannot be neglected easily. Anandha's study (2019) has found out that most students do not feel confident and experience nervousness in front of audience. Another study of Whai and Mei (2015) points out several presentation problems, such as lack of practice, linguistic factors referring to the lack of English proficiency among the students, psychological perspective in regard with lack of confidence and nervousness. Hanifa and Yusra (2018) have listed possible problems encountered by students of higher education, as well as strategies they employ. First, students tend to focus on slides without paying attention to audiences. Second, students lose audience's attention. Third, students encounter time limitation. Fourth, students are nervous. Fifth, students faced mispronunciation. Sixth, students are apt to determine appropriate words to use in certain condition. Seventh, students lose idea due to lack of information. Eighth, students avoid direct eye contact with more knowledgeable audiences. Ninth, students face unattractive audiences causing less confident. Tenth, students are too much concerned about grammar. Eleventh, students tend to connect idea more and more.

C. Students' Strategies in Dealing with Presentations

Hanifa & Yusra (2018) point out some important findings dealing with a successful presentation. According to them, sufficient preparation and practices are keys to a successful presentation. Meanwhile, nervousness in regard to time limitation and audience has become the source of the problem causing presentation to fail. To resolve their problem, improving self confidence, underlining only some important points in the presentation, and anticipating audience's questions are mostly employed.

In regard to strategies, Hanifa and Yusra (2018) have elicited some points from the students' view. First, students try to create ice breaking to attract audiences' attention. Second, students skipping less important point. Third, students observe their friends' presentation. Fourth, students ask for feedback. Fifth, students check their mispronounced words in dictionary. Sixth, students build trust to themselves. Seventh, students address difficult questions to audiences. Eighth, students learn from mistakes for next presentation. Ninth, students use small notes being prepared in advance. Tenth, students anticipate possible questions. Eleventh, students try to be relaxed, Twelfth, students confirm audiences' understanding. Thirteenth, students avoid excessive practice. Fourteenth, students use gesture. Fifteenth, students do code switching

A study by Datu (2016) propose some strategies the teacher can attempt so as to improve the students' confidence level in English presentation, as follows: identifying students' profile before conducting public speaking class, seating lay-outing, self-presenting, and topic challenge.

III. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The population of the present study was the second year students taking the fourth semester of Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang. The purposive random sampling procedure was deployed to get the sample of 50 students. The study was conducted from June 2020 to August 2020, by distributing questionnaire, interviewing, and taking field notes.

The questionnaire tapped the students' drawbacks and approach when performing business English presentation. In the meantime, the interview was done to highlight all issues intended in the questionnaire. After all, the field notes were to backup all points of students' problems and approaches form the teacher's point of view. Three presentations were to be completed by students, comprising the presentations of: (1) company profile and product catalog; (2) market research; and (3) advertising.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The majority of students, accounted for 94% indicated their willingness and happiness to do business English presentation. It makes sense, however, as students of vocational college are encouraged to do more practices than just focusing on theories. Students of Business studies undoubtedly involve much in business presentation accordingly (Sukitkanaporn and Phoocharoensil, 2014; Indrianti, 2018). Those students shared something in common in regard to the reasons to like Business English presentation and problems they have faced. Two dominant factors the students confessed were that this activity build their self-confidence to communicate in front of public (46%), and nurture communication and presentation skills in Business English (56%).

The students mentioned that they "always" (26%), "frequently" (27%), "sometimes" (42%), "never" (6%) experienced psychological symptoms when assigned to have business English presentation. Nineteen (19) psychological conditions were detected as follows.

Table 1. Psychological Symptoms

| | Always | Frequently | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Cold hands | 8% | 21% | 56% | 19% |
| Pounding heart | 15% | 42% | 36% | 11% |
| Stomacache suffering | 0% | 13% | 18% | 71% |
| Fast heart beat | 2% | 8% | 44% | 58% |
| Trembling hands | 6% | 10% | 53% | 32% |
| Trembling knees | 0% | 2% | 18% | 82% |
| Sweating | 0% | 6% | 35% | 62% |
| Eating appetite effect | 0% | 9% | 6% | 93% |
| Feeling nervous | 11% | 45% | 49% | 9% |
| Feeling afraid | 4% | 23% | 45% | 29% |
| Feeling ashamed to be laughed | 4% | 11% | 53% | 35% |
| Increasingly feeling stressed out | 14% | 37% | 31% | 22% |
| Hesitance to speak up | 14% | 31% | 49% | 9% |
| Losing words in the presentation | 8% | 65% | 26% | 4% |
| Inability to produce correct and systematic words and sentences | 11% | 81% | 9% | 2% |
| Having no focus | 0% | 36% | 33% | 31% |
| Inability to respond to questions | 5% | 83% | 9% | 4% |
| Inability to speak fluently | 16% | 75% | 11% | 2% |
| | | | | |

