

# Record and Watch for Improving Students' Public Speaking

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## Abstract

Public Speaking is a subject offered to the students of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang. Teaching the subject is sometimes found boring for both students and lecturer. Many students have slow progress and lack of interest in the subject. Many students find this subject scary because they have to do presentation several times while they are not ready for that. "Record and Watch" is an effective activity to improve their skills in Public Speaking. After implementing the activity for four times, the positive result begins to show up. Most of the students show their better interest at the subject indicated by the fact that many of them participate actively in the teaching and learning process. In addition, they also show improvement in English language accuracy and fluency indicated by fewer mistakes they have in their grammar and pronunciation and less hesitation in their presentations.

## Introduction

Public speaking skill is needed in everyone's life. It is needed for life and career (Cuncic, updated July 2012). In addition, it is stated that public speaking will have positive effect on the development of self-confidence. In short, the public speaking skill will be helpful for anyone to improve life and career.

In relation to this, English department of Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang, offers a subject called Public Speaking (speech) to its students. This subject is intended to provide the students with the competence to to speak in public with good fluency and accuracy together with the use of appropriate body language. At the end of semester, the students are expected to be able to deliver various types (informative, persuasive, and entertaining) speech.

In fact, many students have difficulties in delivering their speeches because they have problems in pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, and some others. Some solutions may be found good to help them. One of them is to assign the students to practice the speech in groups outside the class. The other members of the group are expected to give inputs and comments of the performance. In addition, they are they are also assigned to record the performance while practicing. Then they are assigned to watch the recording and learn something for improving their performance in the class.

### *Public speaking subject*

Public speaking is a compulsory subject for students of English Department, Faculty of Languages and Arts, Universitas Negeri Padang. It is a three credit hour subject offered when they are at semester 4. The students taking the course must have taken Speaking I subject and Speaking II subject. They are also assumed to have sufficient competence on grammar and enough vocabulary to give presentation. At the end of the course, the students are expected to be able to deliver speech to inform, speech to persuade, and speech to entertain fluently and accurately together with the use of appropriate body language.

However, many students still have problems with their English indicated by the mistakes they encountered during presentation and they show less interest in the class. In addition, many students are not fluent enough to deliver their speech in class. This problem should be handled well because they don't have any speaking subjects after the public speaking one. If they are not assisted, they will have problem in their thesis or paper presentation for finishing their study at this department. Finally, they will have problems in finding jobs that require them to do presentation.

### *Practicing before presentation*

The old saying states that practice makes perfect but the other one state that practice cannot make the speakers perfect but it can make them better. Both of the terms indicate that the speakers need to practice their speech before coming to real presentation. This part contents the ideas of some experts dealing with the importance of practice or rehearsal for improving the presentation.

Many experts and providers mention some tips for having good public speaking. Lucas (2009) states that effective speaker could give the speech smoothly without any difficulties. The speaker must have done good practice before delivering the speech. For the first time, the speaker may face some problems, such as, forgetting what to say, making mistakes in pronunciation and grammars, or feeling nervous while standing. All of them are very natural and the practice should be continued. Later, everything will be all right and goes naturally. He then added that the speaker must rehearse the speech out loud in front of other friends and ask them to give feedback for revising the speech.

In line with Lucas, Zeoli also states that effective speakers need to be well prepared. Preparation plays an important role in helping the speaker to deliver the speech well even in impromptu presentation. Toastmaster.org mentions 10 tips for public speakers. They should understand the materials, practice in advance, know the audiences, know the place, stay relax, visualize themselves giving a speech, realize that the audiences want to see them successful, no need to apologize for any problems, concentrate on the message, and to gain experience. In practice, the speakers should rehears out loud using the equipments or devises that might support their performance. In addition, the practice may help them reduce the use of filler words and adjust the materials with the time allocate. They also should predict the time used for unexpected ones.

Silver Sparkz et.al (editors) mentions seven things to make the speakers feel confident at delivering their speech. One of that is that the speakers must be well prepared. In the preparation, the speakers must practice the speech in front of mirror and ready with a small notes when necessary. This is intended to see how the speakers express themselves while delivering the speech and to listen to what they are delivering about. The mirror helps them on the expression and body language while the listening will help them on the language they are using and the content of what they are talking about.

Jenny (2011) mentions 8 strategies to improve public speaking. One of them and it is stated to be the most important one, is to ask for feedback. The speaker practices the speech in front of their friends (group) and asks them to give feedback. It is also suggested to be sure that they will be able to tell honestly about their performance. The friends must be able to give the speaker inputs for revising the speech. The friend should be able to tell the speaker the aspects to be maintained and the ones to be improved, when to increase the speed, and when to slow down.

Howell (2014) also puts priority on the preparation for improving public speaking. Ryan Estis, in the same article, states that preparation is the number one best way to in eliminate nervousness in public speaking. Furthermore it is stated that it often happens that the speakers are not effective at delivering their speech because they don't have enough time to practice what they want to say. It means that Howell also emphasizes the importance of practice for the improvement of speech.

