American University of Armenia
Հայաստանի Ամերիկյան Համալսարան

DEVELOPING PRESENTATION SKILLS

WITH SECONDARY SCHOOL STUDENTS IN ARMENIA

A thesis submitted in partial satisfaction

of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts

in Teaching English as a Foreign Language

by

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2007

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2007

Acknowledgements

Abstract

Teaching how to develop oral presentation skills based on integrating other English language skills into communicative classes and interactions in the final grade of secondary school in Armenia is the main purpose of this study. The study concentrates on making students understand the importance of their learning presentation skills in today's world and their learning some basic skills that are necessary to develop them into a presentation. It also investigates teachers' and students' attitude towards having these skills taught by including them in the school curriculum, and having special training for teachers to teach the course. The study also describes the benefits and limitations of teaching the course. The participants of the study were 10 English teachers from different schools, and 20 tenth-grade students from different classes at the same school. A teacher questionnaire and teacher and student interview questions served as instruments for the study, and they were analyzed using a descriptive method.

While analyzing the questionnaire results, it was found that all ten teachers accepted the importance of having a course on oral presentation skills in high schools, and identified the course as intended for use in pre-academic classes designed to be covered in one term in the final grade at school. The results of the teacher and student interviews showed the positive attitude of teachers and students towards having teachers trained for teaching the course. It also revealed the benefits and limitations of the study.

Table of Contents

Chapter 1: Introduction

In the world of business today, including private industry, government agencies, the military, small businesses, independent consultants, as well as in many other professions, everybody seems to be giving oral presentations. Whatever their specialty or level in the organization, nearly all professionals in business and in any other fields today find that presentations have a major impact on the success of the professional's career. Brilliance, without the capability of communicating it, is worth little in any field. The most brilliant idea is worth little until it is expressed. How well it is expressed can be as significant to its acceptance and implementation as the idea itself. A person can carry around all sorts of terrific insights, knowledge, and analytical capability, but none of it does him, his organization, or the world any good until it is communicated clearly through writing or speaking. The professional who wants his ideas to be heard and wants to have as great an influence as possible recognizes that professional skills go hand in hand with communication skills. Therefore, he/she works on expanding both his knowledge and his capabilities. The oral presentation can be the main avenue of communication, and key decisions can be based on the presentation.

1.1 What exactly is a presentation? Is it the same as a speech? Is it a lesson or a lecture?

A presentation is not entirely a speech. It differs from a formal speech in three main respects:

1. It might be given impromptu, prepared only in outline form and spoken from visual aids and notes rather than fully written and delivered word for word, as speeches may be.

2. A presentation often involves visual aids, while many formal speeches do not.

3. A presentation is usually given to an audience which is highly participative - people rapidly ask questions and engage in dialog. For most speeches the audience listens, and possibly asks questions later (Leech, 1993, p.4).

Presentation skills don't come automatically. Professionals expend enormous amounts of energy and money to acquire the knowledge of their specialties. The typical professional has four or more years of college, may even have a higher degree, participates regularly in societies of peers, and often attends professional seminars. However, this same professional spends very little time on attending brief seminars on developing presentation skills. Developing an understanding of and proficiency in oral communications does not occur automatically either. The ability to speak well to groups is a special skill that needs to be developed. Learning to organize thoughts and to present them so people will listen and understand, determining what will persuade people to your point of view, using visual and other nonverbal channels as well as

the oral channel, developing sensitivity to what turns listeners on or off are things that may be assimilated by life experience, but to acquire a deeper knowledge of them requires serious attention. Increased effectiveness and confidence in oral communications serve a person well in many areas beyond presentations. Meetings, committees, leadership in professional societies, political or civic activities, all extensively involve oral skills.

1.2 How to gain these skills before becoming a professional in a particular field?

In Armenia, since the collapse of the former Soviet Union, the transition period between the grammar translation method and the communicative approach hasn't done much to create a lively, communicative environment where students can feel free of strict grammar rules and can develop active and actual life situations where authentic language is widely used to interact with each other. Interaction and an interactive atmosphere in class will help students think better, create ideas and develop new skills. Students are used to memorizing things or at least retelling some stories from their textbook, which used to be the presentation of the lesson memorized and recited in front of the class. So far, students have had little experience in how to speak in front of the class, how to answer questions and how to behave. They have never had the opportunity to work in groups, in pairs or individually, to later develop some idea into a topic to speak about and present to others. Saying something by rote is not enough for real communication.

In order to solve this problem and prepare students for making good presentations in good English, students need to acquire a basic understanding of interaction, communication techniques and presentation skills.

This study is set out to investigate whether or not students in secondary schools could start learning to develop presentation skills in their final grade at school, when they have already chosen their major, and the effectiveness and benefits of bringing students to authentic oral communication before starting college or university. The examination of these issues by means of analyzing the results obtained from a questionnaire and teacher and student interviews eliciting responses to different ways, techniques and methods of teaching presentation skills in schools today, and the analysis of the data, provide very important information on the extent of possibilities and restrictions while teaching presentation skills in secondary schools, and what methods or approaches could be more appropriate from their point of view.

My goal in this study is to have teachers think about and give me feedback on the benefits of teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia, how to achieve success in creating a good communicative environment in the classroom; what methods and approaches to use to plan an action to address a problem, issue or question in his/her context and how to carry it out; how the methods they have suggested will affect developing presentation skills, and what

techniques to use to assess students' presentations; what other skills can be integrated into teaching this skill; what can enhance motivation and objectivity, what can bring students to frustration and complete failure while delivering a presentation; and what the teacher's role and behavior in the classroom regarding the process of instruction ought to be.

In the **Literature Review** section of my study, **Chapter Two,** we will discuss the concept of a presentation, some basic skills students need to learn in order to deliver a presentation, some problems they may have in delivering a presentation, as well as the importance of critical thinking in the discussions.

The **Methodology** section, **Chapter 3,** will introduce the participants of the study and the materials used to carry out the research study, and the data collection based on the teacher questionnaire, and teacher/student interviews.

The analysis of the data on the teacher questionnaire and teacher/student interviews is introduced in **Chapter four: Presentation and Discussion of Data.** It focuses on the findings of teacher interviews on teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia; the findings of student interviews on teaching presentation skills in school; on assessing presentations, and discussion on assessing presentations.

Chapter 5 of my study is the **Conclusion section,** which introduces the summary of the findings, the significance, as well as the limitations of this research study, pedagogical implications and future research.

My study also provides a survey on teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia, the interview questions put to teachers, the interview questions put to students, the audio taped transcript of teacher interview, the audio taped transcript of student interview, as well as some relevant information about the process and procedure of the study in school # 133 in Nork Massive in Yerevan.

Chapter 2: Literature Review

This chapter introduces some ideas and methods for developing presentation skills for secondary school students in their final grade at school. First, it will describe what a presentation is. Second, it will discuss some basic skills that are important to learn in order to later develop them into a presentation. Next, it will consider the importance of communication skills, as well as other necessary skills to build a speech to present. It will describe how to plan a presentation. Finally, the chapter will deal with problems and failures while delivering a presentation and the ways to avoid them.

2.1 What is a presentation?

Each day people spend a lot of time talking to other people and employ a wide range of skills while talking to them, such as, organizing thoughts carefully, tailoring the message to the audience, telling a story for maximum impact and adapting to listener feedback. These are some of the most important communication skills people will need for a presentation.

Communication involves the exchange of information, ideas, and feelings among people. In this exchange, the process consists of a speaker, a message, and a listener (Annigian, 1993). People need to understand three important words; communication, message and context, in order to improve skills and develop the ability to communicate (Annigian, 1993, p. 4).

What is communication and how can we create good communication in class in order to help students develop their ideas into a presentation?

The word *communication* is derived from the Latin "communicare", which means, "to share." Sharing should be interpreted as the exchange of information (or messages) with objectivity, positive attitudes, and responses with empathy.

A *message* is information sent out in some form: spoken, written, pictorial, or symbolic. It generally has a purpose and can be prepared carefully for an audience (receiver) in suitable language. If the sender fails to prepare the message adequately, or fails to adapt it for the receiver's understanding, the response will not be as intended. When preparing a written or spoken message, the receiver's capacity to understand and his/her attitude or willingness to accept it must also be considered.

Context relates to the subject discussed or the environment that establishes the specific meaning of a word to make sense for its use in a situation. Context is derived from Latin "contexere", meaning "to join together or weave". When you know the time, place, circumstance, and purpose of an event, that is, the context, you can have a clear notion of its meaning. We are not clear about the meaning of a word until it has been defined or introduced in relation to the subject matter presented (Annigian, 1993, p p. 4, 5).

2. 2 What are some skills students need to learn in order to deliver a presentation?

Learning about communication and developing communication skills is not the only skill students need to learn in order to give a presentation, for a presentation is not a casual conversation (Matthews, 1994). It is more highly structured, requires more formal language and a different method of delivery. With study and practice, it will be possible to master these differences and expand one's conversational skills into speechmaking. The text intended for the study, contains a lot of interactive activities to involve learners in practicing things they can apply to real-life situations. In his book 'Speaking Solutions: Interaction, Presentation, Listening and Pronunciation Skills', Matthews (1994) states that teachers can help students to do the following things:

a) Participate successfully in conversations and small group discussions

b) Plan, organize and deliver effective presentations by following clear, specific guidelines

c) Improve listening and pronunciation skills by doing activities based on an accompanying audiotape

d) Strengthen critical thinking skills by brainstorming, supporting opinions, considering values, making decisions, solving problems, and analyzing issues

- Analyze the effectiveness of discussions and presentations by using a variety of self, peer, and group observation forms

- Gain sensitivity to basic cross-cultural issues

- Take responsibility for their own learning by doing a variety of learner-training activities (Matthews, 1994, p xi).

However, before students work through everything, they need to think about how to give a good presentation – from planning what to say, to visual aids, staging and delivery, they need to establish first of all what they want to achieve with the presentation. Why are they giving it? To inform? To influence? To impress?

A presentation is an exercise in persuasion. Of course, there are other ingredients, such as communication of information and ideas, for example, but a presentation takes place in order to persuade a person or a group of people to adopt or revise an attitude, accept or modify an opinion, take or refrain from taking an action or decision. Surely, teachers and lecturers have the same need to persuade, but in a presentation, this is more overt. Therefore, a presentation is different from a lesson or a lecture (Jay & Jay, 2004). A presentation is a form of communication that is usually a prelude to further discussion and exposition. If it fails, the further discussion will not take place, but if it succeeds, the audience to whom it was given will want to study the subject in more detail. Usually a presentation is successful if it arouses curiosity and stimulates a

desire for more information (Jay & Jay, 2004, p. xii, xiii).

The main idea of teaching presentation skills is to teach people how to start planning their presentation and go through several stages to achieve success at the end.

