

## Speech Activity for the Development of Rapport in the EFL Classroom<sup>†</sup>

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今日、英語教育においてスピーチ活動は発信型の活動のひとつとして注目されている。しかしスピーチを行うまでのさまざまな過程を考慮すれば、生徒の人間教育的な側面においてもスピーチ活動は重要である。本研究では、特に教室内のラポール構築においてスピーチ活動が貢献し得るか、またどのように貢献し得るかを調査するものである。調査は幸野が担当した英語リスニングBの履修生を対象に行われた。津江はこの授業におけるティーチング・アシスタントであった。両著者は毎回授業の始めに英語スピーチと質疑応答の時間を設け、発表者にはコメント・カードによる聴衆からの feedback を与えた。さらに学期末に受講生を対象としてアンケート調査を実施し、回答に対して因子分析を行った。その結果スピーチ活動が教室内のラポールの構築に貢献し、この活動によって学生間及び学生と教師間におけるコミュニケーションが促進されたことが明らかとなった。

キーワード：英語教育，スピーチ活動，教室内相互交流，ラポール

### 1 Introduction

Nowadays, the “productive” aspect in EFL (English as a foreign language) education is more and more important and valuable, because the traditional style of EFL teaching has not been well-balanced, focusing too much on the “receptive” aspect. Needless to say, however, it is obvious that EFL teachers still should not make light of the receptive aspect in order to develop students’ skills in the productive aspect.

In Japan, speaking activities such as speech, discussion, and debate are becoming popular in schools, from junior high schools to universities, as effective classroom activities based on the productive aspect. Their purpose is to simply develop

speaking ability. All activities, however, should integrate the 4 macroskills—reading, writing, listening, and speaking. Nunan (1989:22) states;

In real life as in the classroom, most tasks of any complexity involve more than one macroskill. There are occasions, certainly, when one is simply listening, speaking, reading, or writing to the exclusion of the other skills... But there are many other examples where a number of skills are interwoven into a complex language activity... Where possible these skills should be integrated...

What Nunan suggests can also be applied to speech activity, where it is essential for students to pay attention to the process of communication as well as to the message conveyed by the speech. The message may not be conveyed to the audience

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if production takes place without enough reception. Therefore, speech activity is important for the development of English ability both in the receptive and productive aspects.

On the other hand, speech activity also contributes to the aspect of humanistic education for students. JACET Oral Communication SIG (2002: 13-14) reports 3 benefits of acquiring the ability of "public speaking," based on a study by Grice & Skinner. The first one is "Personal Benefit." This aspect enables speakers to enhance their ability of thinking and to have confidence in themselves. The second value is "Professional Benefit," and it relates to getting a job, making a better presentation, and making good human relationships in business. The last one is "Public Benefit." This aspect contributes to better mutual understanding in society as an individual, because a lack of oral expression ability sometimes causes people to misunderstand each other. All these benefits are also important for students to go through the society, and the EFL education in Japan should contribute to this point, and thus speech activity is beneficial for the students.

Speech activity helps students to create rapport, i.e. favorable human relationships, in the classroom. According to Littlewood (1980:93-94), we define "rapport" or "favorable human relationships" here as "the classroom atmosphere which does not create any inhibitions but is supportive and accepting." When a speaker prepares for the speech, he/she would follow the process mentioned in Wagner and Kawashima (1973). A speaker has to choose the topic and think over the content. He/she may write a script for the speech and memorize it, or write a memo and practice with it so that he/she can speak fluently, and finally deliver it to the audience. In this process, there are many important factors which promote mutual understanding among students, because the speaker has to analyze the audience, organize the topic, decide which expressions to use, and practice delivering, so that the audience can easily follow the content.

While a speaker cares about the audience, the teacher needs to instruct the audience to listen to the speech very carefully and with interest. That is, the audience has to cooperate with the speaker. If the audience listens to the speakers very hard with a great interest, that helps them to understand the speaker's favors, interests, point of view, and so on. They may notice a different side of the speaker and may have much interest in or sympathy with him/her.

