English Presentation Skills of Thai Graduate Students

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Abstract

This study addresses the English Presentation skills of graduate students and explores the ways to improve their skills. A cross-sectional research survey study was conducted among 26 students of the Master of Arts Program in English for Careers at Thammasat University, Thailand. The results showed that there are some statistically significant difference between English presentation skills of the students who studied Effective Presentations (the *CR 752* students) and those who did not (the non-*CR 752* students). The respondents suggested that the *CR 752* students should improve their delivery most, while the non-*CR 752* students should improve their organization/content and delivery most. It can be concluded from the findings that Effective Presentations (*CR 752*) should be a required course for all graduates studying in the Master Program in English for Careers. Students who take this course will develop their presentation skills which are viewed as professional competence required by employers. The respondents also thought that other graduate programs should also provide Effective Presentations course for their students.

Keywords: effective presentation, presentation skill, English presentation skills

1. Introduction

English can be regarded as an international or global language that bridges the gap between people from all over the world with different cultures. Additionally, with the establishment of the ASEAN Economic Community in 2015, English will be utilized to a greater extent. In light of this, English competence will be necessary to encourage mutual understanding among users around the globe (Phoocharoensil, 2012).

To equip graduate students with English proficiency to be effectively applied to their careers, the MA Program in English for Careers (MEC) of the Language Institute of Thammasat University (LITU) provides a variety of elective courses for their students, including general career courses, language development courses, interpersonal skills courses and professional development courses. Among these elective courses, *Effective Presentations* (*CR 752*) is a professional development course that aims to enable learners to make clear, well-designed, and professional business presentations in English.

As cited by Reynolds (2012), Kawasaki (2008) said that 95 percent of presentations are poor. The following problems are commonly found at *The First LITU International Graduate Conference*: unclear openings, contents delivered too quickly, presenters reading from the screen, and too much text on slides. In contrast, one presenter had taken this course and his presentation had the following positive qualities: clear opening, making good use of visuals, and engaging the audience. Studying *Effective Presentations (CR 752)* makes students aware of what it takes to be an effective presenter. The study will investigate whether the *CR 752* students and the non-*CR 752* students perform differently at their research paper presentations.

2. Literature Review

The issue of the role of communication abilities in making a presentation in public has implications for business communication and career success. While other courses are mainly aimed at improving four language skills for career development, effective presentations will help students understand how to deliver their knowledge to the public successfully.

2.1 Presentation Skills in a Foreign Language

During the first decade of the current millennium, there have beem an increasing number of discussions regarding how individuals communicate with each other in multicultural environments and the need to understand different cultures (Jameson, 2007; Louhiala-Salminen, Charles, & Kankaanranta, 2005; Peltokorpi, 2007). Meanwhile, cultural knowledge is becoming an important asset to global employees; effective knowledge sharing and creation issues have become vital at the same time (Gupta & Govindarajan, 2000; Holden, 2001;

Leonard & Sensiper, 1998).

In addition to their daily work, individuals working in multicultural settings are required to effectively share and create knowledge with different kinds of people. At the same time, they have to be capable of understanding cultures other than their own. Knowledge workers also need to understand each other's competence (Alvesson, 1993, 2000).

Other research studies have examined communicating of expertise and giving intelligible explanations (Smythe & Nikolai, 2002), giving formal presentations (Wardrope, 2002), and giving more casual presentations (Zaid & Abraham, 1994) across a range of business industries.

In Wardrope's study (2002), a sample of 280 department chairs in six business disciplines were asked to rate the importance of business communication skills to career success in seven areas. The results show that department chairs perceived writing skills to be more important to business communication courses than other communication skills. Two oral communication skills—making oral presentations and using good pronunciation—were also rated highly. Meanwhile, the more technical aspects of presenting, i.e., using projection equipment and preparing handouts, were rated significantly lower.

Many studies consistently agree that communication skills are considered the most important skills for new accountancy graduates as required by accounting practitioners and professional groups (Albin & Crockett, 1991; Borzi & Mills, 2001; Hock, 1994; L. Johnson & V. Johnson, 1995; LaFrancois, 1992; Morgan, 1997). Studies also reveal that accountancy employers have particular concern in regard to the recruitment of suitably qualified graduates with strong communication skills (Courtis & Zaid, 2002; McLaren, 1990; Zaid & Abraham, 1994).