2.3 How to plan a presentation?

Before starting to plan a presentation, it is necessary to be clear about its purpose. Once a precise objective has been set and it has been worked out exactly who the audience is, what they know already and what they want to learn, the plan of the presentation can be started. The planning stage involves working out who is going to say what, for how long and in what order. This process is vital and worth putting thought and effort into. It will give the presentation a strong skeletal structure which will render all the later fleshing out far easier and quicker. If there is a misconception, an omission or an error of intent built into the beginning of a presentation, then all the subsequent time, thought and work are doomed (Jay & Jay, 2004, p.1). For this reason, there should be some exploratory discussion with people at the very beginning to help the speaker decide on what must be done. It is necessary that the presenter start from the first principle: to formulate a precise objective of why he/she is giving the presentation. The answer initially might be vague and general, but the aim is eventually to narrow it down to a single sentence defining a precise and limited objective.

The second principle is to learn to structure the presentation. All good presentations have the same structure. It is a simple, three-part structure, the same as a symphony or a play: exposition, development, recapitulation; first movement, second movement, third movement; Act I, Act II, Act III; order demonstrated, order challenged, order re-established (Jay & Jay, 2004, p. 8).

Every presentation requires some sort of preface, which has a double value: it establishes certain important facts, and it also helps to ease presenters into their relationship with the audience by means of 'neutral' material that everyone can accept and agree with. The audience may come from a different cultural background. This might affect the style and structure of the presentation.

Language should also be taken into consideration. Some non-native speakers of English in the group may not have the same level of English as the presenter, so, the presenter needs to speak more slowly than usual and avoid using idioms and keep the language clear and simple (Laws, 2005, p. 11).

2.4 Some problems people may have in delivering presentations

A very important aspect to consider in developing presentation skills is dealing with stage fright. It is the major concern of students, and they need to build confidence while speaking in

front of others.

Many people who converse easily in all kinds of everyday situations become frightened at the idea of standing up before a group to make a speech. According to a recent study, researchers concentrated on social situations and asked their subjects to list their greatest fears, and speechmaking ranked near the top in provoking anxiety (Lucas, 1998).

2.4.1 Dealing with Stage Fright

Most people tend to be anxious before doing something important in public, and it is normal, even desirable to be nervous at the start of a speech or presentation. The human body is responding to any stressful situation by producing extra *adrenaline.* This sudden shot of adrenaline is what makes people's heart race, hands shake, knees knock, and skin perspire. Every presenter, every public speaker experiences all these reactions to some extent. The question is: How can nervousness be controlled and be made to work for us rather than against us? (Lucas, 1998, p. 8).

2.4.2 Controlling Nervousness

There are four ways in which the presenter can encourage self confidence:

1. Know the subject extremely well
2. Have a positive attitude
3. Speak clearly
4. Be confident and look confident (Laws, 2005).

Managing editor Adam Rombel from the Central New York Business Journal says in a recent column that people who speak in front of groups are not natural speakers. Public speaking is a skill acquired like any other skill, with practice and training. "All professional speakers are nervous before they give a speech in front of a group", says James McEntire (2007), Principal of JMC consulting, which provides growth strategies for small businesses. He is also the owner of McEntire's Bodyshop Supplies in Camden. Once he was called upon during a church service to speak about an important decision concerning their priest (he was a member of their church vestry). "Surprised, stunned and terrified, I had all of these feelings. As I stood up, my brain sat down. I mumbled, misspoke, and tried to explain my thoughts to the congregation. Only about half of what I said was understandable. After that scary episode, I decided to improve my speaking ability. I have done a lot over the years to become a more confident speaker" (McEntire, 2007).

Rather than trying to eliminate every trace of stage fright, a presenter should aim at transforming it from a negative force into what one expert calls *positive nervousness- "a zesty,*

enthusiastic, lively feeling with a slight edge to it. … It's still nervousness, but it feels different. You are no longer victimized by it; instead, you are vitalized by it. You are in control of it" (Lucas, 1998, p.10). Here are six time-tested ways you can turn your nervousness from a negative force into a positive one.

- Acquire speaking experience

- Prepare, prepare, prepare

- Think positively

- Use the power of visualization

- Know that most nervousness is not visible

- Don't expect perfection

2.4.3 Critical thinking

Another important aspect to consider in developing presentation skills is critical thinking. What is critical thinking? To some extent, it's a matter of logic – of being able to spot weaknesses in other people's arguments and to avoid them in your own. It also involves related skills such as distinguishing fact from opinion, judging the credibility of statements, and assessing the soundness of evidence. In the broad sense, critical thinking is focused, organized thinking, the ability to see clearly the relationships among ideas. It has often been said that there are few new ideas in the world, only recognized ideas. The greatest thinkers, scientists and inventors have often taken information that was readily available and put it together differently to produce new insights. However, organizing a speech is not just a matter of arranging the ideas you already have. Rather, it is an important part of shaping the ideas themselves. What is true of organization is true of many aspects of public speaking. The skills people learn in their speech class can help them become more effective thinkers in a number of ways. As they work on expressing their ideas in clear, accurate language, they will enhance their ability to think clearly and accurately. As they study the role of evidence and reasoning in speech making, they will see how these can be used in other forms of communication as well. As people learn to listen critically to speeches in class, they will be better able to assess the ideas of speakers (and writers) in a variety of situations. If they take full advantage of their speech class, they will be able to enhance their skills as a critical thinker in many circumstances. This is one reason public speaking has been regarded as a vital part of education since the days of ancient Greece (Lucas, 1998, p.16).

To make a good impression on the audience, it is not just what is said that is important. The way it is said is important, too. The audience will notice the way a presenter uses his/her voice and body language. When giving a presentation, he/she will have to speak more loudly

than in a normal conversation, more clearly and more slowly. English is a language in which the tone of the voice and the stress that is placed on words and sentences is important. Getting the stress and intonation wrong can affect people's understanding of the message.

When people give presentations, they speak more slowly than usual, but if they slow down too much, the audience may get bored and stop listening. On the other hand, if they speak too quickly, it can be difficult for people to understand what they are saying.

Pausing is also important in giving a presentation. A presenter should use pauses to emphasize the important points of a presentation. Most people giving a presentation think a lot about the words they are going to use. What they often forget is that presenters also communicate without speaking. They transmit their feelings and attitudes through body language and non-verbal signals such as gestures and facial expressions, eye contact, posture, and movement. The audience will read their body language and make judgments about them.

Timing is also needed to plan a presentation. Most audiences become restless and impatient if a speaker talks for too long.

Good visuals will help the audience to understand what presenters are trying to tell them. They can also make their presentation more 'professional' and will help to give the audience confidence in them and their subject. However, presenters should keep the content and design of the visuals simple. If the visuals are too complicated, they will confuse the audience.

Planning the content is an important part of the preparation for giving a presentation. The content of a presentation must be suitable for the purpose or objective presenters are trying to achieve. Thus, they should take into consideration the following:

- what to include in the presentation
- structuring the content
- the type of language and vocabulary they will need
- how to prepare 'lecture notes'
- ways of making the presentation interesting to the audience

The purpose of a presentation is to put forward a solution to a problem (make a recommendation). It might be reasonable to structure a presentation in the same way as one structures a report. This is a common approach in the commercial, technical and scientific world (Laws, 2005, p.59).

With regards to teaching students to develop presentation skills in their final grade in secondary schools in Armenia, I would be deeply interested in ways to create more communicative classes in our schools and help students develop first of all good oral speech, interaction and communication, which will eventually bring to a winning presentation. I have done a great deal of work in the classroom on developing communication through situations,

dialogues and creative activities. Grammar was taught in structures to be used in their oral speech and the mistakes the students made in their speech were occasionally ignored to encourage and develop more communication.

The issues and insights I have discussed so far lead me to pose the following research questions:

- What do students themselves think a presentation is and why do people deliver a presentation?
- Should schools provide special classes teaching students presentation skills?
- Do students need to learn how to communicate their ideas in order to deliver a good presentation?
- Is oral speech enough for delivering a good presentation?
- Can learning writing skills contribute to learning oral presentation skills?
- Should listening exercises be added to such a course, too? What would be their expectations of this course?

In order to investigate these questions, I will carry out a study the results of which will be discussed in the following chapters.

Chapter 3: Methodology

This study is an action research project, and its main goal is to carry out an experiment in a typical classroom setting to create lively discussion over some issues, which will lead to the development of presentation skills. Action research is conducted by teachers in language classrooms and focuses on particular features of classroom interaction. However, action research is more than simply research conducted by teachers in classrooms. The term *action research* is an approach to collecting and interpreting data that involves a clear, repeated cycle of procedures and is an actual research method (Bailey, 2001, p.490). The broad goals of action research are to seek local understanding and to bring about improvement in the context under study (Bailey, 2001, p. 490). Kemmis and McTaggart (1989) describe action research as "a form of 'self-reflective enquiry' undertaken by participants in social situations in order to improve the rationality and justice of their own social and educational practices, as well as their understanding of these practices and the situations in which these practices are carried out" (Kemmis and McTaggart, p. 2).

The research study was carried out in a tenth-grade class in secondary school # 133 in Yerevan over a five-week period by planning a project to address a problem, issue, and question in context. The observation was done to collect data by using the following techniques: a) a teacher questionnaire, b) interview questions for students, and c) interview questions for teachers.

This chapter describes the subjects (school students) and materials involved in the study, how the data were collected and the procedure of the study.

3.1 Subjects

The subjects are 20 (15 female and 5 male) tenth-grade (final grade) secondary school students selected from all other tenth-grade students with a low-intermediate level of English language proficiency. Their language proficiency is determined by the School tests administered by School Administration or by the Ministry of Education. The students are all the age of 15 in their tenth grade at school. The English language is generally taught in regular schools beginning with the third grade. With seven years of studying English, the students are neither able to get involved in communicative activities very much nor interact with each other. Therefore, students have to begin improving their communicative skills, which will later develop to actual interaction and bring them up to presentation skills.

Teachers working in ordinary Armenian schools tend to make their classes teacher-centered by using the grammar-translation method, and using the textbook for the tenth-grade students, which does not promote any communication or discussion, and now, the traditional

method of teaching is going to integrate new methods of teaching which will turn the class into a student-centered one, involving a lot of communication and oral presentations. These new methods will include a lot of interactive activities, listening and pronunciation practice, communication and learning strategies. Teachers will select topics that may interest students, and students will be allowed to select activities that suit the particular needs of the class. Teachers should definitely not feel obliged to cover every section, every activity, or every situation within an activity. On the contrary, they should be flexible in choosing among them. Teachers can assign parts of the text as homework, not in class, and then use class time to review and discuss the important points, or have students compare them in groups. All these can maximize class interaction and lively, authentic atmosphere in class to develop their English language speaking skills into a presentation.

