Gender Matter: Different Learners’ Style of Speech Delivery

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ABSTRACT

It is interesting to discuss how gender contributes differences in linguistic context, in which female and male individuals perform different style of delivering their ideas. This ex-post facto research is eager to discover and elaborate speech delivery gap between male and female students at one of Indonesian high schools. The study responds to the problem of how the style of students from across gender diverse in term of speech delivery. The investigation output is expected to benefit as a main source of reflection to exploit learners’ individual potentials specifically in English Language Teaching (ELT) framework. Focused interview was carried to analyze students’ speech delivery orientation while questionnaires were employed to reveal their strategy in conveying their speech and field note served to describe the students’ speech performance. Upon the whole experimental process, the major findings manifested that both groups of students performed varied delivery style from one to another. Each of them owned typical characters in dealing with the public audience.

KEYWORDS: Speaking style, speech delivery, language and gender

One of the most often researched areas related to gender in education is the issue of sex differences, i.e. comparing male and female characteristics and performance (Forsthuber et al, 2009). Beginning in 1973, when the first article specifically concerned with women and language was published in a major linguistics journal, an increasing number of scholars have been conducting research on language, gender and sexism (Fromkin et al, 2003). It seems there have been a
growing number of discussions on gender based communication in any public places such as schools, workplaces, governmental institutions, and so forth. The more promotion of gender equality has presented a challenging situation for the communication cycle within the institution. Forsthuber et al (2009) then add that a number of recurrent themes or topics are to be found in the literature on gender and education which deal primarily with educational practice (or what goes on in schools). The interaction of different social factors can produce quite complex gender outcomes. The way someone delivers a message is interfered by either masculinity or femininity. This aspect is regarded the influential factor which contributes to language varieties.

It is interesting to discuss how gender also contributes differences in the context of English Language Teaching (ELT), in which female and male students perform different style of delivering their idea. Holmes and Meyerhoff (2003) noticed that a great deal of research on language, gender, and education has been concerned to document differences and inequalities in girls' and boys' language behavior. Girls and boys were observed to have different speaking styles, they made different reading choices, they wrote in different ways and about different topics. It is evident that male and female perform different speech delivery styles which are hypothetically affected by certain factors in language usage.

The questions on the contrast between male and female students’ speech style and also the role of gender to their speech delivery might emerge. Thus, this research is eager to discover and elaborate speech delivery gap between male and female students at one of Indonesian high schools. Both groups of subjects were active speech contestants and repeatedly achieved success in regional English speech events. The investigation would benefit as a main source of reflection to exploit
learners’ individual potentials specifically in English Language Teaching (ELT) landscape.

**English Speaking Development in EFL country**

Everyone realizes that of all the four fundamental language skills (listening, reading, speaking, writing), speaking seems to be the most important as people who know a language should be able to apply it in communication, and speaking ability is the key of the communication. Furthermore, Cahyono and Widiati (2011) point out that communication is an important part of human civilization and it is a means of cultural transformation. The purpose of learning a language is mainly to communicate and to get information from that communication. Harmer (cited in Cahyono and Widiati, 2001) explains:

> There are three reasons why people communicate. First, “they want to say something.” It means that the speaker is interested in conveying messages to the other people. Second, people want speak because “they have some communicative purposes.” Having “communicative purpose” means that the speaker wants something to happen as a result of what he/she says. Finally, when people communicate, “they select from their language store.” This is the consequence of the desire to say something and the purpose in conducting communicative activities. As they develop language storage, they will select language expressions appropriate to get message across to other people (p.31).

Currently, as a part of the “global challenge development” progresses, the teaching of speaking skills is considered a necessary component in the “English as a Foreign Language (EFL)” context, including in Indonesia. Richards and Renandya (in Cahyono and Widiati, 2011) states “A large percentage of the world’s language learners study English in order to develop proficiency in speaking”. However, the
success of learning a language is determined by the ability to communicate in that language. Therefore, many schools in Indonesia have been attempting to improve their students’ English speaking proficiency through several programs such as English conversation club, English extra program and so forth. Regardless the current status of English as a Foreign Language in Indonesia, the schools have initiated to improve their students’ ability to speak English. They have provided additional programs for their students to explore their English capability. Some of them are willing to import native English teachers to maximize ELT process. And furthermore, the presence of English competition, such as speech contest, storytelling, debate and so on, among universities and schools has enabled and encouraged students to involve in many English events both in regional and national levels.