Internationally, academics and practitioners agree that the university curriculum has to focus more on accounting students' writing and oral communication skills development (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Henderson, 2001; Simons & Higgins, 1993). Additionally, a considerable body of scholarship has attempted to make informed recommendations to the curricular offerings at university level accounting education (see, Henderson, 2001; Sin, Jones, & Petocz, 2007; Usoff & Feldmann, 1998).

However, teaching communication is problematic due to the difficulty in transferring the skills learned in the classroom to the workplace. Thomas (1995) discusses the real-life applicability of the texts and approaches used to teach business communication in higher education. Similarly, D'Aloisio (2006) argues in favor of the need to relate university learning to the specific communication competencies required in corporate work settings (see also Beaufort, 1999; Cooper, 1997; Davies & Birbili, 2000; Kemp & Seagraves, 1995).

Generally speaking, the emergence of the so-called *knowledge professional* has seen some commentators criticize the range of skills developed by students engaged in undergraduate business courses. Accounting education committees in the USA (American Accounting Association, 1986; Accounting Education Change Commission, 1990; American Institute of Certified Public Accountants, 1999; Albrecht & Sack, 2000) and Australia (CPA Australia, 1996; Mathews, Jackson, & Brown, 1990; Birkett, 1993; Institute of Chartered Accountants in Australia, 1998a, 1998b, 2001) have indicated a number of deficiencies in accounting education and have suggested changes in course emphasis. They agree that university courses can no longer be completely content-driven and limited to specific technical skills. If graduate students aim to succeed as knowledge professionals in the highly changeable global business environment, they have to possess a range of technical and generic skills. In this context, generic skills can be viewed as transferable qualities to suit the industry in which graduates work; these include but are not limited to communication, team, leadership, problem solving, analytical and interpersonal skills. As a result, it has been recommended that the actual content of accounting courses should reflect a greater focus on the development of generic skills to make sure that the accounting profession gains access to proficient graduates (Albrecht & Sack, 2000; Henderson, 2001).

The findings of more recent studies support the opinion that technical skills are not sufficient for job success in accounting (e.g., Agyemang & Unerman, 1998; Birkett, 1993; Brown & McCartney, 1995; B. Gammie, E. Gammie, & Cargill, 2002; Hutchinson & Fleischman, 2003; Kim, Ghosh, & Meng, 1993; LaFrancois, 1992; Mathews et al., 1990; Mohamed & Lashine, 2003; Usoff & Feldmann, 1998). As an example, Usoff and Feldmann (1998) argue that accounting educators should make an effort to ensure that students understand the importance of generic skills, such as effective communication, and that students should also acquaint themselves with such skills.

More specially, recent studies have explored methods for the development of generic skills during undergraduate accounting courses. Hutchinson and Fleischman (2003, p. 48) state that along with technical skill training and a desire to inspire life-long learning, "most modern degree programs provide the opportunity for accounting students to develop oral, written and interpersonal communication skills as well as exposure to organizational skills and technology" (p.48). Since students are key stakeholders within any learning process, it is necessary that efforts to investigate this issue take their perceptions into account.

2.2 Multimedia Learning Theories

Multimedia is playing a more crucial role in presenting information to the public. A wide variety of different formats have been employed to increase the effectiveness of presentations. Several theories have discussed the significant relationship between visualization and knowledge acquisition. These theories focus on different aspects of multimedia learning.

2.2.1 Dual Coding Theory

Paivio's dual coding theory (1969) provided a significant foundation for subsequent cognitive approaches due to its distinction between verbal and visual coding of information. It proposed two independent memory codes, either of which can result in recall.

Paivio (1975) revealed that images are effective because an image provides a second kind of memory code that is independent of the verbal code. Therefore, having two memory codes to represent an item provides a better chance for remembering that item than having only a single code.

As cited in Gardner's study (2011), Clark and Paivio (1991) stated that information is added on through either visual or auditory interrelations and pictures provide better memory than words.

2.2.2 Visual Learning Theory

Baddeley and Hitch initially proposed the working memory model in 1974. Like Pavio's theory (1969), this model also distinguishes between a verbal code and a visual code. However, the verbal code emphasizes phonological information rather than the semantic information emphasized in Paivio's dual coding theory. Both theories have the limitation of studying multimedia learning. Moreover, both theories are more useful for studying the independent contributions of verbal and visual codes than for studying the integration of two codes.