3.2 Materials

Classes were conducted for five weeks, once a week for two hours (a total of 20 hours) during students' winter vacations from 9 a.m. until 11 a.m. The topics used for the action research were selected by me together with one of the English teachers who was working with

these students. The selected topics were chosen from different sources; from the textbooks "New Interchange" 3 and 4 by Jack C. Richards with Jonathan Hull and Susan Proctor, (1998) "Speaking Solutions" by Candace Matthews (1994), and "A Communicative Grammar" by Patricia K. Werner, Mary M. Church and Lida R. Baker (1996). There were five topics and five situations chosen for each class, covering the four language skills (listening, reading, writing and speaking), some grammar (in structures) corresponding to the particular topic or situation, as well as some additional material, which the students were asked to choose themselves from other books, magazines, newspapers or the Internet. The students were asked to find topics or articles that interested them in order to discuss them in class. The choice of additional material was flexible, so they could also choose a film, a play, or a TV program to discuss. The chosen topics were based on situations which encouraged a lot of discussion, promoting the development of both linguistic and communication skills. They were also intended to strive for fluency and accuracy in English through a topic-based or situation-based syllabus.

The first lesson was based on students introducing each other. No topic was given. The structures of the Simple Present and the Present Continuous Tenses were written on the blackboard to be used in setting the context and be implemented in their speech. The students were asked to work in pairs and gather information about each other in order to tell the group about the partner, his/her interests, hobbies, likes and dislikes, among others.

Each class session, beginning with the second one, consisted of the presentation of a new, different topic followed by a particular grammar structure and vocabulary related to the topic, and concluded with a discussion of the topic in group and pair-work activities. The writing and reading tasks were generally assigned as homework. The students were asked to think of and create a similar situation or topic at home, or they were free to find something similar elsewhere and write it in their notebooks to be read in class during the next lesson. Some students were encouraged to create their own stories to read for their classmates to discuss.

Some of the topics were problem-solving tasks to enhance imagination and creativity of the students to come up with new, original ideas on the spot and raise interest in others.

Although the research required listening exercises as well, this aspect wasn't carried out because of lack of equipment, appropriate facilities, and poor school conditions (no electricity, heating, tape recorders, cold, etc.), as the research was carried out during the winter vacations.

The last two class sessions were devoted to presentations of the 'best' topics the students had identified. Two students even demonstrated the ability of creating a product of their invention to introduce to class. One of them was a 'Mighty Robot' who could help with everything he was programmed to do, and the other was a creative story about time relationships in a person's life.

There were no strict requirements in assessing the students' performance, that is, no tests or quizzes or grades, and the scoring was based on the general description, delivery of speech, language use and topic development, according to noticeable improvements. This kind of scoring didn't discourage students, on the contrary, it gave them a chance to see their own improvement in speech, accuracy, and organization of thoughts and ideas in the process, and what is more, in gaining confidence in speaking in front of others.

The instructional approach of this study was using communicative language teaching to develop presentation skills with the emphasis on vocabulary enlargement, speaking and listening comprehension. Writing was intended to be a weaker but necessary skill. There was no writing activity in class; it was given mostly as a homework assignment.

3.3 Data collection

The qualitative data for this study were collected through the following instruments: a teacher questionnaire, interview questions for teachers and interview questions for students after the completion of the five-week research study.

3.3.1 The questionnaire (see Appendix 1) was developed by me, and commented on by school teachers, not only by the ones who worked in the school where the research was carried out but

also by teachers working in other schools via e-mail and by handing it out (i.e. in writing). The questionnaire was read, checked, improved and finally approved by my thesis supervisor. The sixteen questions raised in the study gathered information from secondary school teachers about the possibilities of teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia; what the benefits/advantages or disadvantages of teaching this course in Armenia are; what limitations there can be for teaching this course; what can cause failure or frustration during the presentation, and about the teacher and student expectations of this course.

The school teachers were informed about the questionnaire and had to take responsibility for the information that was required on the questionnaire, such as their names, positions and workplaces. They were told that the information given by them would be of great importance, as the data obtained from them would prove the reliability of implementing this research study in teaching the course in secondary schools in Armenia.

Ten teachers agreed to fill in the questionnaire, and the results of the information from their data will be discussed later in the next chapter together with the interview questions for teachers.

3.3.2 Interviewing teachers

The main goal of interviewing teachers was to have them speak sincerely into a microphone about the advantages and benefits, restrictions, limitations or concerns about teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia, what they really think about changes in the school curriculum, and how they think grammar ought to be taught in this course to bring students to authentic communication.

Secondary school teachers became very enthusiastic about the changes in the curriculum, as well as about the changes in the school program, language teaching hours, teaching styles and methods. All ten teachers who were asked to speak into a microphone, spoke without fear, and were eager to participate and talk to the researcher about the shortcomings of the teaching system in Armenian secondary schools, generally, and in particular, about the limitations of improving English language teaching in the schools, especially in ordinary schools, where there is little emphasis on oral speech. The teachers were especially enthusiastic about and welcomed my attempts to teach presentation skills in secondary schools, as well as having special training to teach this course. Three of the teachers who filled in the questionnaire are students in the MA TEFL program at the Department of English language Programs (Master of Arts in Teaching English as a Foreign Language) at the American University of Armenia (AUA), who also teach in different secondary schools; four teachers are teachers in the school where the research was carried out; one is a student in the CTEFL program of the Department of English Language

Programs (Certificate in Teaching English as a Foreign Language Program at the American University of Armenia AUA), and the other two teachers teach in one of the suburban schools in Yerevan.

The questionnaire results were viewed and analyzed after the five- week course was over. (For the transcript of the audio records, see Appendix 2).

3.3.3 Interviewing students

The main purpose of interviewing the students was to find out: a) what they understand by the word " presentation"; why people deliver a presentation; if schools should provide special classes teaching presentation skills in their final grade at school; what they think they would change in their English language teaching and learning classes; whether learning oral speech would be enough for delivering a good presentation; if learning writing skills could contribute to learning oral presentation skills; if listening exercises should be added to this course, too and what their expectation would be of the course.

The results of the students' interviews, which were analyzed after the ten-week course, showed that the students as well were encouraged to speak into a microphone without fear, though out of 20 students, only eight agreed to speak. This was also satisfying, because the others were listening and gesturing to their peers that they agreed with their answers. At first, the students felt uncomfortable speaking sincerely about their classes, their dissatisfactions, concerns, and their teachers, but as the conversation went on, and they were told about the importance of their attitude towards what was going on in their school, and what the main goal of the research was, they became encouraged to be more open in speaking their minds (For the transcript of the interviews, see Appendix 3).

Chapter 4: Presentation and Discussion of Data

This chapter reports on the findings of the research study on teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia. The chapter provides details and analysis of the teacher questionnaire, teacher interviews and student interviews, and concludes with a summary of findings. It also discusses possibilities for the alternative assessment of presentations.

The descriptive-qualitative data analysis was carried out based on the responses to the questionnaire (16 open-ended questions for the teachers), the teacher-interviews (7 open-ended questions), and the student-interviews (10 open-ended questions) designed and used for this study.

4.1 Segment 1: Analysis of teacher questionnaire data

The analysis of descriptive-qualitative and quantitative data carried out based on the responses to the questionnaire, the teacher-interviews, and the student-interviews, which was designed and used for this study, gave the following picture of the importance of teaching presentation skills in Armenian schools, the benefits and the limitations of teaching the course.

The first item of the questionnaire for secondary school teachers was designed to reveal the importance of presentations for a person's skill repertoire in today's life, and what the teachers' reasons for the answers were. Ten teachers were given the questionnaire to fill in, and ten answers out of the ten teachers were checked yes, (100 %) and mentioned almost the same reasons, such as: learning presentation skills is very important nowadays as it is the only way to gain the ability to have your ideas in the professional field heard and seen.

The second question indicated the importance of teaching the course in schools as preparation for the students' future development in his/her particular field. Ten answers out of the ten teachers were checked yes (100%), giving the reasons that learning presentation skills at an early age would a) make students be better prepared for their future challenges, b) make students integrate the skills into everyday real-life activities, unfolding the insights of an individual, c) have students overcome speech difficulties before choosing a profession d) get students to learn how to communicate ideas and deal with audiences, e) give students a chance to develop self confidence and self esteem, which would open pathways to international areas.

Question three concentrated on whether students should have presentation skills taught as a special course in the final grade at school. Six answers out of ten were checked yes (60%), with some additional comments of four teachers indicating the importance of having the course taught at an earlier age, that is, not only in the final grade at school.

Questions four and five were designed to identify the importance of integrating communication skills into teaching presentation skills, and if having only good communication skills would be enough for delivering a presentation. Ten answers supported acceptance of integrating communication skills into teaching presentation skills on the questionnaire list (100%), as all of the ten teachers responded to question four (Yes), that having good communication skills will be the basis for developing presentation skills. However, for question five, all ten teachers mentioned that students should learn skills other than oral communication parallel to developing presentation skills, such as; value-based orientations, knowledge of the topic and audience, body language, courtesy, etc., and ways to trigger cooperation.

Question seven was to find out whether making changes in the curriculum to include presentation skills as a special course together with other academic subjects would be appropriate in the final grade at secondary school. The answers on the questionnaire proved yes (100%), as having this course taught as a compulsory subject would confirm the importance of the course.

Question eight was intended to figure out whether teachers should have special training to be able to teach presentation skills in secondary schools. Ten answers out of ten were yes (100%) and according to the comments they made on the questionnaire, most teachers welcomed the idea of trying new things and being trained from time to time in order to learn about current teaching and learning methods and styles and to be able to catch up with modern ways of teaching, as well as modern technology.

The focus of question nine was to consider opinions regarding the question of whether preparing students for short talks in front of the class would later bring them to being able to deliver a presentation in front of a larger audience in an auditorium. Here, five teachers argued that although short talks helped students to gain more confidence and more fluency, and might be like a rehearsal for larger audiences in auditoriums, they would not be sufficient background for speaking in front of larger audiences in auditoriums. According to some teachers, speaking in front of larger auditoriums required multiple skills (50%).

Question twelve concentrated on peer scoring, which was intended to reveal whether students' grading each other could influence their motivation and objectivity in their presentations and to what extent. Peer scoring has never appeared to be implemented in secondary schools, and few of the secondary school teachers were aware of its positive or negative influence. Thus, there were only two answers that were satisfying to the requirement, that is, two teachers out of ten checked 'yes', (20%), (mentioning the positive influence of peer scoring, such as raising encouragement, competitiveness, rather than frustration or embarrassment, etc.); the others thought that it might create hostility among them and would

never be objective (see Table 1, p.20).

Table1.

