

OPTIMIZING GROUP PRESENTATION TASK THROUGH PARTICIPATORY EVALUATION

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ABSTRACT

Teaching large classes often produces a lot of problems. One of the efforts to minimize the problems is by empowering the students in the learning process. One of the teaching techniques that can empower learners is a group work presentation task. Hence, the objective of this paper is to share a discussion that can be used to optimize the application of a group work presentation task. To get the optimal result, an action research is conducted. Two cycles are applied. The data are taken by observing the learning process when an action is applied, by interviewing the learners involved and by discussing the results with the collaborators. The research shows that group work presentation task can work well when participatory evaluation is applied.

Key word: *Group Presentation Task, Participatory Evaluation, and cycle.*

1. Introduction

For some people, teaching language skills is something that needs time to prepare. Some prospective teachers may spend a lot of time to make them perform their best. They might prepare to master the material first before presenting it in front of the students. Next, they may think some various teaching techniques to avoid monotonous performance. In another case, they might need time to build their self-confidence. All things are done to keep the image of teaching profession.

When we focus on teaching performance to avoid boredom on the side of learners, we are always required to make some changes on the techniques that we hold. We are expected to be tactful in switching from one strategy to another. Some various teaching techniques can be employed to make classroom atmosphere

more interesting and challenging, so that the students can absorb the material well.

Moreover, it is becoming our new teaching trend to empower learners in the process of learning especially in teaching adult learners. Teachers are supposed to employ learners to make them learn. Teachers are not the center of knowledge. This implicitly demands teachers to use teaching techniques that can empower learners because learners are individuals with great capacity. According to Harmer (2001: 40), "adult learners have special characteristics, such as a rich range of experiences, a clear understanding of why they are learning, expectation of the learning process and engaging with abstract thought".

There are many teaching techniques and strategies that emphasize more on the role of learners than teachers in the process of learn-

ing. Group work presentation is one of the teaching techniques that can be employed to teach adults by activating their role as subject of learning. This is applied with regard of adultery concept. In this concept, the learners are regarded as adult learners who can independently take in all information or knowledge from any source. They do not rely on the existence of teachers to develop their knowledge. Group work presentation is a teaching technique used to make learners learn something independently.

Even though it is a good technique to make learners learn autonomously. There are several problems that can appear in the application of group work presentation so that the teachers can not handle the technique optimally. Those problems can be listed as follows:

- 1) student's participation is low. For examples: when the members of a group take the chance for presentation, the rest of the class tend not to pay attention; instead, they talk to their friends, day dream or sleep; consequently they do not understand what is explained;
- 2) the members of certain groups presenting the material are less responsible or not serious in handling the task;
- 3) participatory evaluation is not applied yet; and
- 4) the members of the groups in charge in the presentation do not use teaching media to make the explanation clear.

Group presentation task is one of the teaching techniques used to develop students' autonomy. This technique requires learners to learn independently in group without teacher's excessive attention. Here, the students are supposed to present the appointed topic which has already been discussed in their own group to the rest of the class. They, of course, learn the material and prepare it before the class.

This task has been widely given to the type of learners having adult characters. It is

applied to adult learners as they are regarded as being able to learn something with less help of the teachers. Beside that, they can think something abstract so that they can carry out the complicated task easily. According to Nowell (<http://www.sheridanc.on.ca/>; p.1), group work presentation gives a lot of chance for the learners to be more creative than individuals work does. In addition, the task is accomplished faster and more easily. There are many advantages of group work presentation, as follows:

- 1) We can put students in group as this allows them to do a range of tasks. It is possible that this group provokes greater involvement and participation of the students. It increases the amount of talking for students.
- 2) There is a greater chance of different opinions and varied contributions.
- 3) It encourages broad skill of cooperation and negotiation
- 4) The students were prepared to evaluate each other's performance both positively and negatively.
- 5) It promotes learner autonomy by allowing students to make their own decisions in the group without being told what to do by the teacher.
- 6) Students can choose their level of participation (Harmer, 2001:116)

Participatory Evaluation is a kind of evaluation that enables other parties to involve in the process of evaluation. Clearly, it is stated by USAID center for Development Information Evaluation (1996: 1) as follows:

“Participatory evaluation provides for active involvement in the evaluation process of those with a stake in the program: providers, partners, customers (beneficiaries), and any other interested parties. Participation typically takes place throughout all phases of the evaluation:

planning and design; gathering and analyzing the data; identifying the evaluation findings, conclusions, and recommendations; disseminating results; and preparing an action plan to improve program performance.”

