Student Feedback on Teaching Methods in Professional Speaking Contexts

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ABSTRACT

This study examines student perceptions of teaching methods in Professional Speaking for Context courses at SMPN 1 Buntu Pepasan Toraja Utara, focusing on instruction clarity, engagement, effectiveness of teaching aids, opportunities for practice, and overall satisfaction. The research utilized surveys, focus group discussions, and interviews to gather data from students about their experiences and opinions.

The results indicate that a majority of students find the clarity of instruction effective, with 75% reporting that guidelines are generally clear and helpful, though some students experience occasional confusion. Interactive activities such as group discussions and presentations were praised for enhancing engagement, although 40% of students desired more varied instructional methods to maintain interest. Teaching aids like slides and videos were beneficial for understanding, yet technical issues occasionally disrupted learning. Despite ample practice opportunities, 30% of students called for more personalized feedback to improve their speaking skills. Overall, while the majority of students expressed high satisfaction with the teaching methods, there is room for improvement in diversifying teaching approaches, addressing technical problems, and providing individualized feedback. These findings suggest that refining these aspects could lead to a more effective and engaging learning environment.

Keywords: Professional Speaking, Teaching Methods, Student Feedback, Interactive Learning, Real-Life Simulations, Multimedia Resources

INTRODUCTION

Effective communication is a crucial skill in the professional world, and the ability to speak confidently and clearly in various contexts is essential for career success. As such, Professional Speaking for Context courses are designed to equip students with the necessary skills to excel in professional environments. These courses typically cover a range of speaking situations, including presentations, meetings, interviews, and networking events. Given the importance of these skills, it is vital to explore and understand the teaching methods that best support student learning and development in this area.

In recent years, there has been a growing interest in examining student feedback on teaching methods to improve educational practices. Student feedback provides valuable insights into the effectiveness of different instructional approaches and can guide educators in refining their teaching strategies (Al-Jarf, 2022; Majewska & Korhonen, 2023). This study aims to analyze student perspectives on the teaching methods used in Professional Speaking for Context courses, with a focus on identifying which methods are most effective in enhancing their speaking skills.

The integration of interactive activities, real-life simulations, and multimedia resources has been shown to significantly impact student engagement and learning outcomes. Interactive activities such as group discussions and role-plays create a dynamic learning environment where students can practice and receive feedback in real-time (Bear, 2022). Real-life simulations, including mock presentations and business meetings, provide practical experience that prepares students for real-world professional scenarios (Pristiwanti et al., 2022). Multimedia resources, such as videos and audio recordings, help illustrate key concepts and make the learning process more engaging (Esabella et al., 2021).

Recent studies further support the importance of diverse and innovative pedagogical approaches. For instance, Chen, Chang, Hwang, and Zou (2023)

emphasize the effectiveness of virtual reality (VR) contexts in facilitating active speaking behaviors among English as a Foreign Language (EFL) learners. Similarly, Robillos (2023) explores how technology-mediated pedagogical approaches can enhance students' speaking performance and communication engagement. Zhussupova and Shadiev (2023) demonstrate the benefits of digital storytelling in developing public speaking skills in culturally diverse, multilingual classrooms. Jean-Pierre, Hassan, and Sturge (2023) discuss strategies for improving public speaking skills through targeted learning and teaching methods. Zheng, Wang, and Chai (2023) investigate the impact of video-based formative practice on learners' speaking anxiety and performance, comparing self-assessment and peer-assessment approaches. Gordon (2023) addresses the role of explicit pronunciation instruction in improving nonnative English-speaking teachers' effectiveness. Andrin et al. (2024) highlight how impromptu speaking exercises can influence students' oral proficiency. Lastly, Roza, Rafli, and Rahmat (2023) examine the implementation of contextual teaching and learning (CTL) strategies to enhance speaking abilities in an Islamic studies course.

Furthermore, the role of timely and constructive feedback from lecturers cannot be overstated. Personalized feedback helps students identify their strengths and areas for improvement, fostering a supportive learning environment that encourages continuous development (Wahyu Setiawan & Ariani, 2022). As the educational landscape evolves, it is essential to incorporate diverse and dynamic teaching methods that cater to various learning styles and preferences.