Such mutual consideration and the understanding of the differences and similarities among students would promote rapport in the classroom, and help students effectively communicate in the activities. Furthermore, good communication surely contributes to good learning and understanding. Thus rapport is required both among the students and between the teacher and the students. In this study we seek to discover whether or not speech activity contributes to the development of rapport in the EFL classroom, and if it does, to what extent it has an effect on it.

## 2 The Study

### 2.1 Purpose

The present study is intended to investigate *whether or not* and *how* speech activity promotes rapport among the students and between the teachers and the students.

### 2.2 Method

#### a. Subjects

The subjects were 47 first-year students in the Faculty of Education and Human Studies, Akita University. They were enrolled in the English Listening Comprehension B class taught by Kono, the second author, in the first semester 2002. They were mixed in their majors. Of those 47 students, 19 students majored in "School Subject Teaching," 15 in "Education of Children with Disabilities," and the other 13 in "Human Development."

#### b. Procedure

The English Listening Comprehension class

met twice a week, and was a required subject for the students. It was instructed from April 11 to September 10, 2002. Tsue, the first author, helped Kono as teaching assistant. The students were required to make a speech at least once in the course. In the second and the third sessions, Kono made a speech as a model, and Tsue also made a model speech in the third session. After the fourth session, 3 of the students made a speech within 5 minutes during the first 15 or 20 minutes of the class. The students were allowed to choose their own topic, and a show-and-tell technique was recommended as one of the effective techniques.

After each speaker's speech, the present writers encouraged the students to ask questions or to give some comments. They helped to make clear what the students wanted to tell when they had some trouble, and when there were only few questions and comments, either Kono or Tsue, or both of them, asked questions and gave some comments.

In each session, the students were encouraged to give the speakers feedback about the speech by writing comments on a feedback sheet. Tsue collected the comments, added her own comments and encouragements, and gave them back to the speakers as a "Comment Card" in the next session.

After all the students made a speech, they were required to prepare for another speech during the summer vacation, and both of the present authors made a model speech again. This time, the topic was unified into "Funny Stories." After the vacation, the students worked in groups to choose the representative of each group, and in the second last session, a "Funny Story Contest" was held with 6 representative speakers.

The present authors issued questionnaires at the last session and 39 students answered them. The students answered them by choosing one from the 4 answers of "agree," "fairly agree," "hardly agree," and "disagree" depending on the extent to which they agreed with each statement. The statements were as follows:

1. Through the speech activity in this course,

I discovered something new about my peers, feeling more kinship with them.

2. Through the speech activity in this course, I rediscovered myself, having more confidence about myself.
3. Through the speech activity in this course, my relationships in the class have been developed.
4. Through the speech activity in this course, I found something new about my teacher and the teaching assistant, feeling more kinship with them.
5. When I made a speech, I prepared and delivered it by considering my audience.
6. When I listened to a speech, I had interest in it and tried to understand its content.
7. Making a speech is fun for me.
8. Listening to a speech is fun for me.
9. Making a speech makes me feel depressed.
10. I would like to make a speech if I have an opportunity for it.
11. It is worth my while to make a speech in the English class.
12. The question and answer time after the speech was worth my while.
13. It was worth my while to know my peers' comments through a comment card.
14. Through the speech activity, I felt I could act independently in this course.
15. Through the speech activity, the opportunity to communicate with the other students is increased.
16. Through the speech activity, the opportunity to communicate with the teacher is increased.
17. Speech activity should be adopted again in this course next year.

The statements 1 to 6, 15, and 16 are to examine whether or not rapport in this classroom is established through the speech activity, while the statements 7 to 14 and 17 are to investigate how the students feel about being involved in the speech activity, and to what extent they feel the activity

	Agree	Fairly agree	Hardly agree	Disagree		Agree	Fairly agree	Hardly agree	Disagree
Q-1	41	54	5	0	Q-10	10	31	38	21
Q-2	8	33	49	10	Q-11	51	41	8	0
Q-3	10	36	33	21	Q-12	33	39	28	0
Q-4	36	56	5	3	Q-13	69	31	0	0
Q-5	33	47	15	5	Q-14	41	46	10	3
Q-6	33	57	10	0	Q-15	23	48	21	8
Q-7	8	21	56	15	Q-16	33	62	5	0
Q-8	33	54	13	0	Q-17	51	44	5	0
Q-9	5	26	46	23					

