

Effects of Teaching Styles on Motivation for Self-Training by Students in Teaching of Presentation in L2

Hiroshi TANABE*¹

This paper suggests the noteworthy facts of the relation among teaching styles, contents, evaluation styles and students' motivation in a content based classroom, where the method of learning presentation skills in English was presented under various conditions and the motivation of the students was examined. As a result, the importance of the balance between teachers' assumption about the effects of the over all approach and the students' preference for the learning strategies and the learning contents along with the styles of evaluation was emphasized.

Introduction

This paper discusses the effects of teaching on the students' motivation for the self-training outside of the classroom. The effects of the teaching are reported based upon the analysis of questionnaires given to the students at the end of general English courses.

Method

A questionnaire was given to the subjects after the semester of a general English course in 2004 in which a presentation in English was evaluated as the final grade of the course where no explicit teaching about the presentation was given in the lecture except for the instruction of how to learn presentation skills in English. The same type of the questionnaire was given to the subjects who were given the training for the presentation in English as a part of the lecture in 2005. The results of the questionnaires were compared.

Course Description

The course in 2004 and 2005 took the same content-based approach. The theme of both of the courses was on the language acquisition theory presented by Krashen, 1982 for the reasons of the clarity of the structure of the discourse of the theories and the compactness of the concepts, and Ellis, 1985 for the supporting details of the contents of the presentation by the students. The theories were the contents of the presentation training for each course. The major difference in the courses was that the final exam took the form of presentation in English in 2004 and did not in 2005.

Followings are the instruction about the self-training method of presentation that were explained by the instructor for both groups of the students:

Monologue Method of Speech Training

Prepare topics in a specific field. Speak to a microphone. When you find words you don't know, look them up in the dictionary. You don't have to stop the recording during the whole process. You can go back and start from the beginning. You can stop and think as long as you want. After school, you can summarize the points of lectures and explain them in English. You can also summarize the sections of a book as you proceed to the next section. In that case, you

*¹ Associate Professor General Education and Research Center, Tokyo Polytechnic University
Received Aug. 31, 2005

can use vocabulary in the book and it makes the training more efficient. You can do it without recording equipment, but it may make your training more meaningful and you can recognize your development after a few months. Try in three minutes fast and then increase the length of the speech. Just try it and report your trial.

Subjects

The subjects were the two groups of the first year students of Keio university majoring in literature and taking the English course for general purposes, one in 2004 and one in 2005.

Table.1: Level of the students n= 35 students in 2004 and 37 in 2005

Step Test					
Grade	3	pre-2 nd	2 nd	pre-1 st	1 st
2004	7	5	11	4	1
2005	2	12	9	0	0
TOEIC (Step Test)					
Score	510 (2 nd)	630 (pre-1 st)	660 (-)	875 (pre-1 st)	
2004	1	1	1	1	
	520	650(2 nd)			
2005	1	1			

For the students in 2004, the class was elective and for the students in 2005 the class was required where students were distributed into the class regardless of their will. The results of the student levels reflected the fact. The syllabus of the course had given the impression of the higher level of requirements in that it took the content based approach and the contents were on applied linguistics. The results of Step test and TOEIC showed the same tendency of the higher scores among the students in 2004.

Residence in English speaking countries

The length of the residence in English speaking countries was asked. Six students spent more than 1 year in English speaking countries in 2004, and two in 2005. This also showed that the more number of the students had higher levels of English. Seven scores out of thirty-two scores of the tests of English in 2004 and three out of twenty-five were those of the students who had experiences of residing in the foreign countries.