This study seeks to fill the gap in existing literature by providing a comprehensive analysis of student feedback on teaching methods in Professional Speaking for Context courses. By understanding students' perspectives, educators can better tailor their instructional approaches to meet the needs of their learners, ultimately enhancing the overall effectiveness of professional speaking education.

METHOD

This study employed a mixed-methods approach to gather comprehensive data on student feedback regarding teaching methods in professional speaking contexts at SMPN 1 Buntu Pepasan Toraja Utara. Twenty students aged 12-15 were selected to participate, representing a diverse sample in terms of gender and grade level. Data collection involved both surveys and focus group interviews, allowing for a detailed exploration of student perceptions. The structured questionnaire used in the survey included Likert scale and open-ended questions covering areas such as clarity of instruction, engagement, and overall satisfaction. Surveys were administered in paper form during class, ensuring accessibility for all students.

In addition to the surveys, focus group interviews were conducted with a subset of 10 students selected to reflect the larger group's demographics and academic performance. These semi-structured discussions, lasting about 60 minutes each, delved into students' detailed opinions on specific teaching methods, their perceived benefits and drawbacks, and suggestions for improvement. The focus groups provided rich qualitative data that complemented the quantitative survey results, offering a more nuanced understanding of student experiences and feedback.

Data analysis combined descriptive and inferential statistics for the quantitative survey responses and thematic analysis for the qualitative focus group data. This dual approach ensured a robust understanding of the trends and themes in student feedback. Ethical considerations were carefully addressed, with informed consent obtained from all participants and their guardians, and assurances of confidentiality and anonymity provided. Despite the small sample size and potential biases from self-reported data, the study's mixed-methods design yielded valuable insights to inform and enhance teaching strategies in professional speaking classes at SMPN 1 Buntu Pepasan Toraja Utara.

FINDINGS

The study revealed several key insights into student perceptions of teaching methods in professional speaking contexts at SMPN 1 Buntu Pepasan Toraja Utara.

Clarity of Instruction:

Survey Results: The majority of students (75%) reported that the instructions provided by their teachers were clear and easy to follow. However, 25% of students indicated occasional confusion regarding assignment guidelines and expectations. This suggests that while the overall clarity is strong, there are instances where students require additional clarification and support.

Focus Group Feedback: Students appreciated visual aids and step-by-step explanations but suggested more consistent use of examples to illustrate key points. They mentioned that seeing real-life examples helped them better understand complex concepts and how to apply them.

Interview Insights: According to A.B., a student, "Sometimes I find it hard to understand the instructions for assignments, especially when there are many steps. It helps a lot when the teacher gives a clear example." Another student, C.D., added, "I like it when the teacher uses pictures and videos; it makes the lessons easier to follow."

Engagement and Participation:

Survey Results: 60% of students felt actively engaged during lessons, citing interactive activities like group discussions and presentations as particularly effective. The remaining 40% expressed a desire for more variety in teaching methods to maintain

their interest. This indicates a need for teachers to diversify their instructional strategies to keep all students engaged.

Focus Group Feedback: Students highlighted the importance of activities that promote active participation, such as role-plays and debates, which they found to be more engaging than traditional lectures. They felt that these activities not only made learning more enjoyable but also helped them develop their speaking skills more effectively.

Interview Insights: E.F. shared, "Group discussions and role-plays are fun and help me practice speaking in front of others. I feel more confident now." G.H. stated, "I wish we had more debates and presentations; they make the class more interesting and interactive."

Effectiveness of Teaching Aids:

Survey Results: Students generally found teaching aids, such as slides and videos, helpful in enhancing their understanding (80% positive feedback). However, 20% noted that technical issues sometimes hindered their learning experience. This suggests that while multimedia tools are beneficial, their effectiveness is contingent on their proper functioning.

Focus Group Feedback: While students valued multimedia resources, they suggested that technical difficulties be addressed promptly to minimize disruptions. They also expressed a preference for more interactive and visually appealing materials, which they believed would further enhance their learning experience.

Interview Insights: I.J. commented, "Videos and slides make the lessons more engaging, but sometimes the equipment doesn't work, which is frustrating." K.L.

added, "I like it when we use interactive apps and tools, but they should always be ready to use without any problems."

Opportunities for Practice:

Survey Results: 70% of students felt they had sufficient opportunities to practice speaking skills through various classroom activities. Nonetheless, 30% desired more personalized feedback on their performance. This indicates a need for a balanced approach that combines ample practice opportunities with individualized feedback.