	Yes	No	Percentage
Q 1	10	0	100%
Q2	10	0	100%
Q3	10	0	100%
Q4	10	0	100%
Q5	0	10	0%
Q7	10	0	100%
Q8	10	0	100%
Q9	5	5	50%
Q15	6	4	60%

N (number of teachers) = 10; Average percentage = 78.9%

4.1.1 Discussion on segment 1

The results of the findings of the teacher questionnaire show that a) overall attitude of the teachers towards teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia is highly positive (Q2-100%); b) having a special course in the final grade at school is highly positive (Q3-100%); c) integrating communication skills into teaching presentation skills, as well as other skills, such as listening and writing skills, as well as body language, gestures, etc. is highly positive (Q4-100%); d) having only communicative competence in learning presentation skills is negative (Q5- 0%); e) having schools make changes in the school curriculum to include teaching presentation skills is positive (Q7-100%); f) getting secondary school teachers to take a special course for teaching presentation skills is highly positive (Q8-100%); g) having small talks in front of the class can later bring students to deliver a presentation in front of larger audiences in auditoriums is average (Q9 50%); h) if students' scoring each other can enhance motivation and objectivity or it will only bring to frustration and complete failure is ranked 20 % positive and 80% negative (Q 12), and being gifted with a God-given talent to be a good speaker is ranked slightly more than average (Q15-60%).

Questions six, ten, eleven, thirteen and fourteen were categorized as seeking ways,

possibilities, suggestions, and attitudes to enhance learning presentation skills, and the results of the outcome of the questions are in Table 2 below.

Question six intended to inquire about other skills besides communication skills that be used to teach the course. The answers were very interesting, especially concerning mistakes and error correction. One of the teachers mentioned that making mistakes while speaking is allowable, since the teacher shouldn't correct mistakes when a student is speaking in order not to interrupt the student who might stop and not be able to continue his/her ideas. This is one of the assessment skills that teachers ought to use in teaching presentation skills. School teachers always correct mistakes students make in their speech, which often brings students to a state of frustration and discouragement. Other skills that were suggested were using group work and pair work activities and cooperation, which can enhance learning. Teachers ranked highly group work activities (100%), but were a little doubtful about pair work activities, mentioning that group work activities worked much better, so they ranked pair work activities just above average (60%): (see Table 2, p. 21).

Table 2: What Other Skills Can Enhance Motivation, Encouragement, and Objectivity in Students' Presentation?

Other Skills	Positive Influence	Negative Influence	Percentage of positive influence
Group work activities	10	0	100%
Pair work activities	6	4	60%
Peer scoring	2	7	20%
Overcoming stage fright	5	5	50%
Gaining confidence	10	0	100%
Gaining self-esteem	10	0	100%

Average percentage =73.3%

4.1.2 Summing up discussion on segment 1

From the outcome of the teacher questionnaire of what other skills influence motivation and objectivity in students' presentation, it became clear that: a) group activities ranked the highest in positive influence, (GA-100%); b) pair work activities ranked more than average (60%); peer scoring ranked low, (PS-20%); c) learning to overcome stage fright ranked average (OSF- 50%); d) gaining confidence ranked highest (GC-100%); and gaining self-esteem ranked as a highly positive influence (GSE-100%).

4.2 Segment 2: Findings of teacher interviews on teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia

This section reports on findings of the research study on teaching presentation skills and what teachers and students think about teaching this course in secondary schools in Armenia. The chapter provides details of the interviews and concludes with a summary of the findings.

The teacher interview (see the questions in Appendix 2 and the audio tape script in Appendix 4) was intended to consider the ways or things schools should do in order to contribute to teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia, as well as to consider the limitations and restrictions in teaching the course. The interview focused on using technical equipment in schools, such as videos, computers, CDs, etc. for having language classes in language labs, besides using posters and charts, which should be available anytime during school hours, as well as after school in order to enhance student autonomy and awareness of individual and group work activities. It also discusses an important issue regarding whether teachers think it would be better to include presentation skills in the school curriculum and have compulsory classes together with academic classes or to have it as an extracurricular activity.

Questions five and six concentrated on the benefits of teaching this course and the limitations that might prevent teachers from teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia. According to what the teachers said, the researcher found that teaching presentation skills in the final grade at school could be extremely beneficial, in spite of many limitations and restrictions that schools face nowadays in our country; first of all, students have to understand and learn the types of skills they need to develop for their communicative purposes; secondly; they need to understand and use English in everyday activities in class, as well as elsewhere, learn to interact with others in groups, pairs, as well as whole class discussions and activities, learn to make a quick inventory of their own interests, hobbies, skills, beliefs, etc. and choose a subject to speak to an audience.

The limitations related to first of all, poor school conditions, (Q10) as well as learning conditions. Schools are not heated enough; classrooms are cold and not comfortable; classes are not furnished well enough; there aren't good libraries in schools; there is lack of technical equipment, such as computers, Internet, videos, tape recorders or CD players; classes are boring and teacher-centered; teaching methods and assessment techniques are old and traditional; schoolchildren are not motivated either by teachers or by classes; class hours are not enough and teachers are not very well paid.

Question seven, the last question, focuses on how to teach grammar in order to bring students to authentic communication. Almost all the teachers unanimously mentioned that the only way to make students use communicative grammar would be to teach them grammar in

contextualized structures and not to base learning on memorization of rules or on translation. The findings showed the following results in Table 3 and Table 4, p. 23.

Table 3: Benefits of teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia

	Positive attitude	Negative attitude	Neutral attitude
Important in future career	8	0	2
Any profession needs this skills	10	0	0
Connects students with other people in the field	10	0	0
Improves communication skills	10	0	0
Develops other skills, too	10	0	0

N (number of teachers) =10

Table4: Limitations of Teaching Presentation Skills in Secondary Schools in Armenia

	Strongly agree	Mildly agree	Undecided	Mildly disagree	Strongly disagree
Poor school conditions	10	0	0	0	0
Lack of technology	10	0	0	0	0
No specialists	0	8	1	1	0
No textbooks	0	3	0	2	5
Limited class hours	10	0	0	0	0
Low salary	10	0	0	0	0

N (number of teachers) = 10

The findings of the teacher interview revealed that in spite of the limitations that might prevent teachers from teaching presentation skills in secondary schools, the teachers' attitude to teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in Armenia could be considered positive. Concerning whether to include teaching the course in the school curriculum or having it as an extracurricular activity, 8 teachers out of 10 considered that it should be a compulsory course included in the school curriculum to be taught within one term in the final grade at school. However, 2 teachers out of 10 argued that the course should be taught as an extracurricular activity, since in the final grade at school, most students are generally focused on their major profession, and that English may not be a major subject to be concentrated on in that period of time (see figure 1, p. 24).

Figure 1:
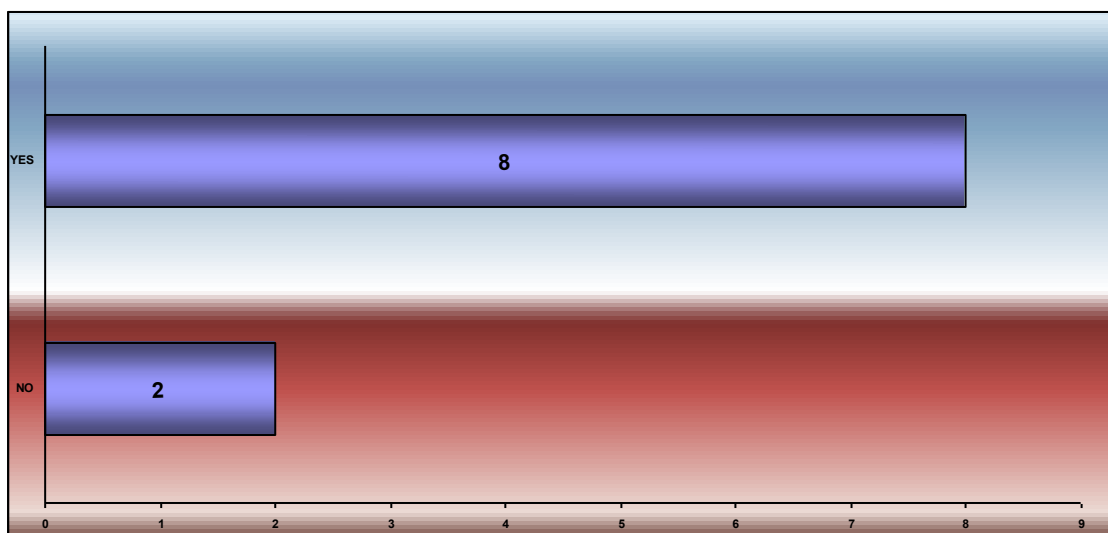
4.3 Segment 3: Findings of student interviews on teaching presentation skills in school

As mentioned in chapter 4, there was a student interview carried out as well (see the questions in Appendix 3 and the audio script in Appendix 5), which was aimed at finding out students' perception about a presentation and why people deliver it, generally; what students thought about schools providing special classes teaching presentation skills; what is needed in order to communicate ideas easily to develop presentation skills; what students would prefer their English classes to be like and what changes they would like to make concerning their English language classes; whether more communicative classes would foster their learning of the language; if oral speech was enough for delivering a good presentation; whether learning writing skills could contribute to learning how to make oral presentation; what they thought of listening exercises to be added in the course, too, and what their expectations of such a course would be.

The main goal of interviewing students was also to compare teacher interview answers with student interview answers and to see to what extent their responses were different or similar concerning the possibility of teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia, and what students thought the most challenging or rewarding things would be while taking the course.

Question 1 was a general question focused on students' attitude and perception of a presentation, why people deliver a presentation, why it is important in everybody's career in our modern life.

Question 2 was intended to find out whether schools should provide special classes teaching presentation skills. Eight more active students' responses out of twenty were based on the increased interest in giving their own opinion about modern, highly developed technology and equipment, which they thought ought to be provided and used in schools and that learning presentation skills, would be the best way to interact not only with their peers, but also with modern technology. Accordingly, the eight students' responses could be ranked the highest degree of agreement about teaching the course in school (Q2 – (8 +12) = 100%.

Question 3 was ranked 20 out of 20 (Q3-8+12) = 100%, as the students were sure that communication skills should be learned before learning presentation skills, that is, in lower grades, in order to have some background to be able to concentrate on improving their speech, enlarging their vocabulary, etc., rather than learning it in the process of learning presentation skills. Developing a lot of different new skills at the same time would be confusing.

Question 4 and Question 5 provoked sincere responses about what kind of English language classes they would prefer to have in school; the same as they are having now or different? What would they like to change? The students' responses were slightly different; most of them wanted to change their boring English classes into more active ones, with a lot of active, lively communication, discussion, opportunities to express personal opinions, and a lot of English speech. So, the question could be ranked 18 out of 20 = 90%.

Question 6 was aimed to demonstrate to what extent more communicative classes would influence students' learning of the language. According to the students' responses, it was revealed that language learning was largely influenced by communicative language learning, the concept of which proved to be different from that of the teachers. The students' concept of communicative approach influences language learning; teachers' attitude to the communicative approach only, without other skills, differs. Thus, students' attitude to communicative competence was ranked 20 out of 20 = 100%; the teachers' approach was ranked 5 out of 10 = 50%.

