

THE GENRE OF Q&A SESSIONS OF ORAL PRESENTATIONS DELIVERED BY STUDENTS ENROLLED IN ENGLISH FOR WORKPLACE COMMUNICATION

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ABSTRACT: This study is to seek out the structure of the moves utilised by students in Q&A sessions of oral presentations and the differences between the moves utilized by FP and FPPSM students enrolled in *English for Workplace Communication*. The Q&A sessions of the oral presentations of 44 third year students enrolled in the preceding subject from the two faculties in UTM were observed. The Q&A sessions were recorded and then transcribed and analysed to work out the moves. It was found that there was a specific structure of moves utilised by students in Q&A sessions of oral presentations. Some differences were found between the moves in Q&A sessions of FP students and those of FPPSM students. The structure of the moves in Q&A sessions needs to be explained to the students so that they are aware of the appropriate moves to be utilised during the Q&A sessions.

ABSTRAK: Kajian ini bertujuan untuk mengkaji struktur langkah-langkah yang digunapakai oleh pelajar dalam sesi soal jawab bagi pembentangan lisan dan juga perbezaan di antara langkah-langkah yang digunakan oleh pelajar FP dan FPPSM yang mengambil subjek *English for Workplace Communication* dalam sesi soal jawab. Pemerhatian telah dijalankan ke atas sesi soal jawab 44 pelajar tahun tiga dari kedua-dua fakulti yang mengambil subjek tersebut. Sesi soal jawab tersebut juga dirakam dan kemudiannya ditranskrip dan di analisis untuk data analisis. Hasil kajian mendapati terdapat struktur langkah-langkah khas yang digunapakai oleh pelajar di dalam sesi soal jawab bagi pembentangan lisan yang telah dianalisis. Beberapa perbezaan juga dapat dikenalpasti di antara langkah-langkah yang digunapakai oleh pelajar FP dan juga pelajar FPPSM dalam sesi soal jawab. Struktur langkah-langkah dalam sesi soal jawab perlu diterangkan kepada para pelajar agar mereka sedar akan langkah-langkah yang sesuai digunapakai semasa sesi soal jawab.

Keyword: English for Workplace Communication, UTM

INTRODUCTION

A newspaper article (New Straits Times, April 2008) reported that the local graduates in Malaysia could not secure jobs as they were not up to the par in terms of English communication skills. These students may have achieved first class degree but they still have problems in communicating in English. Because of this, the credibility of local higher institutions is at stake as the public assume that the problem started because these institutions do not give their students sufficient practice in English.

Statement of the Problem

One common problem of communication found in local higher institutions is, the students are not able to participate actively in dialogues when they attend seminars or conferences. The students did not ask questions when they were given the chance. Students dread question and answer sessions of student oral presentations as the speakers feared of being asked questions meanwhile the audience, do not know how to ask questions and will just keep quiet. When the students start working, they will find that the skill of asking is very important because besides delivering presentations they will also need to be able to answer and ask the questions. Good impression is very important in career life and this skill is very important to maintain.

Objectives

The objectives of this research are:

- 1) To describe the structure of the moves found in Q&A sessions of student OPs.
- 2) To compare the moves found in Q&A sessions of OPs delivered by students in FP and those delivered by students in FPPSM.

Significance of the Research

This research will be an advantage for students to participate actively in Q&A sessions of seminars, oral presentations and also interactions in everyday life. With the knowledge of the moves utilized in Q&A sessions, students can be more confident to participate actively in the sessions. It can also be an advantage for lecturers by giving the input on the moves found in Q&A sessions. With this input, lecturers will be able to use it to teach students the right way to participate in Q&A sessions.

Scope of the Research

This research will investigate the structure of the moves found in the Q&A sessions of student oral presentations delivered by students enrolled in English for Workplace Communication (UHB 3022) offered by the Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, UTM Skudai, Johor. This research will not include the moves and elements found in the introduction, body and conclusion of the oral presentations.

METHODOLOGY

Research Sample and Population

The population of this research included all students enrolled in English for Workplace Communication (UHB 3022) offered by the Department of Modern Languages, Faculty of Management and Human Resource Development, UTM Skudai, Johor. However, the research only observed and recorded two classes as all the classes conducted oral presentations in the same week.

Research Instruments

The researcher made use of one instrument for this study which was transcribed Q&A sessions. There were eight transcribed Q&A sessions that were used in the analysis.

Transcribed Q&A sessions

The Q&A sessions of the OPs by the students were recorded and transcribed. The sessions were transcribed according to the standard convention of transcription. The transcriptions were the main instrument of this study. The transcribed sessions can be seen in Appendix A and B.