Focus Group Feedback: Students appreciated peer reviews and teacher feedback but recommended more one-on-one sessions to address individual challenges. They felt that personalized feedback would help them better understand their strengths and areas for improvement.

Interview Insights: M.N. noted, "Peer reviews are helpful, but I sometimes need more detailed feedback from the teacher." O.P. mentioned, "One-on-one sessions would be great because I could get specific advice on how to improve."

Overall Satisfaction:

Survey Results: Overall satisfaction with the teaching methods was high, with 85% of students expressing contentment. However, 15% indicated room for improvement, particularly in the areas of engagement and personalized feedback. This suggests that while most students are satisfied, there are still aspects of the teaching methods that could be enhanced to better meet their needs.

Focus Group Feedback: The general sentiment was positive, with students recognizing the efforts of their teachers to make lessons engaging and informative. They acknowledged the dedication of their teachers and the benefits of the current teaching methods but also expressed a desire for continuous improvement.

Interview Insights: Q.R. said, "The teachers are doing a great job, and I enjoy the classes. Still, I think there's always room for new activities to keep things fresh." S.T. added, "I appreciate how the teachers try to make the lessons interesting and interactive. It makes learning much more enjoyable.

Discussion

The findings highlight several strengths and areas for improvement in the teaching methods used in professional speaking classes at SMP 1 Toraja Utara, from the perspective of the students.

Strengths:

The clarity of instruction and effective use of teaching aids are evident strengths. The majority of students reported understanding the material well, aided by clear instructions and helpful visual aids. Interactive activities, such as group discussions and presentations, were particularly appreciated for their role in maintaining student engagement and participation. These findings align with Tiu et al. (2023), who emphasize the importance of clear instructions and interactive activities in enhancing oral proficiency.

Areas for Improvement:

Despite the overall positive feedback, there are areas that require attention to better align with student perceptions. The engagement of students could be further enhanced by incorporating a greater variety of teaching methods. Additionally, addressing technical issues with multimedia resources promptly would improve the learning experience. The need for more personalized feedback was a recurring theme, suggesting that teachers should consider incorporating more individual assessment opportunities to help students improve their speaking skills. These suggestions are supported by Robillos (2023), who found that technology-mediated pedagogical

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approaches can enhance student engagement and performance, and by Chen et al. (2023), who highlighted the effectiveness of peer-tutoring and VR contexts in facilitating active behaviors in speaking.

Implications for Teaching Practice:

These findings suggest that while the current teaching methods are largely effective, there is room for refinement to better meet student expectations and needs. Teachers at SMP 1 Toraja Utara could benefit from ongoing professional development focused on diversifying instructional strategies and providing individualized feedback. Incorporating more interactive and varied teaching methods could enhance student engagement and learning outcomes. Additionally, ensuring the technical reliability of multimedia tools will further support the effectiveness of teaching aids. This approach is consistent with Jean-Pierre et al. (2023), who advocate for innovative methods to improve the teaching and learning of public speaking skills, and Sevara and Akramovna (2023), who emphasize the importance of empowering effective communication through innovative teaching methods.

In conclusion, the study provides valuable insights into student perceptions of teaching methods in professional speaking contexts, highlighting both strengths and areas for enhancement. By addressing the identified areas for improvement, educators can better meet the needs of their students, ultimately fostering a more engaging and effective learning environment.

Conclusion

The study highlights several key strengths and areas for improvement in the teaching methods for professional speaking at SMPN 1 Buntu Pepasan Toraja Utara. Primarily, the clarity of instruction was found to be a strong point, with most students

appreciating clear guidelines and visual aids. These tools effectively helped students grasp complex concepts and apply them in their speaking tasks.

However, the study also identified areas where improvements are needed. While many students found interactive activities engaging, there is a noticeable demand for a greater variety of teaching methods to sustain interest and cater to diverse learning preferences. Additionally, technical issues with multimedia resources occasionally disrupted the learning process, indicating a need for more reliable technological support.

Furthermore, while students generally felt they had ample opportunities for practice, there was a clear call for more personalized feedback. Providing individual assessments could better address specific student needs and enhance overall speaking skills. By addressing these areas for improvement, educators can create a more dynamic and supportive learning environment that better meets students' needs and fosters more effective communication skills.

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