

《実践報告》

Learning from the Future: Multimodal Communication and Video Self Modelling in the Presentation Classroom

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[要約]

本論文では、日本の私立大学のプレゼンテーションクラスで実施した試みを報告する。学期中の授業で数回に渡って学生にマルチモーダル・コミュニケーション手法を指導した。さらに、学生のプレゼンテーションを録画し、ビデオ・セルフ・モデリング（Video Self Modeling、以後VSM）と呼ばれる手法で分析した。録画した一連のビデオからは、プロソディ、ジェスチャー、視線を含む多重のコミュニケーション・モードの調和において改善が見られ、結果として、よりまとまりのあるプレゼンテーションに仕上がった。学期末に回収したコメントシートによると、参加者はマルチモーダル・コミュニケーションの価値を認識し、VSMを効果的な学習体験だと考え、改善したプレゼンテーションスキルはカリキュラムを通して他のクラスでも役立つと考えていることがわかった。従って、今回の結果からは、マルチモーダル・コミュニケーション手法の指導とVSMの活用が学生のプレゼンテーションスキルの向上にプラスになる可能性が示唆された。

Note: An earlier version of this paper was presented at JALT 2018 in Nagoya, Japan.

Making effective presentations in English is a valued skill both in the classroom and the labor market (Bankowski, 2010; Brooks & Wilson, 2014; Hall & Hirata, 2017; Matsui, Onishi & Hara, 2018; Otsu & Heffernan, 2008; MEXT, 2014a, 2014b). One study claims that students take English presentation classes to make themselves more employable (Nakamura, 2002). The presentation is not only found in educational and professional settings but it is also growing in prominence in the cultural sphere. In a way that would have been difficult to imagine only a few years ago, the presentation has been elevated to an artform, as media outlets like TED Talks provide highly polished performances that are available to anyone with an internet connection. The presentation in the form of the classroom lecture has long been an essential component of the educational process and those institutions have extensive facilities and equipment for the rehearsal, staging and recording of presentations for posterity. Not surprisingly given the increasingly competitive nature of education, there are also presentation contests where students with advanced capabilities can try to outdo each other for prestige and prizes. It is not difficult to imagine the status a jobseeker would enjoy with a first prize in English presentation on their CV. As a result, expectations can be high.

Although other skills like interpersonal communication, writing and test-taking have drawn most of the research attention in the field, a look at the historical record reveals that speaking in front of an audience was a highly-valued skill for thousands of years (Aristotle, trans. 1924; Cicero, trans. 1954; Corbett & Connors, 1999). Prowess in the art of persuasion or rhetoric, as it is still known, meant advancement in society, either in government, church or law. Rhetoric as a school subject began to fade away with the growth of commercialism and industry, as men found other channels by which to make their fortunes in life (Corbett & Connors, 1999). However, it seems as though the rise of globalization and the democratization of communication technology has made the individual presentation a valuable skill once again, and as language teachers preparing our students for their professional lives, we are obligated to discover the best way to teach it. However, although the government, researchers, teachers and students all agree that it is worthwhile, there seems to be a lack of clarity on what precisely the essential features of presentations are and how best to teach and measure them. This paper is an attempt to clarify how presentation is conceived as a communicative act, as well as a preliminary report of the results of two exploratory interventions in a presentation classroom based on this clarification.

How do previous studies define the essential features of presentation? The word

presentation probably evokes different connotations for different people, but if we restrict ourselves to the modern foreign language classroom, we have an individual speaking to the class on a prepared topic for an extended period of time. Unlike conversational or transactional communication, the presentation does not occur naturally. It is contrived, and this artificiality may be one cause of the presentation's most infamous feature: anxiety. Very few people look forward to giving a presentation. There are probably several reasons for this. One is that people generally do not like to separate themselves from their group. It makes them self-conscious and uncomfortable. The act of presenting necessitates both a physical separation and an intellectual one: the presenter stands alone and shares information that the group does not have. Another reason is that when we are having a conversation, there are only a couple of people listening at most. However, when we are giving a presentation, it is likely that everyone in the room is paying attention, at least at the beginning, unless we discourage their attention with poor performance. This raises the next point: both success and failure are public which partially explains why presentations causes anxiety. Therefore, we might call the presentation a high stakes performance. There is social risk involved. For most people, standing up in front of a group of people, even people we know, raises the pulse and causes worry over what might happen if something goes wrong.