Table 1 : Percentage of the Answer

Component	Initial Eigenvalues			Extraction Sums of Squared Loadings			Rotation Sums of Squared Loadings		
	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %	Total	% of Variance	Cumulative %
1	4.534	26.670	26.670	4.534	26.670	26.670	2.893	17.020	17.020
2	2.260	13.293	39.963	2.260	13.293	39.963	2.123	12.487	29.506
3	1.734	10.200	50.163	1.734	10.200	50.163	1.928	11.339	40.846
4	1.382	8.130	58.293	1.382	8.130	58.293	1.867	10.985	51.830
5	1.335	7.853	66.147	1.335	7.853	66.147	1.799	10.582	62.412
6	1.158	6.810	72.957	1.158	6.810	72.957	1.793	10.545	72.957
7	.857	5.043	78.001						
8	.704	4.143	82.143						
9	.589	3.464	85.607						
10	.566	3.329	88.936						
11	.488	2.869	91.806						
12	.439	2.584	94.389						
13	.300	1.767	96.157						
14	.242	1.426	97.583						
15	.210	1.236	98.819						
16	.109	.642	99.461						
17	9.156E-02	.539	100.000						

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Table 2 : Total Variance Explained

is important for them.

### 3 Results

The percentage of each answer is shown in Table 1. Factor analysis based on principle component analysis was carried out on the data with Varimax rotation. The data was computed by SPSS, a statistic software. The results are provided in Tables 2 and 3.

### 4 Discussion

According to Table 1, while Q-2 shows that about 40% of the students think they rediscovered themselves and had more confidence about them-

selves, Q-5 shows 80% of the students answered they prepared and delivered their speech for the sake of the audience. This means they cared more for their peers and teachers when they made a speech rather than caring for themselves. Maybe this is because their speech topic was not a serious one which required them to think over the issue very deeply. Their topics included self-introduction, their family, their interests, and their favorite singers. Moreover, since the students are from 3 different majors, they may well be conscious of their peers.

Q-15 reveals more than 70% of the students felt that the opportunity to communicate with the

	COMPONENT					
	1	2	3	4	5	6
VAR1	.524	-1.904E-02	6.934E-02	-.204	.367	.393
VAR2	.564	.310	-.112	.482	-.138	.240
VAR3	.554	.491	-.363	-.156	.308	3.919E-02
VAR4	-3.598E-02	5.486E-02	.113	9.919E-02	.853	.231
VAR5	1.399E-02	5.922E-02	-8.950E-02	.883	.187	4.546E-02
VAR6	.198	.144	.216	-.111	1.860E-02	.844
VAR7	-.105	.904	7.918E-02	.164	-.165	-9.130E-03
VAR8	.138	-7.605E-02	-5.157E-02	.205	.188	.756
VAR9	-6.256E-02	-.343	-.195	-.563	5.863E-02	2.583E-02
VAR10	6.975E-02	.821	1.487E-02	.181	.287	6.906E-02
VAR11	.326	.126	.396	.426	.549	3.903E-02
VAR12	.559	-.149	.496	.245	.119	R.183
VAR13	-2.425E-02	-1.590E-02	.826	-.104	5.265E-02	.168
VAR14	.670	-6.310E-02	.282	.122	-.266	.135
VAR15	.768	6.590E-02	-6.857E-02	.150	6.301E-02	.267
VAR16	.615	-6.600E-02	.232	-.176	.378	-.224
VAR17	.279	.303	.664	.167	.321	-.179

Extraction Method: Principal Component Analysis.

Rotation Method: Varimax with Kaiser Normalization.

Rotation converged in 44 iterations.

Table 3 : Rotated Component Matrix

other students had been increased. The result, in relation to Q-2, clearly shows that the speech activity in this course enhanced students' interactions rather than self-searching.

Q-6 and Q-8 show that the students tried to understand their peers' speech with interest, and that they found that listening to a speech was fun for them. Looking at Q-7, however, we notice that only about 30% of the students felt that making a speech was fun for them. It was interesting that there is such a big gap between the two aspects of speech activity—speech making and speech listening. Some students who answered making a speech was not so fun added some comments to this statement. They said they still had some fear in speaking in front of the people though they knew making a speech helped them increase their English ability and they felt happy when they got feedback from the audience. Likewise, Q-10

indicates that only about 40% of the students answered that they would like to make a speech again if they have an opportunity, while more than 90% of the students believe making a speech in the English class is worthwhile, as you see in Q-11. Therefore we can say that there is a conflict between students' rational side and emotional side.

