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Connecting Cultures: Foreign Exchange Student Presentations on Their Home Cultures

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文化のつながり：留学生の祖国文化についてのプレゼンテーション

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要 旨

本論文は筆者が担当する長崎大学の短期留学生プログラム「祖国文化の表現方」という科目に関するものです。その中で科目の課題として出された留学生の祖国でここ100年に起きた政治的、社会的な革命や人権の市民抗議運動について調べ、発表した内容が主に取り上げられています。学生は選んだ国の社会的な市民運動の背景、原因と結果について調べ、キーワードマップというアウトラインを作成し、それを元に授業で30分のプレゼンテーションをしました。結果として、学生のプレゼンテーションスキルが高まり、留学生同士の国々に対する理解が深まりました。

Introduction

In 2004 Nagasaki University's Foreign Exchange Student Center began inviting teachers from other departments at the university to teach courses promoting cultural exchange to the international students taking part in the one year exchange program. The author was invited starting in 2005 to teach a course entitled "Student Presentations on their Home Cultures." The goals of the course were to familiarize students with different aspects of culture including art, literature and political history, to encourage the students to learn about different presentation tools, including keyword maps, picture collages, and power-points and to use these to introduce their home culture to their classmates. Beginning in 2008, the author began a liaison with Nagasaki Shogyo High School, in which the international students in the course gave a 30 minute presentation on their home cultures to students at the High School. The presentation was developed in three stages: individual research using the internet; in-class presentations and

peer-evaluation; revision of presentations; and final presentations at Nagasaki Shogyo High School. This paper will look at the first two stages of this process, looking at three of the student presentations and the peer-evaluations they received.

Aims:

The aims of this presentation activity were (1) to give the students practice in presentation skills including speaking loudly and clearly, using transitional language to provide cohesion and aid the listeners in following the presentation, clearly organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections, and avoiding reading by preparing keywords rather than longer sentences; (2) to encourage students to research their own country's political history and organize the information into a clear, coherent presentation; (3) to raise student awareness and stimulate discussion about similarities and differences between their respective countries.

Student Feedback

To encourage the other students' attentiveness and engagement and to aid the presenter in improving his or her presentation, the listeners were required to give two kinds of feedback to each presenter. First, each listener was required to ask one question and offer one comment about the content of each presentation. Second, they were given an evaluation rubric and asked to evaluate their classmates on each of the three areas above. The evaluation criteria were the four presentation skills outlined above: speaking loudly and clearly, using transitional language, organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections, and avoiding reading by preparing keywords rather than longer sentences. For each of these criteria, each student was asked to rate their classmates' presentations from 5, or "excellent," 4, or "very good," 3, or "good," 2, or "fair," and 1, or "poor." They were also asked to take notes on the impressions that served as the basis of their ratings for each of these criteria.

In-Class Presentations

The students were required to make use of the internet and library resources to research their topics. The students were also required to make a keyword map, based in part on Buzan's (1993) mind-maps, but simplified in that no images or illustrations were required and students were given some leeway in the placement of their keyword-headings. Students were required to choose a political movement of the past century in their country and break it down into at least four keywords-headings and then three branches with sub-headings for each of the four keyword-headings. Students were required to prepare a thirty minute talk based on their keyword maps.

First Presentation: "Kenyan Struggle for Independence"

The first presentation was given by a student from Kenya. The political movement selected as the topic of his presentation was the "Struggle for Independence in Kenya."

Student's Keyword Map

The student's keyword map had "Struggle for Independence" written at the very top and in the center was the word "Kenya." The map had three keyword headings: "Colonization," "Mau Mau Rebellion," and "Independence." Under the first keyword heading "Colonization" were five branches and five key phrases: "Land Alienation," "High Taxation," "Forced Labour," "No Representation," and "No Education." Under the second keyword heading, "Mau Mau Rebellion," was written sub-heading, "Violence 1952-1960." Then the student had another sub-heading, "Kenya is for Kenyans," followed by keywords, "claiming" and then three branches for "our land," "our freedom," and "our dignity." Under third keyword heading, "Independence," was the subheadings, "Jomo Kenyatta," and "Equal Rights for All," with four branches and keywords, "self-governance," "land," "education," and "Democracy."

