

**ACADEMIC PRESENTATIONS: EXPLORING THE SECOND
LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION OF INTERNATIONAL GRADUATE
STUDENTS ACROSS DISCIPLINES**

by

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ABSTRACT

This study examined the language socialization of international students in the graduate school context of a western Canadian university. Focusing on one pervasive speech event, academic presentations (APs), this study explored the role this socioculturally organized activity played in facilitating students' linguistic and sociocultural development, and how it aided them in negotiating their entry into the academic world.

The participants in this study included 55 graduate students and nine course instructors. Thirty seven students were native speakers (NSs) of English, while the remaining 18--the focal participants of this study--were non-native speakers of English (NNSs). The sites were seven graduate courses in six different departments in three different faculties (Faculty of Medicine, Faculty of Arts, and Faculty of Applied Science).

A qualitative approach was employed, and thus multiple kinds of data were gathered over a four-month period. Data collection methods included: (a) open-ended interviews with participants; (b) tape-recorded observations of APs; (c) researcher's fieldnotes of APs; and (d) collection of written documents (e.g., course outlines). Data were analyzed following Bogdan and Biklen (1992) by identifying major and minor themes while iteratively going over the data.

A comparison of APs across disciplines is included, examining aspects such as AP content, sequence, length, and format. As well, an analysis of the qualities promoted in each field and of the multiple purposes APs fulfil is provided and related to the complex socialization (i.e., both linguistic and sociocultural) of international graduate students.

Findings of the study suggested that APs are a complex task whose meaning is not fixed, but rather is determined by the interplay of the broad context of the academic world, the micro-context of each community of practice, and ultimately by each individual. With regard to the language socialization of NNSs, APs challenged students in both linguistic and sociocultural ways. However, by observing, participating in, and reflecting on APs, students gained increased membership and competence within their academic communities.

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To Jorge, Rocío, and our baby

1

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Identification of the Problem

In order to fully function within a specific community, there are certain rules, values, and behaviors that contribute to membership in this specific group. In other words, to participate as a competent member of any given community and to be recognized as such, there is a need to be familiar with the pertinent community's culture.

Becoming socialized into a specific community, however, is not merely a matter of being *aware* of these rules, values, and behavioral patterns; it also implies *acting* and *responding* according to the community's expectations. Hence, we can say that the process of becoming socialized into a specific culture is not a passive process, but rather a very active one which may even take a long time. This socialization process can be observed in all instances where human beings begin or continue to establish social contact. For instance, in the case of graduate students studying in a new or "foreign" environment, achieving recognition as members of the academic community cannot be seen as a straightforward move. On the contrary, it is a process that implies many challenges, decisions, and actions, all of which graduate students face on a daily basis.

Examining the body of research on second language (L2) learning from the last decade, we realize that the number of studies that situate L2 learning within a sociocultural context is on a steady increase (e.g., Duff, 1995; Lantolf, 2000; Mohan & Marshall-Smith,

1992; Morita, 2000; Poole, 1992; Willett 1995). Departing from the traditional focus primarily on the individual learning an L2, in more recent studies “many L2 researchers have explored the rich sociocultural contexts of L2 learning with the underlying assumption that language learning is not just an individual psychological process but is also a social process” (Morita, 2000, p. 279). Understanding the process of learning a second language as a complex, interactive sociocultural process allows us to situate the “individual” acquiring the language within a larger context.

This project has been inspired in great part by a call in the existing literature for further examination on the L2 learning processes where the acquisition of a second language (in this case English) is situated in a sociocultural context from which it cannot be separated. The choice of academic presentations (APs) as the oral task to explore in this study is based on many reasons. Among them is the fact that APs seem to be a pervasive task demanded of graduate students¹ across a variety of disciplines. As well, informal conversations with peer graduate students and course instructors further revealed the need for a better understanding of how the task is perceived and enacted.² It has been widely and openly addressed in the literature (e.g., Duff, 1995; Ferris, 1998; Ferris & Tagg, 1996a,

¹ This conclusion was reached after thoroughly researching on the Internet the different course requirements for graduate courses across disciplines at Western Canadian University (WCU) - a pseudonym. It was surprising to find out that a large percentage of these courses included as one assignment that of giving an academic presentation.

² Even before the start of this project, I designed and informally distributed a survey on APs among my peer graduate students (including both NSs and NNSs). This survey specifically asked participants to respond to questions (some were multiple choice items, while others were open-ended comment questions) about their experience giving and listening to APs. Out of the 22 surveys distributed, I received 19 completed surveys back. Both, NSs and NNSs, pointed to specific areas of APs that they felt challenging, and sometimes even frustrating. Especially for NNSs who were giving an AP for the first time in their lives, the fact that it was in English and that they were not yet fully acquainted with the Canadian education system, represented extra challenges that students had to face. The insightful responses of my peers who pointed to specific problematic issues (such as speaking in front of an audience, trying to engage the audience, avoiding oral reading, etc.) around APs served as a strong inspiration for my choice of topic.

1996b; Morita, 2000; Weissberg, 1993) that NNSs experience an extra challenge when faced with oral academic tasks. Hence, this study was also motivated by arguments in the literature on academic discourse and the socialization of NNSs through language-mediated activities. Finally, my own personal experiences³ as a NNS graduate student trying to become a member of a new academic community helped me determine the selection of APs as the focus of research for this work.

1.2 Purpose of the Study

In light of the need for further research studies that focus on the sociocultural aspects of language learning, the present work looks at how L2 learners immersed in a new academic community become socialized through language into it. I examine this process through mainly one kind of task (among many others graduate students are expected to perform throughout their course of studies)--academic presentations--and how this activity is embedded within the linguistic socialization of graduate students into the North American academic world more generally.

³ Although I was very familiar with oral presentations in my home country, as an incoming NNS graduate student in Canada I realized the different kinds of challenges my classmates and I had to cope with while preparing for and delivering our APs. In my case, I could see a considerable change between my first and second APs for the same graduate course. For the first AP I wrongly assumed that we (i.e., my co-team member and I) were expected to give a detailed presentation of the research article in question. For my second AP, after having reflected on my first experience, and after observing others do their APs, I chose a completely different approach: Instead of spending most of the time presenting content, I tried to summarize the main points discussed in the readings, and then involved the audience in a discussion. This strategy seemed to work much better than my first approach. As well, I noticed changes in the kind of language expressions I employed in both APs: while for the first one I feared including spontaneous talk, for I assumed it would be perceived as not very professional, I later realized that for that particular course context, a more interactional style and extemporaneous kind of talk were perceived as efficient. In sum, the more experience I gathered through observing and performing APs, the more I discovered the complex issues surrounding the task, and the more I wished to explore them closely. I realized that through a task such as APs I was learning how to become a professional in my own field, that of Language and Literacy Education.

Thus far, the studies that have more closely examined the role of academic talk at the graduate level have concentrated mainly in a few areas or disciplines: Animal Sciences and Agronomy (Weissberg, 1993), Applied Linguistics (Morita, 2000), and Speech Sciences (Tracy, 1997). Tracy's (1997) work, however, focussed more broadly on academic talk in the graduate seminar, where professors and graduate students' presentations were one of several other aspects under study. Morita's (2000) work, on the other hand, had APs given by graduate students as its main focus. The present study is hence more closely related to the kind of work done by Morita. Other studies (e.g., Ferris, 1998; Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b) have focused on aural/oral tasks, where APs were not the main kind of activity explored, but rather one kind of task undergraduate and graduate students are required to perform. (A more comprehensive review of the literature on the topic can be found in Chapter 2 of this thesis.)

Building up on the existing knowledge on the subject, and with the aim of expanding and further gaining insights into the socialization of graduate students into the academic world through discourse, the present study focused on APs given by graduate students across a variety of disciplines at a large western Canadian university, referred hereafter by the pseudonym of WCU. This research thus involved graduate students in seven different graduate courses in three different faculties: Faculty of Medicine (FM), Faculty of Arts (FA), and Faculty of Applied Science (FAS) (see Figure 1.1).

Hence, the present study attempts to address a gap in the existing literature on the topic of APs at the graduate level by examining this task across a variety of disciplines thus far not explored.

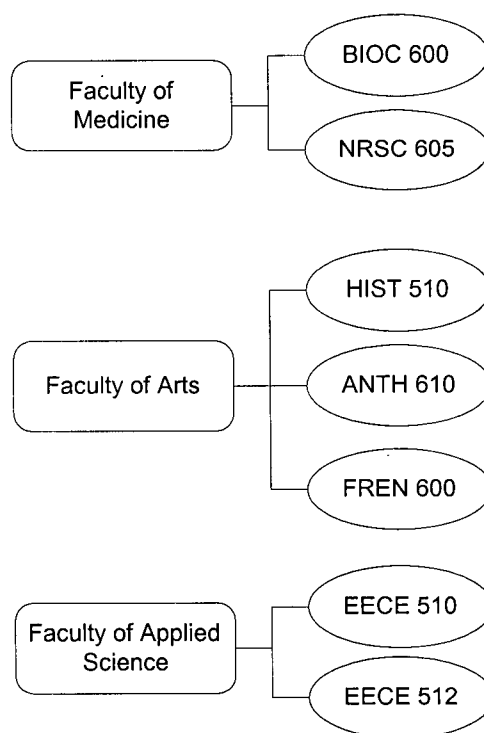


Figure 1.1 Faculty Clusters and Courses

The present work is framed as a qualitative study that views the AP as a task through which all of the participants involved construct knowledge about both the language employed to perform/perceive the presentations, and about cultural aspects (i.e., values, beliefs, rules) involved in this task. The theoretical perspective that frames this study is that of language socialization, which “draws on sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches to the study of social and linguistic competence within a social group” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163). Based on these assumptions, according to the same

authors, language socialization starts “at the moment of social contact in the life of a human being” (p. 164), and extends throughout life. Grounded on these assumptions, the present study takes a view of language learning and cultural learning as interrelated and interdependent.

1.3 Questions Guiding the Research

The research questions that guided the present study are the following:

- 1) How are APs organized, performed, and perceived by instructors, presenters, and classmates? What are the characteristic discourse features and expectations associated with APs within and across fields?
- 2) What purposes do APs fulfil within the graduate school context? What role do they play in the language socialization of graduate students, particularly of NNSs of English?
- 3) Are there any specific difficulties or challenges that NNSs of English have during the preparation and delivery of their APs? If so, how do NNSs cope with these difficulties? How are these difficulties perceived across fields?

In order to address these questions, this study examined APs given by both native speakers of English (NSs) and non-native speakers of this language (NNSs).⁴ A stronger emphasis is placed on the experiences and perceptions of NNSs, and how these are perceived and responded to by NS peers and the course instructors. In some cases, compari-

⁴ “Native” speakers refers to those individuals who speak English as their mother tongue; “non-native” speakers, on the other hand, refers to speakers of English as an additional language.

sons between the academic presentations performed by both groups (NSs and NNSs) are included, as well as comparisons of the task across fields.

The data collected includes field notes and observations of APs performed by NSs and NNSs; open-ended audio-recorded interviews with participants (i.e., graduate students and course instructors); and collection of some written documents (e.g., handouts prepared by presenters, course outlines). The multiplicity of sources of information was sought and secured to complement my own observations and analyses as much as possible.

1.4 Significance of the Study

It is hoped that the present study will shed more light on the language socialization processes of graduate students into the academic community. The participants involved in this study are all graduate students enrolled at WCU, which has among its student population both national and international graduates. Given that the number of foreign students who speak English as an additional language has been on a steady increase--not only in Canada, but also in other countries of North America (namely, the United States)--(see Zimmermann, 1995), there is an urgent need to further examine the issues that surround the integration of these students into the academic world.

This study becomes meaningful in that it attempts to address the socialization experiences of NNSs through discourse practices in the macro-context of WCU. Though generalizations to other populations or communities is not intended or advisable, it is believed that useful insights will be gained to enrich our knowledge of how APs are perceived and enacted by graduate students and their instructors. It is hoped that this knowledge will ulti-

mately become useful to the entire educational community. It will serve instructors planning to incorporate APs as a required task for a graduate course, to inform them and increase their awareness of the issues underlying the task (i.e., it is hoped that this work will become a useful source of information about the kind of struggles and concerns graduate students go through while preparing for and delivering APs, about the kind of aid they could potentially receive from their peers and instructors, and the kind of expectations the audience can reasonably have of them). Given that the most affected population of individuals is the student body in this case, it is my wish that this work will be just as beneficial for students as for instructors: It will raise awareness of certain issues, and it will also serve --especially for NNSs--as a guide of some of the values promoted in graduate school, and some of the expectations associated with APs. Students participating in this project have had a chance already to reflect on their AP theories and practices; students who will have access to reading this work will hopefully be inspired to do so as well.

In addition, this study contributes to a growing body of L2 learning research literature which departs from the language acquisition perspective that draws on psycholinguistics, by focusing on sociocultural aspects of language learning (Lantolf, 2000) employing the theoretical framework of language socialization. Few studies have employed this framework to research issues surrounding adult language socialization, particularly with second language learners (e.g., Duff, Wong, & Early, 2000; Mohan & Marshall-Smith, 1992; Morita, 2000; Niiyama, 1997; Poole 1992). The present research project intends to address this existing gap in the literature.

1.5 Thesis Organization

The present work is structured around seven different chapters. Chapter 1 serves as an introduction to the thesis, highlighting the rationale for the selection of research focus, including the research questions guiding the study, identifying the problem and its significance, as well as outlining some of the main issues to be discussed in the remainder of the thesis.

Chapter 2 makes reference to the theoretical framework of this study and provides a brief review of the relevant literature. The concepts of language socialization, socioculturally organized activities, task context, and communities of practice are explained, as is their relationship to this project. A selection of studies that have focused on the language socialization of ESL learners is included, as well as a selection of studies that have explored issues surrounding the acquisition and performance of academic literacy and oral skills by NNSs of English.

Chapter 3 presents a description of the qualitative approach employed, and the corresponding data collection methods. The latter include audio-taped open-ended interviews with NNSs, NSs, and course instructors; audio-taped student presentations and discussions; researcher observations of APs and fieldnotes of these observations; and collection of relevant written documents (such as course outlines, peer evaluation sheets, and student-prepared outlines for their respective APs). The research sites and participants are described (employing pseudonyms for the protection of individuals), transcription conventions and procedures are specified, and data analysis techniques are introduced.

In Chapters 4, 5, and 6, I provide a detailed description of APs in each of the three faculty clusters (FM, FA, and FAS). APs are situated and analyzed in each classroom context, and the task is explored as a language-mediated activity through which NNSs acquire both linguistic and cultural knowledge.

Chapter 7 centers on a discussion of the research findings and implications. APs are examined across fields, noting similarities and discrepancies. As well, the role APs play in the students' process of gaining access to their new academic communities of practice is addressed. Limitations of the study and also suggestions for further research are included in this chapter. I conclude the chapter and the thesis with a brief summary of the study and my personal thoughts on the research process.

2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

2.1 Language Socialization, Socioculturally Organized Activities, Task Context, and Communities of Practice

The present study embraces the theoretical concept of language socialization (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) in order to explore a socioculturally organized (Ochs, 1988), language-mediated task such as APs. Drawing on sociological, anthropological, and psychological approaches to the study of social and linguistic competence within a given social group, language socialization refers to the socialization of individuals “through the use of language and socialization to use language” (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 163). According to this perspective, language socialization is a lifelong, interactive process that begins at the moment a human being starts social contact.

The concept of task or speech event is also crucial in the language socialization approach, which defines a task as a sociocultural activity. From a language socialization perspective, the unit of analysis is the activity in which members of a social group take part. Ochs (1988) contends that as children participate in activities they acquire both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. In this view, linguistic knowledge and sociocultural knowledge are interrelated and impact each other.

Further exploring the notion of task (or activity) in language socialization, Mohan and Marshall-Smith (1992) challenge the input/interaction view of SLA research (e.g.,

Long & Porter; Pica & Doughty 1985; Gass & Varonis, 1985) where task and context are assumed as given, and contend that “in the language socialisation view, task and context are under development” (p. 88). Hence, they argue that neither the task nor the context are to be considered as fixed. Rather, they are negotiated or co-constructed through interaction.