We can see clearly that participatory evaluation involves other persons outside the evaluator himself to make judgment or recommendation toward certain product, such as: partners, stakeholders or customers.

In this article, what is meant by participatory evaluation is evaluation in the form of comment, recommendation, response and giving value toward student’s performance in carrying out group work presentation from other students who become the audience in the presentation.

Participatory Evaluation here is aimed at enhancing the performance of group presentation task. The members of the group are expected to be more serious and responsible in accomplishing the task because they are judged and given comment from other members outside the group. In addition, the other members will pay attention more on the explanation of the group presenting as they get task to evaluate and give comment to the presentation.

New paradigm on teaching has focused the process of learning on the side of learners. Learners are becoming the subject of learning. Learners are not viewed as the objects that only receive knowledge from the teachers; instead, they are more viewed as someone who can independently understand what they learn.

This approach has switched the concept of teaching to be learning. The concept of teaching emphasizes on the process of transferring knowledge from teachers to learners. On the other hand, the concept of learning emphasizes more on the side, that is of learners. Learners are required to be active and they

have great roles to acquire knowledge or skills. Learning is creating condition to make learners learn something. This is supported by the statement of Gibran in Harmer (2001: 56), “If (the teacher) is indeed wise, he does not bid you enter the house of his wisdom, but rather leads you to the threshold of your mind”.

Learning focuses the learners to be active to access knowledge independently. The case demands the task of teacher as facilitator. It means that teachers are demanded to be able to create certain condition or to manipulate the situation so that the learners can learn by themselves. Illich in Harmer (2001: 70) states that:

“In fact, learning is the human activity which least needs manipulation by others. Most learning is not the result of instruction. It is rather the result of unhampered participation in a meaningful setting”.

From the above explanation, it is clear that learning needs to be conditioned by the teachers. Teachers need to facilitate learners in order that they can learn maximally.

To optimizing group presentation task by applying participatory evaluation, a research has been conducted. The research only focuses on the following cases:

- 1) How Group Presentation Task is carried out by applying participatory evaluation in the process of learning?
- 2) Whether or not Participatory Evaluation be used to optimize Group Presentation Task?

2. Research Method

The research method used is action research; that is a research employing some actions aimed at enhancing the quality of learning process. According to Hopkins (1993:76) action research contains some actions to develop the quality of a system. In addition, Rea-

son and Bradbury (2001; 2) say that a primary purpose of action research is to produce practical knowledge that is useful to people in the everyday conduct of their lives. So, action research is about working towards practical outcomes, and also about creating new forms of understanding.

This approach is taken as it is more oriented to the process than to the result. To enhance the quality of the process, the teacher needs to pay a great attention on the learning process. Consequently, learning will be effective.

The research takes place in English Department of FKIP UMS. The subjects of the research are the students of English Department taking the subject on TEFL (teaching English as A Foreign Language). There are four instruments employed to collect the data, namely: interview to the informant (appointed students); observation to the event; discussion with the research lecturer, researcher, and the students as subject; and the questioner to find out the development of learners' understanding toward TEFL course.

3. Finding and Discussion

3.1 Finding

This research is conducted in two cycles. Every cycle covers planning or preparation stage, action application, observation, and reflection. In the preparation stage of the first cycle, based on the observation, interview and discussion with collaborators, the researcher identifies some problems in group presentation task, namely: (1) students take a little participation or in other words, the involvement of the whole students is lacking, (2) the presenters are not working seriously, (3) feedback and evaluation are only given by the lecturers, and (4) the teaching media are not used maximally.

Those four points become the attention in the first cycle to find some solutions to optimize group work presentation task. These are all for the sake of minimizing the weaknesses

in the TEFL learning process. To minimize the problems, participatory evaluation is applied and treated as the action. After the action is applied, the researcher and collaborators conduct focus group discussion for some reflection. The result of the reflection in the first cycle can be seen below.

3.1.1 The Participation and Involvement of Learners

After the participatory evaluation is applied, some weaknesses decrease. The indicators of the success of the action can be seen from the following findings: 1) the members of the audience group are no longer passive; they participate in the discussion by giving some feedbacks and evaluate the presentation, 2) they are forced to listen carefully and pay attention to the presentation because at the end of the meeting, they must give feedback to the presenters, so they have a little chance to chat, and 3) at the question session, the number of students asking questions get increased; they tend to be more active.