Later, a revised working memory model was proposed by Baddeley (2001) to clarify how people can combine information from the different modalities. This model consists of phonological, visual-spatial, and central information integration. It also provides a greater understanding of the interaction of working memory with Long Term Memory (LTM). It explains that visual-spatial and central integration are more important for memory. Both the emphasis on the integration of multimodal codes and the interaction between Short Term Memory (STM) and Long Term Memory (LTM) make Baddeley's (2001) revised working memory model more relevant to multimedia learning.

2.2.3 Cognitive Load Theory

In 1980, Sweller developed Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), which hypothesized that information must be processed in working memory before it can be stored in long-term memory (Van Merrinboer & Sweller, 2005). He also mentioned that an overloaded working memory will be less effective for long-term processing. This means that working memory overload decreases learning ability.

Sweller (2005), as cited in Reynolds (2012, p. 10), also mentioned that it is more difficult to organize information if it comes at us in both spoken and written form at the same time. Because people cannot read and listen well at the same time, presentations filled with lots of text must be avoided. On the other hand, multimedia that displays visuals, including visual aids of data, can be processed while listening to someone to speak about the visual content.

2.2.4 Multimedia Learning Theory

Using Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (DCT), Baddeley's Visual Learning Theory (VLT), and Sweller's Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), Mayer (2001) developed the Multimedia Learning Theory (MMLT), which comprises seven multimedia instruction principles: multimedia principle, spatial contiguity principle, temporal continuity principle, coherence principle, modality principle, redundancy principle, and individual differences principle.

Based on these principles, it is evident why PowerPoint might be criticized when it is composed of slide after slide full of text and few images. Educators should be encouraged to create multimedia teaching experiences using PowerPoint. However, if these contain only text, working memory can be overloaded, resulting in less effective communication, slower processing, and less learning.

As cited in Gardner and Aleksejuiene (2011), Clark (2008) stated in her article *PowerPoint and Pedagogy: Maintaining Student Interest in University Lectures* that "lecturers must use their PowerPoint with design, flair, and skill" (p. 42). This approach was also favored by Leutner, Leopold, and Sumfleth (2008), who considered CLT and was able to demonstrate science students' increased comprehension and learning outcome through mental image construction; and Van Merriboerne and Sweller (2008), who are currently studying the incorporation of CLT in health profession education optimization.

2.3 Key Elements of Effective Presentations

According to Duarte (2008), she pointed out that the "presentation ecosystem" consists of three parts – the message, the visual story and the delivery. Duarte and other scholars (Cyphert, 2007; Lahtonen, 2011; Reynolds 2011, 2012) have recommended that presentation preparation start with specification of the message. Next, the points should be outlined in support of the message (Cyphert, 2007; Duarte, 2008). In communicating knowledge, narratives or stories are more effective than a series of outlined arguments (Cyphert, 2007). "One of the components for creating 'sticky' messages is story" (Reynolds, 2012, p. 77). The outlined points are included into the narrative, which is the oral part of the presentation.

The visual is the second element of Duarte's presentation ecosystem. By providing context for the story's content (Lehtonen, 2011), these slides support the storytelling (Mahin, 2004; Pratt, 2003). The slides support the oral presentation and these must not distract from the oral story.

In order to control the impact of presentation slides, several limitations have been recommended. The three-second rule (Duarte, 2008) considers presentation slides as outdoor billboards. It guides that each slide's message should be limited to the amount of information that can be processed by audiences within three seconds.

Variations on the 1-7-7 rule (Duarte, 2008; Katt, Murdock, Butler, & Pryor, 2008; Reynolds, 2012) limit each slide to one main idea. A slide contains a maximum of seven lines of text and a maximum of seven words per line. Katt et al. (2008) commented that the 1-7-7 and similar text limitation rules are based on Miller's conclusion that short-term memory can only process about seven chunks of information and simultaneously recognize the differences among about seven stimuli (Miller, 1956).