The problems are related to the students' English proficiency as cognitive factor, and self-confidence and nervousness as affective factors (see-Al-Hebaish, 2012; Whai and Mei, 2015; Hanifa and Yusra, 2018; Anandha, 2019). Most students said they frequently had difficulty in organizing their words or sentences in correct and systematic

way. They also claim to be unable to respond to questions from the audience during the presentation. They even lost words resulting in speaking less fluently during the presentation. All of those problems may be due to their limited English proficiency that lead them to feel less confident. The teacher's notes also signified the inadequate English proficiency, in terms of incorrect pronunciation, lack of vocabulary range and clear mistakes of basic grammar.

Admitting their low proficiency of English, the students then tend to experience affective factors, such as: running out of words they prepare in advance—as an indication of being nervous, being afraid of making mistakes or being laughed by the audience, feeling stressed or tensed. The students' nervousness and lack of confidence are also signified by psychological symptoms, like: trembling hands, fast heart-beating, feeling tensed/stressed, sweating a lot, being worried and nervous.

One more drawback noticed through the observation was that of insufficient presentation skills. Some did not meet the standard of presentation structure, had very monotonous, and still showed bad body language like: fidgeting, and bad eye-contact.

Table 2. Approaches Applied in the Presentation

| | Always | Frequently | Sometimes | Never |
|---|--------|------------|-----------|-------|
| Practicing presentation in advance | 33% | 25% | 39% | 4% |
| Memorizing sentences for presentation | 33% | 43% | 23% | 2% |
| Structuring presentation based on teacher's instruction | 44% | 35% | 22% | 0% |
| Making summary | 31% | 32% | 36% | 3% |
| Reading slides | 2% | 43% | 53% | 2% |
| Building one's own self-confidence | 11% | 15% | 67% | 53% |
| Having confidence to use one's own English | 16% | 49% | 33% | 3% |
| Avoiding eye-contact with audiences | 13% | 38% | 62% | 14% |
| Making jokes/games as ice-breaking | 12% | 12% | 29% | 52% |

The most frequently employed approach was structuring presentation. The students noticed the teacher's explanation in regard with how to have a good presentation. Memorizing sentences in advance was also the students' choice to present better. Surprisingly, many of them preferred to use their own English instead of memorizing the sentences or reading notes or slides.

The least employed approach was ice breaking activities, such as making jokes or inserting games. Building their own self-confidence seemed to be the approach they were not likely to prefer as well.

From the interview and observation, it was noticed that the students followed the presentation structure as suggested by their teacher. It was admitted that the students tried to make notes and memorize their sentences. They occasionally read their notes during their presentation. When trying to memorize sentences, the students' performance looked too formal and awkward to a certain extent. The teacher acknowledged that the students do rehearsal prior to their presentation. It is noticed that they look prepared somehow. However, there are some points of strategies noticed by the teacher but not mentioned by the students. It was perceived that some students read the slides during the presentation. The students also tended to avoid eye-contact with the audience. They made attempts to build their self-confidence, one of which, by making positive affirmation to themselves, like: stating that they must be able to do the presentation well. There was noted as well that a few students were effortless to manage their presentation.

Some findings of the strategies in the present study, in fact, are in conjunction with some previous studies. Similar to the findings of Hanifa and Yusra (2018), the students tend to build their self-confidence and make use of notes to help their presentation performance. Avoiding eye-contact, in one hand, appears to be the students' drawback. On the other hand, it can also be a strategy to maintain confidence during the presentation.

V. CONCLUSION

The present study is to investigate the problems and approaches encountered and employed by the students of Business Administration Department, State Polytechnic of Malang. The problems are reviewed the students and teacher.

It was found most students were in favor of business English presentation. Despite their feeling well with the presentation, the lack of English proficiency became their problem. In addition, nervousness, lack of confidence, fear and feeling stressed or tensed were problems they faced in their presentation of business English. To overcome their presentation problems, the students attempted to structure their presentation as suggested by the teacher. Besides, they also memorized sentences in advance. Many of them already practiced using their own English rather than memorizing

sentences and reading notes or slides. All the problems and approaches to handle the presentation are in line with some previous similar studies.

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