ENHANCING THE PRESENTATION COMPETENCE IN FOREIGN LANGUAGE

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Introduction

Nowadays information plays an essential role in all areas of our lives and its quantity, quality and price increase significantly. Every day we are confronted with a situation in which this information is not only gained but it should be interpreted appropriately, too. The way of interpretation plays an important role within the process of information gathering, interpretation and use. It can be seen in the known saying" when the two say the same, it may not be the same" which presents a variety of interpretation and transmission of information and we face this process whether in the home or business environment. And especially this current period of globalization and internationalization of the world requires more effective and successful preparation and improvement of the presentation competence in English.

1.1 Presentation in foreign language - why is it so important?

Presentation in foreign language should expand communication competence in foreign language (in this paper English language), develop vocabulary from the phraseology of presentation, creativity; motivation to study languages and apply the language competences in real or modelled situations and moreover, enhance the presentation skill. We should teach the target audience – students, teachers and other interested groups – to present in English more efficiently and professionally.

As I have been teaching the ESP subjects for four years, I have found out that the improvement of presentation competence should be included into the content of each course because it would help students to become more competitive in a globalized world where competition has intensified.

1.2 Presentation skill

During the seminars the students of different specialization have to prepare and present the presentation on the given topic, which has been chosen from the area they study, to colleagues in range from 10 to 15 minutes. I consider the part of preparation and afterwards the way of presenting the most crucial but on the other hand hard to deal with not only for students but for me as a teacher, as well. The development of the presentation competence in English should give students not only theoretical but also practical experience and skills.

If the improvement of presentation skill should be discussed, I should start with the analysis of areas that due to research questionnaire done among the students of the Department of Geography and Regional Development (136 respondents) cause the problems. The outcomes are outlined in the following table.

area	number of students	percentage
Stage-fright and stress	129	94.9
Non verbal communication	112	82.4
Interaction with the audience	106	77.9

Lack of communication skill	96	70.6
Pronunciation	94	69.9
Structure and content	87	64.0
Lack of vocabulary	81	59.6

As the most problematic areas are stage-fright and stress, non-verbal communication and interaction with the audience this article deals with the mentioned problems.

1.2.1 Cope with stress and stage-fright

The moment when we stand and speak in front of a group of people, we start to feel a stress and anxiety. The problem of trembling knees, tight throat, tension, stomach upset, etc. can appear. This is a normal process and it means that we take a situation responsibly, therefore, we want to achieve a positive outcomes. Once we are too nervous, this tension can be extended to the audience. Also in the survey 94.9% of students said they felt stress at presentation, which is even more intensified using the English language. Furthermore, the students studying first year of bachelor´s degree have experienced the presentation in English for the first time. So there is a need to focus on the different stress relaxation techniques. In the final oral assessment, which takes place after each presentation, we talk about different techniques of stress relief such as deep breathing, moving with the toes, finding friendly faces, do not forget to smile, using appropriate gestures, humour, see the audience as only one person. Of course, that after each presentation in English language, the stress level decreases (personal observation during 4-year- teaching experience) and it is also vital to remember to prepare a high quality content and language prior to the presentation itself.

1.2.2 Non-verbal communication

According to Barbour „ the total impact of a message breaks down like this: 7%verbal (words), 38% vocal (volume, pitch, rhythm, etc), and 55 percent body movements (mostly facial expressions). This breakdown indicates that effective nonverbal communication skills are essential"[Barbour: Louder than Words: Nonverbal Communication online].The very first moment of interaction we send signals through numerous signals: body language, facial expression, gestures, eye contact. The success of the presentation depends on the fact whether we can manage our emotions. It is advisable to have a smart look and dress, positive attitude, smile, appropriate eye contact, facial expression, work with space, and take into an account the number of listeners. One of the important facts are a genuine smile, which evokes positive feelings, gestures that emphasis words, and should be soft and relaxed. Eye contact expresses interest in audience and also serves as feedback. People, who maintain more eye contact, are considered more self-confident. Working with space is also the element that must be taken into account. If the distance between the lecturer and the audience is bigger, the more formal contact is. If we need to comment the visual aids, it is better to use a laser pointer with which we do not circle around. We can also use the left hand, as we are turned to the audience by a face.

1.2.3 Interaction with an audience

Bixler et al. [2006:182] points out that within the first 60 seconds the audience will decide if it listens. It is therefore necessary to start a presentation with some strong phrases which are catchy. And right at this stage of presentation the students make

mistakes because they begin and form the initial contact with the audience by the phrases like - Good xxx..., my name is ..., I am a student ... .etc." The variety and choice of phrases depend on the target audience and style of formality which requires using more formal language like - Good xxx, ladies and gentlemen. My name is ..., Today I'd like to ..., Perhaps we can leave any enquires you may have until the end of the presentation. Since the seminars are a homogeneous group of students, who know each other, it would be better if they would choose phrases of informal style, e.g. "Thanks for being here. Dear folks. , Nice to see you today., and many others.

An important point is whether the audience is interested in the topic. The students are required to prepare a presentation from the given list, and therefore there is not always adequate interest from the side of listeners. Thus, I point the fact that they have to think in advance how to engage the audience. Unfortunately they often opt for a neutral, unattractive way of giving the presentation, the choice of vocabulary does not correspond to the level of English, they do not have the eye contact with the audience, they look "nowhere", they often only read, do not use non-verbal communication.

Literature

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Summary

The issue of the presentation competence is a complex problem. It is necessary to manage the content, form and language resources. The enhancing the presentation competence should be included in the core of subjects dealing with ESP to enrich and prepare students for life in a multicultural society, improve their communication competence, enhance their competitiveness in professional life, develop creativity and modernize an educational process.