Table.2: Experience

Experience in English Speaking Countries in 2004

6 weeks during college 630 (pre-1st)

1 year from 5-6 years old 510 (2nd)

1 year from 18-19 years old - (-)

2 years from 12-14 years old 875 (pre-1st)
 4 years from 2-6 years old – (pre-2nd)
 4 years and 6 months 9-14 years old – (pre-1st)
 Experience in English Speaking Countries in 2005
 3 weeks during high school – (pre-2nd)
 10 months from 9-10 years old 650 (2nd)
 3 years from 3-6 years old – (-)
 3 years from 4-7 years old – (-)

Field of interest

The students' interests were asked to find the possible motives for the contents of the course. In both of the cases, psychology was popular, which was related to the language acquisition theories in many points. The feature of the subjects in 2004 was that more number of the students—compared with ones in 2005—showed their preference for linguistics. This might show the basic motives for the content being higher among the students in 2004. Another point in this questionnaire item was that in both groups—as was higher in 2005—sociology showed the higher points. This might suggest the contents of the class could be rearranged by adding the socio-linguistic aspects of language acquisition.

Table 3.: Field of interest (2004, 2005)

American literature (1, 0), Archaeology (1, 0), Art (3, 5), Buddhism (0, 1) Chinese Language (2, 6), Classic literature (1, 0), Comparative culture (2, 1), Data processing (0, 2), Economics (0, 1), Education (4, 1), English language (1, 1), English literature (1, 0), European history, (3), French Literature (4, 0), Geography (1, 1), Gymnastics (0, 1), History (3, 9), Human science (5, 2), International Politics (1, 1), Japanese literature (1, 5), Language (1, 2), Linguistics (7, 1), Literature (2, 3), Music (2, 1), Natural science (1, 0), Philosophy (0, 2), Politics (1, 1), Psychology (8, 10), Religions (1, 0), Sociology (5, 10), Sports (0, 1) Symbolism (1, 0)

Prospected Future

Another issue which might affect their motivation to the learning of English in this specific content was their future occupation. “Teachers” and an “abstract idea of becoming the users of English” in their occupation were the highest, which might tell basic motivation for the course content was high among both of the students.

Table 4. Future:

Future (2004, 2005)

Actor/actress (1, 1), Announcer (0, 1), Buddhist priest (0, 1), Communication, Counselor (0, 1), Editor (0, 1), French teacher (1, 0), Graduate School (2, 1), Librarian (1, 0), Literary person (2, 0), Journalist (1, 2), Musician (1, 0), Producer of TV program (0, 1), Psychologist (1, 1), Researcher (0, 2), Running own company (0, 1), Sports reporter (0, 1), Teacher (6, 8), Translator (0, 2), Travel agent (2, 0), User of English

in their occupation (9), Welfare (3), Writer (0, 6), Not decided (3, 6)

Results and discussion

Frequency of the training

The frequency of the self-training in a week was asked only for the students in 2005. Twelve students out of thirty-five answered they did it more than once a week and average for about 9 minutes. Three minutes of the training was recommended and the results showed they tried longer for about five to ten minutes at a time when they did. See Table 5., and 6.

Table 5. Frequency of Training in a Week in 2005

0	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	other
24	8	4	0	0	0	0	0	1

Table 6 . Average Length of Training Time in 2005

8.9 minutes

Contents of the training

The contents for the presentation training were examined. Twenty-six students in 2004 and 14 in 2005 answered the questionnaire item. More number of the students answered in 2004 than in 2005. See Table 7.

Table 7. Contents of Training (n=26 in 2004, n=14 in 2005)

Used summaries of the texts (3, 3)

Make summaries out of the texts (11, 6)

Make summaries out of the texts, handouts, etc. (12, 5*)

* These five subjects chose their own topics, such as Harry Potter, conversation, free speech.

Method of the training

The method of training was asked and the memorization of the contents for the presentation was taken a lot among the students in 2004. The reason for this might be assumed that they prepared for the final interview test of the English. The memorization of contents was not recommended in the instruction shown above, though. Various methods were taken by the students in 2005, where no interview test was given except for their volunteer presentation in the class. See Table 8.