Pecha Kucha (Duarte, 2008; Lehtonen, 2012; Reynolds, 2012) is a rigid presentation style with 20 slides each shown for 20 seconds creating a 6-minute 40-second presentation. Another rigid format is the 10/20/30 rule employed by a venture capital firm, which limits PowerPoint presentations to 10 slides presented in 20 minutes with no font smaller than 30 points (Duarte, 2008). Reynolds (2012) suggested that the number of slides should be a function of the main point to be made, the purpose of the talk, the audience and their expectations, the desired outcome and the nature of the venue. Duarte and Reynolds recommended that bullet points from presentation slides be eliminated.

The third element in Duarte's presentation ecosystem is delivery. "The bulk of a presentation comes not from the slides but from the depth and breadth of the presenter's extemporaneous discussion of the topic during the presentation." (Mahin, 2004, p. 221) The key factor for effective presentation delivery is practice. (Berkin, 2010; Duarte, 2008; Reynolds, 2011) The goal of practice is to find a point of preparedness that makes the presenter confident and fluent, but does not destroy his or her instinctive behavior. Reynolds (2011) compared a good presentation with a jazz performance.

Many communication experts have suggested some system of prompts other than the slides. Renfrow and Impars (1989, p. 21) recommend presenters use notecards as cues or guides. Each card presents an idea with highlighted key words. They are to be "glanced at – not read from". Duarte (2008) suggested flash cards, mind maps or a written summary. Reynolds (2011, p. 54) recommended a "single page of easy-to-see notes" or a one-page list of key points to use in case of technology failure.

2.4 Previous Related Studies

Recent research studies have identified the significance of interpersonal communication skills for graduates. In 2006, De Lange, Jackling, and Gut investigated the emphasis placed on technical and generic skills developed during undergraduate accounting courses from the graduate perspective. The responses show that graduates perceive communication- and analytical-based skills as the most necessary for a successful accounting career.

Gray (2010) investigated the importance of 27 oral communication skills for new accountancy graduates in New Zealand, as perceived by chartered accountancy professionals. It also examined what specific skills accountancy employers value most highly. One-hundred and thirty three of 146 returned surveys (49.6%) showed that the respondents considered oral communication skills to be essential in a new graduate; a further 41.4% reported them to be very important. In addition, specific data concerning the perceived importance of 27 individual oral communication skills were sought to determine what specific kinds of oral communication skills are required by New Zealand accountancy employers.

Gardner and Aleksejuniene (2011) also explored the effectiveness of applying cognitive learning theories for teaching using technology. Overall, PowerPoint presentations were considered to be effective communication methods, especially if the presenter talks about the image while it is still on the screen and if the presenter uses a tablet to indicate the areas as he/she talks about them. The survey showed that "95% of the participants preferred a multimedia mode of communication in a large group learning setting because it allowed them to make connections and have a better grasp of clinically relevant dentistry" (Gardner & Aleksejuniene, 2011, p. 8).

Students agreed that using video clips is also an effective way of communication. As expected, PowerPoint presentations were not considered as effective modes of communication if there was text without images.

Later, the findings of Reinsch and Gardner were extended by DeKay's study (2012). An informal experiment was conducted to investigate the significance of interpersonal communication skills in work-related environment. A total of 38 e-mails from service providers of business communication training were collected for five months, from February through June 2012. All of the training focused on speaking skills, and none was concerned with writing. The results showed that 13.3 % of the training concerned giving presentations.

Research by Hynes (2012) analyzed the training at a U.S.-based company provided in interpersonal communication. Sixty senior managers across the corporation were interviewed to determine the most important IT training needs. Respondents indicated eight soft skills that they believed contributed the most to employee performance, and communication was at the top of the list. Virtual and face-to-face meetings, formal presentations, team skills, e-mail, and interpersonal communication were included. The results showed that interpersonal communication appeared to be just as important, if not more so, than business writing or making professional presentations in the business curriculum.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Objectives

1) To compare the differences between the English presentation skills of the *CR 752* students and the non-*CR 752* students in their research paper presentation

2) To explore the ways to improve graduate students' English presentation skills.

3.2 Participants

26 people who attended the conference served as the participants of the present study. There were two types of respondents—presentation raters and research presenters. There were two types of respondents—presentation raters and research presenters. Research presenters were divided into two groups: *CR 752* students and non-*CR 752* students. Ten *CR 752* students and 28 non-*CR 752* students were rated on how they used English presentation skills in their research paper presentations.