Recently research in academic literacy has emphasized the idea of discourse community (e.g., Casanave, 1995; Flowerdew, 2000; Swales, 1990) and the apprenticeship processes that novice scholars go through when gaining access to their respective communities. According to Swales (1990), a *discourse community* can be defined as a group of people who share a set of social conventions that are directed towards some purpose (as cited in Flowerdew, 2000). This group of human beings share common specific sets of language, beliefs, and practices. Research on graduate students’ academic writing development, for example Casanave (1995), shows that “access to and acceptance by the disciplinary community are thus dependent upon the learning of the beliefs, values, and conventions that characterize that community” (Flowerdew, 2000, p. 130). However, these discourse communities are not fixed and homogeneous entities, but rather are dynamic and changeable in nature. Similarly, research on oral academic discourse (e.g., Morita, 2000) reveals that the same applies to the apprenticeship processes of graduate students trying to become members of their academic milieu.

Applying the notion of discourse community to the present study, we need first to identify the macro-context as well as the micro-context of this research study. While the macro-context or “academic world” is WCU as a whole, without making specific distinctions among disciplines and specific courses, each of the graduate courses explored could be considered as a smaller, micro-context for language socialization. In turn, each individ-

ual micro-context can be identified by its unique characteristics: e.g., by the human component, by the disciplinary terminology and content itself, and by external factors such as historic time and physical aspects, among others. Taking this stance, and viewing the graduate courses at WCU as part of a unique, identifiable discourse community, allows us to focus on the human component and related issues of each small community instead of taking into account merely the disciplinary content and demands of each course.

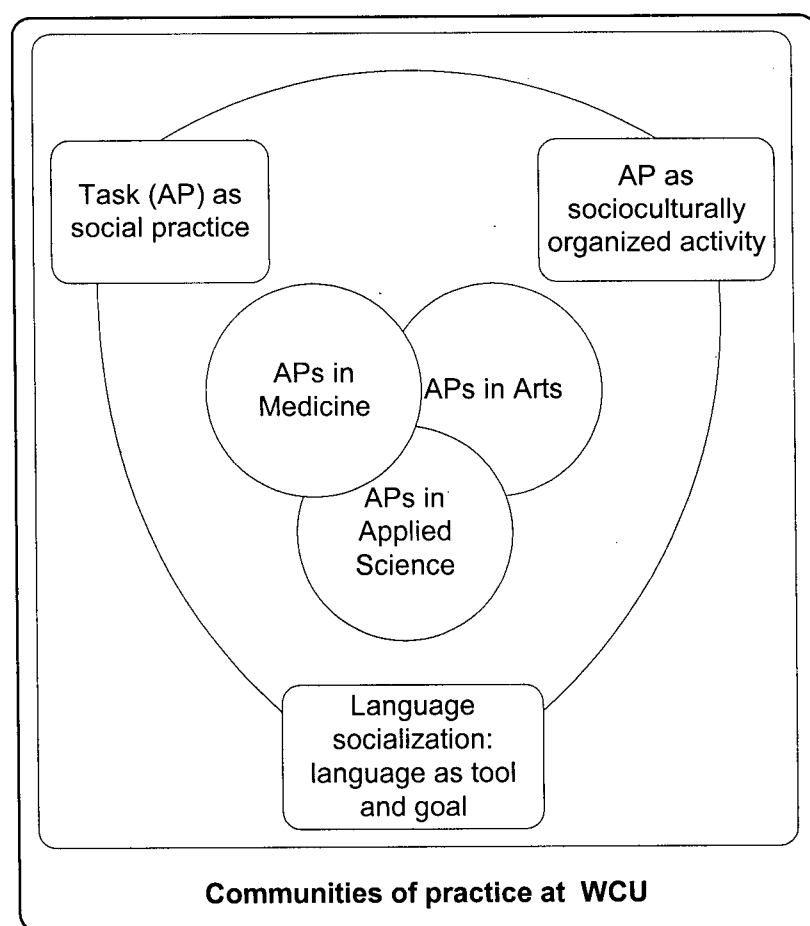


Figure 2.1 Theoretical Framework and Contextualization

In sum, the concept of discourse communities--or what Lave and Wenger (1991) and Wenger (1998) call *communities of practice*--serves as a framework and acknowledges the complex nature of the process of gaining membership into the larger academic community. The four concepts just briefly outlined (see Figure 2.1) are useful theoretical tools for analysis in this study.

2.1.1 Language Socialization and L2 Research

Several studies have been conducted to explore the primary language socialization of children (e.g., Heath, 1982; Ochs, 1988; Watson-Gegeo & Gegeo, 1986). These studies pointed to the interrelationship between the acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge while children participated in various activities. Based on the argument that people experience language socialization not only through their primary socialization in their childhood, but also throughout their lives as they are immersed in a new sociocultural context, in the past years the language socialization perspective has also influenced the field of L2 research. Investigating L2 learning processes from a language socialization perspective that incorporates rich contextual information provides more ecologically valid information than studies that have focussed on individuals exclusively (thus paying limited attention to the social context). What follows is a review of a selection of works that have investigated the language socialization of L2 learners in contexts such as school, work, or new living environments.

Among these works, Willett's (1995) study and Duff's (1995, 1996) study involved children and high school ESL learners, respectively. Willett's (1995) study involved three ESL girls and one ESL boy in a first grade in an English-medium classroom. Through

observing and analyzing the classroom participation of these four ESL learners in a year-long study, Willett described how--through socially significant interactional routines--“the children and other members of the classroom jointly constructed the ESL children’s identities, social relations, and ideologies as well as their communicative competence in that setting” (p. 473). According to Willett, these children needed to acquire English language and literacy skills in order to gain access to their new classroom community. At the same time, she pointed to the complex nature of classroom and community cultures, claiming that “becoming a competent member requires navigating the competing agendas of its sub-cultures” (p. 499). She also pointed to the local nature of the interactional routines and strategies, and how these vary across sociocultural groups.

In a year-long ethnographic study, Duff (1995, 1996) explored the language socialization of English learners at a secondary school in Hungary. She investigated the connections between macro- and micro-level changes in Hungary through an examination of transformations in educational discourse. The context of her study was that of history lessons, and the unit of analysis that of two speech events: *felelés* (oral recitations), which constituted a traditional very demanding oral task in Hungary; and student lectures or oral presentations (or other open-ended oral activities), which were replacing *felelés* in certain classrooms. Duff showed how “[a] historically and culturally rooted phenomenon and vehicle for Hungarian language socialization, it [*felelés*] is an activity that has been affected by systemic changes and has, in turn, affected evolving educational discourse” (Duff, 1995, p. 517). Consequently, the micro-level changes of educational and classroom discourse could be conceived as manifestations of the macro-level changes that were taking place in broader sociocultural contexts.

A number of researchers, including Niiyama (1997), Poole (1992), Mohan and Marshall-Smith (1992), Nishizawa (1997), and Morita (2000) have focused on college or university level settings, and I will summarize these studies below.

In a language socialization study that involved six NNSs and an ESL instructor in a college-level ESL classroom, Niiyama (1997) explored the ways Japanese students taking a Public Speaking and Debating Class developed their oral English skills. By focusing on the individual oral presentation task, Niiyama examined the kinds of language and rhetorical features developed by the students in this class, and the processes by which these students were socialized into this specific context. Among the findings of her study, Niiyama described five language and rhetorical features (hook or introduction, organizational principles of a presentation, transitional devices, sentence patterns, and opinions and arguments) that were introduced in the class so that students obtained the necessary skills to perform a successful oral presentation. It was through the instructors's explicit teaching, through interaction between students and the instructor, and through feedback that these language and rhetorical features became meaningful and thus useful to the students.

In her study, Poole (1992) analyzed teacher/student interaction in two beginning ESL classes. Following a qualitative research design, Poole's study involved eight ESL students enrolled in a beginning level ESL course at a large private American university, and the teachers who taught the classes. Two of the class periods, marked by a high degree of student verbal participation, were selected to conduct the analysis. Poole focused on three classroom discourse features: (a) expert accommodation of novice incompetence; (b) task accomplishment; and (c) display of asymmetry. Her study revealed that some of the routine interactional sequences (i.e., social messages) in these classrooms were very similar to

those found in other studies (cf. Ochs & Schieffelin, 1984) examining middle class American caregiver language. Poole suggested that "second language contexts include dimensions that powerfully and necessarily affect both the teaching and the learning processes" (p. 610), and highlighted the fact that this was not generally acknowledged in most L2 literature.

In a study that involved a group of Chinese students in a graduate school setting, Mohan and Marshall-Smith (1992) investigated the language socialization of these English language learners who succeeded in spite of their limited language proficiency. The authors focused on how the interaction surrounding a task developed the learner's contextual understanding of the task, thus arguing that "the context is socially constructed by the cooperative work of expert and novice, and the context both illuminates and is illuminated by communication within the task" (p. 88). Mohan and Marshall-Smith also contended that "while the learner's participation in the cultural activity is a central means of socialisation, it is not the only means; observation may be important, as may comment, discussion and explanation" (p. 88).

Nishizawa (1997) explored the role of sociocultural context in college students' socialization into the classroom culture of a Canadian community college. Her research project involved 66 students (42 NSs and 24 NNSs of English) taking a literature course, where nine of the 24 NNSs were also taking an ESL adjunct class. Thus, Nishizawa explored the role of the ESL course adjunct to the literature class in promoting the linguistic and cultural socialization of NNSs. Through an analysis of tasks observed and performed by students, the study examined the social, cultural, and academic values and norms

(e.g, individualism, collaboration, gender equality, etc.) promoted in the class, and how the students in the class perceived these values and norms, and created the classroom culture.

Morita (2000) explored the language socialization of NNSs studying at a large western Canadian university. Her study in two different graduate level TESL⁵ classrooms involved two instructors and 21 students, six of whom were NNSs; the unit of analysis was oral academic presentations (OAPs). Morita's findings suggested that students became gradually socialized into the academic discourse through observing, performing, and reviewing a task such as OAPs, and based on these findings Morita argued that "academic discourse socialization should be viewed as a potentially complex and conflictual process of negotiation rather than as a predictable, unidirectional process of enculturation" (p. 279).

Finally, two studies that have examined the linguistic socialization of immigrant adults (especially women), include Duff, Wong, and Early (2000) and Li (2000). Duff et al. (2000) investigated the language socialization of ESL speakers into the workforce and the broader community. The authors conducted a qualitative study through which they examined the linguistic and social processes involved in the education and integration of 20 immigrant ESL speakers seeking a healthcare career in Canada. The study focused on these 20 students' participation in two work-oriented programs that combined ESL skills and nursing skills, and that were sponsored by an immigrant services agency in western Canada. According to the researchers,

the most interesting and unexpected findings include the range and complexity of communication skills required of the study participants; the need to speak a language other than English or their first language; the need to use and interpret body language to master both technical academic discourse (oral and written) and collo-

⁵ Acronym for Teaching English as a Second Language

qual interpersonal skills; the opportunity to ask for and receive assistance with English from the residents; the need to engage and respond empathetically to their interlocutors; and the need to assess and meet their communication and other (physical, emotional) requirements. (pp. 48-49)

As one of the concluding remarks, the study called for an urgent understanding of the difficult, complex, changing language needs in the multilingual and multicultural workplace.

Another study that attempted to fill a gap in the secondary language socialization in the workplace is the work of Li (2000). This author examined the language socialization of an immigrant woman in the U.S. trying to learn how to frame requests in English (her L2) in an appropriate way. The case study of this woman showed that making a request in a second language is not merely a linguistic process but also a social one. This in turn points to the double process of socialization, where novices in the new working environment are novices in both the new language and the new culture.

While some of the studies reviewed above focused on young ESL learners in school settings, others focused on adult ESL learners in college or university settings or in the workplace. What all these studies have in common is the fact that a language socialization perspective and a range of qualitative research methods proved useful to investigate how ESL learners acquired both linguistic and cultural knowledge when immersed in a new and carefully described setting. Table 2.1 provides a summary of the language socialization studies reviewed in this chapter:

Table 2.1 Language Socialization and L2 Research

Study	Focus	Participants and Sites	Method
Willett (1995)	The role of interactional routines between children and other classroom members in jointly constructing the ESL children's identities, social relations, ideologies, and communicative competence	Three ESL girls and one ESL boy; first grade in a mainstream first-grade classroom at an elementary school	ethnography
Duff (1995, 1996)	Dynamic relationships between classroom tasks, educational discourse, and sociopolitical and cultural contexts through an analysis of <i>felelés</i> and other types of oral tasks	Hungarian high school students taking history lessons at secondary schools with immersion programs	ethnography
Niiyama (1997)	Development of oral English skills of ESL students through an examination of language and rhetorical features surrounding oral presentations	Six Japanese students and an ESL course instructor in a Public Speaking and Debating class in a Canadian ESL institute	ethnographic approach
Poole (1992)	An analysis of teacher-student interactions to reveal the cultural dimensions included in ESL classroom contexts	Eight ESL students taking lessons in a beginning level ESL class at a large American university	ethnographic techniques
Mohan & Marshall-Smith (1992)	Language socialization of ESL learners; task context as co-constructed	Eight ESL Chinese students in graduate adult education course at a Western Canadian university	ethnographic approach
Nishizawa (1997)	The role of sociocultural context in college students' socialization into the academic classroom culture	66 college students (42 NSs and 24 NNSs) in a literature course, and nine NNSs taking its adjunct ESL course in a Canadian college	ethnographic approach
Morita (2000)	Role of academic presentations in the language socialization (LS) of graduate students into the academic world	21 graduate students (six NNSs and 15 NSs) in two TESL graduate courses in a Canadian university	ethnography
Duff, Wong, and Early (2000)	Linguistic and social processes at work in the education and integration of immigrant ESL speakers into the workforce and the broader community	Two groups of ESL students (n=20); two language and skills instructors; a clinical practicum supervisor; a project manager; and the training institute director at a Canadian government-funded institution	qualitative approach
Li (2000)	The role of exposure and participation in social interactions, and assistance of experts or more competent peers in the LS of an immigrant woman in the U.S. learning how to frame requests in English	A Chinese woman in an inner-city immigrant job-training program operated by a Chinese American association, and workplaces in a metropolitan city in Northeastern United States	case study

2.2 Research on Academic Discourse

APs, the unit of analysis for this work, are one type of oral academic discourse (in this work understood as “speech”). Given their relevance to my study, in this section I will briefly review a selection of works that have focused on academic discourse in either reading, writing, listening, or speaking tasks.

2.2.1 L2 Studies on Academic Reading and Writing Tasks

In response to the growing number of international students in North American schools and colleges, several researchers have focused on the development of L2 literacy skills in NNSs. Among these researchers are Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995), Casanave (1995), Prior (1995), Leki (1995), Leki and Carson (1997), and Spack (1997). I will briefly summarize their studies below.

Atkinson and Ramanathan (1995) employed an ethnographic approach to explore how NNS writers at a large U.S. university on completion of their writing classes at an English Language Program (ELP) offered by the University’s ESL institute, were required to register directly in the mainstream University Composition Program (UCP). Findings of the study suggested that the NNS writers were affected by the differing conceptions of academic writing promoted by both programs (ELP and UCP). The kinds of knowledge expected from students taking the UCP “include considerable familiarity with native patterns for structuring discourse, knowledge of native norms of communicative behavior, and some understanding of writing (...) as a heuristic, self-defining activity” (p. 563). Hence, the authors argued that since these cultural assumptions may not be reasonably met by NNS

writers, explicit instruction in relevant cultural norms and assumptions might contribute to partially solving the problem.

Casanave (1995) carried out her research project focusing on 12 NNSs enrolled in a doctoral program in sociology at a U.S. university. The author investigated the reason why these students did not seem to be socialized into disciplinary communities in homogeneous ways, arguing that a view of context for composing as eminently local, interactive, and historical helps to understand how students learn to write in particular academic settings. The author contends that

[b]y looking at how individual students construct different contexts for composing from the same writing assignments, we can better understand the diverse responses of a multicultural, multilingual graduate student population to the socialization experience. (p. 86)

Along the same lines, Prior (1995) explored EAP needs analysis for academic writing tasks. He involved five professors in four different disciplines, and a total of 64 students (17 of whom were NNSs). Prior realized that the task the professor assigned was not the same as the task the students understood (i.e., there were multiple task interpretations). As well, he realized that students' representations of the assigned writing tasks drew on many sources other than the professor's statements of those tasks: Students made inferences based on their prior school experience, the models offered in the assigned readings, and their perceptions of the professor's personality and intellectual biases. As a central argument, Prior maintains that tasks are completely shaped by the multiple histories, activities, and goals that participants bring to and create within seminars.