Table 8. Method of Training (2004, 2005)

Memorization of the contents (12, 4)

Memorization of the points of the contents and practice (5, 3)

Practice (5, 3)

Other (0, 3*)

Did nothing (1, 1)

*Two subjects answered they made free speech.

The reasons for NOT doing the self-training

12 subjects in 2004 and 22 in 2005 answered they did not practice presentation. Followings are the reasons why they did not do it. As the answers showed, there seemed to be several reasons for not doing the training. The reasons in the first category are those related to the motivation that the learners should owe for their responsibility. This includes the will to train themselves and to overcome characteristic problems, and to make it a habit of doing the training. The second category might be related to the time regulations restricted by the requirement of tests and reports other subjects. They lost their time preparing for other subjects. The third category is about the difference in the strategies. Some students did the training in different ways. In this point, instructors should be aware of the way they present the strategies in the methods carefully by not pushing their ways to the more creative students. See Table 9.

Table 9. Reasons for NOT Training Presentation Skills

2004

I could not motivate myself at that time.
 I had a lot of test preparation and had no time,
 I had no time to do it and I gradually forgot about the training.
 I need an audience to practice presentation.
 It is my character defect.
 I could not practice it after the interview test.
 I have not done it but I will try.

2005

I did not have time. (3)
 I was not motivated.
 My basic approach is to be always creative and I did not prepare contents. (2)
 I have not done it but I will try.

Motivational change

After the instruction, the students tried the training for themselves. They had a new experience of learning how to develop their presentation skills. They seemed to experience the motivational changes for the training during the process. See Table 10.

A lot of the students in both groups reported they were motivated after they tried it. This is important to be mentioned. We as instructors could introduce various kinds of strategies, techniques, and methods of learning English as they are worth trying for the students.

The problem still remains, though. One student in 2004 answered s/he could not have any interest in the content of the course. Suppose there are more number of students who do not like the theme or the topics of the course, the effects of the course will be disrupted. As the description by the students in Table 3 and 4, showed students' interests varies. We instructors should balance the teaching of the contents and their student motivation.

Table 10. Motivational Change (2004, 2005)

I was motivated from the beginning to the end. (4, 2)

I was motivated from the beginning and more strongly motivated by the training. (5, 4)

I was not motivated at first, but I was motivated by the training. (14, 17)

I had not been motivated and was not motivated after the trial. (2, 3)

The reasons for the positive attitude (from the first description to the third one)

2004

I noticed it was worth trying because presenting contents in English was harder than imagined.

2005

I was fascinated by my own performance.

I volunteered to make a presentation in the class, so I tried very hard to make it successful. (2)

I was ashamed of showing my bad performance in public.

Participating in the class motivated me and the training seemed practical.

After the first trial in the class, I noticed the training was very important.

I envied who could make a good presentation.

When I do I do my best.

I was so poor and felt the necessity of the training.

The active classes of this kind is very interesting.

I was motivated by the new training method.

The reasons for the negative attitude (for the fourth item)

2004

I could not have an interest in the theme given in the lecture.

I could not catch the wave of my motivation.

2005

My English was too poor for the training.

I could not speak to myself.

I was just lazy.

I liked to write the scenario of the presentation, but did not make a presentation in the class.

I want to make a good presentation, but am still nervous in doing it.

Conclusion

There seem to be two important components of teaching presentation skills in English. The first one is the content of the course and the second one is the procedure. Both of these two components should motivate the students with various preferences for the learning contents and the strategies. In order to make our class effective we should balance the teacher's assumption about the effects and the students' preferences. In addition to the teaching, the evaluation procedure for the course affects the learning strategies taken by the learners. In this study, a term exam affected the strategy for the learning of presentation in English in that more number of the students memorized the contents for the presentation, which might not be the best way to learn presentation skills in a foreign language.

<References >

- [1] Rod Ellis, 1985. *Understanding Second Language Acquisition*. Oxford University Press.
- [2] Stephen Krashen, 1983. *The Natural Approach.*, Prentice Hall.