**Speech Style delivery**

Delivery refers to presenting a speech in public. When you deliver a speech, you merge its verbal and visual components into a presentation before an audience. There are four types of delivery methods: impromptu, extemporaneous, manuscript, and memorized (Coopman and Lull, 2012).

*Impromptu*

Impromptu speech refers to a type of public speaking in which the speaker has little or no time to prepare a speech (Coopman and Lull, 2012). Lucas (2009) adds that an impromptu speech is delivered with little or no immediate preparation. The Latin phrase *in promptu* (from which this word is drawn) actually means “to have at hand, to be in readiness.” And this little piece of etymology gives away the big secret: The best impromptu speeches are not really unprepared at all, they are just given promptly (Learning express, 2010). This sort of speech is commonly practiced
in our daily communication such as answering a question in a small discussion or dialogue, giving committee report or having class discussion and so on. In this respect, impromptu speaking is simply another way to use the basic communication skills you already have and use regularly (Lucas, 2009). This way benefits flexibility but limited time to rehearse and organize the speech composition.

Extemporaneous

In popular usage, extemporaneous means the same as “impromptu”, but technically the two are different. Unlike an impromptu speech which is delivered off-the-cuff, an extemporaneous speech is carefully prepared and practiced in advance (Lucas, 2009). The speakers of extemporaneous speech generally just create an outline of their content or a brief note in hand. Hamilton further highlights that an extemporaneous speech is not memorized or written out word for word; it is developed from an outline and presented from brief speaking notes. Speaking extemporaneously helps you deliver an audience-centered and engaging message, greatly maximizing your chances of connecting with your listeners and having your speech achieve its purpose (Coopman and Lull, 2012).

In addition, it gives more precise control over thought and language than does impromptu speaking; it offers greater spontaneity and directness that speaking from memory or from a full manuscript; and it is adaptable to a wide range of situations (Lucas, 2009). Based on its more advantages, extemporaneous speech is mostly suggested by professional speakers and teachers in any different context.

Manuscript

The best and surest way to guarantee that you won’t forget your speech is to write it down, word for word, and then read it back to your audience. This will certainly alleviate your anxiety—but it will also make a dreadfully dull speech
Manuscript is a type of public speaking in which the speaker reads a written script word for word (Coopman and Lull, 2012). Although it might seem that reading your speech would be a safe way to avoid a blunder, speaking from a manuscript is much harder than speaking from notes. It’s difficult to use good vocal variety and maintain direct eye contact while reading a speech. (Hamilton, 2012)

**Memorized**

Memorized speech is a type of public speaking in which the speaker commits a speech to memory (Coopman and Lull, 2012). Memorized speech can be best used in certain situations such as congratulatory remarks, introduction, and acceptance award speech and so on. As knowing exactly what you are going to say reduces the chances that you will sound unprepared or make comments you will regret later. And memorizing small sections of your speech, such as your introduction, key transitions, and conclusion, helps reduce anxiety and can increase your self-confidence (Coopman and Lull, 2012).

However, Speaking from memory has even more drawbacks than reading from a manuscript. First, because it takes a great deal of time and effort to memorize a speech, it will not work on occasions when there is only enough time to decide on your main points and find the necessary supporting materials. Second, speaking from memory makes it difficult to react to listener feedback. A question from a listener can make you forget the next sentence or even the rest of your speech. Also, it is difficult to make your delivery relaxed, spontaneous, and believable if you are trying to recall memorized text (Hamilton, 2012).
Researcher’s Experience in Guiding Speech Contestants (In Training and Contest)

It was begun in 2012 when the researcher, through an English club, made an attempt to guide some students to participate in speech contest. As many as six female speakers were encouraged to participate in a province level of speech contest. All of them had typical characters in delivering their speech contents.

For six years, this club has tried to participate in several English competitions including speech contest. This aims at justifying and evaluating students’ English proficiency and performance for their study. During the students’ participation, they have achieved some notable success both in regional and national level. However, the researcher noticed typical characters from one student to another. Although they learned from the same coach and created the same speech structure, they diverged in case of delivering their speech materials. This varied style sometimes greatly affected students’ performance and how speech judges valued them in on a stage. A judge might prefer students with strong gesture performance and other loved the calm ones. Thus, the result of speech contest was frequently unpredictable due to the judge’s tendency for the delivery style of individuals’ speeches.