Specifically, what could go wrong? By analyzing and comparing how different researchers teach presentation and what standards they use to evaluate performances, a clearer picture of contemporary classroom practices should emerge. What are teachers using for evaluation criteria?

A review of relevant recent literature reveals a variety of approaches to managing and evaluating the presentation class. All of the papers mentioned here are based on experiences in Asian contexts. Shimo (2011) chose to grade based on content, comprehensibility, duration and improvement. Students in Shimo's classes earned grades through self, peer and teacher evaluation. Bankowski's (2010) program was designed to improve students' ability to deliver academic presentations in an EAP setting, so her treatment was organized around discourse, structure and content. Her focus was on getting students to research and assemble the right kind of information with delivery a secondary concern. Bankowski's rubric was based on clarity of research question, effective introduction, and suitably narrow topic, for example. Munby's (2011) evaluation form contained the categories preparation, presentation skills, speaking skills and

content together with a 5-point Likert scale. Similarly, Hovane (2009) used a 4-point Likert scale to evaluate the constructs voice, eye contact, gestures, smooth delivery and easy to understand. The 4-point Likert scale removes the middle choice and is preferred by some researchers for this reason. King's (2002) measurement tool was more detailed with five categories: preparation, organization, content, presentation, and oral skills. Each category was then further defined with subskills. For example, presentation was comprised of "held audiences' attention, spoke with note cards, eye contact, time control, volume of voice and effectiveness of visual aids." Brooks & Wilson (2014) and Shimo (2011) had their students write reflectively as part of the evaluation process. Such feedback could provide valuable information for refining the instruction and the evaluation. Discussing or negotiating the contents of the evaluation criteria with students was a common trait among most researchers. It seems collaboration is a standard approach to teach desired skills, lower anxiety and raise awareness of performance expectations.

While many papers provide different procedures for managing a presentation course with respect to organizing the content and evaluating the performance, there seems to be more to the story than preparing something to say and saying it. After all, what is it that makes one presentation engaging and memorable and yet another off-putting and forgettable? What is "smooth delivery" or "improvement"? How does a student earn full points in the "gesture" category? Is there a quantifiable difference between a gesture than earns a three and one that earns a four? Gesture is one taken-for-granted category in presentations that appeared in several papers and yet not one defined it or explained how it should be taught or why. The same can be said of eye contact. In the next section of this paper, the author will address these issues and suggest how they might be improved.

Answers to some of these questions can be found in other disciplines. Researchers in communication-related fields have been describing the correlation between speech, prosody, gesture and facial expressions (Jannedy & Mendoza-Denton, 2005; Mendoza-Denton & Jannedy, 2011) even positing that speech and gesture embody the same underlying cognitive content (Loehr, 2012) and that gestures aid discourse comprehension and recall (Llanes-Coromina, Vila-Gimenez, Kushch, Borrás-Comes & Prieto, 2018). Collectively this research seems to suggest that speech and gesture comprise a single communicative system. It is beyond the scope of this paper to describe all possible human gestures that accompany speech but suffice it to say that gestures are not supplementary or para-linguistic elements of spoken communication but

essential to it.

Multimodal communication considers written and spoken language as two modes among a larger repertoire of meaning making resources (Halliday, 1978; Hodge & Kress, 1988; Kress, 2010; Kress & van Leeuwen, 2001). Multimodality recognizes the fluidity of real time communication. Although different approaches within the multimodal field define mode differently, in this intervention mode is presented as a, “a system of meaningful contrasts between forms in a community that has conventions for the interpretation of those forms and contrasts”(Andersen, et al, 2015). For example, in classroom practice it is traditional for a teacher to stand at the front of the room when teaching, but they may choose to change the mode of physical proximity and approach students individually should the social context require it, maybe even sitting down, itself a mode of action that will be interpreted differently depending on the community. For someone giving a presentation, these choices will be bound by other culturally determined expectations.