Question 7 expanded the idea of the previous question and was focused on figuring out

whether oral speech would be enough for delivering a good presentation.

Question 8 was intended to consider whether writing skills could contribute to learning oral presentation skills. Students' answers could be ranked as 19 out of 20, and 9 out of 10, which was equal to teachers' responses. So, both responses might be ranked 95% (Q8=95%).

Question 9 was also intended to consider whether listening exercises should be integrated into the course, and again, teacher responses and student responses ranked the same, as they both had the answers of 100% (Q9=100%).

Question 10 was the main idea of the thesis research, which would gather data about teacher and student expectations of teaching presentation skills in secondary schools in the final grade at school. Teachers' responses to this question didn't sound as enthusiastic as the students', because teachers considered the limitations and restrictions about teaching this course. They thought that problems would arise with the Ministry of Education and School Administration. On the other hand, students found the problem mostly in teaching, which they thought could be improved by having more qualified teachers.

4.4 Summary of findings of segments 2 and 3

According to teacher-student interviews, it can be concluded that teachers' and students' expectations of teaching presentation skills in secondary schools can be considered as highly positive in spite of the fact that a lot of difficulties might occur connected with changes in the school curriculum, improvement of teaching methods, usage of technology, school administration and the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, step by step changes in all these spheres could by all means bring positive results, as both teachers and students think that the Ministry of Education has already undertaken some programs and projects related to improvements in the educational system in Armenia.

4.5 Assessing Presentations

Assessment in Armenian schools is expressed by the grading system of 2-5 points: 2 points is unsatisfactory; 3 points is satisfactory; 4 points is good, and 5 points is excellent.

Teachers always grade their students with these marks, which may sometimes seem too limited to assess the full potential of students' abilities, and very often grading may be considered as "not objective" assessment. The reason for labeling this kind of assessment "not objective" is that these five points are not enough to show the extent of the students' learning abilities. Besides, students are generally assessed for written work, such as dictations, reproductions (very rarely), compositions (not very often), or simply tests based on grammar.

Students have never been assessed for their oral presentations, mostly for speaking skills, and they have never been given any feedback on their presentation, i.e., students are never explained why they are getting this grade, what are their weakest points, etc.

In the ideal language class, a teacher will often ask students to express their views on the topic under discussion, and, in order to respond to such requests, students need to speak English well enough to be able to defend personally held opinions or describe people, objects, or events. Students should be able to hold casual conversations with other students in class and speak about music, travel, world events, their future career, etc. They need to be able to control accuracy of their pronunciation, grammar and rate of speech to make their spoken responses intelligible to the listeners.

For the course on Teaching Presentation Skills in Secondary Schools, there have been neither tests nor assessment set, as this is the first time this kind of classroom research has been carried out in an Armenian school, and the school students are not used to being assessed for their oral communication skills except for texts memorizations or retelling topics, which is generally done by learning them by heart.

However, the course requires some rubrics to grade students' oral presentations as well. Assessing students' oral presentation skills by descriptive criteria, would be a good chance for teachers to realize the importance of using alternative assessment, which would surely bring authenticity in testing, which would enhance learner improvement more than just giving grades. Besides, students would see the gradual change and improvement in their speech themselves without any pressure or 'punishment', because grades sometimes may appear to be a tool for punishment, especially in schools, so when the students learned about this study, they became concerned about being graded. They wondered whether the grades would influence their total grades in the certificate after finishing school, and were happy to know that the course didn't require any grading and felt happy and relieved as they thought there would not be any "punishment" for those who might fail or do poorly in their oral speech.
Every grade in their final year at school is generally very important, because students are going to apply for universities or colleges, and they need to have good grades from school.

4.5.1 How can students' oral presentation skills be assessed?

Students should be assessed by descriptive speaking rubrics using criteria from 3-5, and there would not be a failing grade. Complete failure should be marked '**needs improvement'**, and the following rubrics could be used:
General description of the speech:

1. The presentation is highly intelligible with minor lapses and sustains coherent

discourse (**score-5).**

2. The presentation is generally intelligible and coherent, but has some noticeable lapses in the expression of ideas **(score-4).**

3. Some relevant information of the topic is missing in the presentation or contains inaccuracies which obscure the meaning **(score-3).**

4. The speech is very limited in content or coherence, and is largely unintelligible **(needs improvement).**

Delivery:

1. The speech is generally clear, fluid, and sustained. It may include minor lapses or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation. Overall intelligibility remains high **(score-5).**

1. Speech is generally clear, but it exhibits minor difficulties with pronunciation and intonation. Overall intelligibility remains good **(score-4).**

3. Speech is clear at times,though it exhibits problems with pronunciation and intonation. Problems with intelligibility may obscure meaning in places **(score-3).**

4. Consistent problems with pronunciation and intonation cause frequent hesitations and pauses, and the delivery is fragmented and choppy **(needs improvement).**

Language use:

1. The presentation demonstrates good control of basic structures that allow for coherent, efficient expression of relevant ideas and contains generally effective word choice.Though some minor errors may be noticeable, they do not obscure meaning **(score-5).**

2. The speech demonstrates fairly effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly coherent expression of relevant ideas **(score-4).**

3. The presentation is limited in the range and control of vocabulary with inaccurate grammar and connections (**score3**).

4. Range and control of grammar and vocabulary severely limit expression of ideas and connections among ideas. The speech contains isolated words or short utterances **(needs improvement).**

Topic development:

1. The speech presents a clear progression of ideas. It includes appropriate detail, though it may have minor errors (**score-5).**

2. The presentation is sustained and conveys relevant information about the topic. However, it exhibits some incompleteness, inaccuracy in the progression of ideas **(score-4).**

3. The speech conveys some relevant information about the topic, but it is clearly incomplete or inaccurate, and omits key ideas, or demonstrates limited development of important information **(score-3).**

4. The speech fails to provide much relevant content. Ideas that are expressed are often inaccurate or limited with repetitions **(needs improvement).**

4.5.2   Discussion on assessing presentations

It has already been mentioned that descriptive rubrics have never been used in Armenian schools, and that assessment is conducted by the grading system. According to what the teachers said in their interviews, this kind of assessment would be the most relevant method for assessing the presentations. However, there should be some training for teachers including the assessment system for teaching presentation skills, without which it would not be possible for them to use it. The teachers agreed that in order to assess students' oral performance objectively, considering all the descriptive criteria in the speaking rubric, teachers would need professional training.

According to students' interviews**,** descriptive assessment would give them a better chance to develop and improve students' oral presentations gradually and realize the change themselves.

Chapter 5: Conclusion

The goal of the present study was to examine students' perceptions of presentation skills generally, and, particularly, of teaching presentation skills in the final grade in secondary schools in Armenia. It also intended to identify and analyze the advantages and benefits, as well as the limitations of teaching this course.

The participants of the study were the researcher and twenty (16-17) year-old high school students with a low intermediate level of English language proficiency who were studying in the tenth grade at school.

5.1 Summary of findings

The research findings can be summarized according to the research questions posed in chapter 2 of this paper. The overall results of the study based on the teacher questionnaire and teacher and student interviews showed that teachers accepted the idea of the importance of having a course on teaching presentation skills in high school and identified the course as intended for use in pre-academic classes designed to be covered in one term in the final grade at school.

The interview also included the advantages and benefits of teaching this course, as well as the limitations that might prevent teachers from teaching the course.

According to the findings in this study, students also showed a great interest in having presentation skills taught in high school and showed a logical understanding of the importance of teaching the course in pre-academic classes. They expressed deep willingness and openness to changes in the school curriculum, regarding teaching and assessment of traditional methods and of the whole system; they demonstrated candid attitudes to improvement and learning new things in new ways, integrating communicative and other skills into presentation skills, and showed high expectations of this course.

According to the teacher questionnaire, teachers showed the highest percentage (100 %) in agreement with having this course as an academic subject to be taught in schools. However, in their interview responses, two of the teachers became doubtful about being able to teach presentation skills in their schools because of many restrictions from the side of the school administration and the Ministry of Education. Nevertheless, they believed that the course would open new ways for both teachers and students to catch up with modern life, modern technology, modern teaching methods, styles and strategies in order to be able to step forward and succeed in life. Based on the findings of this research, it can be suggested that this course would serve as a good background for new findings, new observations and analyses, and other aspects of teaching authentic language in authentic classrooms creating an authentic environment for teaching the

English language and speaking about creations, inventions, explorations and achievements. This would be real progress in the educational system of our young country.

5.2 Pedagogical implications

From the research findings, some implications can be drawn:

5.2.1 The significance of the study

a) **for students:**

The study can play a significant role in the development of teaching communicative language use in schools today, which would enhance students' oral communication skills, and bring them to where they can develop presentation skills. By taking this course, students would not only learn how to communicate better, but they would also learn how to interact with each other in academic settings, as well as in social settings. They would learn other skills rather than only communicating and interacting with each other, such as: how to become tolerant and open minded to each other and each other's ideas, and accept critical thinking as the main strategy to listen to others, comment on other's ideas and thoughts, and speak about theirs without being hurt or hurting others. Students would also learn how to gain confidence in speaking about their own ideas in front of others without fear. They would learn how to appreciate peer evaluation and peer comments rather than consider only the teacher' opinions.

All these would bring students to modern society to meet new challenges without much pressure or stress.

b) **for teachers:**

This study would bring a lot of new challenges for teachers as well, such as; learning how to use high tech equipment in their teaching (VCRs, CDs, computer, Internet, Power Point, etc.), how to integrate new, different skills in communicating skills, how to develop these skills into presentations, and how to be more prepared for the new demands of school teaching, students' progress and development. Teachers would have a chance to willingly participate in trainings sessions, and implementing their knowledge in their classrooms, as some teachers mentioned in the interview that one of the most important shortcomings of teaching the course would be the ignorance of the teachers, and that some teachers do not even know what their role as a teacher in the classroom is.

5.3 Limitations of the research study

- ▪ The first limitation of the study is that the study involved a limited number of students (only 20), accordingly, the conclusions of the study findings cannot be generalized to all

secondary school students in Armenia.

- The second limitation relates to the limited number of teachers (10), who filled in the questionnaire and gave the interview. Therefore, the findings cannot be generalized to all English teachers in Armenia.
- The allotted time period for carrying out this research study was limited (5 weeks) because of the poor school conditions, as well as poor learning conditions.

The final presentation of the students' presentations did not take place at the end of the study, and by the researcher. It took place at the end of March, and by the two teachers, who were observing the study, because of the poor conditions at school. (the school was not heated enough, and the official classes were delayed. Besides, the classes were assessed only within the period of the study by the descriptive assessment system. The final presentations were assessed by the two teachers, and the results were reported by these two teachers. Two of the students got the highest grades "fives", the other two got "fours", and the rest of the students were just listening and evaluating their peers.