3.3 Research Instrument

The questionnaire consisted of three parts:

Part I contained seven questions. It was used to investigate the demographic data of the respondents concerning gender, age, occupation, program of study, years of English study and experiences in presentations in the workplace.

Part II contained 41 close-ended questions with a five-point Likert scale. It was used to measure the respondents' perceptions towards the English presentation skills of the MEC students.

Part III contained three open-ended questions. Participants were asked to provide opinions or suggestions for the MEC students on ways to improve their presentation skills.

3.4 Data Analysis

The quantitative data was analyzed using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences Program (SPSS) to calculate the frequency, percentage, and mean. Furthermore, a *t*-test was also employed.

Frequency and percentage were used to describe the respondents' personal data.Arithmetic mean was employed to evaluate participants' perceptions towards the English presentation skills of the graduate students. Their PowerPoint presentations were analyzed utilizing Sweller's (1980) Cognitive Load Theory (CLT), Visual Learning Theory (VLT), and Multi-media Learning Theory (MMLT).

4. Results

Four aspects of presentations, i.e., organization/content, delivery, poise and visuals, were explored using a questionnaire survey.

4.1 Organization/Content

Obviously, the *CR 752* students started by grabbing the audience's attention with his/her opening ($p = 0.0004$) and giving the audience an overview of the presentation ($p = 0.0058$). During the presentation, the presenters clearly used linking expression to move from one idea/topic/part to the next ($p = 0.0063$). At the end of the presentation, they briefly summarized the key points ($p = 0.0264$), signaled when finishing his/her presentation ($p = 0.0218$), and clearly answered the questions ($p = 0.0209$).

Meanwhile, the results showed that there was not a significant difference between the skills used by the *CR 752* students and the non-*CR 752* students: giving a clear structure of his/her presentation ($p = 0.0618$), maintaining

the audience's interest ($p = 0.2734$), providing clear information about his/her research ($p = 0.9814$), making an effort to express his/her unique voice ($p = 0.1472$), leaving the audience with a closing thought ($p = 0.0729$), finishing his/her presentation within the time limit ($p = 0.6701$), and showing that he/she understands the questions ($p = 0.1726$).

4.2 Delivery

The results show that the students had taken *Effective Presentations (CR 752)* used better delivery skills than those who had not taken the course. The audiences perceived that the *CR 752* students performed better in many areas. They had clear pronunciation ($p = 0.0001$), spoke at an appropriate pace ($p = 0.0483$), pronounced words accurately ($p = 0.0499$), and varied their intonation ($p = 0.0484$).

Meanwhile, the results show that there was not a significant difference between the delivery skills used by both groups as follows: using language appropriate to the content ($p = 0.0506$), speaking at an appropriate volume ($p = 0.0588$), using tempo changes effectively ($p = 0.0624$), avoiding a monotone voice, and avoiding the use of jargons ($p = 0.3819$).

4.3 Poise

When asked about poise the respondents viewed that both groups performed significantly different in terms of consistently making eye contact with the audience ($p = 0.0189$), using body language to clarify a point ($p = 0.0045$), appearing confident while making a presentation ($p = 0.0006$) and appearing well-prepared ($p = 0.0008$). On the other hand, the difference in regard to dressing with a professional look ($p = 0.6831$) was not significant.

4.4 Visuals

The respondents viewed that the *CR 752* students PowerPoint presentation were significantly different from the non-*CR 752* students. Their visual aids used in the presentation were clear ($p = 0.0498$), easy to understand ($p = 0.0051$), and was interesting ($p = 0.0338$). The presenters used visual aids that showed the relevant text on the same slide ($p = 0.0118$), and used color to emphasize a point ($p = 0.0485$).

Meanwhile, the findings showed that there were not significant differences as follows: using simple visual aids, using visually appealing visual aids ($p = 0.0788$), using visual aids that were appropriately matched with the content ($p = 0.1104$), using large fonts which were easy to see ($p = 0.0595$), using font colors that contrasted sharply with the background ($p = 0.0580$), using an attractive background ($p = 0.2937$), avoiding the use of distracting backgrounds ($p = 0.5086$), using a consistent background ($p = 0.5086$), and talking about the image while it was still on the screen ($p = 0.3547$).