Leki (1995), and Leki and Carson (1997) explored the reading and writing skills expected of students in North American university classrooms. In her 1995 study, Leki

examined the academic literacy experiences of five ESL students in light of the strategies they brought with them to their new academic experience in the U.S., and the strategies they developed in order to cope with the demands of the new academic setting. Leki identified a number of these strategies: (a) clarifying strategies; (b) focusing strategies; (c) relying on past writing experiences; (d) taking advantage of first language/culture; (e) using current experience or feedback; (f) resisting teachers' demands; and a few others. Besides highlighting the interesting fact that students come to their U.S. studies with a whole range of strategies, and that they pursue new ones when the ones they already have are not useful to successfully meet the course writing expectations, Leki suggests that EAP courses should consider discussing these strategies with students, recognizing (and helping students to recognize) what they already know, and avoiding teaching what they already do know.

In another study that focused on academic writing demands, Leki and Carson (1997) compared the kind of knowledge students are expected to demonstrate in EAP classes with that of academic writing classes. Their study was based primarily on interview data from 27 participants in phase 1, and 21 participants in phase 2, all of whom were either undergraduate or graduate NNSs at a large U.S. university. The interviews inquired about students' perceptions and experiences writing for both English for academic purposes (EAP) courses and academic content classes across the curriculum. Findings from this study suggested that "what is valued in writing for writing classes is different from what is valued in writing for other academic courses" (p. 64). EAP classes seemed to limit students to writing without source texts or without taking responsibility for the content of what they wrote. This in turn is in contrast with the kind of academic writing expected from students in classes across the curriculum. The implications for EAP courses involve examining stu-

dents' writing needs and providing students with opportunities for doing the kind of writing demanded in academic courses.

In a longitudinal case study involving one NNS female student, Spack (1997) examined the reading and writing strategies employed and developed by this student in order to acquire college-level academic literacy skills. The aim of the study was to shed light on the acquisition of academic literacy of one student over an extended period of time, filling a gap in the literature which generally focuses on short time periods (e.g., one semester). Thus, Spack followed her participant over a three-year period, and explored the role of the students' first language (Japanese) in promoting academic literacy in her second language (English). As part of her conclusion to the study, Spack mentioned that

when instructors direct students to explain ideas with explicitness and precision, for example, rather than to communicate through subtle implication (as Yuko put it)--we are asking them to embrace a certain stance toward knowledge that is not shared universally. (p. 48)

Hence, the author suggested that educators should reflect on their own role and responsibility in demanding students to complete writing tasks for which they have not been prepared, especially when the students have not spent a lifetime immersed in a western English-medium academic system.

The selection of studies reviewed in this section have all focused on the acquisition of L2 academic literacy skills, thus addressing the need to gain more insights into the complex processes students go through when attempting to function in an academic context in which they have not been raised.

2.2.2 L2 Studies on Oral Academic Tasks

Although less explored so far, some researchers have also focused on the oral discourse needs of NNSs when functioning in an English-speaking academic setting (cf. Johns, 1981; Mason, 1995; and Ostler, 1980, as cited in Ferris and Tagg, 1996a). In this section I will review the research studies on the acquisition of oral academic skills by Ferris (1998), Ferris and Tagg (1996a, 1996b), Yook and Seller (1990), Weissberg (1993), and Tracy (1997).

In response to the relative lack of research on speaking and listening tasks required by instructors in academic contexts, Ferris and Tagg (1996a, 1996b), and Ferris (1998) conducted a series of surveys examining four distinct types of tertiary institutions (a community college, a public teaching-oriented university, a public research-oriented university, and a private university) and a variety of disciplines and class types. In their 1996a/1996b study, Ferris and Tagg surveyed over 900 professors, and the results showed that (a) instructors' requirements varied across disciplines, type of institution, and class size; (b) instructors' lecturing formats followed a tendency to becoming less formal and more interactive over time; (c) this tendency placed new expectations upon students. Implications for EAP courses drawn from this survey pointed to the need to prepare EAP students for comprehension and participation in a variety of lecture/discussion formats, suggesting that EAP instructors strive for authenticity in the kinds of tasks they ask their students to perform (e.g., listening to real lectures by a variety of speakers, interact with native speakers, and cope with genre-specific vocabulary, reading materials and writing tasks).

While Ferris and Tagg's (1996a, 1996b) surveys provided insights into the views of instructors at four different tertiary institutions, Ferris' (1998) study shed light on the views

of students at three different tertiary institutions. In this latter study, Ferris adapted the survey previously distributed to instructors in order to find out the students' views on their instructors' requirements regarding listening and speaking skills. As well, the survey explored the difficulties these students had in meeting those requirements, and the relative importance assigned to a selection of seven academic aural/oral tasks. A comparison of the two studies (1996a /1996b and 1998), indicated that "although ESL students may have a clear idea of what their problems are (...) they may not have an especially accurate sense of the relative importance of those problems" (p. 313). In addition, while instructors seemed to blame students' struggles on cultural differences and language deficiencies, and by extension they also blamed ESL classes and teachers, students rarely acknowledged any responsibility for their own listening/speaking difficulties, instead choosing to complain about the inadequacies of their instructors. Even though the survey data lacked any kind of detailed information, it revealed some of the contradictions between the views held by academic content area instructors and those held by ESL students.

Also researching the oral needs of NNSs, Yook and Seller (1990) investigated a group of 21 Asian students enrolled in a speech communication course at a large midwestern U.S. university, where students were required to give oral speeches. The study employed qualitative techniques such as participant observation, a questionnaire survey, and focus group interviews. The responses of students revealed that for the most part, students were anxious about their speeches, and this anxiety seemed to be the result of three factors: (a) students were concerned about whether or not their audience would understand them due to their pronunciation difficulties; (b) students were also worried in case they were not able to "think in English" while doing their speech, and thus might fail to find the

appropriate words to express themselves; and (c) students became very anxious due to their lack of previous exposure to the oral speech genre, and sometimes it even meant they did not understand the assignment fully. Having illuminated some of the struggles (both linguistic and cultural) that these Asian students faced in the public speaking course, the author called for further research in the area, and highlighted the importance of raising awareness of these issues among both instructors and students.

In an investigation of the graduate seminar as a speech genre, Weissberg (1993) employed a qualitative design to analyze in detail the structure of the seminar presentation, and to explore the specific demands it poses for the NNS graduate student. In addition, Weissberg examined the crucial register difference between the seminar presentation and the research article. Besides providing detailed information on how the seminar presentation is organized in graduate courses in the departments of animal science and agronomy, the study revealed differences in the choice of speech styles chosen by both NSs and NNSs. In general, NNSs failed to cover the expectations of their instructors through misinterpreting the way in which the presentation should be organized and delivered. Two factors working against NNSs were identified: (a) lack of linguistic knowledge; and (b) differing notions as to what constitutes acceptable academic speech. Among the implications for pedagogy derived from the study, Weissberg contended that

it is wise to evaluate the kind of ESP preparation, if any, that NNS students received for the graduate seminar and formal academic speech events in general. (...) [I]t is not reasonable to expect that all, or even many, students simply "pick up" the associated oral genre on their own. Non-native speakers who are uncomfortable with their oral skills in English may be specially inclined to memorize a written text for their presentations. (p. 33)

Finally, among the more recent studies that have explored academic oral discourse (though not focusing on NNSs) is the study by Tracy (1997). Tracy's central purpose was to understand better the institutionally significant activity of the departmental colloquium, typically found in many North American universities. In her qualitative study, Tracy combined data mainly from tape-recorded colloquia and interviews with colloquium participants (i.e., faculty and graduate students) with the aim of describing "the web of problems academic groups face, the discursive practices used, and the ideals academics have about how they should talk" (p. 4). The main claim developed in her work is that "the academic colloquium is best conceived as a dilemmatic situation--a communicative occasion involving tensions and contradiction. This claim has three layers of meaning" (p. 4). Tracy analyzed in detail each layer of meaning associated with the academic colloquium, and provided suggestions in the form of three proposals: (a) academic groups should give ongoing attention to maintaining a strong sense of intellectual community within the groups; (b) academic participants should pursue a dilemmatic ideal, recognizing that discussion must be thought of as both dialectic and constructive criticism; and (c) academics should talk about colloquia in ways that recognize the positioned nature of the problem analyses, and they should use language practices that keep the "dilemmatic" character of colloquia visible. The dilemmatic frame employed by Tracy in order to examine the academic colloquium is one of her work's main contributions to research. (See Table 2.2 for a summary of the studies on academic discourse reviewed in these sections.)

Table 2.2 Academic Discourse and L2 Research

Study	Focus	Participants and Sites	Method
Atkinson & Ramanathan (1995)	The disjuncture that L2 writers experience when crossing over from an ESL program to a mainstream composition program	NNS graduate students and their instructors at a American University's ESL institute and at the university's composition program	ethnographic approach
Casanave (1995)	Exploration of the local, historical, and interactive notion of the contexts for composing	Twelve NNSs and their course instructors in a doctoral program in sociology at an U.S. university	qualitative approach
Prior (1995)	EAP needs analysis for academic writing; an examination of writing tasks as complexly shaped by multiple histories, activities, and goals	Sixty-four graduate students (17 NNSs) and five professors in four disciplines at a U.S. university	ethnographic techniques
Leki (1995)	Academic writing strategies employed by ESL students	Five ESL visa students in their first semester of study at a U.S. university	qualitative approach
Leki & Carson (1997)	The contrasting writing demands and preparation of ESL students in EAP writing courses and in academic courses	Forty-eight NNS undergraduate/graduate students at a large U.S. university	qualitative approach
Spack (1997)	Examination of the reading and writing strategies of a NNS student trying to acquire college-level academic literacy in English	One NNS (Japanese) student at a large U.S. university	case study
Ferris (1998)	ESL students' views of aural/oral skills needed for academic purposes	768 ESL students at three tertiary institutions in the U.S.	survey
Ferris & Tagg (1996a, 1996b)	Expectations of U.S. college/university instructors with regard to aural/oral tasks	Over 900 content-area instructors at four different U.S. tertiary institutions in various academic disciplines	survey
Yook & Seller (1990)	Investigation of the needs and concerns of Asian students in speech communication performance classes	Twenty one Asian students in a speech communication course at a large midwestern U.S. university	qualitative approach
Weissberg (1993)	Exploration of the graduate seminar as a speech event and its specific task demands on NNSs	Ten NNSs presenting in graduate seminars in the departments of animal science and agronomy	qualitative approach
Tracy (1997)	In depth exploration of the activity of departmental colloquium as a dilemmatic situation	Faculty and graduate students in the communication department at a large U.S. university	qualitative approach

Other studies that I have already briefly reviewed in an earlier section in this chapter have also focused on oral academic talk: Duff (1995, 1996), Morita (2000), and Niiyama

(1997). All of these studies also highlighted the need to further investigate issues surrounding oral academic discourse. Accordingly, the present study attempts to fill a gap in the literature by exploring the perception and performance of academic presentations by NNSs taking graduate courses at a large western Canadian university. Although previous studies have investigated oral academic discourse such as oral presentations, the graduate seminar, and speeches across different institutions and levels, and including a variety of NNS language and culture backgrounds, the novelty of the present study resides in the investigation of academic presentations across different fields or disciplines.

3

METHODOLOGY

3.1 A Qualitative Approach

In order to address the research questions that guided this study I employed a qualitative approach, including some ethnographic techniques. This approach involves direct contact between the researcher and those participating in the study: "People everywhere learn their culture by observing other people, listening to them, and then *making inferences*. The ethnographer employs this same process of going beyond what is seen and heard to *infer* what people know" (Spradley, 1979, p. 8, emphasis in the original). I assumed that in order to comprehend APs from a *holistic* perspective (Watson-Gegeo, 1988), the best way I could do it was by getting as close as possible to the participants in the AP situations.

Among the researchers that have chosen language socialization as the theoretical framework for their studies, most have used qualitative approaches (e.g., Duff, 1995; Mohan & Marshall Smith, 1992; Morita, 2000; Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986; Willett, 1995). This is because of the ethnographic focus on rich descriptions of sustained and situated cultural practices in most language socialization work. Qualitative approaches have been adopted lately by many L2 researchers, rather than (or in conjunction with) traditional quantitative approaches to research because qualitative research places greater emphasis on contexts and interpretations of social practice (e.g., Davis, 1995; Johnson, 1992).

Ethnography is one of the qualitative methodologies currently most popular among qualitative L2 researchers (Crago, 1992). This study cannot be defined as truly ethnographic (due to its short duration, and the reduced amount of data gathered from each participant and context); however, I did employ some ethnographic techniques. In qualitative approaches, researchers are encouraged to seek a variety of information in order to be able to perform a *triangulation* of data. According to Miller (1997), “[t]riangulation assumes that looking at an object from more than one standpoint provides researchers and theorists with more comprehensive knowledge about the object” (p. 25), thus helping to ensure research credibility. Accordingly, I went to the field and observed and tape-recorded participants in the act of presenting, while I also observed the human and physical context in which the APs took place. In addition, I interviewed participants to gain a broader understanding of the task by accessing the participants’ perspectives on what had occurred. All this took place within a period of four months (i.e., over the duration of one academic term in which students were taking their courses).

3.2 Participants and Context of Exploration

This study took place at a large western Canadian university with a high enrollment of international graduate students.⁶ As well, this university offers 94 Masters programs, and 71 Ph.D. programs across a great variety of disciplines.⁷ The popularity of this institution, plus the broad spectrum of fields of study available serve as an attraction to not only national students, but also to a large body of international students who leave their countries

⁶ Just as a reference, according to the statistics on international students information provided to me by International House at WCU, in Winter term 2000 -2001 (the period during which data for this study were gathered) there were 309 new international students registered in graduate programs at WCU.

⁷ This information can be retrieved from WCU’s Faculty of Graduate Studies home page.

to come to Canada and pursue their graduate studies at WCU. Of particular interest is the fact that international students come from countries all over the world, implying a large sociocultural and linguistic diversity. Hence, this proved to be an ideal setting to carry out a language socialization project.

Participants (graduate students and instructors) were selected according to the following pre-established criteria: (a) the courses should be at the graduate level, offered at WCU; (b) APs should be one of the tasks students would have to perform some time during the course; (c) there should be at least one NNS in the course; (d) course instructors should feel comfortable with the idea of providing me access to their classes; (e) a majority of the students in the class should be willing to give me access to the class. I ensured that nobody would feel uncomfortable with my presence in the classroom, or with my use of a recorder to audio-tape the APs (whenever I was given permission to do so by both the student in question and the course instructor).

After preparing a preliminary list containing ten courses that could potentially be part of the study, I decided to contact the corresponding course instructors and share with them the main characteristics and goals of this study. In the meantime, I obtained approval from the Research Ethical Review Board at WCU to proceed.

Once I received the instructors' approval, I approached students in the different courses, normally on the first day of classes. On this occasion, I would introduce myself briefly, as well as the goals and characteristics of the project, and a detailed description of what the student involvement would consist of. In all cases, I would leave the students with a copy of the Informed Consent Form (see Appendix A) for their consideration. I would then return the following class to collect signed forms, and find out whether or not students

were in common agreement to allow me to observe their APs.⁸ Following WCU's ethical review guidelines, I assured participants that I would employ pseudonyms for their names and for the courses in all cases. (Accordingly, none of the participants' real names were used in this study, and although the course labels I employed are real, the course numbers are fictional.) In the end, I was given access to seven graduate courses in three different faculties (see Table 3.1), and was able to obtain approval from a total of 55 students⁹ and nine course instructors.

Table 3.1 Faculty Clusters, Number of Students, and Participants

Faculty	Course	Number of NSs in the course	Number of NNSs in the course	NS participants	NNS participants	Instructors
FM	BIOC 600	12	3	8	2	1
	NRSC 605	22	5	12	3	2
FA	HIST 510	9	3	6	3	2
	ANTH 610	10	1	9	1	1
	FREN 600	3	2	2	2	1
FAS	EECE 510	-	3	-	3 ^a	1
	EECE 512	-	5	-	5	1
Total number of participants				37	18	9

a. One participant was taking both courses: EECE 510 and EECE 512. Hence, although the participant is counted twice in the table so as to show the number of participants per course, for the total number of participants s/he is counted just once.

As can be observed from the information in Table 3.1, the NS participants amply outnumbered the NNS participants. This is only logical given the fact that in all cases--with

⁸ It was up to the course instructor to decide how they would reach a verdict. In come cases, I was informed that the students had voted for or against my presence, regardless of whether all or only some of the students would be directly involved in the project. In other cases, although no in-class voting took place, I still made sure nobody felt perturbed by my being there as an observer.