Moreover, we know that, although Q-3 shows that only about half of them think their relationships developed after they made a speech, Q-1 shows most of them said they discovered something new about their peers, feeling more kinship with each other. Also, we have seen that Q-15 showed more than 70% of the students said the opportunity to communicate with the other students had been actually increased. The students probably had no other opportunity to develop further relationships out of the classroom, because

their majors were different and this course was one of the very few places for them to know each other.

The results of the factor analysis extracted the following 6 factors:

Factor 1: VAR 1, 2, 3, 12, 14, 15, and 16

Factor 2: VAR 7 and 10

Factor 3: VAR 13 and 17

Factor 4: VAR 5 and 9

Factor 5: VAR 4 and 11

Factor 6: VAR 6 and 8

The names given to each factor are the following:

Factor 1: Humanistic Educational Effects in Speech Activity

Factor 2: Positive Attitude to Speech Activity

Factor 3: Significance of the Comment Card

Factor 4: Concern for the Audience

Factor 5: Discovery about and Kinship with the Teacher and the Teaching Assistant

Factor 6: Pleasure of Listening to a Speech

From these results, it can be said that speech activities have humanistic educational effects on students, and that students relatively have positive attitudes to the activity. Factor 1 consists of the elements such as “discovery about and kinship with the peers,” “self-discovery and confidence,” “development of the relationships in the classroom,” and “communication enhancement both among the students and between the teacher and the students.” As we have expected, good relationships in the classroom are important when students are involved in the activities. Hence as Factor 2 reveals, students have positive attitudes to speech activity, because it promotes rapport in the classroom.

Furthermore, the students find comment cards from the peers worthwhile (Factor 3). The results also reveal that speech activity enables the students to know something new about the teacher

and the assistant, and to feel kinship with them (Factor 4). This means that the students think peer evaluation or feedback is important for them, and that they establish favorable relationships with the teacher and the assistant through speech activity.

Finally, the results indicate that students cared for the audience when they made a speech, and enjoyed listening to a speech made by the others (Factors 4 and 6). As we have already discussed, although they tend to feel less enjoyment when they make a speech, listening to a speech is fun for students because that requires them to use less energy.

## 5 Conclusion

As we have already seen, in this course, speech activity enhanced the students' communication in the classroom. This communication enhancement was very valuable because these 47 students would have been strangers to each other without such speech making opportunities and the exchange of information about themselves though the speech activity. In fact, many students gave comments to the speaker in their feedback sheet such as “I feel like listening to more of what you said, in Japanese,” or “I really want more information about your topic. It was so interesting.” Moreover, the present writers feel, in fact, that the students themselves realized the importance of the speech activity, and that above everything else, they enjoyed the class since they smiled a lot during the speech session.

Finally, a limitation in this study should be mentioned. Although all the students were required to make a speech, they had not been given very specific instruction about how to make a speech, and to what point they should pay attention in preparing and delivering the speech. Because it was a “Listening Comprehension Class,” its focus was mainly on listening comprehension. The students had to study the textbook, watch the video, and listen to the CD, and they also had a listening comprehension test. In further studies, there would

be a need for more instruction about speech making.

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### Summary

Nowadays, speech activity is considered more and more important as one of the “productive” activities. Regarding its process, however, it is also important in the aspect of humanistic education. In this paper, we intend to investigate whether or not and how speech activity develops rapport in the EFL classroom. The subjects were the students enrolled in the English Comprehension Class B taught by Kono. Tsue was his teaching assistant in the class. In each class, we gave them an English speech time followed by questions and answers. The speakers got feedback from the audience through comment cards. Finally, the present authors issued questionnaires at the last session, and carried out factor analysis on the data. As a result, we clarified that speech activity in this course contributed to the development of rapport among the students and between the students and the teacher.

**Key Words** : EFL Education, Speech Activity, Classroom Interaction, Rapport

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