Student's Presentation

The student explored the chronology, causes and achievements of the Kenyan struggle for independence. First, the presentation identified five key facets of colonization that were motivating factors of the movement. The first cause was land alienation, the phenomenon then prevalent throughout the African continent whereby natives of the continent were unable to own land, the vast majority of which was controlled by colonial powers for mining and exporting raw materials. The second and third causes were the high rates of taxation and forced labour the colonized natives were subjected to by the colonizing power. The fourth and fifth causes were the denial by the colonial power of the natives' access to education and representation in the country's governance. The presentation then traced the inspirational role played by founding father Jomo Kenyatta, and the political resistance beginning with the Mau Mau Rebellion in 1951 and that culminated in Kenyan Independence in 1963.

Listener Feedback

There were four other students in the class, one from Turkey, one from Thailand, one from China and one from South Korea. Each student was given an evaluation rubric and asked to rate the presenter on the following points: (1) speaking loudly and clearly, (2) using transitional language to provide cohesion (3) organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections, (4) avoiding reading by preparing keywords rather than longer sentences. Figure 1 shows the peer-ratings the Kenyan student’s presentation received from each of his classmates.

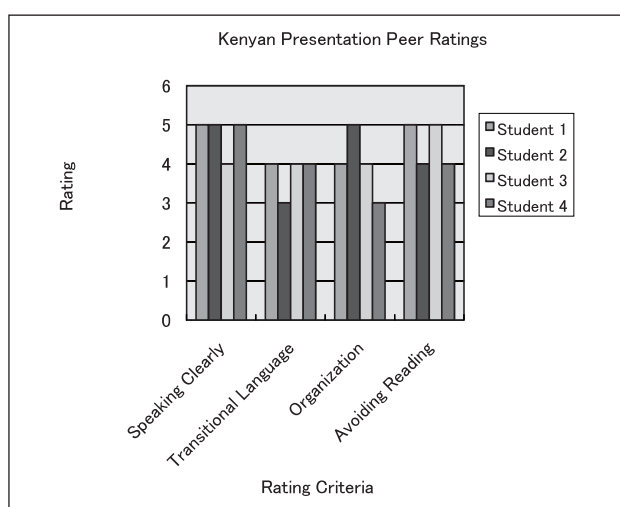


Figure 1: Peer-Evaluations for Kenyan Student’s Presentation

Student 1 from Turkey rated the Kenyan students’ presentation highest on “speaking loudly and clearly,” and “avoiding reading by preparing keywords” both of which she rated 5 or “excellent.” For the other two criteria, “using transitional language to provide cohesion” and “organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections” student 1 rated the presentation 4 or “very good.” Student 2 from Thailand rated the presentation highest on “speaking loudly and clearly” and “organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections,” rating both of those 5, rated “avoiding reading by preparing keywords” 4, and rated “using transitional language to provide cohesion” 3 or “good.” Student 3 from China rated the presentation highest on “avoiding

reading by preparing keywords” which she rated 5. For the other three criteria, “speaking loudly and clearly,” “using transitional language to provide cohesion,” and “organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections” she rated 4. Student 4 from South Korea

Student 2: “The White Revolution in Turkey”

Student’s Keyword Map

The second presentation was given by a student from Turkey. The political movement selected as the topic of her presentation was “The White Revolution in Turkey.” In the center of her keyword map was the phrase “The White Revolution.” There were five keyword-headings: “Fundamentals,” “The Process Leading to May 27th,” “The Power of National Union Committee,” “Yassi Ada,” and “After May 27th.” Under keyword “Fundamentals” were three sub-headings: “Economic problems,” “Problems between Democratic Party and the Army” and “D.P.’s Foreign Policies.” Under keyword-heading “The Process Leading to May 27th” were four sub-headings: “1957 Elections,” “Nine Officers Event,” “Topkapi and Kayseri Events” and “The Revolution Declaration.” Under keyword-heading “The Power of National Union Committee” were three sub-headings: “The Stroke,” “The Mending Committee” and “The Liberty Martyrs.” Under keyword-heading “Yassi Ada” were two sub-headings: “The Arrests” and “The Trials.” And under the final keyword-heading “After May 27th” there were four keyword-headings: “The Ring Campaign,” “Retired Revolution Officer’s Association,” “1961 Constitution” and “Legitimization of the Revolution.”