In other words, the specific instance of a particular gesture or type of eye contact is one drawn from a range of potential choices, each with possibly different culturally determined meanings (Chandler, 2007; Halliday, 1978; Thomas, 1983). Real time communication is always in flux. At any given moment one mode may be dominant but later the same mode may contribute to the overall meaning by taking a lesser, supportive role as a different mode is foregrounded. While students may be intuitively aware that non-linguistic modes such as gesture, gaze, action, and prosody contribute to communication, they may not realize the degree to which the absence or poor orchestration of these modes can detract from a communicative act. In the case of presentation class, reciting pre-written messages without attending to these other modes often result in performances that fall short of their intended purpose. In this treatment, multimodality is presented as a unified approach to understand how meaning is made during communication, and by thoughtfully using these resources which are available to everyone, anyone can make better presentations. Clearly there is a lot going on once students begin to consider the array of choices we have just described. The next step in this intervention is to create a series of videos of students as they put into practice what they learned about multimodal communication, giving learners and the teacher a clearer picture of what was being done well and what needed to be improved on.

Video modelling has been used for decades in a variety of fields to help people acquire

new skills and behaviors (Buggey & Ogle, 2012; Prater, et al, 2012). While video modelling in education uses experts, teachers or peers as exemplars, video self modelling (hereafter VSM) takes this a step further by using the learner as both subject and model based on the premise that the student’s visual of him or herself performing the desired activity correctly may increase motivation and self-efficacy (Bandura, 1997). VSM is divided into two types, positive self-review—building on successful skill performance—and feedforwarding—performances of skills not yet acquired. Feedforwarding is particularly suited to improving language-related skills and can provide a “positive image of future mastery” (Dowrick, Kim-Rupnow & Power, 2006). By making speaking and presentation visible and replayable, students learn what they are doing well in a given task, and in some cases quickly modify their behaviors where they see room for improvement. The image of the future self becomes actual through observation, noticing and practice. VSM has its limitations. It is unable to help people acquire skills they cannot perform. What it can do is show learners combining skills already within their repertoire in new ways or just beyond their current level.

By combining direct instruction of the multimodal approach to communication and VSM, it is expected that students will better coordinate meaning modes resulting in more effective presentations. In this treatment, students prepare and deliver a presentation based on 15 personal photos which is recorded on video and informally evaluated by each student from the aforementioned multimodal perspective. The treatment consists of a lesson on multimodal communication and a corresponding rubric for evaluating presentations. After each student watches the recording of their own presentation and evaluates themselves, the instructor talks with them individually as they watch the student’s performance together and discuss what might require change. Then each student practices until satisfied and the same presentation is rerecorded and reevaluated. Now students have a pre and post-treatment recording of the same presentation and judge the performances for themselves. The details and expected usage of the different modes that appear in the presentation are described in the following section.

Method

Participants

This study was conducted in the Fall of 2017 in a semester-long presentation class at a

private university in Japan. There were 11 students in the class, all first-year English majors. The class was an elective. All participants were native Japanese speakers. The class met once a week for 90 minutes for 15 weeks.

Materials and Procedure

Students were instructed to select 10-12 photographs of a meaningful event, place or person. Each photograph was to be placed in a PowerPoint slide. Students then wrote a 4-6 sentence description for each slide and saved it in the notes section of PowerPoint. This series of photos was the subject of the presentation. Students then rehearsed until they were comfortable with their performance. Then the instructor recorded them with a digital video camera as they presented. The resulting video file was given to each student on a USB memory drive. Students watched their own performances and evaluated them using the multimodal communication rubric. After the students had watched themselves and compared their performance with the rubric, the instructor would confer with them individually and discuss their goals for the next performance. We can see here Schmidt's (2010) noticing hypothesis at work, as well as the very similar "noticing the gap." Learners must make conscious comparisons between their own behaviors and the target, and to do that they must notice and attend to the target in question. Although not tested experimentally, in theory VSM should make this process more efficient. It is difficult to reflect on what you cannot see or remember exactly.

Students were required to think about what the presence or absence of different elements would add to or subtract from the message in a presentation. This meant thinking about the connotation associated with specific gestures or postures, for example. Rather than define a construct simply as good or bad, well done or poorly done, students were led through a series of variations and asked to think about the connotations of each choice. In order to make this analysis more systematic and transparent, students were introduced to the "axes of selection-combination," borrowed from structuralist analysis and adapted in Figure 1 below.