⁹ Participants (in the case of students) are considered to be those of whom I had the chance to, at least, observe their APs. For a detailed list of all participants please refer to Appendix D.

the exception of FAS courses, where 100% of the students were NNSs--national students were in the majority. Although for the purpose of this study I will mostly refer to data gathered from NNSs, I still decided to include the NS participants in the table in order to provide the reader with a clear image of the course population in each case.

3.3 Data Collection Procedures

All data were gathered within an intensive four-month period (from September to December, 2000). This was the first term of the academic year 2000-2001, and for some students it was the first term at WCU. In order to collect the data, I chose to attend every class (whenever possible) in each of the seven courses I selected for the study. For this to be physically and temporally possible, I had to ensure there was no overlapping of timetables, and that I was at a reasonable walking distance from each classroom to reach the setting in time, thereby avoiding class interruptions.

As already mentioned, triangulation of data was sought in this study. Spradley (1979) maintains that "[i]n doing field work, ethnographers make cultural inferences from three sources: (1) from what people say; (2) from the way people act; and (3) from the artifacts people use" (p. 8). Hence, in order to obtain information that addresses these three sources, a variety of data was collected in this study.

Participants were interviewed after they performed their respective APs, and they were invited to share with me any comments or opinions they had (they could do this any time by phone, e-mail, or in person before or after class.) I assumed the role of an observer in the class during the students' presentations, tape-recorded their APs, and took fieldnotes

of my observations and interpretations of acts and discourse. The artifacts I collected included course outlines, student prepared handouts, and peer evaluation sheet matrices.

Although I had designed a questionnaire to be completed by students, I realized it would be too great an imposition, given their already heavy workload and their agreement to be interviewed. The fact that participants were generally so forthcoming in their interviews also led me to decide to leave out the questionnaire. What follows in the next sections is a detailed description of the different kinds of data collected for this study.

3.3.1 Observations, Fieldnotes and Audio-recordings of APs

In all, I had the opportunity to observe 56 different APs in the seven courses I had access to. Whenever possible,¹⁰ I would choose to sit in a place in the room where I had a good vision of not only the presenter, but also the audience. This would give me a chance to witness first hand whatever presenters and their audience (including instructors) experienced during the different APs. I tried to focus not only on the discourse taking place, but also on the gestures, postures, and reactions of presenters and the audience in the act of performing or listening to an AP. I kept a written record of this descriptive information in a special notebook for each course. Next to the descriptive information I also included my own interpretations of what was happening in each case. This kind of systematized double entry proved to facilitate and enhance the stage of data analysis, for a broader scope of

¹⁰ Unfortunately, not all APs I observed were audio-recorded. In most cases this was due to lack of consent from either the student participants or the instructor; in two other cases the data was lost due to a technical problem. I avoided future technical problems by employing a back-up system using two tape recorders simultaneously. Among other difficulties with the collection of this kind of data is the fact that the room size in which recordings were made, the setting's acoustics, and my ability to locate the microphones close enough to the speakers also affected the quality of the tapes.

information was included. Provided I was given the students' and instructors' consent, I tape-recorded these presentations. As Silverman (1993) contends,

audio-recordings are an increasingly important part of qualitative research. Transcripts of such recordings based on standardized convention, provide an excellent record of 'naturally occurring' interaction. Compared to fieldnotes of observational data, recordings and transcripts can offer a highly reliable record to which researchers can return as they develop new hypotheses. (p.11)

Recorded data thus becomes "an essential corrective to the limitations of intuition and recollection" (Heritage, 1984, p. 238), helping to minimize the influence of personal preconceptions or analytical biases, and allowing other researchers and readers to have direct access to the data about which claims are being made. In the data analysis stage of this research project, I transcribed those sections that I considered relevant to sustain the claims I was making about the AP experience and its relationship to the language socialization of graduate students into the academic milieu. It is from this data that any theory or conclusions can be derived.

Table 3.2 summarizes the information related to the number of APs observed and how many of these observations were tape-recorded.

Table 3.2 Observations and Audio-recordings of APs

Faculty	Course	NS APs observed	NNS APs observed	NS APs recorded	NNS APs recorded
FM	BIOC 600	8	2	6	2
	NRSC 605	12	3	0	0
FA	HIST 510	6	3	6	2
	ANTH 610	9	1	0	0
	FREN 600	2	2	2	2
FAS	EECE 510	0	3	0	3
	EECE 512	0	5	0	5
Totals		37	19	14	14

3.3.2 Audio Recorded Open-Ended Interviews

To complement the kind of information collected through observations of APs, I invited participants to engage in an open-ended interview. The aim of this interview was to further explore the AP experience and how it affected graduate students from the moment they commenced preparation of their AP, to the moment they delivered it and immediately after. I chose to include data from interviews in this study since I share the view that research is a “social production symbolically negotiated between researcher and participant” (Goetz & LeCompte, 1984, p. 57). As Block (2000) further highlights, “interview data are not seen as the production of an individual interviewee but as the co-construction of interviewer and interviewee” (p. 759). Block notes that interview data become the “voices adopted by research participants in response to the researcher’s prompts and questions” (p. 759), thus making us aware that our prompting during the interview, and our personal relationship with the interviewee inevitably shape the resulting responses. As researchers relying on interview data to write up our studies, it is imperative that we are conscious of the fact that the voices we hear from our participants are always context-dependent. In spite of these arguments of caution, interview data still prove to be most helpful minimizing researcher bias and providing the possibility to re-access the information in its “raw” form. As Silverman (1993) puts it, “[i]nterviews share with any account an involvement in moral realities. They offer a rich source of data which provide access to how people account for both their troubles and good fortune” (p. 114).

The interviews conducted for this study were semi-structured around open-ended questions (see Appendix B for a list of sample interview questions for students and instructors). With this list of questions in mind, I would initiate the interview and from then on

listen to what participants chose to say. As Silverman (1993) indicates, “[a]uthenticity’ rather than reliability is often the issue in qualitative research. The aim is usually to gather ‘authentic’ understanding of people’s experiences and it is believed that ‘open-ended’ questions are the most effective route towards this end” (p.10). Whenever the conversation was straying too far away from the research focus of this study, I would ask a question that brought the participants back to the original focus.

Even though all graduate students and their instructors were invited to take part in an interview, not everybody was able to do so. In some cases, this was due to the tight schedule students had; in other cases, it was just a matter of personal reasons for not becoming involved a step further in the project. Still, the number of students and instructors that agreed to be interviewed was quite large (n=41), and this enhanced the representativeness of the population under study. Table 3.3 summarizes the descriptive information as to the number of students and instructors interviewed.

Table 3.3 Participants Interviewed

Faculty	Course	NS interviewed	NNS interviewed	Instructors interviewed
FM	BIOC 600	8 ^a	2	1
	NRSC 605	4	2 ^b	0
FA	HIST 510	5	3	2
	ANTH 610	2	1	0
	FREN 600	1	2	0
FAS	EECE 510	0	3 ^c	1
	EECE 512	0	3	1
Totals		20	16	5

a. In the case of all participants in this course, interviews were conducted in dyads, as was convenient for the participants.

b. Two NNSs were interviewed in this course. However, recorded data is only available from one of these interviews, since the second participant chose not to be audio-recorded.

c. As already indicated in Table 3.1, one participant was observed in both EECE courses, but interviewed only once. Consequently, although 4 participants in course EECE 510 were interviewed, only 3 should be counted as the final number.

Interviews, whenever possible, were audio-recorded. Once again, the opportunity of listening repeatedly to mechanically recorded data is a great advantage to the researcher. As noted on the table footnotes, in case participants felt uncomfortable with recordings of their voices, no audio-recordings were made. Fortunately, this occurred only once.

Regarding the times and settings in which interviews took place, these were conducted either in the classroom or in the outside surroundings, or in the student's office. Normally students were interviewed right after they delivered their APs (once the class was finished and dismissed, of course). If this was not suitable for the participants, both of us would agree to meet on a special date, in a place of the participant's choice (generally the participant's office room or any other public place on WCU campus).

Interviews with instructors were conducted once the courses were over. In all cases, interviews took place in either the classroom or the instructor's office room. The average interview length was 20 minutes, though interviews ranged from as short as ten minutes to as long as 45 minutes.

3.3.3 Collection of Written Documents Around APs

Written documents were collected whenever they seemed to be relevant to the APs. Course outlines were one kind of documentation collected; these usually provided a description of the AP task. Course handouts prepared by students were also collected, though students did not prepare these in all courses. Finally, in one course the instructor

provided students with a peer evaluation sheet. A copy of this sheet was collected, and students were specifically asked to refer to this type of evaluation in their interviews.¹¹

3.4 Transcription Procedures and Conventions

As already mentioned, a large amount of data was audio-recorded. Of this data, all interviews were transcribed, and some relevant sections of APs were transcribed as well. Transcription of interviews was done while data was still being collected, and finished almost a month after. This was done close in time to the actual APs and interviews so that my own still fresh recollections of what had occurred in each situation would speed up the transcription process. The transcription conventions employed are detailed in Appendix C.

3.5 Data Analysis

One characteristic of qualitative research is its iterative nature. This term, according to Palys (1997), connotes a cyclical (though not merely repetitive) process, where increasing sophistication and change are implied. Data analysis is at the core of any empirical study:

Exploration and description are not, after all, simply ends in themselves; they're the processes through which one identifies those elements that are important to investigate further, and the description one engages in should be of those elements that are most integral to developing explanations about the phenomenon of interest. (p. 299)

¹¹ Regarding the assessment of students, I believe this would have been a very interesting aspect to explore in further detail. However, given that feedback was provided to students mostly at the end of the course (and thus I did not have access to it in all cases), and also given that the kind of feedback students sometimes received was very vague, I decided I did not have sufficient information to analyze assessment issues in this study.

There are several suggested ways of analyzing data. To go from a description to an explanation/exploratory phase of the study, I followed Huberman and Miles' (1994) suggestion of identifying patterns, themes and clusters that emerged from the data. As I went through the data, I first looked for salient themes that repeated themselves. I also noted those outstanding cases which, though not repeated, might also serve to make a special relevant point. After noting the main themes, I developed a coding category and went through the data again and again, marking each unit (stretch of transcribed discourse, my own notes) with the appropriate category. I noticed that some units of data overlapped, and some other units would fit into more than one category. According to Bogdan and Bilken (1992), this is what usually occurs in the first steps of data analysis.

After returning repeatedly to transcripts or other documentation in order to reread and reexamine the data searching for salient or recurring themes, and after coding the data, the next step involved organizing those themes in a way that they would portray a logic and serve as an argument to sustain the claims made as a result of this study. The categorization of patterns or themes is thus presented not on its own, but accompanied by quotes, documents, or descriptions representative of those patterns, and this is done with the aim of enhancing the credibility of this report. In a more advanced stage of data analysis, comparisons among different faculties and courses were performed.

In sum, through a systematic, deep analysis of the task of APs within the context of each graduate course at WCU, the aim of this work was to shed light on the relationship between this task and the role it played in the language socialization of graduate students into the academic world.

4

APS IN THE FACULTY OF MEDICINE

If we are going to stay in the field of science, we have to get comfortable, 'cause this is just a tiny little forum, I don't know what's gonna be like in the future, giving talks to nearly 500 people or so!

(Interview, Bettina, BIOC 600)

4.1 Situating the Task

Bettina's words above emphasize the need students have to become comfortable presenters. As incoming members to the broader scientific community, students are aware that part of their job implies sharing their research and learning about other colleagues' research as well. Thus, looking at the APs that students performed in medicine courses will shed some light on the language socialization experiences students went through as they tried to learn how to gain access to the larger community of scientists.

In order to gain a better understanding of how APs may be understood as an important component that facilitates the discourse socialization of graduate students, we need to examine the task within the specific contexts in which its meanings are constructed. Hence, what follows is an attempt at situating APs within the specific classroom context in which presentations took place.

From September to December 2000, I observed two different courses offered by the Faculty of Medicine: one in Biochemistry (BIOC 600) and the other in Neuroscience

(NRSC 605). BIOC 600 was an elective (but highly popular) course for students in either the masters or Ph.D. program. Consequently, the student population was usually quite large compared to other optional courses offered in the same department (in this case there were 15 students in the class: 12 NSs and three NNSs). The course instructor, Dr. Morgan, had eight years of experience teaching this course, and this was the fourth year he included APs as one of the tasks to be fulfilled by students.¹² Classes took place twice a week (Tuesdays and Thursdays) for 1.5 hours each time. APs were one form of student assessment for this course, representing 20% of the final course grade; other assignments students were required to do are summarized in Table 4.1:

Table 4.1 Faculty of Medicine Tasks

Course	Tasks	Grade% ^a
BIOC 600	- oral presentation	20%
	- draft contribution to a field-specific project based on the AP	20%
	- research proposal	50%
	- attendance and class contributions	10%
NRSC 605	- class participation in four modules	10%
	- written critique	10%
	- oral presentation of critique	5%
	- [name of] assignment	25%
	- final exam	50%

a. No other criteria was provided or specified besides the grade percentage students could be granted for their APs.

NRSC 605 was a core course for graduate students. It was structured in four modules, with a different module director in each case.¹³ The student population in NRSC 605 was comprised of 27 graduate students: 22 NSs and five NNSs. Classes took place three

¹² Another professor (Dr. Klum) at WCU was invited by Dr. Morgan in order to teach one module of this course during a three-week period. Four student APs in BIOC 600 were delivered while Dr. Klum was in charge, and Dr. Morgan was not present in the classroom during this period. Still, Dr. Morgan was responsible for assigning the AP grade to all students.

¹³ Given that I observed presentations during two modules, for the purpose of this study I will just refer to two (out of the four) instructors in this course: Dr. Thompson and Dr. Stevens.

times a week for two hours each time. APs in this course were worth a maximum of 5% of the final course grade. A detail of the other required tasks in this course is included in Table 4.1.

4.2 On the Surface Level: Descriptive Features of APs in Medicine

Besides situating APs within the corresponding classroom contexts, we also need to look at the descriptive features that help define the task on its surface level. Therefore, what follows is a brief characterization of APs in both BIOC 600 and NRSC 605. I will make reference to aspects such as AP regularity (e.g., whether it was a one-time event, or an ongoing event), AP length, number of presenters per date, AP format and style.

4.2.1 APs in BIOC 600

The course lasted a total of 12 weeks in all. APs in BIOC 600 started on week three of the course and extended until week ten, with a two-week interruption period in between--weeks seven and eight--where no student APs were performed. APs were usually performed on Thursdays, except for one case.¹⁴ Thus, APs were ongoing in the sense that they were not just one-time event, but rather they became a basic pattern for Thursday classes, for a period of seven weeks. Out of 15 APs in this course I was able to observe ten. Two of these were given by NNSs, and the remaining eight by NSs of English.

¹⁴ Unfortunately, I was not informed of this change in schedule and thus missed the AP performed on this date.

The APs in this course were supposed to follow a format specified by the instructor upon commencement of the course. According to this format, APs should take around 25 minutes, plus a ten-minute question period. Consequently, each presentation date there was enough time for only two presentations. As can be observed in Table 4.2, APs in BIOC 600 lasted an average of 36.3 minutes.

Table 4.2 AP Length - BIOC 600

Shortest AP	25 minutes
Longest AP	43 minutes
Mean	36.3 minutes

The style in which APs were performed could be defined, according to my observation of the presenters' behaviors and procedures, as moderately formal. Presenters attempted to stick to the prescribed 35-minute limit, but even if they went overtime, the instructor would not interrupt the AP. In all cases, presenters stood at the front of the room for the whole period, giving the event a certain touch of formality. The instructor would usually sit at one side of the room, close to the rest of the audience but in a relatively visible place. The audience would remain in complete silence during the AP, and once the question period commenced, students took turns to ask questions. This kind of pattern repeated itself almost identically for the ten APs I observed. It should be noted, though, that while for the first three weeks of APs the classroom atmosphere seemed to be quite tense and ceremonial (manifested through complete silence not only while the presenter was speaking, but also during the question period where only two of the students that were in the audience would usually ask questions; absence of jokes or ice breakers; tense faces among presenters and audience), towards the middle and end of the presentation schedule the classroom atmo-

sphere loosened up and more fluid interaction between presenters and the audience started to take place.

4.2.2 APs in NRSC 605

In the case of NRSC 605, APs were given on three specific dates (Oct. 20, Nov. 20, and Dec. 8), which coincided with the end of modules two, three and four respectively. Regular lectures were not given on these particular dates, when as many as nine students were scheduled to deliver their APs each class. Hence, APs in this course could be identified as a three-time event. I was able to observe a total of 15 presentations in NRSC 605: eight on Oct. 20 (while Dr. Thompson was in charge) and seven APs on Nov. 20 (while Dr. Stevens was in charge). While 12 APs I observed were delivered by NSs of English, three were given by NNSs.