Student’s Presentation

In her presentation the student discussed the rise to power in the 1950’s of the Turkish Democratic Party. She focused in particular on how the initial popularity of the Democratic Party was eroded when the Military began to oppose its perceived challenges to the secularism of the Turkish Constitution established by founder Kemal Ataturk. She also argued that the

Military Coup that led to the arrest, trial and execution of key members of the Democratic Party on the island of Yassi Ada established the military as a watchdog preventing the “undue” accumulation of political power by Islamic Fundamentalists.

Listener Feedback

Figure 2 shows the peer-ratings the Turkish student’s presentation received from each of her classmates.

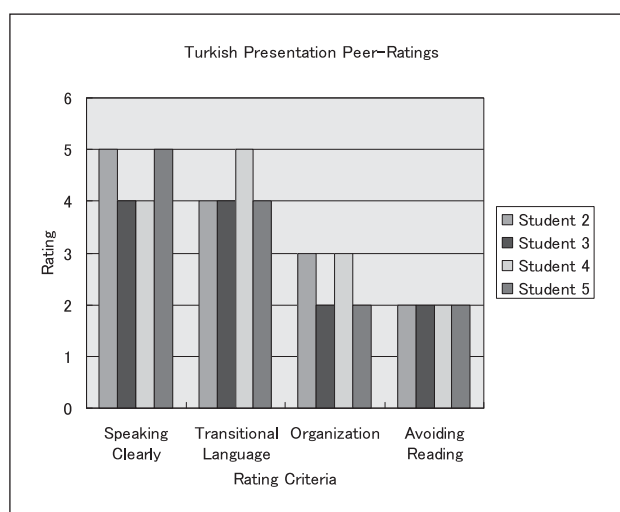


Figure 2: Peer-Evaluations for Turkish Student’s Presentation

Student 2 from Thailand rated the presentation highest on “speaking loudly and clearly” rated 5, or “excellent” and “using transitional language to provide cohesion” rated 4, or “very good.” He rated “organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections,” a 3, or “good,” and rated “avoiding reading by preparing keywords” the lowest at 2, or “fair.” Student 3 from China also rated the presentation highest on “speaking loudly” and “using transitional language” both rated 4. She rated both “organization” and “avoiding reading” 2. Student 4 from South Korea rated highest “using transitional language” at 5 and “speaking loudly” at 4, while “organization” and “avoiding reading” were rated lower at 3 and 2 respectively. Student 5 from Kenya rated “transitional language” and “speaking clearly” highest at 5 and 4 respectively, while “organization”

and “avoiding reading” were rated lower at 3 and 2 respectively.

Student 3: “Korean Comfort Women’s Struggle for Redress”

Student’s Keyword Map

The third presentation was given by a student from South Korea. The political movement selected as the topic of her presentation was “The Comfort Women from South Korea.” In the center of her keyword map was the phrase “International search for Human rights and Justice.” There were four keyword-headings: “Living Witnesses,” “Scar of War,” “Demands,” and “Solutions.” Under keyword “Living Witnesses” were three sub-headings: “Japanese Government Neglect,” “Decreasing Media Attention” and “Aging, will die soon.” Under keyword-heading “Scar of War” were four sub-headings: “Abused during the war,” “All over Asia, (Korea, China),” “Shame, can’t return to Motherland,” and “Can’t have normal life.” Under keyword-heading “The Power of National Union Committee” were three sub-headings: “The Stroke,” “The Mending Committee” and “The Liberty Martyrs.” Under keyword-heading “Yassi Ada” were two sub-headings: “The Arrests” and “The Trials.” And under the final keyword-heading “After May 27th” there were four keyword-headings: “The Ring Campaign,” “Retired Revolution Officer’s Association,” “1961 Constitution” and “Legitimization of the Revolution.”

Student’s Presentation

The South Korean student gave a presentation on the plight of the so-called “comfort women,” the euphemism referring to women forced into prostitution by the Japanese military during the Second World War. In her presentation, she discussed the surviving witnesses and victims of the practice, and argued that as their numbers continue to dwindle, the need for the Japanese Government to recognize these survivors grows more urgent. She stressed the hardships borne by the survivors as they found themselves ostracized

in their homeland following the war and unable to lead a normal life. She argued that, in the absence of a formal apology by the Japanese Government, the only recourse was in bringing lawsuits to the courts, and in keeping media attention focused on their demands.