3.1.2 The Increase of the seriousness of the presenter group

The seriousness of the presenters in carrying out the task increases after participatory evaluation is applied. They are motivated to be serious in presenting the material because they are aware of being evaluated by their friends. They feel shy when they get bad score or unfavourable feedback. Consequently, they do their best. The presenters' seriousness can be seen from the following indicators: (1) their preparation and readiness in presenting the material and their mastery, (2) the completeness of the material presented, (3) the great coordination among the members of the group, and (4) the preparation to use the teaching media. Beside that, the degree of the seriousness can be seen from the result of the questioner that shows that before participatory evaluation was applied. After participatory

evaluation is applied, the result get encreased to be 88 %; it means 66 % encrease.

3.1.3 The Increase of the understanding toward the material

The students belonging to the audience have a better understanding toward the material after the action is done. It is shown from the calculation as follows: from the questioners distributed, it can be seen that only 7,4 % of 27 audience say that they understand the presenters' explanation while 92,6% of the 27 audience say that they do not. After the participatory evaluation is applied, the degree of students' undestanding encreases. It is shown that 51,85 % of the audience understand the presenters' explanation, while 48,15% of the audience group still do not understand. Anyhow, there is a postive change after the application of participatory evaluation, namely 44,45% change.

3.1.4 The learners ability to use the teaching media

In the beginning of the application of the action, the teching media are not used optimally. Only few students initiate to use the teaching media to make clear their explanation; even lots of students only read the text in explaining. So, there is no eye contact. This affects learner's understanding much; they don't understand what is delivered by the presenters. After twice application of participatory evaluation, presenters start to use teaching media so that the material can be understood by the audience more clearly. The teaching media used are OHP, transparant paper, white board, boardmarkers, pictures and realia. In terms of media usage based on the questioners, it is found out that some groups are not skillful in using media eventhough they use media (in the beginning of the treatment). After several treatments, all groups have employed the teaching media, eventhough some are not skillful at using them.

However, positive results achieved after the first treatment, some weaknesses are still found out. The weaknesses that appear in the first cycle are as follows:

- a. The presenters ignore the quality of the voice; they do not care whether their voice can be heard by all audience.
- b. The performance of the presenters are unfavourable. The voice of the presenters tend to be very soft-low volume so that not all audience could catch the explanation. The presenters do not explain the material clearly (to the point); they talk around and around. Their explanation is monotonous; they only read the text during their presentation. The 27 respondents judge the three presenters present unattractively before the treatment is conducted.

The followings are the results of the questioner: $1/27 * 100\% = 3,7\%$ respondent groups judge that the presentation is attractive, whereas $26/27 * 100\% = 96,3\%$ respondents judge that the presentation is not interesting.

Realizing the weaknesses, the researcher and collaborators, again, conduct the second treatment to do some improvement by revising the instrument (questioners) for evaluation. At this second cycle, the researcher, non only focuses on the four items above for evaluation, but also add one item, namely, the presenters' perfomance. In this second cycle, the performance indicators cover the voice of the presenters in terms of volume, pitch, and intonation; the clearness of the explanation; the variation of the delivery (not monotoneous), and eye contact with the audience.

After the second treatment is applied, the reflection is conducted. The followings are the results of the reflection. After the treatment is conducted, the presenters start to pay attention to the presentation. They speak in higher volume, even so, some still speak in low volume. Their explanation is clearer and more

interesting than in the previous performance. They master the material very well; they can keep their eye contact and sometimes make some jokes. From the three presenter groups being evaluated after the treatment is conducted, it is found out that $18/27 * 100\% = 66,7\%$ respondent judge that the presentation is interesting, whereas $9/27 * 100\% = 33,3\%$ respondent groups judge that the presentation is not interesting. This shows that there is an increase of the interest in the presentation.

3.2 Discussion

The success of the learning process always involves some components. According to Gulo (2002: 8) the components cover teaching objectives, teachers, students, materials, teaching methods, media, and administrative and financial factors. Teachers, as one of the components play important roles to control, organize, lead, and facilitate the learning process so as to achieve the learning objectives. In relation to their task as a fasilitator, teachers are required to give chance to the learners to be autonomous to develop their knowledge and skills. The teachers do not dominate the opportunities to transfer their knowledge.