In years, the researcher encountered trouble to find a talented male speaker. This was mainly caused by the minor numbers of male students in the club and moreover they possessed lack interest and desire to perform in public event. Most of English competitions that this club ever participated and accomplished were dominated by female learners. Yet, since 2015, the researcher had fortunately been able to invite a talented male student to participate in some speech events. This student successfully grabbed three titles in regional speech championship from 2015-2016. Another one was a female speaker from the last grade of the school. The girl
was also actively involved in English speech contest. She was several times successful in achieving English speech contests in various events. Those two students had the equal experience in attending the speech events.

The Diversity of Speaking Style between Male and Female

Azhar and Mohindra (2012), in their research about communicational approaches of men and women at workplaces, found that men and women socialize differently and consequently, have diverse styles of speaking. The male communication pattern and traits tend to be honest, direct, and factual. It is considered “report” type talk. According to Tannen (in Drynan, 2011), men and women express themselves in different ways and for different reasons. Men use communication to maintain independence, while women talk to maintain intimacy. Whether conscious or unconscious, men often talk to establish status from others. Women use words to connect themselves emotionally, to express feelings, or build rapport. Men often share facts and figures as in a report. The communication behaviors which men tend to possess are as follows:

- Reason
- Logic
- Power
- Rank
- Status
- Compete
- Winning
- Team
- Think

The female communication pattern and traits tend to be nurturing, indirect, and respectful. It is considered “rapport” type talk. The communication behaviors of women tend to possess the followings:
Drynan (2011) then highlights that girls were typically told to use their manners, play quietly, and be ladylike, while it appeared to be socially acceptable for boys to use rough language, play loudly, and be rambunctious. In my opinion, this norm continues to exist today. Girls are allowed to show feelings. For example, if a small girl scrapes her knee and starts to cry, she is nurtured. If a boy has the same minor injury, he is told not to cry and be tough.

Men and woman communicate with their own styles, strategies and approaches. But the purpose basically remains the same that is to interact and transfer information among of them. Men will take the approach of instrumental communication style where they want the answer right away and establish their hierarchy and supremacy. Women, on the other hand, will be more of an expressive style of communication as they will be able to confide in others and are more sensitive to issues than men women will be able to build, maintain and strengthen the relationship (Azhar and Mohindra, 2012).

**METHOD OF THE STUDY**

**Design**

The design implemented in this research was ex-post facto or causal comparative. Borg et al (2003:296) defines ex-post facto as design that relies on
observation of relationships between naturally occurring variations in the presumed independent and dependent. Moreover, Lord (1973) affirms that causal comparative or ex-post facto of research seeks to establish causal relationship between events and circumstances. In other words, it finds out the cause of certain occurrences or non occurrences. This is achieved by comparing the circumstances associated with observed effects and by noting the factors present in the instances where a given effect occurs and where it does not occur. This study determined if there was any relationship between gender and speech delivery style in one of Indonesian high schools. Two groups of students that consisted of four participants were observed in case of delivering their speech. The study was administering the following instruments:

- Interview

Interview was carried to analyze students’ speech content, delivery orientation as well as their experience in the participation of speech events. This interview acted as a means of submitting information about the learners’ different style of delivery.

- Questionnaire

Questionnaire was employed to reveal the strategy used in conveying their speech. It explored the students’ preference of using the technique during their speech. The questionnaire presented 19 items of Likert scale from 1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = undecided, 4 = agree, and 5 = strongly disagree.

- Field Note Report

Field note served to describe the students’ speech performance. The note was utilized by the researchers to observe the students’ style in delivering a speech. The students’ performance either in daily practice or in the competition was recorded to
gain the data. Then, each student’s performance on the video was analyzed and compared in accordance with their gesture, intonation, voice and eye contact.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Students’ Strategy in Conveying Their Speech

The questionnaire focused on exploring students’ strategy in delivering their speech. The output did not reflect significant contrast of the way students produced their speech. They predominantly performed the same thing and possessed similar tendency to deliver a speech. The distinction could exclusively be seen in certain variables such as students’ desire of creating a speech with a sudden topic. This table explains the learners’ preference contrast on a sudden topic.

Table 1

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I like a sudden topic best</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The male students seemed to detest receiving a sudden topic than the females did. It was affirmed by the females’ thought that without memorizing a speech text, they felt free to interact with the audiences naturally as if talking to them.
Table 2

*The students’ opinion about memorizing speech text*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

By not memorizing a speech text, I feel free to interact with the audiences naturally as if talking to them.

Another contradiction was found in the need of bringing a note when delivering a speech. Female students admitted that the presence of a small note in a speech would be very helpful to support their performance.

Table 3

*Students’ view about note presence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Strongly agree</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It is seen from the table that unlike the males, females confidently felt that the presence of note was effective in delivering a speech. From a note, they were able to develop supporting sentences in composing their speech materials.