Listener Feedback

Figure 3 shows the peer-ratings the Turkish student's presentation received from each of her classmates.

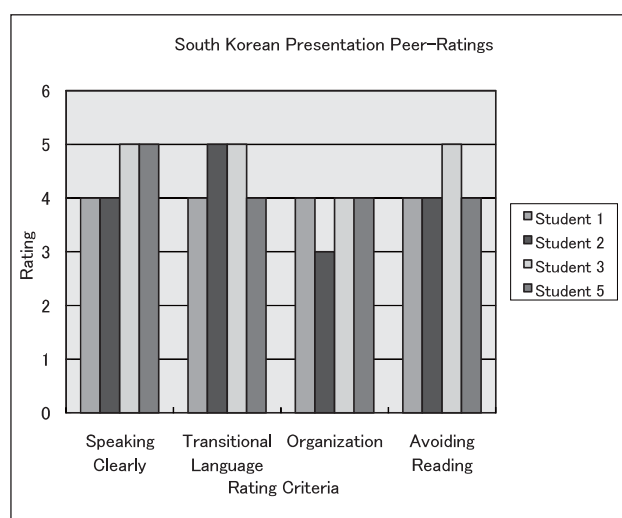


Figure 3: Peer-Evaluations for South Korean Student's Presentation

Student 1 from Turkey rated the presentation 4, or on all four criteria. Student 2 from China also rated the presentation highest on "speaking loudly" and "using transitional language" both rated 4. She rated both "organization" and "avoiding reading" 2. Student 2 from Thailand rated the presentation highest on "using transitional language" at 5. Student 2 rated "speaking loudly" and "avoiding reading" at 4, while "organization" was rated lowest at 3. Student 3 from China rated the presentation highest overall, with "speaking clearly," "transitional language," and "avoiding reading" all rated at 5, while "organization" was rated lower at 4. Student 5 from Kenya rated the presentation highest on "speaking loudly" at 5, while the remaining three criteria were all rated at 4.

Findings

Each of the three students in the study was able to realize the aims of the presentation activity to different degrees. All of the students managed to meet the first aim, "speak loudly and clearly." Each of the students when rating their peers' presentations gave the highest ratings for this criterion. All three students also received high ratings on the second criterion, "using transitional language." For the third criterion, "organizing the larger topic into distinct, logical subsections, the Kenyan student scored highest. The three classmates gave additional comments to explain the basis of their evaluations. Among the reasons cited for their ratings, the students wrote, "presentation makes a complicated topic easy to understand because it divides the topic into key parts," and "easy to follow what happened because presentation explains the causes and results of each important event in chronological order." The South Korean student's presentation also received high scores for this criterion. The Turkish student scored lowest on "organizing topic" with peer-comments including "Hard to follow the history because there's too much information" and "confusing because hard to tell what is a cause and what is an event. The Turkish student also scored lowest on the fourth criterion, "avoiding reading by preparing keywords rather than longer sentences." The notes on the student's map were far too detailed, most of them written in complete sentences, so that she simply read the sentences during her presentation. The Kenyan student and South Korean students' presentations both received high scores on this final criterion.

In addition to those presentation skills, the students were able to meet the next goal of the presentation activity, "to encourage students to research their own country's political history." Each of the students made use of the internet to compile informative presentations. The activity also succeeded in the third goal, "raising student awareness and stimulating discussion about areas of similarity and difference in their respective countries." After each of the presentations, the students asked questions and offered feedback. The

Kenyan and Turkish students both commented on the similarly assertive role of the military in their respective countries' political events. The Kenyan and South Korean students noted the similar patterns of human-rights abuses committed by the English and Japanese colonial powers.

Conclusion and Further Research

The activity realized the goals set out earlier in the paper. The way that the activity was structured enabled recycling of the presentation skills in three stages: research and preparation of the presentations individually; in-class presentations; peer-feedback in the form of peer-ratings and questions and comments. The in-class presentation and peer-feedback was in preparation for presentation at Nagasaki Shougyo High School. Future research on this topic will incorporate an additional stage of feedback by students at Shougyo High School and evaluation by the author and the Native English teacher at Shougyo High School. The future study will compare student performance on each of the four presentation criteria to assess improvement.

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