Tipsforsuccess.net states that in order to improve the public speaking skills, the speakers need to do preparation and it is absolute the key. It is also stated that a successful presentation is the accumulation of long preparation. There are some steps to do in doing preparation. Among them are to rehearse in front o mirror, in an empty rooms, and make sure the materials are well mastered. The speakers may do some revisions if necessary based on the rehearsal. The main purpose of the preparation is not only the mastery of content but also the delivery of the speech.

The other one, Dejolde mentions ten tips to help the speakers to have good performance. One of them and it is said to be the key on is preparation. The students should spend some time

to practice their speech before coming to class. The student may practice in front of mirror or in group.

Lucas (2009) states that preparation is the key to gain confidence in giving public speaking. Further he states that the speaker should spend more time to prepare than to deliver the speech. Ideally, every one minute speech requires one or two hours, and even more for preparation. The preparation may take long time but the rewards are the successful speech. It is better to spend more time for practicing rather than making foolish mistakes while giving the real speech.

The ideas above indicate that preparation or practice is very important for improving the performance of speakers on public speaking. Without proper practice, the students face some problems in delivering their speech. The problem can be the mastery of the content, the fluency of delivering the speech, and the language of the speech. In public speaking subject, the students are assigned to practice in front of their friends in groups.

#### *Record and Watch*

The idea of doing the recording comes from the video entitled “Tips to Improve Your Public Speaking - How to Speak Professionally - Speech Speaker Tips – YouTube”. The speaker mentions five tips, among them are “practice, listen,” and “record and watch”. The video mentions some benefits of recording and watch activities on improving public speaking skill. Record and watch activities will give reflection to the speaker about how good and how bad the speaker is at giving presentation. The video will show if the speakers use too many fillers during their speech and it will be useful for doing revision for the next performance.

Yang (1992) states that many school activities can be recorded (videotaped). Students’ performance in English can also be videotaped. Furthermore he states that students may use camera for recording their rehearsal. It is hoped that the students record their rehearsal and then watch it to see how they can improve their performance. They may disagree with some parts and want to improve it. In the public speaking class, they do the recording when they practice in small group. The members of the group are assigned to give inputs to the speaker to improve their performance, especially, their English.

According to Yang (2012) recording speech performance can be done more easily than role-play because they only move on limited area. In this subject, the students were assigned to practice in a small group and one of them was in charge of videotaping the speaker’s performance while practicing the materials to be performed at the real class. Furthermore, Yang states that the recording will help the speakers to see the weakness in the materials, language, and body language -- gestures, facial expression, posture, and eye contact as well.

Another important aspect to be learned by students from the recording is to find out the fluency. Some of them may appear to be fluent with right pause and appropriate speed while others may be hesitant and affect the communication. In this subject, the students were assigned to submit the material (in slides) and the video recording as well. The video recording was intended as the proof that they really practice their speech before their performance in the classroom. It is quite impossible to come to every group at the time they do the rehearsal. The video recording will be the proof.

How many times do they have to do the recording? There is no limitation of the number of times of practicing and recording. In public speaking class, they are assigned to practice twice in minimum in their group. They may do it several times but the recording to be submitted is only one. It may be the one of many recordings that they may be happy to submit. It is believed that the one submitted must be the one they are happy to see too.

#### *Record and Watch Procedure*

There are some topics that need to be studied in Public Speaking Subject at English Department of UNP, such as, speaking about what they know, speaking to inform, speaking to persuade, and speaking to entertain. Every student is assigned to do one presentation on every topic. They are assessed every time they have presentation.

What are the steps of Record and Watch? First, the students are assigned to practice at least two times on each topic before doing the presentation in the classroom. For example, for the topic of speaking to inform, every student is assigned to practice their speech in group at least two times before they do presentation in classroom. Every practice they do, the other member of the group does the recording. Every student must submit one of the videos they like to the lecturer before they do real presentation.

#### *Some Progress Made by the Students*

The progress of made by the students in public speaking, as mentioned in the previous part, is focused on language fluency and accuracy. In terms of fluency, the progress is focused on the continuity and the smoothness of the presentation. In terms of continuity, the students could perform their speech without using many types of filler, such as, huh, ok, yup, and others. Before doing the recording activity, many students used to have the fillers and they have negative effects on the audience interests on the speech. In terms of smoothness, the students no longer hesitate many times. In addition, they could do their presentation in a rather normal speed that makes their presentation easy to understand.

In terms of accuracy, the students show some improvement in the use of language. Their pronunciation is much better compared to the time before doing the record and watch activity. This is possible because their friends had given them some comments on their language and gave the correct pronunciation of the words that they were wrong in pronunciation. The improvement of accuracy is also found in the use of tenses. Before using record and watch activity, many students use various tenses interchangeably. Most problem had was that they were confused in the use of simple present and past tense.

#### **Conclusion**

Public speaking is found to be scary subject for students. They tend not to take it if they have the choice. However it is really needed to support their study and career later on after graduation. In order to make them able to deliver their speech well, they need to practice. One of recommended ways is to practice their speech in group. Every member of the group is assigned to contribute for the revision of the presentation. The practice in the group is videotaped and every student is assigned to submit the video as the proof that they had practiced in group. After the students practice the record and watch activity for four times, it is found that they had made some improvement in their language fluency and accuracy. At the same time, they began to like the subject indicated by their attendance and interest in the subject.

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