With regard to the format of APs in this course, students were required to strictly follow the instructions detailed in the course outline:

Present a 10 min synopsis of this critique to the class. There will be 5 min. for discussion at the end. You can show up to 5 overheads if you want. For the presentation start with point #3 (do not state the summary #2). Convince the class that this subject is worth studying. Also state the hypotheses that are tested and the experiments that test the hypotheses. Then discuss the limitations and the possible future directions and experiments. You may want to select some provocative points to stimulate discussion with the rest of the class. As the presenter you will field the questions. The instructors will wait until after the students ask their questions before they raise their hands. Therefore, a good presentation will stimulate discussion among the students with minimal if any involvement (questions) from the instructors.

(NRSC 605 course outline, p. 3)

In all, each presenter was allowed 15 minutes and was entitled to use up to a maximum of five overhead transparencies. From my observations, instructions detailed above

were followed precisely by most students.¹⁵ All the APs performed on Oct. 20 were even timed with an alarm clock. Once the alarm rang, students had to move on the next stage (e.g., from presenting to answering questions) or to the next presenter. Given that as many as nine presenters presented on each date, for practical reasons and out of respect to all presenters the timing was strictly enforced (see Table 4.3 for details on AP length in NRSC 605).

Table 4.3 AP Length - NRSC 605

Shortest AP	15 minutes
Longest AP	20 minutes
Mean	15.33 minutes

In cases where presenters disregarded the time limit, Dr. Thompson intervened. For instance, Mark (NS) was asked a question and when he was about to respond, the alarm rang. Mark started to answer, but after 45 seconds he was stopped by the instructor who signalled the end of Mark's AP by saying: "I think you should stop" (fieldnotes, Mark, NRSC 605), and started clapping. In another instance when the alarm system was not used, Carla went five minutes overtime before Dr. Stevens thought it appropriate and interrupted: "Thanks, but I think we have to push on" (field notes, Dr. Stevens, NRSC 605).

With regard to the style of APs, from the information I gathered through the observation of APs, these were delivered in a quite formal manner, timing and format being strictly respected. The silent expectant classroom atmosphere, plus the fact that presenters stood in front of the class and were considered for those 15 minutes as experts on the topic added to the formality of the event. In addition to the thoroughly paced and structured way

¹⁵ Out of the 15 APs I observed, only one student failed to comply with the five overhead limit rule, and two students went a few minutes overtime during the five minute question period.

of the APs, jokes or ice breakers were mostly absent and perceived by most presenters as a waste of time (this opinion was gathered from informal conversation with students).

4.3 Underneath the Surface: Essential Aspects that Help Define APs in Medicine

At first glance, APs in BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 look quite contrastive: BIOC 600 APs were ongoing, 30 minutes long, with two presenters per day, allowing for more casual interaction (though it did not necessarily occur) and plenty of discussion. On the other hand, APs in NRSC 605 were strictly timed, did not exceed 15 minutes, with nine presenters per day, and they were a three-time event. However, these superficial, more descriptive features of APs do not necessarily define the essence of APs in Medicine. This becomes evident as I discuss the content of APs, the purposes they fulfil, the linguistic demands they pose on presenters, and the qualities valued in the discipline. If we look closely at these latter aspects, we will discover that they are mostly shared by both courses in the Faculty of Medicine. Such an overlap is not the result of sheer coincidence, but I would rather argue that these features that underlie APs in both BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 help construct the meaning of the task within the context of the Faculty of Medicine.

4.3.1 The Content of APs

The kind of content students were requested to present in BIOC 600 as well as in NRSC 605 was that of a research article. Each article would typically include details of the research study background, methodology, with a main emphasis generally on the different experiments performed and the results of these experiments. Figures, photographs, and

tables illustrated these experiments. A section outlining the findings and contributions of the research study was also part of the article. While BIOC 600 students were requested to present the whole article, including some critical comments, NRSC 605 students were asked to concentrate on their critique of the published work. Still, students in both courses were faced with the same type of material: the research article.

The choice of content is associated with the usual kind of task demanded from scientists in the “real” world: Scientists are used to reading, examining, and criticizing each others’ experimental work. Thus, the APs in BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 represented a good chance for students to rehearse a kind of task they will most certainly be exposed to repeatedly in their careers.

4.3.2 The Sequence Patterns of APs

Each AP can be described in terms of the sequence around which it is organized as well. The internal organization of APs consists of a number of stages, each of which signals a different moment of the presentation. Thus, we can identify a template sequence followed by students in each course. The AP sequence around which BIOC 600 students organized their APs included the stages shown in Figure 4.1:

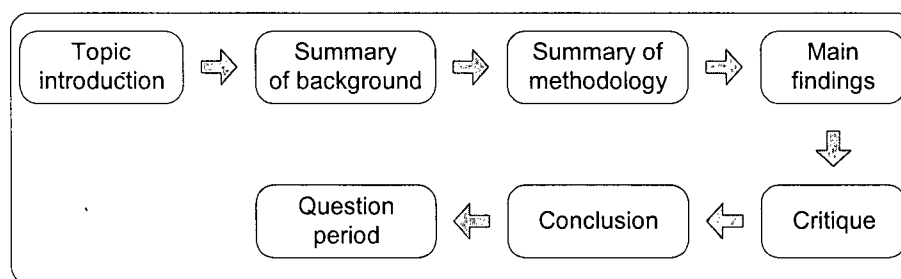


Figure 4.1 AP Sequence - BIOC 600

The standard sequence that all NRSC 605 students followed to organize and deliver their APs is shown in Figure 4.2:

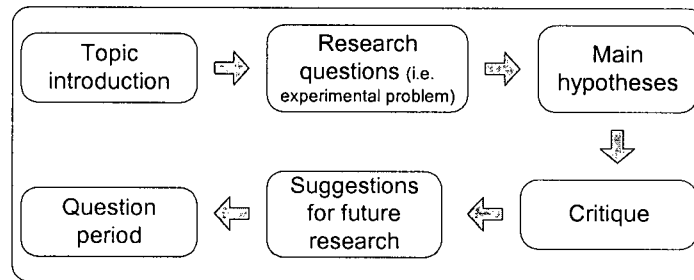


Figure 4.2 AP Sequence - NRSC 605

Though both sequences differ in terms of some of the stages included, it can also be argued that some main sequence components are very similar. In both courses, students were asked to introduce the topic, present the work of the paper's authors, criticize this work, and finally lead a question period. Once again, this served as a kind of exercise to gain practice and expertise in the task of critically analyzing somebody else's work.

Even though students paid attention to the standard AP sequence in BIOC 600 and NRSC 605, the amount of time and the kind of emphasis each presenter put on each stage varied from presenter to presenter. For instance, in some cases the presenters chose to include a very brief summary of the background and devote more time to the presentation of methodological issues and findings. In other cases, the summary of methodology was extremely brief, and the emphasis was placed on the findings and critique of the research article. The critique stage was sometimes not obvious as a stage, but rather the presenter chose to include some critical comments throughout the presentation (e.g., when describing the methodology, some critical comments were also introduced by the presenter). This vari-

ability represents the local, personal nature of how the task is constructed, perceived, and enacted by each individual. Even if the students were provided with specific instructions as to how to organize their AP, it was up to them to finally determine how to structure and deliver their presentations.

4.3.3 The Purpose(s) of APs

The choice of APs as a required assignment was not haphazard. Presentations in both BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 were included as a task with a set of purposes. Some of these purposes were explicitly stated (e.g., in the course outline), while other purposes were not overtly expressed, but were nonetheless in the minds of instructors and students.

Dr. Morgan, the BIOC 600 instructor, viewed APs as a great opportunity to stimulate in students the ability to critically evaluate existing research. This was perceived as the main purpose APs fulfilled, and as can be appreciated from the instructor's own comments, it was a very crucial one:

*I think there are ... several aims that I have in the course. (...) the actual content is - it's important but it's not the only objective? ... for me, the most important things that the students - should get out of the course are- the opportunity to - critically evaluate - pieces of information. And then do two different things: one is tell other people about it - and second it's to write a report - which - expresses their ideas on the topic. Because I think that those are - two central activities ... that they have to develop in order to function - in science. Basically they have to - think critically, and they have to - communicate their ideas - both orally and in written form. So that's the main reason ... the oral presentations is one of the major parts - of what I think are the major skills that the students should be working on. (...) the most important factor is that they are working on things that are gonna be helpful in their graduate program? That's - the major rationale for having presentations.*¹⁶
(Interview, Dr. Morgan, BIOC 600)

¹⁶ Words in italics are used to draw attention to a particular segment that is the focus of an analytic point. (Refer to Appendix C for a summary of transcription conventions.)

Dr. Morgan also mentioned that the two kinds of assignments he usually requires students to do in this course (i.e., the oral presentation and the written report) are two activities or skills students have to be completely familiar with in order to fully function in the academic community and in the world of science.

Taking into consideration the expectations for APs in NRSC 605, it can also be concluded that the major objective for having this task in this course was to allow students to prepare themselves for a type of scientific activity. Students were well aware of this purpose, and recognized the need to practice giving APs in order to acquire the necessary presentation skills to be successful at professional or academic conferences, for instance. As described by Mark (NS), APs were highly justified in this course, given that the need to present in front of classmates and instructors provides an opportunity for practicing:

You know, for uh, I think it is for students, 'cause you can see, you know, when *you look around and watch people, you can tell that people - there's a fairly high level of inexperience? giving talks?* And - I see this is you know the same thing for physicians too? You know, some people are very comfortable - I think what most people - I think what people probably don't -uh - realize it that - uh - that *preparation is really a big deal, practicing it is a big deal,* and that uh - ya.

(Interview, Mark, NRSC 605)

Other classmates also stated that APs in a graduate course provided an excellent chance to practice in order to decrease the level of nervousness in future presentations.

Anne (NS) indicated the following:

I think *it's good too because - throughout our academic career - or - any career that we have - we may be presenting. So maybe in your undergrad you might leave with only two presentations, and you just don't have the experience, and you're totally nervous and you have to learn on the spot?* But having the practice - (...) That, I mean, I used to get nervous before I went up there? But now [I don't any more].

(Interview, Anne, NRSC 605)

Forcing students to organize their thoughts carefully was one of the hidden goals for doing APs in NRSC 605. Lisa (NS) mentioned that

one thing I found really good about this kind of presentation of the critique was that it really forces you to make sure that you know, you're really sure that you're gonna get that material well, because there's gonna be some experts there, and you must talk about something that you have just learned.

(Interview, Lisa, NRSC 605)

Some participants stated that NNSs were at a disadvantage, given that they were supposed to present in English, their L2, and this might hinder the way the AP was perceived. It was in this kind of situations where APs also served as a good chance to practice not only the skills, but also the kind of interaction and behavior expected from a presenter in an English speaking environment such as that of WCU. As expressed by Robert (NS):

Certainly some people in this class are in a big disadvantage. They're excellent students and really they know the material, uh, but - I mean it's the reality of doing graduate work in Canada, I guess if they're gonna be here they're gonna have to present his material in English. So I guess it was an important exercise for them, but I think it was difficult.

(Interview, Robert, NRSC 605)

In sum, APs in Medicine fulfilled a multiplicity of purposes. They provided students with an opportunity to practice public speaking and thus helped them become more effective presenters in the future. APs also helped them decrease their level of nervousness, and forced students to know well the material (as opposed to just reading it without pressure). To NNSs, APs represented the additional challenge/chance of presenting in a foreign language. Thus, NNSs could see APs as an opportunity to practice the English language itself. Above all purposes, since APs are quite essential in science, both BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 seemed to offer a great opportunity for students to gain expertise in this task.

4.3.4 Discourse Features of APs

Besides being familiar with the course expectations, in order to prepare and deliver the APs, students needed to be familiar with the appropriate disciplinary terminology. For example, APs in medicine were characterized by the use of technical scientific language. Thus, anybody without knowledge of this kind of terminology would not be able to either present or make much sense of what was being said. It was this particular feature of APs that represented a definite challenge to NNSs.

4.3.4.1 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Perceived Through Observations

In this case, NNSs seemed to be at an obvious disadvantage when compared to their NS peers. On top of all the demands posed to presenters when preparing for and delivering an AP, those who had not previously studied in English-speaking environments struggled with the English language per se.

As I observed José, Sohan, Lin, Elena and Carl doing their presentations, I could not fail to notice almost immediately after their opening words that this task was demanding for all of them, not only in terms of the content and organization, but also in terms of the linguistic demands it represented for each of these five NNSs of English.

(a) José, a student whose first language was Spanish, delivered his AP in a carefully rehearsed (word by word) fashion. He rarely paused, or included “filler” words/phrases (such as “Ok, let’s see now”, or “So that’s...”), which his NS peers would use pervasively. His frequent use of passive constructions resembled those found in written texts, not oral texts. His limited choice of transitional words (he kept on using “also, then, after that”), though correctly used, probably reflected that his linguistic repertoire was not as broad as that of his NS peers. In addition to this, José also had to cope with the strong effect of his Spanish accent, a challenge by no means to be overlooked. (Some of his NS peers commented in their interviews that José’s accent had actually made it hard for them to follow his presentation, and even though he had managed to convey the message, it required extra effort and patience.)

(b) Sohan came from India. His main linguistic drawback was his strong Punjabi accent, which interfered slightly at times impeding easy understanding (i.e., the audience was forced to think and find out what he was attempting to say). He tended to rush his speech on some occasions, and whereas if he had done this in his L1 his speech would not have been obscured, by rushing his talk in English his words became blurry and difficult to understand. Though he had more experience speaking English in his home country than José (who was actually giving a presentation in English for the first time in his life), Sohan's linguistic competence did not match that of his NS peers.

(c) Lin, a young woman from China who could barely communicate orally in English, obviously struggled throughout the whole AP. Lin did not only have problems pronouncing the technical terminology in English, but she also struggled to make grammatically correct sentences, let alone try to sound natural or comfortable speaking in English. During the question period, Lin was not able to understand most of the questions she was being asked, and therefore she had to request her peers to rephrase them. In two out of five cases, she was not able to respond due to a linguistic misunderstanding.

(d) Elena, a young woman from Poland, managed to deliver her AP in a precise (i.e., correct grammar) yet very tense manner. She seemed to have learned her talk by heart, since on three occasions she stopped for brief moments and tried to remember the words she had thought of using for her AP. Thus, her rehearsed style of talk evidenced her lack of confidence speaking in her L2, and her strategies to compensate for that.

(e) Carl was a German student. Although he seemed to be quite comfortable speaking English (with a more informal style of talk and even more nativelike patterns of intonation and pronunciation), at some points during his presentation he was forced to rephrase the same idea more than three times, for he seemed to struggle in order to find the correct wording to convey his ideas. (This is something that seemed to bother him, for in the interview he made explicit reference to how presenting in his L2 forced him to be repetitive.) It was on occasions like these that his linguistic struggles were made obvious.

Unfortunately, I did not have a chance to tape-record any of the APs in NRSC 605.

Hence, I am not able to include any transcriptions of extracts from APs given in this course.

However, my fieldnotes of students' APs are helpful in reconstructing a few episodes that help to illustrate the kind of situations in which NNSs struggled with their L2 proficiency.

For instance, in one case Lin read aloud a sentence on one of the overhead transparencies

she used. After reading the whole sentence, she stopped, looked back at the screen, and reread the sentence after noticing she had skipped a word (and thus, the sentence did not make any sense). Although this kind of situation could also occur to NSs of English, no doubt, in the case of Lin it was just one more instance in which her apparently lower English proficiency seemed to affect her delivery. As well, the fact that Lin relied heavily on her overhead transparencies throughout the entire AP (apparently avoiding glancing at the audience for fear she would get lost) seemed to indicate she felt insecure. Finally, her struggles to utter technical terms such as *regulation*, *synaptic*, *residue*, and *electrophysiology* revealed some of her pronunciation difficulties.

In the case of José and Sohan (both students in BIO 600), I was able to gather tape-recorded data from their APs. However, given that these two students seemed to have difficulties mainly associated with the influence of their L1 accent, these kind of struggles are complicated to illustrate in a written transcription. (Besides, they fall beyond the scope of linguistic analysis performed in this thesis.)