5. Discussion

The present study revealed that there were some statistically significant differences between the English presentation skills of the *CR 752* students and the non-*CR 752* students. However, for other skills no significant differences were found.

In Decker and Tyler's study (2013), the researchers assessed the effect of one approach to encouraging students to make more effective presentations – imposing limitations on slide composition and the number of words per notecard. The findings from a descriptive survey concluded that limiting the number of words per notecard to three contributes to better presentations. A total of 85% of students who reported following the instruction perceived their presentations to be at least "slightly better". Meanwhile, 63% of the students who followed the instruction reported their presentations have been "much better". In the present study, the audiences perceived that the *CR 752* students had significantly better skills in terms of organization/content than the non-*CR 752* students.

The open-ended questions asked for the opinions or suggestions of respondents for improving the graduate students' English presentation skills. Eleven of a total of 39 returned questionnaires suggested that *CR 752* students should improve their skills.

Three returned questionnaires (27%) agreed that the presenters should improve their organization/content as follows: add clear topics in the PowerPoint presentation they are talking about, i.e., recommendations, and keep their presentations short and simple. As mentioned in the Literature Review, the key message should be specified at the beginning of the presentation (Cyphert, 2007; Lahtonen, 2011; Reynolds 2011, 2012). Later, the supporting points should be developed to enhance the core idea (Duarte, 2008; Cyphert 2007).

Five returned questionnaires (45%) agreed that the presenters should accurately pronounce words, effectively use tempo changes and vary their intonation. Three returned questionnaires (27%) agreed that the presenters should improve their body language by using more gestures to clarify points and making more eye contact to communicate with the audience. Voss (2004), as cited in Oommen (2012), has suggested that in a classroom setting the presenter should pay attention to the class rather than worrying about the slide advancement, as when

doing the latter they fail to engage with the audience.

Two returned questionnaires (18%) commented that the presenters should add more relevant pictures on the slides. This finding is consistent with Clark and Paivio's Dual Coding Theory (1991), which states that information is added through either visual or auditory interrelations, and pictures are easier to remember than words.

Sweller, as cited in Reynolds (2012), also recommended that an effective presenter should avoid presentations filled with lots of text. It is more difficult to organize information if it comes at us in both spoken and written forms at the same time.

According to Mayer's Multimedia Learning Theory Principles, students learn better from both words and pictures. They also perform better when corresponding words and pictures are presented near each other on the screen. Presenting words and pictures simultaneously also enhances their learning. Moreover, students learn better when irrelevant words, pictures, and sounds are excluded.

Incorporating images with the slides, as well as the quality, relevance, and integrity of the content are major concerns (Tufte, 2003). He pointed out that flashing words or images on slides do not make the content relevant if they are not relevant. Keefe and Willett (2004) stated that appropriate content should be considered rather than the use of PowerPoint. McDonald (2004) also warned that focusing on multimedia technology such as graphics rather than the content can be defined as ''PowerPointlessness'', which brings about ineffective communication.

Twenty-one of a total of 55 returned questionnaires suggested how the non-*CR 752* students could improve their skills. Six returned questionnaires (28%) agreed that the presenters should improve their organization/content as follows: give a clear structure of their presentation, i.e., from general to specific, use more transition words, engage the audience and focus on the findings rather than other topics. Six returned questionnaires (28%) agreed that the presenters should improve their delivery. They should speak louder, pronounce words clearly and accurately, as well as vary their intonation, pitch and tone. Five returned questionnaires (23%) agreed that the presenters should consistently make eye contact with the audience and used body language to clarify a point.

To improve poise and delivery skills, the presenters have to practice more. Preparedness will make them more confident and fluent (Berkin, 2010; Duarte, 2008; Reynolds, 2011). Some academics have suggested using notecards with highlighted key words that can be glanced at (Renfrow & Impars, 1989) or flash cards, mind maps or a written summary to aid in memorization (Duarte, 2008).

Six returned questionnaires (28%) agreed that the PowerPoint presentations should be improved as follow: less text on screen, more figures and pictures, some highlight topics, larger tables, avoiding too much information and improving the clarity of slides.

