The Effect of Self-Evaluation on Oral Performance

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Background

Self-monitoring has been emphasized in instruction of oral skills as part of learners' taking responsibility for their own learning. It provides students with the opportunities and the strategies to continue their learning beyond the classroom (Avery & Ehrlich, 1992). However, there is still much disagreement on the degree to which learners can self-monitor and self-correct (Celce-Murcia, Brinton, & Goodwin, 2010). Some research has been conducted by Dr. Kang to look into the effects of self-evaluation in general on presentation skills and pronunciation. The research provided findings indicating an influence on presentation skills. However, the research received feedback from teachers, at TESOL 2012, that it did not provide a specific enough focus or guidance in self-evaluation for students and could benefit from such focus and guidance., the

Research Questions

This study addressed the following research questions:

- Do students' focused self-monitoring strategies improve their oral performance skills of the following types:
  - presentation skills
  - pronunciation
  - comprehensibility
  - oral proficiency

Methods

During the fall of 2012, the study focused on two intact classes as one experiment and one control group. The students were all enrolled in one of two sections of level five listening and speaking at the Program in Intensive English (PIE). Throughout the semester, the two classes engaged in pre and post-tests, which were presentations given for class credit. In week

seven and fourteen of the semester, both classes received mini-lessons on presentation skills (e.g., eye contact and hand gestures) and pronunciation (e.g., stress at word and sentence level) respectively. Later in week seven and fourteen, students in both groups gave a practice presentation which served as the pre-test. In week eight and fifteen, both classes gave a final presentation which served as the post-test. By the end of the semester, both classes had given a total of four presentations. Pre-presentations were on the same topic as the corresponding post-presentations in the following week. All student participants received immediate feedback after pre-presentations from their teacher concerning the topic from the mini-lesson earlier that week.

The experiment group engaged in self-evaluation over a period of about three days. This self-evaluation consisted of students logging on to a video hosting website and watching a video of their own presentation while also filling out a self-evaluation form. See Appendix A and B for examples of the self-evaluation forms used during the study.

At the end of the semester, after all presentations were complete, the rating of student presentations occurred. Raters included two of the three researchers for the project, and also included a third rater for part of the rating concerning only presentation skills and pronunciation. Rating involved use of two 5-point scales, one 7-point Likert scale, and a 7-point scale comprised of four 7-point Likert subscales. See Appendix C for the scales used during rating.

Results

To determine the reliability of scores assigned to students' performances throughout the semester, an inter-rater reliability analysis was run and inter-rater reliability was above .70 for all scoring sessions. In order to determine what effect self-evaluation may have had in the experiment group, a statistical analysis using paired and independent t tests, and a 2 x 2 mixed factorial ANOVA was conducted. The analyses enabled a comparison of rating scores between

groups, within groups, and over time. Results showed significant difference within the experiment group in the comparison of week 7 and week 15 post-test scores on the oral proficiency scale ($t = -2.30$, p $< .05$, $df = 23$) and also between pre and post-test scores in week 15 for oral proficiency ($F = 42.99$, $p < .05$, $df = 1$). All other score comparisons did not yield significant differences. The qualitative data collected through the self-evaluation forms also showed many off-topic responses and many students felt that their oral performance concerning pronunciation was sufficient for their purposes. Some students did indicate through their responses a more strategic approach to self-evaluation, but these students were a minority concerning self-evaluation.

Relevance to PIE and Second Language Learning

Overall, the indications from our study were that self-evaluation does have an effect on oral performance, but at a very general level. All measures of specific aspects of oral performance showed no statistically significant effect, while the general measure (oral proficiency) did show some statistically significant improvement. The effect was seen in both short and long term measures (between pre and post-tests, and also between post-tests from week 7 to 15). However, based on the results from both quantitative and qualitative analysis, the task of self-evaluation is not something students can do effectively without more guidance. These findings help to suggest that if teachers are asking students to self-evaluate in order to improve their oral performance, those teachers would do well to provide training and guidance in how to self-evaluate for specific aspects of oral performance.