In the case of Sohan, he seemed to be quite comfortable presenting in English. This was most likely due to the fact that he had taught an undergraduate course in English while he was in India, his home country. On the other hand, since this was José's first AP in English, it was evident from his perceivable shaky tone that he was extremely nervous at the start of the event.

4.3.4.2 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Reported by Presenters

Students' perceptions of their own struggles coincided with my overall impressions. All five NNSs were conscious of the challenges they faced when presenting in a second language, and some of them were even worried about their situation.

José would have preferred to present in Spanish, his L1. In fact, since this was his first AP in English, he confessed he did not sleep for the 24 hours before the event, a situation that was very stressful. Though he did not seem too concerned with his use of English for everyday purposes, he did say that he needed a lot more practice with technical vocabulary.

According to Carl, presenting in his L2 prevented him from maximizing his potential to express his ideas succinctly. To him, speaking in English meant that he would inevitably face the problem of redundancy.

Sandra: So, going back to speaking English as a second language, do you think that it influenced the way that you presented? If you had made the same presentation but in Germany, would it have been a little bit different?

Carl: My presentation in German?

Sandra: Yeah. Would you have felt more comfortable, or the same?

Carl: Yeah, of course I could have said more in- in less words! yes. Yeah, you don't have the problem with redundancy then, it's more comfortable in your language, yeah.

(Interview, Carl, NRSC 605)

Consequently, presenting in his L1 would make him feel more comfortable.

One of the course instructors (Dr. Morgan, BIOC 600) acknowledged the fact that presenting in an L2 does have an influence on the way the presentation is perceived.

Though linguistic deficiencies can be partially compensated for with good visuals, and though the audience focuses mainly on the content of the presentation rather than on the

form, if presenters show a certain degree of linguistic struggle this will inevitably impact the delivery:

And, but you know, in a practical sense if *someone's control of language is not sufficient to get basic ideas across, then I think it's bound to influence the way that you perceive the presentation?* Uh - uh - I guess what I try to do is to still - assess the scientific thinking? as well as the actual presentation. (...) *And with a visual presentation you can get around with - a good clear diagram - a set of clear statements that would need some practice beforehand. So that's not a serious impediment - though it does have some influence.*

(Interview, Dr. Morgan, BIOG 600)

According to a NS peer, one of the main problems NNSs face comes down to understanding what the audience wants to know during the question period.

Sandra: Now, what about- one thing is what you present, and another thing is like the five minute question period. How do you think then - are they able to prepare for that question period?

Mark: That's like - that's a major problem, and *I've seen people at international conferences going out in flames during the question period - because of that. Partly because often times they don't even understand the question?* Uh - that's uh - that's actually very common. *They don't understand the question they are being asked, and secondly they are not confident to describe, you know.* And often times I find if their supervisor or somebody in their lab that speaks better English is in their audience at the time of the question period, it's useful. But *it's tough, that's the main problem.*

(Interview, Mark, NRSC 605)

Mark had actually observed many NNSs in situations--in other contexts--where they struggled to understand the questions they were being posed. Linguistic difficulties also implied in some cases that the presenters were not able to provide accurate responses.

4.4 Qualities Promoted in the Faculty of Medicine

Presenters in both courses tried to conform to the expected values promoted in their field. Students knew that for this task emphasis was to be placed on providing a good out-

line and critique of the article they were presenting. In order to do so, students needed to deploy the skills necessary to successfully get their message across, for sharing ideas and opinions are part of what it is to be a scientist.

Among the qualities valued and promoted in the Faculty of Medicine (as observed and mentioned by instructors and presenters) were the following (see Figure 4.3):

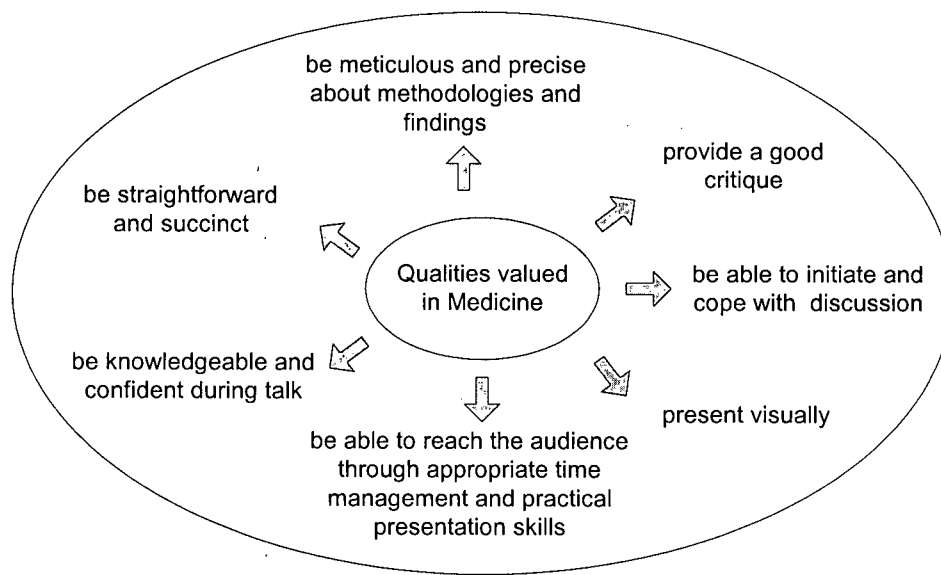


Figure 4.3 AP Qualities Valued in the Faculty of Medicine

While Figure 4.3 summarizes the qualities valued in the Faculty of Medicine, there are some behaviors that are discouraged in the field. Eluding the behaviors shown in Figure 4.4 was also promoted in BIOC 600 and NRSC 605:

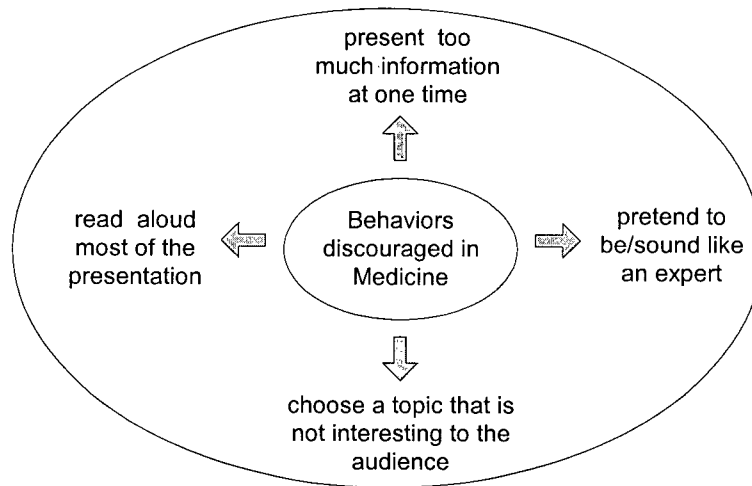


Figure 4.4 AP Behaviors Discouraged in the Faculty of Medicine

As long as presenters behaved according to the expected qualities valued in the courses, and provided that they avoided the behaviors discouraged in the discourse community, presenters' success was guaranteed. However, the issue of whether presenters were to adhere to these qualities or not warrants closer examination. To start with, qualities such as "being straightforward and succinct" may sound simple and easy to accomplish. Yet this is not the case for a vast majority of students, especially for those who come from cultural backgrounds and discourse communities where directness and explicitness in talk are to be discouraged. As well, "being able to spark a discussion and cope with it" was a job that some NNSs were just not ready to manage.

For instance, in the case of Lin, her inexperience giving talks in her own native Chinese added to her inexperience giving talks in English. In fact, during the interview Lin explained that people in China in the community of practice she belonged to were not used to giving presentations, and as a student she was not expected to promote discussion. On

the contrary, challenging authorities' opinions was viewed by Lin as a negative behavior. And to Lin, reading aloud sounded like a formal, acceptable way of presenting--yet reading aloud was completely discouraged in this new community of practice into which she was being immersed. Obviously, this kind of cultural educational background clashes with the Canadian educational context into which Lin was now negotiating access. Hence, in addition to the linguistic challenges Lin had to cope with, she was also learning about a different way of behaving in class: she was learning the Canadian way of being a graduate student of medicine.

We can say that for students like Lin, the process of language socialization as a graduate student in a Canadian university involves the process of multiple socialization Li (2000) talks about: socialization as a novice in a new study environment (Canada), and socialization as a novice operating within a new language (English) and culture (Faculty of Medicine graduate courses). Thus, though the linguistic challenges faced by NNSs were considerable, there were other kinds of challenges that this group of presenters had to cope with. In the next section I outline and discuss the kind of presentation strategies that students employed in order to approximate to the expected values promoted in the corresponding courses.

4.5 Strategies Employed by Presenters

The task of giving an AP involved students in a series of choices: presenters had to decide from the start how to tackle the assignment. This decision-making process is related to the conscious selection of strategies employed by students in order to organize and prepare the AP, and also at a later stage, to how they delivered the presentation. We can thus

identify two main groups of strategies students counted on to try to adhere to the expected behaviors in their community of practice: preparation strategies and delivery strategies. In the next two sections I will make reference to strategies employed by both NSs and NNSs, and I will distinguish as well those strategies that were exclusively employed by NNSs.

4.5.1 Preparation Strategies

Preparation strategies are related to the tactics students employed to make themselves ready for the event.

Prepare ahead of time

Most students expressed in their interviews that preparing an AP demanded time and effort. To manage to successfully complete the task, they started the AP preparation in advance. However, while NNSs in BIOG 600 took an average of six hours to prepare for their presentation (including reading the research article and preparing the talk and the transparencies), NNSs took an average of 25 hours. The same occurred with participants in NRSC 605: NSs needed an average of five hours to go through the article and then set up their AP, while the three NNSs in this course took about four times longer.

Consult undergrad textbook

A preparation strategy that one NS referred to was consulting an old textbook. "I had to go back to textbooks, quite a bit, like I went back to undergrad textbooks to see if I could pull out figures that would be relevant for explaining the stuff" (Interview, Joseph, BIOG 600). Perhaps international students would have done the same (i.e., consult their old textbooks/materials) if they had access to them.

Consult with an expert

Although most students seemed to be prepared enough to cope with the task by themselves with no additional support, one of the participants, a NNS, decided to contact one of the referenced authors in the article he had to present.

Practice

For students who were presenting in NRSC 605, time was a big issue. They were well aware that they would have to stick to the 15-minute limit, and thus one of the most often mentioned strategies was that of practicing their talk and timing it. However, while most NSs practiced their talk just once, NNSs felt the need to practice it at least an average of three times. Some students also practiced in front of an audience (generally other peers), and if they did not manage to get an audience, they just pretended they had one. As well, NNSs concentrated on one more aspect that their native peers did not really pay attention to: language. For one NNS, practicing actually involved saying the words she would use “maybe around ten times, each word” (Interview, Lin, NRSC 605). This shows how for this student, presenting in her L2 represented a great challenge--one she had to prepare herself for. For another NNS who was presenting in English for the first time in his life, practicing involved going “through the whole talk for about four or five times at least” (Interview, José, BIOC 600). On the other hand, a NS peer “just flipped through it once on the bus” (Interview, Charles, BIOC 600). While differences in amount of practice may be due to the presenter’s own confidence in the topic (and not just the language), it was interesting to observe that NNSs made reference to both the linguistic challenge of the AP and the practical challenges of presenting.

Choose familiar topic

While presenters in NRSC 605 were not given the chance to choose the article for their AP, students in BIOG 600 were given that option. Hence, a strategy that both NS and NNS resorted to was to choose a topic that was either related to their interests or to their prior experience in the field. As José mentioned,

Yes, in fact *I chose my paper because I have some experience with analytic chemistry*, and since the calcium measurements are just an analytical chemistry, it's just that it's done in a different level, it's done on living systems, so that's why I chose the paper.

(Interview, José, BIOG 600)

Choose to present the "big picture," leaving details aside:

A few NSs mentioned that they had actually chosen to leave details aside in their APs, and thus concentrated on the "big picture." One NS even made a light critique of his NNS classmates' presentations (which had taken place the class before), arguing that they had gone too far into the details, and this had made the AP boring. Instead, this student chose to select the main points to the audience, and avoid being in the front for a long time.

Well, and I - they [the authors] do typically go into all the methods they use, so many techniques - *I kind of mentioned the basics of what the test is, but I didn't actually go into how actually they did it. We would have been here for a long time* ((laughs)).

(Interview, Charles, BIOG 600)

Say less (in some cases)

Sohan, a NNS, argued that one of his strategies was to avoid saying everything: "less means more. It means the less data you put into people's heads, people are going to accept it more readily" (Interview, Sohan, BIOG 600). Other NS peers also made reference to the same strategy, explaining that in some cases it was difficult to choose what to

leave out of the presentation, because you run the risk “of leaving loose strings” (Interview, Frank, BIOC 600).

4.5.2 Delivery Strategies

Keeping the audience’s attention was a major goal most presenters had in mind. In order to do so, they resorted to a (combination of a) variety of strategies.

Speak at a slow speed, ask and answer questions

Carl, a NNS, believed that speaking at a slow pace would enhance his presentation. As well, he thought that a good way to show his expertise was for him to frame questions and answer them right away:

Sandra: What does the presenter need to do to present in a good way? What do you think?

Carl: What I think?

Sandra: Yeah.

Carl: *He has to go slowly; and first you have to talk to the students and you have to ask questions and answer them. Yeah, this is the way how to, yeah, keep the attention.*

(Interview, Carl, NRSC 605)

Use gestures

In addition, Carl mentioned that using gestures is a good way to catch the audience’s attention:

Sandra: Is there anything else a person needs to do or to have?

Carl: Yeah, I think it’s not just the way to talk, it’s also the way of - (2) what do they say - gesticulation?

Sandra: Ok, gestures. ((prompting))

Carl: *Gestures*, yeah

(Interview, Carl, NRSC 605).

It was interesting that while most of the NS presenters I observed made ample use of gestures and body expressions, none of the NS presenters I interviewed reflected on

that. On the other hand, NNS presenters were the ones who pointed to this strategy, while they were the ones who employed it the least. Probably this speaks to the fact that NNSs were just learning about the role of gestures and thus they were incorporating the strategy at a conscious level (while most NSs had already unconsciously mastered it).

Doing the AP early in the day

Some students, if given the chance, chose to be among the first presenters of the day. The rationale behind this choice was that “people’s span of attention always wanes as the day progresses” (Interview, Mark, NRSC 605). There was no distinctive pattern of order of presentation choice between NS and NNS presenters.

Select / skip some parts to conform to time constraints

If students had been granted more time, some of them would have gone into more detail. For instance, José mentioned that although he had prepared a longer talk,

I also skipped some parts of my topic - because it was taking too long (...) in fact I selected- I think I tried to select the most important things - the highlights on all the processes done to - measure - calcium - within the cells. Uh, there were many - other - things that I could have explained - with a little more detail, but it was - it was just a matter of time.

(Interview, José, BIOC 600)

Pretend the audience does not know as much as the presenter does

To reduce the level of nervousness, Sohan mentioned that he usually pretends the audience is not very knowledgeable about the topic he presents, and this allows him to feel more at ease while talking.

I’m nervous just before it starts. (...) when people are looking at my eyes - I visualize them, I tend to visualize them as - my students back in India ((small laughs)). So then the things become very easy - so I feel I’m safe - because then I think they don’t know as much as I do!

(Interview, Sohan, BIOC 600)

Avoid looking at the audience in order to reduce nervousness

While maintaining eye contact was a strategy mentioned by most students, in the case of Lin (a NNS), avoiding eye contact was exactly what she did in order to reduce her level of nervousness: "I feel scary - when more people looking at me. So I don't look to people. I just look - read my notes and present" (Interview, Lin, BIOC 600). As I observed Lin during her AP, I noticed her eyes would usually be focused on her notes, and in the event she did look somewhere else, she avoided maintaining direct eye contact with any of the people in the audience. However, this might have inadvertently affected her presentation, for there was the sense that she was not able to establish any kind of rapport with the audience.

Use humor

While NNSs tended to stick to the content of the paper they were presenting, some NS peers would actually deviate a little bit the topic of their talks through including a little bit of humor in their presentations. However, the audience was not always receptive to capture this humor, and thus the effect was lost. In the case of Charles, for instance, he made a side commentary in his AP which was supposed to make the audience laugh. But nobody seemed to catch his joke, and he was left with sheer disappointment:

I was trying to, you know, to give a little bit of humor, you know, I said: "It's the (x) diet" [which was supposed to make people laugh], and they're just looking "ah? ah?" - If you're just like "ah? ah?" - that doesn't work.