5.4 Future research

There are several areas to be concentrated on in the future:

- First, more secondary school students and teachers should be involved in teaching/learning presentation skills in secondary schools, and in different classes at the same time with different teachers (at least two teachers).
- Second, English schools should also be involved in the study in order to compare the expectations of the teachers and the students in regular schools and in English schools.
- Third, the time period should be expanded in order to assess the presentations together with the teachers.

The exploration of student-teacher expectations, their personal beliefs and views are ongoing areas of inquiry for the present language classrooms. Although this research study had a lot of limitations, it gave me deeper understanding of what can be some better ways to bring students to authentic communication so that they can speak in public with confidence, manage their time better, and learn to evaluate things objectively. This study may serve as a starting point for further research on oral presentation skills development, which will better prepare students for higher academic challenges.

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Survey on Teaching Presentation Skills in Armenia

Questionnaire for Secondary School Teachers

Ten secondary school teachers teaching the English language in Yerevan agreed to give an interview on Teaching Presentation Skills in Secondary Schools in Armenia.

1. Do you agree that presentations are very important for a person's professional repertoire today? What are your reasons? **Yes, No**

2. Do you think schools should be teaching students to develop presentation skills from school years? Why? **Yes, No**

3. Do you agree that students need to learn this skill by taking some special course during the last year at school? **Yes, No**

4. Do you agree that the professional who wants his ideas to be heard and wants to have as great an influence as possible will recognize that professional skills go hand in hand with communication skills? **Yes, No**

5. Is having good communication skills enough for delivering a presentation? **Yes, No**

6. What other skills do you think are important for teaching presentation skills?

7. Should secondary schools in Armenia make changes in the curriculum and go beyond the textbooks to develop communication and presentation skills in the 10th grade? **Yes, No**

8. Do you think secondary school teachers should take special training to teach students presentation skills in the tenth grade? **Yes, No**

9. Do you agree that preparing students for small talks in front of the class can later bring them to being able to deliver a presentation in front of a larger audience in an auditorium? **Yes, No**

10. What are some good methods you would suggest be used in developing presentation skills in schools?

11. How will the methods you suggest affect developing good presentation skills?

12. Can students' scoring each other enhance motivation and objectivity or will it only bring to frustration and complete failure?

13. What can make a speaker fail?

14. Do you think some students should avoid making presentations because of stage fright? or do you think the teacher has to teach students to control nervousness as well? If yes, how?   **Yes, No**

15. Do you believe that one has to have a God-given talent to be a good speaker?

16. What are the main concerns with dealing with teaching presentation skills in high schools in Armenia?

Appendix 2
Interview questions put to teachers

Question 1: What are some forms of material that are to be developed while building the content of a presentation?

Question 2: What kind of visual aids can be used in school? Is it a good idea to use technical equipment besides posters and charts?

Question 3: What should schools do to contribute to teaching this course?

Question 4: Do you think it would be better to include presentation skills in the school curriculum and have compulsory classes together with academic classes or do you think it would be an extra curricular activity?

Question 5: What do you think are the benefits of teaching this course in the tenth grade at school?

Question 6: What are some limitations that may prevent teachers from teaching this course in schools in Armenia?

Question 7: How do you think grammar ought to be taught to bring students to authentic communication?

Appendix 3

Interview questions put to students

Question 1: What is a presentation? Why do people deliver a presentation?

Question 2: Should schools provide special classes teaching presentation skills?

Question 3: Do you need to learn how to communicate your ideas in order to deliver a good presentation?

Question 4: What would you prefer your English classes to be like?

Question 5: If you were principal of your school, what are some changes you would like to make concerning your English language classes?

Question 6: If your classes were more communicative rather than grammar translation, what do you think would change in your learning of the language?

Question 7: Is oral speech enough for delivering a good presentation?

Question 8: Can learning writing skills contribute to learning oral presentation skills?

Question 9: Should listening exercises be added to this course, too?

Question 10: What would be your expectations from this course?

Ten secondary school teachers working in different schools in Yerevan agreed to give an interview on teaching presentation skills in the final grade at school. Here is the tape transcript of their interviews with the researcher.

Question 1: R: What are some forms of material that are to be developed while building the content of a presentation?

T1: Books, articles, newspapers, TV, Internet, other sources of information to be used, picture, posters charts…

T2: I think it's very necessary to have posters and charts while developing the content of the presentation, besides, it's very necessary to have some technical equipment at school. It also helps greatly.

R: Do you think it's a good idea to have some warm up activity in order to get students to be prepared for the presentation with some materials, appropriate materials?

T1: Doing presentation needs a lot of pre… am…

R: Pre-activity…

T1: Yes, pre-activities, because you read, you collect information from different sources, you build up your speech, certainly it requires preparation beforehand.

T3: Well, I will add that we need some presentations to be given to students, to children to listen to them, some table games which also will help to develop some skills, then films also, listening equipment. All these will also help to build the content of the presentation.

T4: Visual aids, such as charts or the power point which can be beneficial. Maybe some information or a picture…Teachers should use some explanation about the presentation content, also the Internet.

T5: I think, it will be a good idea to give students a situation to discuss in order to build the content of the presentation…maybe a story or something.

T6: And I think, you can show a picture to your students and ask them to build the content of the presentation.

T7: It will be a good idea to write some questions on the board to help students think of the content of their presentation, also a book or…

T8: The discussion of a film will give the students an idea of building the content of their presentation, or some character from a book or a film.

T9: Reading a story, or listening to a story will help, too…

T10: A computer game can be a good way to build the content of a presentation.

Question 2: R: What kind of visual aids can be used in school? Is it a good idea to use technical equipment besides posters and charts?

T1: It…it might be a good idea, but I don't think our schools have this equipment, and most of the students are not … quick with equipment… it can't be used for it.

T6: Yes, but you just consider the fact that all students, nearly all students go to Internet clubs and use computers…, so computers, using power point, will be a good idea, because students will be very much interested, as they see computer to be their future…

T1: Yes, but my school is one of the best schools in Yerevan, and they still don't have computers.

T3: I think it is necessary to use all these technical equipments. They are very important today, computers, films, some listening equipments must be used at schools for this aim.

T2: I think, many of the students have computers at home, or at least they go to the Internet clubs to play computer games, or to chat, so they might be interested in using power point in their presentations, or computers, generally. Many of our students go to the Internet club to write letters to American students, their pen-friends.

Ts: I agree that if we bring a computer to the classroom and have a lesson via computer, I mean, have a presentation with a computer it will be very appealing for our students, since it is and more interesting than charts and posters or even the blackboard.

T4: I think they all are very important. Posters and charts also are very important, but it is a good idea to make students be aware of technical equipments and use them in their presentations. It will be much more attractive to use technical equipments, besides, the students know that technology is everywhere and it can be appealing especially for kids.

R: Do you think they can be forced to buy computers, or what do you think should be done to make schools do this. There are some schools that have computers, computer labs…

T1: Yes, but they don't allow their students even go into the room and use the computers.

T8: I think, it depends on the teacher. If the teacher insists on going there and having a class there, the headmaster can't do anything, and you will be glad to do so, but the teachers need to be very attentive with the equipment in order not to be destroyed or damaged. Do you agree?

T2: I think it's a great experience to have computer classroom to have our classes there, because computer helps greatly for listening, understanding, for discussions for bring kids to presentations.

T1: Yes, but the teachers, most of the teachers know less about computers or using computers than their students, so they need to learn in order to do presentations…I think, it is not so much important to do by this, I don't know, modern technology. You can use a chart or even the blackboard, pieces of paper, you can do it in a lot of ways.

R: Yes, you are absolutely right, but how should we make students get involved in it?

T1: Outlines, they can use outlines…

T7: But students are more interested in using modern technology rather than writings or posters or whatever, also, doing something via computer might take much less time.

T6: I fully agree that using computers in schools besides charts and posters or whatever will be very important as it will look progressive and schoolchildren will immediately start doing new things in new ways, which will influence positively on their learning.

T1: Everything can be useful; one just should be willing to.

Question 3: R: What should schools do to contribute to teaching this course?

T1: So, first of all, everybody should understand the importance of teaching this course, such as keys and work towards realizing something, taking some steps, having this course in their schools, preparing the teachers, preparing the finance and equipment, helping the teacher who is willing to do something.

T2: Students should have special classes in language laboratories, labs. But I think it is the problem of the Ministry of Education to add more hours for our English language teaching and provide us with new technical needs, which will help us greatly, yes?

T3: To provide us with more hours, to have better conditions for this course. We don't have central heating. This is a great difficulty in teaching, because in November and December we have 30-minute classes, and during winter students don't come to school for a long period, so we have limited lessons. Besides, I would like to have more technical equipments in school, mainly listening equipments, because now we don't have any. We have a tape recorder, but it is not enough. We need CDs, CD players, also DVD players, VCDs to put into the computers and listen to them.

Individual activity. Students can go to the language lab and work individually.

T9: We have problems with children from poor families, and they rarely attend school. Schools also should help this kind of pupils who are out of control or attention. We also have difficult pupils, pupils with complexes who make a problem. Maybe teaching new things with new technology can bring them back to school and it will be a good way to keep them busy rather than roam the streets.

T4: I think, teachers should include much presentation in their lessons, as I have already mentioned in the questionnaire, presentations should be put in as a school subject. When they pass a topic, some of the students may work on the topic and discover new things about it and will be eager to find additional information to present. I see this contribution in school requirements, within the required courses, not only the hours, but also with the cooperation of teachers in different subjects.

R: Do you think schools individually can help teachers and do something for teaching this course or do you think they need to be governed to have some rule dictated to them?

T1: Schools need to consult everything with the Ministry of Education, because they do not let you do everything you want.

R: OK, do you think, if schools get together and force the Ministry of Education to allow them to have this course in the curriculum will help more than have the course as an extracurricular activity in their schools?

T1: I think that the changes that are taking place in the education law, there have been some things done related to using interactive ways of teaching to develop communication. I think that every month, if I am not mistaken, all the headmasters have meetings with the minister of education and discuss problems with their schools and everything, and if they raise, I think it can be an issue of negotiable thing.

R: OK, … raised at this meeting…?

T1: Aha.

R: Oh, you gave me a good idea; we may have such a meeting to raise this question. And we can get some permission to start teaching this course. I think, teachers should be allowed to take some training to teach this course.

T2: I think it shouldn't be compulsory and would be better to teach this course as an extra curricular activity.

T3: I agree, because students need to realize what is important for them little by little, because they will have to learn a lot of things altogether, and it might bring them to some disappointment.

T6: As for me, teachers should take some training first, and then think about giving lessons. What about the curriculum, I think, both are OK.