One of the teaching techniques that gives much chance for the learners to be active is a group project called a group work presentation task. Here, learners are demanded to be autonomous in mastering knowledge or skill that will be presented. They will be forced to actively access knowledge or information, especially for the group presenting the material. According to Harmer (2001: 335) however good the teacher, or the students, they will not learn whatever language, if they only rely on time and material spoonfed by the teachers in the classrooms. With group work presentation task, the presenter always try to search for the material or reference out side the teaching hours.

On the other hand, the audience tend to

be actively engaged (listen and understand) and to discuss the vague ideas. As a result, the learners will be independent, active and selfconfident. This group work presentation task can also elicit students' cognitive and psychomotoric competence. In accordance with humanistic learning trend, as stated by Harmer (2001: 56), learners become the centre in the learning prcess. As a result, learners will become autonomous to search for the information. In this, the success of learning is determined by the learners themselves not by the teachers and teachers do not become the transferers of knowledge anymore; they become more as facilitators.

Not one group work presentation task is aimed at autonomizing learners, but is also to create lively and joyful situation in the classrooms, so learners will be motivated. With this task, learners will be motivated to complete the task and this brings in a good result for them, especialy in their learning outcome. According to Brown (1994: 20), the learner's success of learning is determined by intrinsic motivation. In accordance with Brown, Harmer (2001: 50) also states that in the learning process, the existance of motivation is very crucial to achieve a success in learning. From this, we can underline that in the process of learning, teachers are demanded to create interesting and joyful atmosphere to motivate learners, so the affective factor is accomodated.

The aplication of participatory avaluation in group work presentation task provides a lot of chance for the learners to be active and critical learners; learners become creative and confident to try something new. It means that this task is able to create conducive learning and make good learners. Good learners, according to Harmer (1998: 10), have the following criteria:

- 1) Willingness to listen: Good learners are willing to listen what is happening; they do not only pay attention at glance but they are really engaged.
- 2) Willingness to experiment: Good learn-

ers are not afraid to take risk and try something new.

- 3) Willingness to ask: Even though some teachers feel irritated when students always ask, good teachers should give them chance to ask and good learners are those who can manage when to ask.
- 4) Willingness to think how to learn: good learners can select the best way to learn.
- 5) Willingness to get feedback: Good learners are ready to get suggestion, correction and feedback.

Feedback in the application of group work presentation task is a part of the learning process to achieve perfection in presentation task. However, good the presentation still has some weaknesses. Those weaknesses are shown to the presenters so that they can perform well. Even so, the feedback must be given carefully because not all learners are ready to get it. The feedback which is given indirectly to learners in group is better than direct feedback for individual learner because the direct one can cause inferiority and unself confidence to the learners if the learners are not ready mentally. Moreover, we do not need to make students shy in front of others. If this happens, it will make the condition worse. Consequently, the affective aspect of learners needs to be considered.

The application of media in teaching has positive value for learners' comprehension so that their achievement increases. Konfusius in Zaini (2004: xvii) states that what is heard is easy to forget, what is seen is easy to remember, and what is experienced is easy to understand. Teaching media functions greatly in group work presentation to make learners understand the material well and the information searched will not be easily forgotten by the

audience learners so that it can stay longer in the storage system.

In addition to having group work presentation, learners are also demanded to perform their knowledge. Learners do not only understand the knowledge and keep it but they have to practice and perform whenever they do the presentation and make some arguments. They practice their knowledge through true and real experience. This means that students are not only able to increase cognitive aspect but also psychomotoric aspect.

In group work presentation task, learners get a lot of chance to speak student talking time is greater than teacher talking time. The time allotted is not dominated by the teachers. So far there is great controversy on the time division in the classroom. Harmer (198: 4) says that the time used in the teaching and learning process is dominated by the teachers, consequently there is a lot of criticism toward the lacking of opportunities for the learners to speak and practice the language they learn. A good teacher is the one who maximizes student talking time and minimizes teacher talking time. In line with Harmer's idea, this group work presentation task really provides the students with a lot of chance to speak and to be active. Student Talking Time is really maximized.

4. Conclusion

Group work presentation is one of the teaching techniques that can be employed to teach adults in large classes by activating learners as subject of learning. To optimize group work presentation task, we can apply participatory evaluation, that is an evaluation that involves other students who become audience during presentation session. It turns out that through continuous feedback, the learners can do better the presentation.

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