Several suggestions can be applied to enhance the impact of the visuals as follows: the three-second rule, i.e., information on each slide should be limited to the amount that the audiences can understand within three seconds (Duarte, 2008); the 1-7-7 rule, i.e., each slide should contain no more than seven lines of text and no more than seven words per line (Duarte, 2008; Katt et al., 2008; Reynolds, 2012); and the 10/20/30 rule, i.e., 10 slides should be presented in 20 minutes with no font smaller than 30 points (Duarte, 2008). In addition, the slides should include the main points of the talk and fewer bullet points. Finally, presenters should keep in mind the objective of the talk, the audience and their expectations, the desired outcome and the nature of the venue (Reynolds, 2012).

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Appendix

Questionnaire

This questionnaire is a part of the thesis for a Master of Arts in English for Careers, Language Institute, Thammasat University. It was designed to examine how students have applied their presentation skills and

knowledge to their research paper presentation. All the information provided will be considered confidential and be used only for research purposes. Please answer honestly as only this will guarantee the success of the investigation. Thank you very much for your help.

Instructions: Please mark √ in the blank representing your own information or fill in the blanks provided.

1. Background Information

1) What is your year of birth?

2) What is your gender? Male ( ) Female ( )

3) Are you an instructor? Yes ( ) No ( )

If yes, skip (4)-(6)

4) Are you a student? Yes ( ) No ( )

5) If you are a student, how many years of English study have you undertaken?

6) Which program are you studying? MEC ( ) TEFL ( )

7) Do you have to give presentations at work?

___ Yes, please specify the frequency ___ times: month

___ No

2. Presenter Evaluation

In the following section we would like you to indicate your opinion after each statement by putting a '√' in the space that best indicates the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

Strongly agree = 1; Agree = 2; Neither agree nor disagree = 3; Disagree = 4; Strongly disagree = 5.

Organization/Content					
The presenter	1	2	3	4	5
1) Grabbed the audience's attention with his/her opening.					
2) Gave the audience an overview of what he/she will cover in his/her talk.					
3) Provided a clear presentation structurre.					
4) Always used linking expressions/signalled clearly to move from one idea/topic/part to the next.					
5) Maintained the audience's interest.					
6) Made an effort to express his/her unique voice.					
7) Provided clear information about his/her research.					
8) Finished his/her presentation within the time limit.					
9) Signaled when he/she were finishing his/her presentation.					
10) Briefly summarized key points, when he/she present the final part of his/her presentation.					
11) Left the audience with a closing thought at the end of his/her presentation.					
12) Showed that he/she understands the questions					
13) Answered the questions clearly.					

Delivery					
The presenter	1	2	3	4	5
14) Had clear pronunciation.					
15) Accurately pronounced words.					
16) Effectively used tempo changes.					
17) Spoke at an appropriate pace.					
18) Spoke at an appropriate volume.					
19) Varied his/her intonation.					
20) Avoided a monotone voice.					
21) Used language appropriate to the content.					

22) Avoided the use jargons when other words can be used.

Poise	
The presenter	1 2 3 4 5

23) Dressed with a professional look.

24) Consistently made eye contact with the audience.

25) Used body language to clarify a point.

26) Appeared confident while giving the presentation.

27) Appeared well-prepared.

Visuals	
The visual aids used in his/ her PowerPoint Presentation	1 2 3 4 5

28) Were simple.

29) Were clear.

30) Were easy to understand.

31) Were visually appealing.

32) Were interesting.

33) Ware appropriately matched with the content.

34) Showed the relevant text on the same slide as the image.

The presenter	1 2 3 4 5

35) Used large fonts which were easy to see.

36) Used font colors that contrasted sharply with the background

37) Used color to emphasize a point i.e. font, graph.

38) Used an attractive background.

39) Used a consistent background.

40) Avoided the use of distracting backgrounds.

41) Talked about the image while it was still on the screen.

Adapted from "PowerPoint and learning theories: Reaching out to the millennials," by Gardner, K., & Aleksejuniene, J., 2011, Transformative Dialogues: Teaching & Learning Journal, 5(1), p. 3., and "CR 752 Effecive Presentations: Peer Assessment Form." By Zentz, M., 2012, The Language Institute of Thammasat University.

3. Open-Ended Questions

In this section, we would like you to respond to the following questions

1) What do you think about this presentation?

2) What are the strengths and weaknesses of the presenter?

Strengths: _____

Weaknesses: _____

3) What could the presenter do to improve his/her presentation?