(Interview, Charles, BIOC 600)

In the case of Cynthia, another NS, she started her AP with an overhead transparency of a math equation. The immediate response of the audience was that of abrupt laugh-

ter and little bit of whispering around. Cynthia had purposely included this overhead as an “ice breaker,” and this is all she needed in order to start her AP more relaxed. As she said, “*That was the only thing I was focusing on when I got up there! I had one thing that I could do!*” ((laughs)). I actually prepared it this morning - *I thought it would be kind of fun.*” (Interview, Cynthia, BIOC 600)

Read aloud

Though only one out of the 25 students I observed in the Faculty of Medicine courses resorted to reading aloud for the presentation, I believe that this presenter’s strategy should not be ignored (even if it does not represent what the majority did). In fact, I think it is worth highlighting what occurred in this case, for it sheds some light on Lin’s plight. As already mentioned, Lin came from China, and she explained that in her home country she was not used to presenting. On top of that, she believed that a “formal” (and thus good) way of presenting involved reading aloud. However, this was not the proper way to do it in NRSC 605, where students were not expected to read but to speak more spontaneously. The more extemporaneous the talk, the more the presenter was perceived as an expert in the topic. Hence, in her AP Lin failed to respond to the values promoted in her community of practice, and all she was left with was an experience that would hopefully help her become a better presenter in the future:

I - this my first presentation. So I - I hope that next ones are better- I think so, *I need to practice speaking English.* But now I know - but *my problem is speak.* I can read, but not speak!

(Interview, Lin, NRSC 605).

Use visuals

All of the presenters in both courses made use of overhead transparencies in their presentations. In fact, it seems that presenters would not have been successful had they not included visuals such as graphics, photos, tables, and so forth. This kind of information cannot be as easily and as effectively conveyed through the use of words. Thus, it seems that in order to be a successful presenter in the Faculty of Medicine, students generally had to make ample use of overhead transparencies.¹⁷

Stand in front of the audience

Students in both NRSC 605 and BIOC 600 delivered their APs standing in front of the audience. While some presenters seemed to be comfortable in this prominent position, others looked somehow intimidated when in front of the whole audience. Walking around (but not too much) was a sign that identified presenters as being comfortable in that position, while remaining in the same spot for almost the whole AP revealed a certain lack of confidence or feeling of awkwardness. Since standing in front of the audience is a kind of behavior typically expected of scientists delivering talks (or of doctors talking to their patients), eventually all students in NRSC 605 and BIOC 600 would have to become comfortable in this position.

In sum, both NSs and NNSs made use of a wide range of strategies in order to try and meet the course (i.e., the community's) expectations. However, to highlight a distinguishing factor of NNS presenters, this group of students resorted to a pool of strategies (such as rehearsing difficult words in a loud voice, or rehearsing the whole AP four or five

¹⁷ Students in medicine mentioned that they usually employ computer-generated slides for their APs. However, they were not allowed to do so for NRSC 605.

times) that would help them cope with the linguistic challenges they faced. This type of strategy was not employed by any of the NSs in the course. As well, a strategy such as reading aloud was chosen by one NNS, making it evident that she was not yet familiarized with the expected type of talk valued and promoted in the course.

5

APS IN THE FACULTY OF ARTS

So, in the social science discipline, or humanity discipline, if the scholar or student can't express themselves freely - I think his paper or his presentation - wouldn't be very popular. I don't think so.

(Interview, Chao, HIST 510)

5.1 Situating the Task

Just as APs seemed to be pervasive in the Faculty of Medicine, this also seemed to be the case in the Faculty of Arts. I was able to observe APs in three courses in this faculty: a History course (HIST 510), and Anthropology course (ANTH 610), and a course offered by the French, Italian, and Hispanic Languages Department (FREN 600). HIST 510 and FREN 600 were elective courses, whereas ANTH 610 was part of the required course load for students in the masters/doctoral program in the Department of Anthropology and Sociology.

Classes in all three courses took place once a week. In HIST 510 and FREN 600, classes were about 120 minutes long, while in ANTH 610 they lasted 180 minutes. In all, I was able to observe as many as 23 students in this Faculty. In HIST 510 I observed six NSs and three NNSs (out of 12 students in the course); in ANTH 610 nine NSs and one NNS (out of 11 students in the course), and in FREN 600 two NSs and two NNSs (out of five students in the course).

In HIST 510 there were two course instructors: Dr. Samuels and Dr. Kovak. Both of them had been teaching in the department for several years, and they had team-taught this

course for three years (though not consecutively). Dr. Evans, the course instructor for ANTH 610, had taught the same course the previous session; and Dr. Hubert was team teaching FREN 600 with other two instructors, but each of them was in charge of a different module.¹⁸

Besides the presentation, students in all three courses were required to do other tasks. Table 5.1 summarizes the kind of tasks and the grade percentage associated with each task in the three courses:

Table 5.1 Faculty of Arts Tasks

Course	Tasks	Grade%
HIST 510	oral presentation	25%
	final research paper	75%
ANTH 610	oral presentations	20%
	class discussion/participation	20%
	fieldwork projects	30%
	research proposal	30%
FREN 600	oral presentation	15%
	final research paper	85%

As shown on the table, the maximum grade percentage awarded to students for their APs varied in all three courses, ranging between 15% and 25%.

¹⁸ Dr. Hubert was in charge of module two, when I observed the APs.

5.2 On the Surface Level: Descriptive Features of APs in Arts

5.2.1 APs in HIST 510

The course lasted for a period of 12 weeks, presentations starting in week 3 and extending until week 12. APs were an ongoing activity in this course, for there was usually one presenter¹⁹ in each class, and the APs became the main (and sole) activity of each class, under the leadership/guidance of each presenter. The format students were expected to follow asked for the presenters to expose a researched topic of their choice for about 30 minutes, and leave the rest of class time to questions and discussion that emerged from the exposition. Presenters in general managed to stick to the 30 minute exposition period, and the remaining stage of their AP was not so much in their hands exclusively, but it also depended on the number of questions and comments generated by the audience. In most cases, the discussion period added another 55 minutes to the presentation, totalling an average length of 82.7 minutes for APs in this course (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 AP Length - HIST 510

Shortest AP	46 minutes
Longest AP	100 minutes
Mean	82.7 minutes

For each AP, besides the presenter there was an appointed “moderator” who was in charge of introducing the presenter and managing time (but who in most cases did not play a very active role in spite of the instructors’ original intention).

¹⁹ Usually there was one presenter per class, except for two cases in which two presenters (whose topics were very closely related), delivered their APs on the same date.

The presentation style followed by students in this course could be defined as moderately formal. For each AP, the audience would be seated around a group of tables organized in a long rectangle, and the presenter would normally choose to be seated in a place equally distant to all other extremes of the table. The course instructors were the only members of the audience who were always seated in the same place. The fact that presenters were seated (as opposed to standing in front of the audience) seemed to reduce the formality of the task. Presenters were the center of attention--throughout the exposition period the audience would look at them exclusively, and through the discussion period eye contact would go from the person who framed the question/made a comment to the presenter, back and forth, but still they could adopt a relaxed position by either leaning on a chair, or resting their arms on top of the table. A simple detail such as this seemed to relax the classroom atmosphere, and in turn it also helped the presenter to reduce the level of tension. As for the kind of register the presenters chose for their APs, generally they combined both formal with more informal expressions, and presenters also took their time if they did not find the exact wording to expose their thoughts (hence, short pauses of five seconds between strings of speech by the presenter were not atypical). As a further argument to sustain the claim that the degree of formality was moderate in this course, it should be noted that even though presenters had a flexible time frame of 30 minutes for the exposition of their topic, there seemed to be no urgency to rush through concepts and main ideas. As well, though presenters were not usually interrupted during this exposition period, in a few cases when clarification of specific terminology or an idea was important, the audience did not hesitate to interrupt briefly.

5.2.2 APs in ANTH 610

For this course, students had to do what the instructor called “seminar presentations.” According to the course outline,

Seminars will be based upon assigned articles for which all students will read and prepare abstract summaries. Students will take turns being responsible for presenting the main arguments and leading the class discussion.

(Course outline, ANTH 610,p.1)

Thus, in this course there was not to be a major AP, but rather a number of smaller APs performed by each student on each AP date. In the end, students were asked to give three different APs in this course: (a) a brief oral summary of a book review; (b) an oral report of research findings (from a fieldwork project); and (c) an oral summary of a research proposal. For the purpose of this study, I have focussed on APs (b) and (c).

With regard to the regularity of APs, these were sporadic. No pre-established dates were arranged, but these dates were agreed upon throughout the academic term. Hence, no tentative schedule for classroom presentations was available. Based on my own observations (see Table 5.3 for a detail of AP length in this course), and from input from interviews with student participants, in some cases presenters had a long time to present (about 25 minutes), while in other cases presenters were left with only a few minutes (around 7 minutes).

Table 5.3 AP Length - ANTH 610

Shortest	6.8 minutes
Longest AP	25.2 minutes
Mean	11.5 minutes

When describing the time frame for APs in this course, one participant tried to describe the parameters provided by the course instructor. In the participant’s own words:

She [the course instructor] said - 'around this amount of time, this is what I want you to include', in a very broad sort of sense? Unfortunately, her estimations were inaccurate - in terms of what was feasible? Even though she'd said 'I want you to prepare something for about 15 minutes', then she asked to - to respond for longer than that, so - if you were in the beginning, you got half an hour for your presentation and questions, and then if you were at the end, you got five minutes! So, there was a huge variation (...) That was not a great situation to be in.

(Interview, Nicole, ANTH 610)

The APs in this course, according to my observations, were quite informal. Presenters were usually seated when presenting (instead of standing in front of the audience), some of them adopting a very relaxed position on the chair (e.g., resting their back on the chair, far away from the table, their legs crossed). Only in the case of three APs, where presenters were using transparencies, did they choose to stand in front of the class. The students and instructors were usually seated around an irregular square-shaped cluster of tables, the instructor always seated in the front position.²⁰ Even though APs were perceived as a specific task where one student was in charge of the talk, and the content to present was to be organized in a coherent and professional way (i.e., it was expected that students would incorporate in their oral discourse the lexicon typical of qualitative research methods discussed and introduced in this course), not all students seemed to enact the task in the same way. Hence, in some cases APs were very informal (e.g., students not only seated in a very relaxed position, but also delivering their AP as just one more instance in which they talked in class, in a very casual way and giving the impression of improvising most of their talk); in other cases students were more selective of the terminology used, the structure of their AP, and of their postures and ways of addressing the audience. It should be noted that it was

²⁰ Though there was no desk, there was a board on the wall, which helped determine this was the front of the classroom.

not only the students who adopted various levels of formality, but also the course instructor (who in some cases was also seated in a very relaxed way, with her arms above her shoulder, and her hands behind her neck; and who sometimes used very informal expressions to address the students, or cracked an ironic joke).

5.2.3 APs in FREN 600

My observations of APs in FREN 600 took place during the second module of the course (weeks four to eight). Out of the four classes in this module, two were devoted to the presentations. Consequently, APs in this course were a two-time event that took place right in the middle of the term. On the first presentation date there were two presenters (a NNS and a NS), and on the second date there were three (two NNSs and one NS), but I observed only two of these.²¹

The pre-established time frame for the APs in this course was 15 minutes of delivery time plus some extra minutes devoted to discussion/questions generated by the audience. Accordingly, most presenters took an average of 17.5 minutes to deliver their AP and the discussion period lasted an average of three minutes (totalling 21.5 minutes for the whole AP, see Table 5.4).

Table 5.4 AP Length - FREN 600

Shortest AP	19 minutes
Longest AP	23 minutes
Mean	21.3 minutes

²¹ One of the NSs requested specifically not to be observed, since she felt this would increase her level of nervousness.

Even though the course instructor had initially thought that the students in the audience would generate questions, this was not the case. In all four APs I observed, the instructor took the lead and out of the average three minutes of discussion time, 2.3 minutes were exchanges between Dr. Hubert and the presenter. Only in two out of the four APs did students in the audience ask a question.²²

The style in which APs were performed could be identified as quite formal. Only one of the presenters chose to stand in front of the class to deliver her speech. The other three presenters I observed chose to remain seated as usual, around a square like cluster of tables. In spite of the less formal position (i.e., usually standing in front of the class adds a touch of formality to the event, while remaining seated tends to decrease it), the quiet, silent classroom atmosphere and the brief but rather ceremonial introduction to presenters that the course instructor performed seemed to raise the level of formality of the event. For instance, when the course instructor introduced Kalea's AP he emphasized the meta level of the presentation, and referred to the presenter as an "expert" in the topic:

So, we'll have two presentations today, one dealing with the topic of structuralism. This is like research being done on researchers - I suppose a lot of structuralists would say that this is like a meta-meta level of analysis. So, in any case, we'll hand it on over directly to our expert today on this topic, Kalea.

(AP recording, Dr. Hubert, FREN 600)

²² When asked about this in their interviews, participants indicated that due to the theoretical nature of the APs, it was very difficult for them to pose any questions for they were still in the process of internalizing the concepts exposed.

5.3 Underneath the Surface: Essential Aspects that Help Define APs in Arts

APs in the Faculty of Arts did not share all of the same surface features discussed above. HIST 510 APs were much longer than either ANTH 610 or FREN 600 APs. As well, HIST 510 APs were ongoing whereas ANTH 610 APs were a three-time event, and FREN 600 APs a two-time event. In none of the three cases APs were strictly timed, and presenters did have some room to adjust the length of their AP according to their needs. While in HIST 510 there would usually be one presenter per class and the AP would take the whole class period, in ANTH 610 all 11 course participants presented on the same date, and in FREN 600 there were either two or three presenters per date. Yet, once again, there are many similarities that underlie the surface level of APs in the Faculty of Arts. I will examine some of these next.

5.3.1 The Content of APs

Students in the Faculty of Arts courses were expected to choose a topic of interest to them and of relevance to the course, and present it. Thus, in HIST 510 students gave an AP that allowed them to share with the audience their knowledge on the chosen topic, and how much research they had done so far. In ANTH 610, given that this was a qualitative research methods course, all students were engaged in a common research project that involved some fieldwork experience. Though the research site was selected by the course instructor, students were free to choose which aspect of the research site they were willing to research (applying their newly acquired knowledge on research methods, of course). Hence, the APs were a chance to share with the audience a piece of the common, bigger

course research project. In FREN 600 students were asked to pick a theoretical literary term, and research it thoroughly.

In all three courses students would ultimately have to write a final paper/research proposal in which they would be able to incorporate some of the ideas presented in their APs.

5.3.2 The Sequence Patterns of APs

While sequence patterns in the Faculty of Medicine can be more easily illustrated due to their more homogeneous nature, the same does not seem to apply to courses in the Faculty of Arts. In this latter case, I would argue that the stages of APs in all three courses were quite flexible and by no means lead to generalizations. Thus, my attempt to visually illustrate the sequence patterns below is simply to provide an example of two sequences (see Figures 5.1 and 5.2).

I have not attempted to include a diagram with the sequence for ANTH 610 given that APs in this course were less structured around a common pattern.

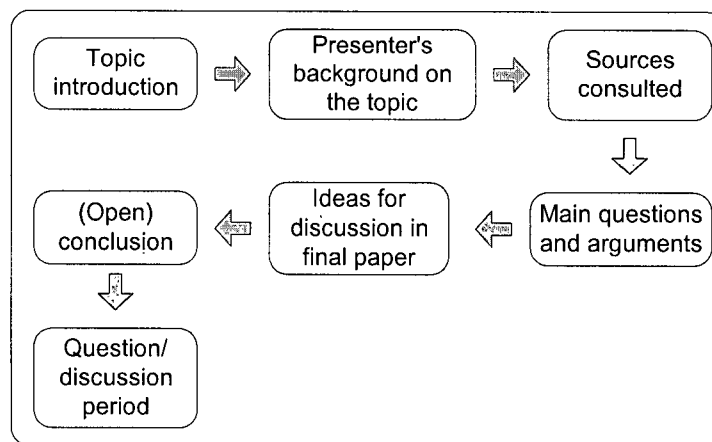


Figure 5.1 AP Sequence - HIST 510

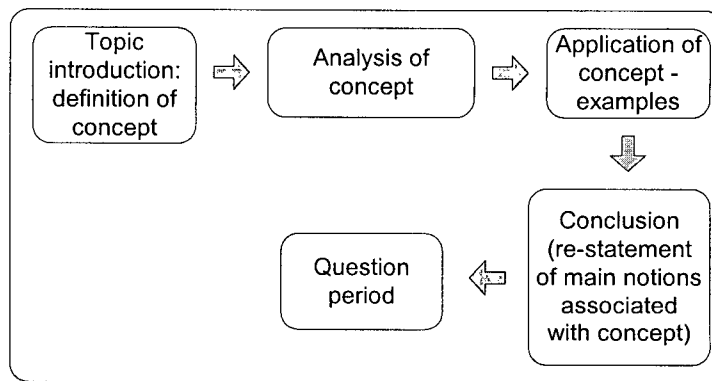


Figure 5.2 AP Sequence - FREN 600

Of course, all presentations did have a clear beginning (introduction), body (where main ideas were presented and developed), and a final concluding stage. However, while in Medicine courses conclusions were expressed in a straightforward manner, in Arts courses conclusions were notorious for their characteristic openness and degree of tentativeness. In HIST 510 APs, students finished their presentations with thoughts that challenged the audience and provoked discussion; the same applies to ANTH 610 APs, though in this case the discussion sometimes took place in the middle of the AP. In FREN 600 APs, on the other hand, given the theoretical nature of the presentation topics, there was not much chance for discussion about the topic itself, but rather about aspects of the topic that the presenter would include in his/her final paper.