**Students’ Speech and Delivery Style Orientation**

The participants of interview consisted of four students across gender with various experience in practical speech. From them, the researchers attained different
facts of students in dealing with speech text. They owned diverse preference of speech topic for particular reasons and they also encountered different problems in creating their speech text such as to overcome bad mood, elaborate a speech theme and use appropriate grammar within their speech materials. Even so, the content of their speech texts resembled one to another. From four types of delivering speech (manuscript, extemporaneous, memorized, and impromptu), all of them desired ‘memorized’ best due to the reason that they could be more prepared and confident to perform in front of their audiences as seen in one of participants’ answer below.

“I like ‘memorized’ best because by memorizing, I can have more self preparation so I can be more confident in delivering my speech”.

The researcher provided thirteen adjectives which reflected each speaker’s character in delivering their speech. They were; strong, cool, inspiring, childish, soft, calm, feminism, optimistic, elegant, emotional, flat, wise, humorous. From the four speakers, it was noticed that their characters differed one another as described in the following table.

Table 4

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Character Description</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>MS1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MS2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FS2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

It was then clarified by the researchers’ field note of all speakers’ performance on the practice and competition videos. The field note figured the
speakers’ style from their physical performance which comprised four aspects of gesture, intonation, voice and eye contact.

Both male speakers performed very calm moves of foot step which went left and right mostly and also sometimes forward and backward. The first male speaker tended to raise his hands constantly to left and right while the second one possessed more variety of using his strong hand in certain key points of his speech while nodding his head. Their intonations were different each other. One of them was constant and slightly flat in intonation while the other had explanatory, inspiring and strong emphasis on some key words. Although both of them were male speakers, in term of voice, the second speaker dominated the first. The second speaker had tendency to look into the audiences incisively than the first speaker as it became his power in delivering his speech. It was observed in interview answer of his special character which the other speaker might not have.

‘I think some speakers might have very common style. On the contrary, what I could accentuate from myself in delivering a speech is to look into the eyes of my audiences’.

The female speakers also owned typical characters of delivering speech observed on the videos. Both of the participants performed intensive moves of foot step to left and right side. Their both hands clasped and sometimes moved left or right or even shook in the same direction. The first female speaker liked to shake and nodded her head while the second one liked to head up. The first speaker’s intonation, with constantly strong voice, was going calm at the outset then flowing up in the speech climax and finally falling down at the end. While the second one presented constant intonation which emphasized on the key points with fair voice
that arose in the climax points. In dealing with the audiences, the first female speaker performed better eye contact than the second one.

The varied behavioral styles of most speakers were mainly intended to gain impression of judges and audiences. They were trained to attract their spectators with speech materials and performance they had in order to dominate speech contests. As like an actor, their performance was an attempt to affect people’s positive view of their quality. Their body language, intonation, gesture and voice were utilized as their power to introduce their identity towards the audiences.

Varieties in performing a speech could be interfered by many factors such as communicative goal, favorite public figure or gender. We saw from the observation that speakers’ style was not mainly influenced by their internal factor (gender) but also their tendency to imitate their favorite speaker. From the interview, it was found that they idolized different public speaker figures whose style they tried to imitate in their speech. It however confirmed Elinor Ochs’ notion (in Ekert and Ginet, 2003) that linguistic behaviors were seldom associated directly with social categories such as class or gender. The male speakers’ preference to perform calm and constant moves and females’ motion which often loitered possibly answered gender clash in language use. It is clarified by Azhar and Mohindra (2012) that men use an instrumental style of communication. Instrumental style of communication for men is to focus on identifying goals and finding a solution. Women communicate in an expressive style. The expressive style involves emotions and having a perspective of being sensitive to how others feel. In their study, they noticed that women were more aggressive, emotional and critical that encouraged them to move more.
CONCLUSION

This paper finally arrived at the conclusion of the entire research process. This study bore that speech delivery styles between male and female learners truly occurred. Yet, it did not mean that the distinctions were mainly affected by their masculinity and femininity. The findings descriptively illustrated that there was slight gap regarding the students’ technique of delivering a speech. Nevertheless, the observation through their speech videos reflected that they sure maintained different styles of delivery. Male speakers tended to be calm while their opposites tried to perform expressively. In short, both groups of students performed varied delivery style from one to another. Each of them owned typical characters in dealing with the public audience. Those varied way of delivery was mainly intended to be their typical characters to attract the audiences and the judges.

REFERENCES