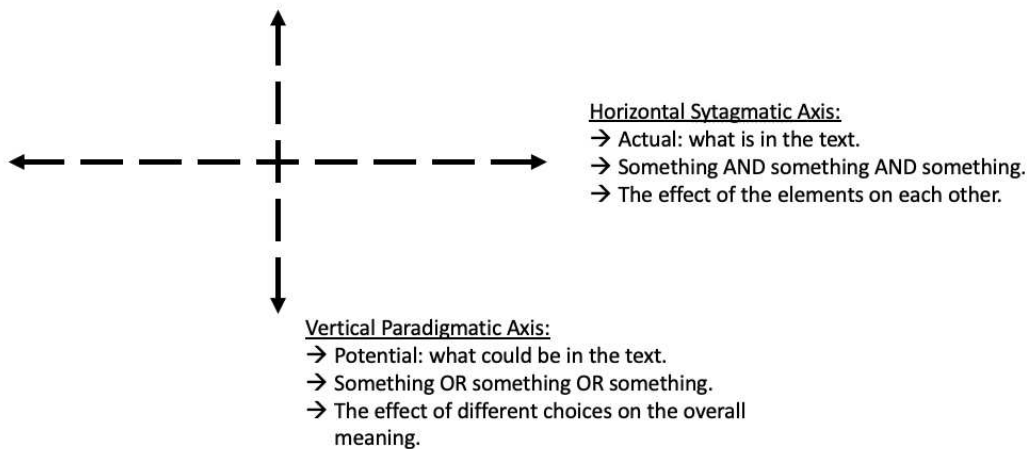


Figure 1: *Syntagmatic and paradigmatic axes*

This aforementioned analytical framework is flexible and can be used with any system governed by established cultural codes (Chandler, 2007). It might be helpful to start with a familiar example like a bento lunch box. In a typical bento box, there are fixed areas where foods go. In the largest space, there is only one category of acceptable food, rice, but within that category there are several allowable options like white rice, brown rice, rice with red beans, and so on, but it would not do to find a peanut butter sandwich there. In the same way then, students can begin to think about the different categories that comprise a presentation and what kinds of choices are acceptable within the established practices. In this way, the instructor can begin discussing and negotiating with students as to what a presentation should look like in a step-by-step fashion as outlined in previous research.

Visual. The first category the students are asked to think about paradigmatically and syntagmatically is the personal photographs. The series of photos must be selected according the categories *important event*, *place* or *person* and then arranged accordingly. As mentioned earlier, the presentation is supported by a series of photos presented in sequence on PowerPoint slides. There are some guidelines regarding photo selection. The photos must be taken by the students themselves or by someone using their device; they cannot be copied from the internet. Students were also instructed not to add any text or other embellishments. The photos are not to be random but should be selected in the main by the criteria of personal significance: the photos must show a personally meaningful event, place, person or combination

thereof. The idea behind this is to maximize the potential illocutionary force behind the written descriptions (Thomas, 1995). If students are required to think carefully about the potential meaning contained in a photo during the selection process, it is reasonable to assume that this will carry over into the writing process as well. Hastily chosen photos may prove more difficult to write about in a meaningful way. Students can take a long time to sort through the thousands of photos they have on their smartphones, so this is a good task to be completed outside of class.

Written. Students are asked to follow the orientation-details-evaluation organizational model when writing about their own photos, an example of which follows:

I took this photo in Sydney Harbor in Australia. You can see the Opera House in the background. These are six students from our department. It was my first visit to Australia as well as my first experience taking students to another country. Australians were very friendly and everyone had a great time.

The photograph mentioned appears in Figure 2 below. The concluding evaluation should correspond to a simultaneous rise in volume and increase in duration of the voice, raising the prominence of that portion of the utterance. Students often need some practice to coordinate these modes successfully.



Figure 2: *Study abroad in Australia*

Students now have two modes to orchestrate, speech and visual.