T8. But if it were an extra curricular activity, students would never pay any attention to it. I am sure they wouldn't even get interested at all.

T1: Yes, teachers themselves should be familiar with this course, using a power point in the classroom, and something should be done before you deliver the presentation, as everything should be based on modern technology

R: So, they need training?

T1: Sure. They need to be willing to change their teaching styles, methods, a lot of things.

R: I remember, when I started teaching in school, things were different and a lot of things have changed since then, but when I went to school and talked to teachers, I got frustrated, because, unfortunately, most teachers have remained the same despite these changes. Before I came to MA TEFL, I had done a lot, I mean, I was willing to do something new, I was open to changes, but now, I can see that very few teachers are willing to change, and many of them do the same. So, what do think are the reasons for this? Do you think the salary, or are there any other reasons?

T1: The salary? It is one of the reasons, but the limitations, for me, I think the most important thing is ignorance, not awareness about what an educator should be like. Most of our teachers are not good educators because they don't know what is being an educator. And they are unaware of many things, such as ways of thinking…

R: Yes, there are some good teachers, I mean, they used to be very good ones, but time has changed, and many of them don't even want to attend any workshop or seminar in order to learn about new methods of teaching, new skills and strategies. What can be done in school in order to better the English language teaching and learning?

T7: I think some workshops or maybe seminars should be held in schools and the attendance should be compulsory for all the teachers at a particular school time after time.

T3: I agree, because if you know that something is compulsory and you have to do something real, and your future teaching is based on the work you have done, you will get engaged in it.

Question 4: R: Do you think it would be better to include presentation skills in the school curriculum and have compulsory classes together with academic classes or do you think it would be an extra curricular activity?

T1: I think it should be incorporated in the curriculum. It should be part of everyday work. Some teachers do not want to do it because it is difficult. Preparing students for a presentation needs a lot of time, efforts; they should stay after school, work with them, do after-school activities. It requires a lot, because it's real work. The teachers are not lazy, but they are not paid for that, and they won't do anything for free as they have problems to solve and they need money. I think with every topic you have in the curriculum, you can have a presentation even, the texts, for example, a family, a sport, etc.

T4: I think that it can be included in the school curriculum, but, having it as an extra curricular activity is not a bad idea. The disadvantage of having presentations as an extracurricular activity is that not all students will be willing to take part in it, and it will become not very important.

R: So, you think presentations should be integrated in the curriculum, right?

T1: Yes, you can use the class time doing things out of the book, like selecting some topics that can be presented. I mean, there can be topics from the book, but students like to go and find information related to the topic elsewhere.

R: How about the class hours? Do you think there should be more hours of English, say, four times a week?

T1: In my school, it is every day, and I think, in regular schools, the English language hours should be at least four times a week; two hours communicative language learning, and the other two, for grammar, exercises and tests.

Question 5: R: What do you think are the benefits of teaching this course in the tenth grade at school? I mean, the final grade, when they are going to finish school.

T1: It's very important, because with the changes in the world generally and in the education system, our students need to know doing presentations and, I know that most of the universities and colleges use this, so if they have these skills before entering the university, they are ready to go forward and not to just begin from the beginning learning. They will save time, the teachers and students.

T4: I agree that students should take this course in their final grade at school, because they have already decided on their career and will later, in their major use this knowledge, I mean in any profession they will need this skill.

R: So, if students are well prepared to take their entrance examinations, it comes from schools, from their teachers, maybe from their private classes. I don' mind their private classes; let them have them, but this is a kind of skill they have to develop while choosing a profession, because in any profession, they will need to present something, they need to get used to presenting something for their future career.

T1: They need to be in constant relation and connection with other people in the field, and they need to take part in conferences, seminars and so on, so let them do these presentations.

Question 6: R: What are some limitations that may prevent teachers from teaching this course in schools in Armenia?

T1: First of all, not knowing the skill, because most of our teachers do not know this skill, and they should learn in order to show the student what is a presentation and the best ways to do this

and familiarize the students with it. Also, class hours could be limitations, lack of equipment, time because you may need to stay some extra hours, and so on.

T4: Surely, there are some limitations, first of all, lack of hours, untrained teachers not enough materials, such as textbooks. The idea is that this is new to our society, and we need specialists, more hours, and materials. Also, permission of the Ministry of Education is a problem.

T10: I think there can be a lot of problems preventing teachers from teaching this course, such as a) Permission of the Ministry of Education, b) school hours in the curriculum, it will not be easy to change the schedule for the classes especially in the final grade, c) regular schools do not have enough conditions for innovations, d)there are not enough teachers, for example in our school, we have four teachers who teach many classes e) it will be better to teach this course in English schools, because children are more ready for this course. It can be a good project to be carefully analyzed and implemented after special teachers have been hired to teach presentation skills.

T8: I agree with you, because a lot of things should be done in order to get ready for teaching this course, though I think it is not a bad idea.

T9: The limitations may be connected with a lot of new things all at once, what if the students do not like the course and stop attending the class like many other classes that they do not attend**?** In this case, some students may have this course like their English classes, and some do not.

T2: We have already spoken about the limitations, lack of technical equipments, class size, classes should be at least fifteen students, school conditions, creating English speaking environment…

Question 7: R: How do you think grammar ought to be taught to bring students to authentic communication?

T1: I am for implicit teaching of grammar, through texts, through structures, and not giving the rules, but learning the grammar in the context and understand what meaning does this structure convey, the message that is given in the grammatical structure not only the form, but also the meaning it has, because without meaning language is nothing. Different structures can be used in one sentence, depending on what meaning we want to express.

T4: It will be a good idea to teach grammar in situations, structures and in context. Of course, it can bring students to authentic communication. You can ask students to communicate about an authentic topic and see what grammar they use, and , based on their mistakes, you can teach grammar.

R: Do you think mistakes should be corrected immediately, while speaking?

T4: No, I think the teacher should make notes of the mistakes the students make in their speech and later correct or discuss them with the students. It is the teacher's responsibility.

T2: I think within seven years of studying English in secondary schools, schoolchildren should have some basis for communication, and there is no need to go deep into grammar. The teacher can give them some grammar forms to use in their oral participations.

Appendix 5
Transcript of Audio taped Student Interview
Ten secondary school students agreed to give an interview

Question 1: R: What is a presentation? Why do people deliver a presentation?

S1: Some new thing to be presented to all, all the world, some professional thing, something in a particular profession.

S2: I agree that a presentation means to show or introduce some product or idea to people in the field, in order to recognize the product, to acknowledge not only the product but also, its functions and production potentials in order to use it or not.

S3: I think that presentation plays a very important role in our life. If you invent or create something, people should learn about it and should know how to use it, what its potentials are…

S4: And in this way science develops faster and stimulates progress in life.

S5: People deliver presentations in order to make their products visible and recognized by other professionals in the particular field.

S6: Yes, in business, and in other fields, too, to be recognized.

S7: I agree that a presentation is important to develop business and also science.

S8: It is also important in art, fashion, and everywhere, generally. People demonstrate their creations to the world in order to be famous and make their products be famous, too.

Question2: R: Should schools provide special classes teaching presentation skills?

S1: I think special classes should be organized in order to make pupils develop these skills to use them later in their life.

S2: I agree that pupils should know a lot about presentation to be busy with important and useful things and know how to use them for others.

S3: Companies always try to create things that are better to compete with others, that is, they need to be persuasive enough to make people in the field accept their innovations. For this, they need to know how to present the items or their ideas.

S4: I also think that learning these things should be started from schools, and schools should play an important role in developing presentation skills. Because, when a pupil finishes school, he/she enters a new life, a new sphere of life and majors in his profession, and in any profession, he/she needs to learn new things and create his/her own. In order to show his creations or inventions, he/she has to present them to other professionals and prove to be better or even the best.

S5: I agree, because a person should know how to introduce something to others. It is a special skill you should learn in school.

Question 3: R: Do you need to learn how to communicate your ideas in order to deliver a good presentation?

S6: Yes, I think we all are sure that a person needs to know how to communicate his/her ideas in order to make people understand what he/she wants to say. When a designer makes a piece of clothing, he/she should find a nice model to wear it and show others. The model should know how to walk in it, and how to present it in order to look nice and useful. When you are to speak about your product, you need to speak nicely and persuasively in order to make your product look nice and useful.

S7: And even a painter or a sculptor who wants to present his/her paintings, or sculptures he/she organizes an exhibition to show others, the world, maybe, to show that they are worth seeing, and that they are different from the pieces of art of the past century. Or a ballet dancer who wants to be hired, he/she tries his/her best to prove that he/she is a better dancer than others, and he/she performs in front of others.

R: Interesting ideas about non-verbal communications, and what about verbal communications?

S8: Communication skills should be learned in school. I think pupils should be prepared for this skill since early years at school. It will be much more difficult if you concentrate on learning how to communicate your ideas at an adult age, when you have to concentrate on your major.

S4: You may have interesting ideas or interesting things to introduce to others, and if you don't know how to do that, it will fail to be accepted. I think you need to learn a lot of things before you present something to other professionals.

S2: Especially, if you want to export your product, you need to know English well enough to speak about it and people should understand what you are saying.

R: Question 4: What would you prefer your English classes to be like?

S1: I think we need to learn communicative language skills, and for this purpose, I would like our English classes to be different. I don' know how, but they need to be changed, because what we learn is to memorize something or do exercises, but we do not use the language.

S2: I agree, because we don't speak English during our English lessons. We always speak Armenian, and we can't introduce anything in the English language either.

S3: Something should be done to change the style of our teaching and learning the language. I would like to speak English more in our classes of English. After all, they are English classes and not Armenian.

S4: I would like our teachers to speak more English in class. I think if we start to understand what our teacher is saying, later, we can understand more complicated things.

S5: When we don't understand some word or a sentence, we immediately translate it into Armenian. Maybe we could do it in another way, I don't know.

R: So, you want your classes to be more communicative, that is to discuss things in English, to speak more and use the English language more in class, to enlarge your vocabulary?

Ss: Yes, (in chorus).

R: OK.

Question 5: If you were principal of your school, what are some changes you would like to make concerning your language classes?

S7: First of all, I would like to change our English textbook. It is too boring and we don' like it. Then, I would have more hours of English in my schools.

S8: I agree, and I would add that English is an international language and we should learn it in order to speak the language not only in class, but also somewhere else, outside our country. But we can't speak, because we only have our English classes three times a week, and we write exercises and do some translation work. We do not even read sometimes.

S4: If I were principal of our school, I would have foreign pupils visit our school from time to time or send our best students to other countries to practice the language. I know, it sounds like a dream, but who knows, maybe some people would listen to our ideas.

S1: I would add some subjects in the English language, such as Literature, History, Geography, Writing Class, etc. in regular schools as well order to develop the language.

S3: I would invite specialists from different countries to teach us English. Those would be people who don't understand our language, and we could learn communicative language.