DISCUSSION

The Structure of the Moves Found in Q&A Sessions of FP Students' Oral Presentations

For FP students, there were four Q&A sessions recorded. Each group's oral presentation was followed with a Q&A session. In each session, a minimum of four questions were asked and answered. Therefore, for each session only four questions were analyzed in order to conduct a standard analysis. For each session, the four questions were analyzed in a table in order to determine the general sequence of the moves utilized by each group. The same step was repeated for the next three groups. After this analysis, the general sequence of moves for each group was organized into a table as shown below.

Table 1 The Moves Found in Each Group (FP)

FP 1	FP2	FP3	FP4
Making transition	Making transition	Making transition	Making transition
-	Inviting questions	-	-
-	-	Stating number of questions	Stating number of questions
FP 1	FP2	FP3	FP4
Introducing questioner	Introducing questioner	-	-
Structuring move	Structuring move	Structuring move	Structuring move
Questioning move	Questioning move	Questioning move	Questioning move
Thanking the questioner	Thanking the questioner	-	Thanking the questioner
Responding move	Responding move	Responding move	Responding move
Expanding move	Expanding move	Expanding move	Expanding move
Reminding speaker of the question	-	-	-
-	Confirming that question is answered	-	-
-	Inviting next question	-	Inviting next question

As can be seen from the analysis, each group utilized almost the same moves. Each group had a transitional phase in their Q&A session where they indicated the end of their presentation. However, only FP2 proceeded with the move of inviting questions from the audience. In Q&A session for FP3 and FP4, the audience stated the number of questions they were going to ask before asking the question. Next, two sessions saw audience introducing themselves before asking the question. As it was a business presentation, they introduced themselves as representative from their company. They proceeded with the structuring move and then they asked their question (questioning move).

For every group, one of the speaker responded to the questions (responding move) and proceeded in explaining more on their responses (expanding move) by giving examples, assurances etc. There was one member of the audience in Q&A session for FP1 who reminded the speakers of the question that she asked (reminding speaker of the question). Only one of the groups, FP2 confirmed with the questioner whether the response given answered her question. Speakers from FP2 and FP4 invited other questions from the audience after they finished answering the questions.

Each group signalled the end of their presentation as the start of Q&A session as they are experienced in delivering oral presentations. Therefore, they are familiar with the basic moves of OP. However, only one of the groups invited questions from the audience. This might happen because of the presence of the lecturer as the chairman for the presentations where they assumed that the audience will ask questions even though they did not invite the questions.

Most of the audience members introduced themselves before asking questions as this move was required by the chairman. However, some of them did not utilize this move. All the questioners utilized structuring move when they were asking question. Structuring move is where the questioner gave context or situation for the questions they asked. For example, the questioner might give a situation of problem that he or she wanted to know how the speakers would solve it. Then, he or she will proceed with the real question.

Most of the speakers thanked the questioners for the question before answering it. This can be seen from the table where speakers from three groups utilized this move. They responded to the questions and each time they would expand their responses in order to make the audience more convinced of their product. However, some of the speakers strayed from the responses that he or she should give and that was when of the questioner from F1 reminded the speaker of her actual action. Speakers from FP2 would confirm with the questioner whether the responses given answered their question. This move may have been utilised because it may seem that the questioner was not satisfied with their answer. However, none of the audience members verified this but agreed that their questions were answered. Speakers from F2 would always invite other questions after they had finished answering questions.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of the research, it was found that the structure of the moves found in Q&A session of student oral presentations is:

M 1.0 Transitional phase
SM 1.1 Making transition
SM 1.2 Inviting questions
M 2.0 Asking question
S.M 2.1 Introducing questioner
S.M 2.2 Stating number of questions
S.M 2.3 Structuring move
SM 2.4 Questioning move
M 3.0 Answering question
SM 3.1 Thanking the questioner
SM 3.2 Referring to Power Point slides
SM 3.3 Responding move
SM 3.4 Expanding move
SM 3.5 Reminding speaker of the question
SM 3.6 Confirming that question is answered
SM 3.7 Inviting next question

With this, it answers the first research question which is “*What is the structure of the moves found in Q&A session of student oral presentations.*” Further analysis of the transcribed Q&A sessions of FP and FPPSM student oral presentations, it was found that there were several differences in terms of moves between those two faculties and these differences answer the second research question which is “*What are the differences in moves found in Q&A session of OPs delivered by students in FP and those delivered by students in FPPSM*”. The differences are:

1. FP students utilised more moves than FPPSM students in Q&A sessions.
2. FPPSM students referred to Power Point slides when answering question.
3. FPPSM students introduced themselves before stating number of questions but it was the opposite for FP students.

Overall, the moves described by Kayfetz and Smith (1992) formed the basis of the moves in Q&A sessions as all the moves were found in the transcriptions. Hopefully, with this research, it can help to make the lecturers and also students to be aware of the moves necessary in Q&A sessions as it can help to prepare students to handle and participate in Q&A sessions later when they are working.

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