Prosodic. Another necessary step to managing the coherence of a presentation is to draw students’ attention to the prosodic features of English, specifically the rising tone that signals the important information in an utterance, also known as information focus. In spoken English, speakers increase volume and utterance length at the most salient parts of a message while conversely shortening and lowering volume on those segments of language which are less central to the message, usually bits of grammar that do not carry essential meaning (Halliday, 2014). The opposite of this pleasing, natural-sounding modulation would be speech characterized by flat, monotonous delivery, where all words are uttered undifferentiated in volume and length. It is helpful to keep in mind that out of all the modes or channels of communication mentioned in this treatment, prosody is probably the most difficult to improve in a limited period of time.

Gesture. In this part of the intervention, students are tasked with analyzing gestures appropriate to the classroom demonstration and the possible connotations of each. While there are an almost limitless number of gestures a person can make, in this treatment the focus is on deictic movements that support the written text and the photographic information. In other words, in the sentence “This is my favorite pudding shop,” the speaker would gesture to the part of the image that contained the shop. Below is a table describing some possible gestures and their connotations presented to students to raise awareness of this layer of meaning (see Mendoza-Denton & Jannedy, 2011, for a discussion of layering).

Table 1

Paradigmatic Choices for Gesture

Description	Possible connotations
Q. What kinds of gestures are possible and what might the connotation of each be?	
Lack of gesture	Stiff, uninterested, nervous
Hand in pocket	Nervous, too casual
Fist raised in the air	Triumphant, defiant
Pointing to the slide at meaningful times	Prepared, confident, interested

As with other modes of communication, students are expected to coordinate gestures with the spoken text in an effort to create a pleasing variation.

In this part of the intervention, gaze is used in the sense of where the speaker's eyes are directed as well as the audiences'. Effective presenters manage the gaze of the audience deliberately by directing it at the visual information, the presenter themselves, or to some other place that is appropriate to the message at a given moment. One common cause of overdirecting audience gaze is displaying a slide with too much information. Slides with complex graphs or tables, multiple photos or a combination of texts and images can take too much attention away from the presenter and overwhelm the listener. A speaker can bore the audience with a monotonous gaze and detract from the message. The table below lists some possibilities that belong to the paradigmatic category of gaze.

Table 2

Paradigmatic Choices for Gaze

Description	Possible connotations
Q. What kinds of gazes are possible and what might the connotation be?	
Reading off of notes, rarely looking up.	Unprepared; not interested in audience; nervous
Both eyes closed	Concentrating; scared
One eye closed	Odd
Rapid blinking	Nervous
Staring at one person continually	Nervous
Looking around at no one in particular	Distracted, bored
Varying one's gaze depending on the content of the message and the intention.	Confident, prepared, sincere

Students will recognize the common errors of reading off of notes and avoiding audience

eye contact, and they will likely need some repeated modelling and practice in order to achieve a gaze appropriate to a classroom presentation.

Measures and Results

After students were introduced to the multimodal approach to communication and experimented with the axes of selection-combination, they were given an original scoring rubric as seen below in Figure 3.