Question 6: R: If your classes were more communicative rather than grammar translation, what do you think would change in your learning of the language?

S1: We would be able to make presentations.

S2: I think we could have more opportunity to feel comfortable when we are asked to speak to foreigners.

S3: W e might understand what our teachers are saying to each other when they don't want us to understand (joking).

S4: It would be much better, because we could avoid doing things which we think are useless, such as translation of huge texts, a number of exercises that we copy from each other and get good grades, etc.

S5: We would have oral discussions and could express our own opinions

.**S6:** I agree with what has been said.

S7: In the 21 century the English language plays an important role in our life. I would be able to communicate well and not have to study again anywhere else later to work for international companies.

S8: If we could learn communicative language, we would have the chance to study in foreign countries. With our English, we can't go anywhere.

Question 7: R: Is oral speech enough for delivering a good presentation?

S4: I think besides oral speech, we need to have listening exercises, because we never listen to English speech and, naturally, we will not be able to understand English speaking people. If we have to make a good presentation, and have our ideas introduced, we need to understand what people are asking about some questions or problems, or just things they might not understand.

S7: I agree that listening should also be learnt together with oral skills, and also writing, because we have to learn how to write about things we want to present and read it.

Question 8: R: Can learning writing skills contribute to learning oral presentation skills?

S8: I don't think writing is necessary that much, but it would be better to learn all of the skills.

S1: I think the opposite way. Learning to write well is as necessary as oral speech and it will by all means contribute to learning presentation skills. Because we need to write our ideas down and then learn them, so they are connected.

S2: I agree, because when we write something on a sheet of paper, we remember it better. Also, we need to be accurate in writing as well as in speaking

S3: When someone prepares a speech, he/she generally writes and then reads at the meetings. I have noticed this a lot of times, so, I think writing, listening skills should also be included in teaching presentation skills.

Question 9: R: Should listening exercises be added to this course, too?

We have already spoken about this question. If you don't have anything else to say, we can go to the last question.

Question 10: R: What would be your expectations from this course?

S1: This course would give the next generation more opportunities to exchange ideas, communicate in English, to listen to others and understand.

S2: Learning presentation skills would help pupils to feel more confident about everything they do in international areas.

S3: To think for the future and create things they will be able to present in their field.

S4: I am sure that in the final grade at school, pupils would learn this skill and be better prepared for their future.

S5: I agree, and one more thing, I would like to add that this course would be great and would give us more chances to develop and progress in our future career.

S6: I also think that it is a very good idea to develop presentation skills in ordinary schools in Armenia. It will help pupils learn other important skills, too.

S7: My expectations would be very high, but I am not sure that everyone could teach us good presentation skills.

S8: And I am sure that when it comes the time to teach presentation skills at school, there will be some teachers to teach the course.

Some relevant information about the process and procedure of the Presentation Skills Course taught in School #133 in Nork Massive in Yerevan.

Twenty tenth-grade students from different classes of the same school, agreed to take part in the research work. The classes were conducted by the researcher for five weeks; once a week for 2 hours. The two English teachers who had been working with those students, observed the class.

Day 1, (December 23, 2006)

The procedure:

1. Introducing each other

Before introducing each other, the students were taught some grammar material they were going to use in their speech (**the Present Simple and the Present Progressive tenses**).

The structures of these tense forms (affirmative, negative and questions, long forms and contracted forms) were written on the blackboard. All the students actively participated in the explanations and took notes. The tense forms were introduced by the researcher, and the students said what they already knew. The researchers wrote their answers on the board and highlighted the main idea of the two tense forms:

The present simple

▪ **Describes habits, routines or events that happen regularly. It can also express opinions or make general statement of fact.**

The Present Continuous

▪ **Describes activities at the moment of speaking, activities currently in progress, or plans for the future.**

The class was divided into groups to develop the activity.

Activity 1. (20 students were participating)

The class was divided into four groups of five people. They asked each other questions to get as much information about each other as possible within fifteen minutes. In each group one of the students was to be responsible for the others in the group and had to make everybody take part in the discussion. Then, each student introduced another student in front of the class and told the audience what he/she had got about the person he/she introduced. They had three minutes (set by the teacher) to speak. Other students asked questions if they were interested in the information they were presented about the particular person.

Students get more and more enthusiastic and got more intrigued about each other's personal interests.

The school students were not used to that kind of activity, some of them were still a little passive and were afraid to make mistakes in their speech.

The purpose of the activity was to make students speak and express themselves no matter whether they make mistakes while speaking or not. There was not much attention paid to mistakes. In the first place, it was important to make students speak and not be afraid of saying something. Of course, the grammar was introduced in the first place to stimulate correct speech; nevertheless, students were not able to concentrate on it and express their ideas at the same time. So, it would take some time to get used to going on with their speech and not thinking about the correct grammar.

Since the beginning of the class, the students needed to build up their confidence. They generally benefit most from encouragement and positive reinforcement. So, their first efforts of speaking in a group or to the class were not graded or assessed. Many students suffer such anxiety in speaking situations that any criticism at this age can be counter productive. After some practice, students can certainly benefit from constructive comments about their relative strengths and weaknesses from both the teacher and their peers.

Day 2, (December 29, 2006)
Organizing small group activities
Procedure
At the beginning of the class, some grammar was introduced on the **Simple Past** and the **Past Progressive** tense forms. The forms were written on the board so that everybody could see them and the students were asked to speak about what they knew about the two tense forms, their functions and the usage. It was explained to them in what situations these two tense forms were used together in one sentence. For example, the question, "What were you doing when the lights went out", might create a lot of ideas that the students could think of. Therefore, the students were given some situations to brainstorm ideas on the particular topic, using the grammar forms of the Past Simple and the Past Progressive. The time was set by the teacher (twenty minutes) to find as many ideas as possible. The class was divided into four groups of five students. Group members sat in a circle. Each group member had a specific role to play in the activities.

Role 1: Leader
   a) starts the activity
   b) makes sure everyone participates
   c) keeps everyone on the subject
   d) keeps the discussion moving
   e) keeps track of the time

Role 2: Reader

    a) reads aloud the instructions, situation(s), question(s)

Role 3: Summarizer

    a) explains the situation or problem in his or her own words (without reading)

    b) makes sure everyone understands the situation

Role 4: Reporter

    a) reports the group's results or ideas to the class

The following situations were delivered to each group of the students in class:

Situation 1:

Yesterday an old, homeless man walked into the public library, sat down at one of the desks and started reading a newspaper. He smelt bad. What did the library manager do?

Situation 2:

Last night, when I was going to bed, someone rang the doorbell. What happened?

Situation 3:

A burglar broke into your apartment and stole your homework. What did you do?

Situation 4

You and your friends were swimming in the sea. When you got out of the water, someone had stolen your clothes. What did you do?

Within the 20-minute time, the students brainstormed ideas in groups and then read their ideas. Other groups commented on the ideas and chose the best one. The students got very excited, because they became more competitive and wanted their own group to win.

The researcher collected the best ideas for each situation.

For situation 1 group 3 had the best idea.

For situation 2 group 4 had the best idea.

For situation 3 group 1 had the best idea.

For situation 4 group 3 had the best idea.

The leader of each group read their answers to class.

The second day of the research was more exciting, and the students became more confident to express their ideas. The time limit made them think faster and be more creative. There was a lot of noise in the classroom as the students were exchanging ideas and suggesting newer and better ones.

Day 3, (January 3, 2007)

Developing small group activities

The previous class was based on the **Simple Past** and the **Past Progressive** tense forms. This

class was to develop the use of the grammar in the more expanded way, that is, to use those 2 tense forms in news stories. The students were given handouts with some news stories where the verbs given in brackets had to be written in the correct forms.

After the students had completed the tasks, the researcher discussed the mistakes with them and gave them another activity which required a lot of creativity. Each group of students was given handouts with a title and a topic sentence. They had to read them and make up a story. The stories were unusual and the students had to deal with the odd situations. Later, each group listened to the others' stories and asked questions for clarification.

Story 1:

Job Applicant's Life Saved by Being Later for Interview.

Lisa Miller is lucky. She missed her bus while she was on her way to a job interview…

Story 2:

Illusion Or Alien?

A strange light lit up the sky as three students were driving home last night…

Story 3:

Identical Twins Reunited After 45 Years Apart

Ellen and Mary could hardly believe their eyes when they saw each other…

Story 4:

Man Receives Letter Mailed 50 Years Ago

Paul Jones got a surprise when he opened his mailbox last week…

The students were given 20 minutes to continue the ideas and create a story, using the Simple Past and the Past Progressive tense forms.

Homework: For homework, the students had to create a story in a similar way as they were introduced and worked on in class. They had to work individually, not in groups, to make up some interesting, even very funny, or incredible stories which could be discussed during the next class.

Day 5, (January 11, 2007)

The goal of the fifth day of the research work in the classroom was to bring students to where they could develop presentation skills based on the discussion on the topics they had written as homework, which had been given to them during the previous session. The presenter had to turn the written topic into a talk, which was different. Once it was established what the students wanted to say and in what order, something else needed to be decided; **what words to say to stay with.** No matter how relevant the subject, and how interesting the format of the presentation, it might still be possible to confuse the audience, even send them to sleep through a poor choice of words and phrases. Therefore, students also had to learn some rules that were not difficult but they were important.

It was the first time the students had had to speak to the "audience," and introduce the topic chosen by them. The main idea of the first presentation was to have their peers and teachers listen to each of them and give comments on:

- **the appearance (clothing);** no one was dressed appropriately (formally)
- **the courtesy (greeting, opening and closing the speech);** no one used any greeting words or phrases, nor closing words
- **the delivery (reciting, reading or talking);** everyone was memorizing or reading or stammering
- **the language (smooth and fluent);** no accuracy or fluency
- **the vocabulary (rich, with some synonyms or opposites);** poor vocabulary, not knowing how to connect ideas
- **visuals;** no charts, posters or the blackboard
- **time;** more than the given time was spent

As I have already mentioned, it was the first attempt of the school children to deliver a presentation, and the comments were based only on the above factors.

Most of the children stood in front of the class and 'recited' something. They laughed, smiled, even tried to get prompting from their peers, but they all gave comments on the above mentioned factors, which was the goal of the discussion after the presentation. The students had not been told about all those factors beforehand. The intension was to identify and realize the importance of things while delivering a speech. A time limit (7-10 minutes) was set for each of the students, and all of them had nearly learned their topics by heart, which has been a typical thing in secondary schools in Armenia and not only in schools, but also in colleges and universities.

After the presentations, when everything was discussed carefully together with the researcher and their teachers, the students realized how many things they still needed to learn in order to deliver a good presentation, and that delivering a good presentation was not the same as

reciting something in front of others, but a well-prepared speech to introduce to others in a fluent language, with good manners, relaxed, and without tension in order to share ideas and promote a discussion..