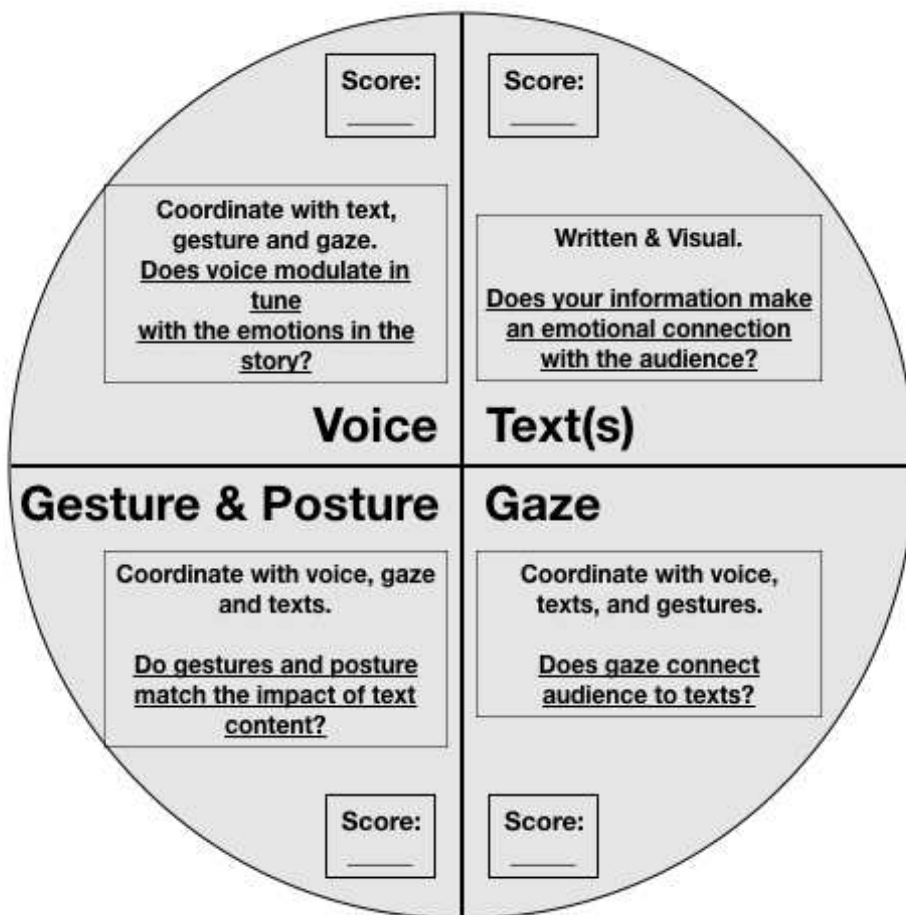


Figure 3: *Presentation evaluation rubric*

The rubric presents some of the modes of interest holistically as opposed to other rubrics that list points as discrete items. Students used this rubric to analyze their own performances as

recorded on video as well as their classmates' videos. The rubric was designed to encourage participants to question their own practices with improvement in mind rather than just as a tool for determining a grade. Students received a rubric for each of their recorded performances so they could track their own progress over the series of videos.

In addition to the rubrics, students were also asked to keep a viewing log over the two-week winter vacation. Following from several VMS researchers (Buggey & Ogle, 2012; Dowrick, Kim-Rupnow & Power, 2006; Prater, et al, 2012), they were instructed to watch as often or as little as they liked, but when they did watch to make a log entry. Unfortunately, the majority of students failed to complete the viewing logs or submit them which in turn resulted in a paucity of data for this project. The reasons for the low completion rate were not clear but participants may have tired of the activity, felt it too repetitive or failed to understand its importance. Whatever the cause, this data collection activity may need to be redesigned. However, an end of term questionnaire revealed most students were positive about the multimodal approach and VSM and felt their presentation skills had improved. Regarding the VSM activity, most comments involved the idea of noticing, which partially confirmed one hypothesis; namely, that watching videos of one's self would lead to behavioral improvement.

In answer to the question, "Is watching videos of yourself useful?" participants replied: "Yes, it was useful to find my bad point of my presentation; It is useful, I found how I had given presentation by looking objectively; It's useful because I can check myself, ex) voice, smile; It was useful for me because I can know my good things and bad things; It is useful for me because I can make a comparison between old video and new ones."

Discussion& Conclusion

Current research and practice in the art of teaching English presentation could benefit from developments in other fields. Communication research has established the correlation between the spoken language, gesture, facial expression and prosody, going so far as to claim they all represent the same cognitive content. The multimodal turn has taken this a step further by democratizing all modes of communication in contrast to the traditional logocentric view. Education research has shown that VSM can help learners acquire new behaviors by using themselves as models in videos. This paper combines the aforementioned research into two treatments that not only helped students become better presenters in English, but raised their awareness of how to be more effective communicators overall, a skill they can use across the

curriculum and take into the workplace after graduation.

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Abstract

This paper describes two exploratory instructional interventions in a presentation class at a private Japanese university. Students received instruction in multimodal communication at several points during the semester. Additionally, student presentations were recorded during the treatment period and used for analysis in an approach known as Video Self Modelling (hereafter VSM). The series of videos recorded over time show demonstrable improvements in the orchestration of multiple modes of communication, including prosody, gesture and gaze, resulting in more cohesive presentations. Student viewing logs collected at the end of the treatment indicate that participants recognize the value of multimodal communication, experience VSM as an effective learning mechanism and find their improved presentation skills useful across the curriculum. Together these results suggest that student presentation performances benefit from instruction in multimodal communication and the use of VSM.