5.3.3 The Purpose(s) of APs

The main goal APs fulfilled in Arts courses was to provide students a chance to “play with ideas” and share them with an audience who would most probably have a keen interest in these ideas. To HIST 510 instructors, APs seemed to represent a good chance for

students to relate their personal interests to a more global history (i.e., show how their personal interests were embedded or related to broader interests in the field). Thus, APs in HIST 510 were a chance to create a space for interaction and discussion.

Similarly, APs in ANTH 610 existed on order to “provide an appropriate environment to generate discussion and active participation (...) To constructively criticize each others’ work” (ANTH 610 course outline, p.1). While discussion was also one of the AP purposes in FREN 600 (at least this was so stated by the course instructor), this did not necessarily occur. APs in this course fulfilled the purpose of engaging students in doing research and practicing researching skills (such as consulting different sources and condensing/combining information). In all three courses the common purpose of asking students to generate ideas of their own was encouraged and expected.

In addition to these declared purposes of APs, students also viewed presentations as a chance to practice oral/practical skills that they needed to familiarize themselves with in order to fully function in their communities. Both NSs and NNSs concurred that APs represented a great chance to improve their presentation skills:

I - It is good for me to do- to practice presentation because I can practice for my future - when I go to confe- international conference and I have to present my research. So it's good to do it here - that I learn.

(Interview, ANTH 610, Sachiko, NNS).

A student (NS) also mentioned that APs were a good idea (even though she would enjoy not having to do them) because they forced students to make up their minds (a purpose also mentioned by a NRSC 605 student):

I think presentations are a good idea. I don't enjoy them, so I would be fine with not having to do one ((laughs)), but I think it's good for- it's good for me

- certainly it's just a good way of- having to present something to the course
- *because it really makes it come clear in my mind and makes it- you have to really decide what you're gonna say and figure out a coherent argument because you know that people are gonna call you on it if it doesn't make sense, whereas if you're just reading on your own, and coming out with stuff, it doesn't necessarily have to be that clear.*

(Interview, Myriam, HIST 510)

To Mike (a student who regularly worked as a lawyer), presentations in HIST 510 were characterized by the level of speculation presenters could exercise, and this was an aspect he specially appreciated from this kind of presentation:

Uh, my regular - my regular day job is a lawyer, so - I - I have to make presentations in terms of advocacy? (...) so - so you have to make presentations. But - it's much more formal than here, often. *One thing I like about - being in school as opposed to making presentations in work is that you can be more speculative.*

(Interview, Mike, HIST 510)

Leslie, an ANTH 610 student, found APs a good chance to practice a skill that is of high demand in her field. In fact, since she had worked at museums and sometimes as a tour guide, she felt that she needed good presentation skills in order to be employable:

If you're doing anthropology, or something like that at the graduate level - *then you'll likely be put in these situations where you're gonna have to go to conferences and present papers, and - a lot of professions you have to do oral presentations?* So, you'd better get used to them at school, and maybe get a little polished on how you do it, you know, and - because, for me, like going to school - like, I want to get a job once I'm done. (...) *So you need to have some of those types of skills - to make you employable?*

(Interview, Leslie, ANTH 610)

To NNSs, APs also represented a good chance to "speak out" as well as to practice the English language.

For some things, *it's very good practice for me to speak out? During class discussion it's very difficult to - participate in discussion? But if we have a presentation - I can prepare and I can say something! ((laughs)) Class*

presentation is good opportunity to practice. And also - I can practice to improve - English language? Yes - I need this too.

(Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

We can thus also identify several purposes behind the AP task in the Faculty of Arts: to stimulate discussion and provide an appropriate environment for this; to allow students to practice presentation skills; to encourage students to make up their minds; and to provide a chance for NNSs to practice the English language and to give them the opportunity to “speak out” in front of the class (something many NNSs have problems doing).

5.3.4 Discourse Features of APs

Students taking courses in the Faculty of Arts were expected to orally communicate their thoughts and points of view. Hence, articulation of ideas through verbal communication was key to determining the students’ success not only in their APs, but also in the remaining required tasks. The kind of language features students in Arts needed to be familiar with in order to express themselves through oral discourse were closer to the kind of everyday language speech employed by people outside the discipline, technical language apparently being less pervasive in Arts than in Medicine (or Applied Science, see Chapter 6) courses. Idiomatic expressions, colloquialisms, and personal anecdotes were usually present (or expected) in APs. Though this may seem to be an advantage for those who speak English as a second language, it may end up being a disadvantage. This issue will be addressed in the sections that follow.

5.3.4.1 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Perceived Through Observations

I was able to observe three NNSs in HIST 510, one in ANTH 610, and two in FREN 600. Some of their personal histories share many similarities, while others are quite distinctive. Still, what all six NNSs have in common is the fact that English is not their mother tongue, and this inevitably impacts (at different levels) the way they are able to express themselves in tasks such as APs.

(a) Alexei, a student from Russia in his early 30s, seemed to be comfortable expressing himself in English. His Russian accent, though still perceptible after five years of using English actively in an English speaking environment, was almost imperceptible. It was evident to the audience that Alexei had thoroughly prepared his talk; his written notes--which he glanced at from time to time--attested to this fact. He spoke in a loud voice, maintaining eye contact with the audience, and establishing rapport with his peers and instructors through the use of humorous comments or personal anecdotes (e.g., when Alexei started his AP he pointed to his t-shirt that had the phrase *modern simplicity* written on it. He explained to the audience that he was not wearing the t-shirt by accident, and continued with a number of reasons associated with the topic of his talk that justified his choice of garment). Yet, in spite of his evident confidence, there were a few instances in his AP where Alexei struggled to express himself clearly. For instance, in one case he started his argument and half way stopped talking, took a couple of seconds, and then looked for confirmation among the audience to see whether the English grammatical structure he was employing made sense.

(b) Nasrin came from Iran, and had lived in an English speaking environment for only a few months. She was also in her early 30s, and in spite of her limited experience living in a foreign country, she impressed people with her straightforward style of talk, and her secure tone of voice. Her AP was no different from the usual way Nasrin expressed herself in the class, though her shaky voice at the beginning, and her lack of eye contact with the audience most of the time evidenced her nervousness. Nasrin seemed to feel quite comfortable presenting in her L2, and she employed a few strategies (like preparing for herself a seven-page handout which she glanced at from time to time to check whether she had gone over all the points) that obviously worked for her. Still, in spite of Nasrin's fluency in speech and her apparent comfortable use of her L2, more than once she seemed to have trouble when trying to find the appropriate expression in English. This may be associated with the fact that English was her second language, and thus certain words or expressions did not occur to her as spontaneously as they may occur in her L1. However, this is my speculation.

(c) China was Chao's home country, which he left about two years earlier in order to become an international student in Canada. Of the three NNSs in HIST 510, Chao was the one with the weakest L2 linguistic abilities, and this was perceived by all people in the course. His strong Chinese accent and intonation, his introverted style of talk, and his long pauses prevented Chao many times from being clearly understood or followed in his speech. Chao had also prepared a written handout for himself, but he almost ignored it, choosing to rely mainly on his memory. Even though his AP was successful (i.e., he managed to maintain the audience's attention, and was able to pass his message across), his lack of linguistic proficiency at times brought him trouble.

(d) The NNS in ANTH 610, Sachiko, was a female student in her early 30s who came from Japan. Sachiko had spent four years in the USA while studying at an American university, and by the time I observed her giving her APs (I was able to observe her in two instances), she had been in Canada for a couple of months. Sachiko usually chose to remain quiet during class time (unless directly asked a question/opinion by the course instructor). For her APs, Sachiko chose to read aloud her handout: she read in a loud, clear voice, and from time to time looked at the audience, rarely pausing to make any comments or to expand on any of the points in her handout. As a listener, at times it was not easy to follow Sachiko: her mispronunciation of quite a few words and her awkward intonation patterns were the main reasons that prevented the audience from understanding her clearly. However, what seemed to be the hardest aspect of APs for Sachiko was not the delivery act in itself, but rather coping with the questions she was asked by the audience.

(e) Kalea was born in Greece but had lived in Canada for the past thirty years (half her life). She held a degree in Management and Marketing, and thus was very familiar with the AP genre. Kalea's English was very fluent, and her vocabulary very rich. Though she had a strong Greek accent in her speech, she pronounced words correctly and it was not difficult to follow her. It was evident from the fast pace in which she delivered her AP that Kalea had carefully prepared her talk. Once Kalea concluded the delivery part of her AP, she was asked a couple of questions by the course instructor. Although Kalea did not seem to have any major linguistic difficulties when speaking English, it was in this type of instances that she actually seemed to experience certain level of difficulty in finding the appropriate lexical terms or expressions she was looking for in order to express the ideas she had in mind.

(f) Annette was a NNS of English born in Quebec. She grew up in a French-speaking environment, and was not formally exposed to English until the age of 20. I was actually not able to tell Annette was a NNS from the way she spoke: She seemed to have mastered the English language, her fluency, intonation, accent, and spontaneity equaled those of English native speakers. Hence, from my observations I could not discern any of the struggles that Annette went through while doing her AP in

English. It was only after I interviewed her that I became aware of some of the limitations Annette felt giving her AP in her L2.

The six NNSs I have briefly referred to above seemed to experience linguistic difficulties at different levels. Some of them were in fact highly proficient English speakers (e.g., Alexei, Nasrin, Kalea, and Annette), to whom presenting in their L2 did not seem to cause them much trouble. For instance, in Nasrin's case, her talk included many instances of appraisal and personal judgments, also commonly used by NSs of English:

I have a *very famous quotation* by Marx, which *I like very much* (...) I looked at the definition of rights by [name of author]. *I liked it* because it is not based on moral principles, and *it's totally objective* (...) I think *a big mistake* many authors make is that they ignore Hobbs.

(AP recordings, Nasrin, HIST 510)

She also made use of a personal anecdote, thus bridging the gap between her (the presenter) and the audience: "I was about to change topic when I came across in the library --totally by accident--this book by [name of author] and then I decided that I wanted to stick to my original topic" (AP recordings). Still, in spite of Nasrin's fluency in speech and her apparent comfortable use of her L2, more than once she seemed to have trouble when trying to find the appropriate expression in English: "I - I don't know how to say this in English- it's like when you- I know there is a very common way of saying this, but I don't remember it" (AP recording). Though this may not be a serious problem--after all, many NSs also rephrase their speech without being perceived as poorly prepared or less language proficient, in Nasrin's case it seemed to affect her at a personal level by lowering her self-esteem (refer to next section).

Chao and Sachiko, on the other hand, were among the NNS presenters whose L2 language proficiency seemed to be weaker. In Chao's case, he was aware (and worried)

about the interference of his Chinese accent. He even excused himself in front of the audience for this: “Maybe my - *accent will disturb you, but I hope you can understand it*” (AP fieldnotes, Chao, HIST 510). In addition, Chao sometimes struggled to phrase his opinions clearly enough, and tried to rephrase his idea several times before he seemed satisfied: “Chinese labor is regarded - is very low - is - have very low salaries, very low wage.” (AP fieldnotes). In another case, during the discussion period, one of the course instructors asked him a question, but Chao was initially unable to respond because he did not understand one of the words in the question:

Dr. Kovak: I’d like to throw in a comparison. Were the Chinese recruited in Siberia as indentured workers?

Chao: As what?

Louise: In-den-tured.

Dr. Kovak: Indentured, contracted.

Chao: Oh, contract, ok

(AP fieldnotes, HIST 510)

It took a while and some amount of explanation until Chao was able to identify the meaning of the question. This example illustrates but one of the instances in which Chao was obviously at a disadvantage when compared to his peers (even when compared to his more English language proficient NNSs).

Sachiko seemed to have the greatest trouble when members of the audience asked her something. For instance, on one occasion the course instructor wanted to know where Sachiko situated herself within her proposed research project. Dr. Evans asked her: “Where is your voice here?”²³ With a puzzling expression in her face, Sachiko remained silent and

²³ Sachiko made reference to this episode in her interview, which actually confirms what we witnessed as part of the audience (see next section).

did not know exactly how to tackle the question. “Your voice, where does it come from?” asked Dr. Evans once more, thinking Sachiko had not heard the question. But actually, Sachiko had not understood the question. In another case, Dr. Evans asked her: “Where are you?” And Sachiko adopted her puzzled look once more. The instructor then rephrased her question: “Where do you situate yourself in this research?”. Relieved, Sachiko commented: “Oh, I understand. Oh, I see” and she went on responding the instructor’s request. (AP fieldnotes).

In sum, as perceived from my observations of APs, NNSs seemed to experience linguistic difficulties while delivering their APs. In the next section I will refer to the presenters’ perception of their APs, and to how these complement my views.

5.3.4.2 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Reported by Presenters

What I was able to observe did not necessarily tell the whole story about what was going on inside each presenter’s mind. Thus, data from the interviews held with participants allows us access to what these NNSs felt when preparing for and delivering their APs.

In spite of Alexei’s apparent level of comfort presenting, when asked if the fact that he speaks English as his L2 would affect the AP in any way, he responded:

Sure. No matter how many - years you learn a foreign- English language in this case, I’ve been using it actively probably for more than five years? *Still there are certain colloquial things and traditions of education which it takes some time for- you know- for you as non native speaker to catch on.* For example, I didn’t do my undergrad, or I didn’t go to high school in North America, so certain things, you know, talking about vocabulary, *talking about terms, talking about (1) definitions which are very simple for the native speakers, for you it may take some time to double check them to go to the dictionary. So I think that it adds a little bit to the nervousness, especially if you are doing a presentation for the first time.*

(Interview, Alexei, HIST 510)

Alexei felt that even though he had been using English in an active way for over five years, there were still certain things he had not been able to fully master (e.g., colloquial expressions). As well, he usually needed to double check words in the dictionary (something he assumed NSs do not necessarily have to do). All this added to the level of nervousness any presenter would usually have before an AP. He pointed out not only the question of learning the English language, but also what he referred to as “traditions of education”. By this he meant the way in which members of the academic community usually interact and behave; and this, he said, takes time to learn.

In spite of her apparent level of comfort, Nasrin felt that presenting in English entailed certain limitations:

I always feel that - it's just - it takes more time to prepare it. And - also - uh - I think the other problem is -uh- you always want to make sure that - the topic you choose, and the things you want to say - are the things you can handle? giving your - linguistic abilities? sort of, you know like you know - your own limits. So, it limits you, definitely. (...) But, still I think, since you can't - like you can't think very complex issues - in a second language - unless you really know that language very well, and you know enough verbs, enough abstract words. - Otherwise you are like sort of more - you have to stick to your very simple ideas? you know?

(Interview, Nasrin, HIST 510)

For Nasrin, in order to successfully present in English she needed to be sure she was able to cope linguistically with the topic of her AP. In addition, English constrained her because she felt that it was harder to express complex issues in her L2. So, even though Nasrin sounded quite natural and at ease in her AP, there were many issues (some of them associated with her language “limitations”) that Nasrin felt had an impact on her AP, and that made her feel not prepared enough with respect to her language abilities.

Chao was completely aware of the challenges of giving an AP in English. As a NNS, he felt his AP was below his standard, for he was not able to employ language in the way he normally does in Chinese. When asked whether his presentation would have been any different if had he done it in his L1, he responded:

Of course! Oh, ya. A lot of difference, *huge difference*. Because, *if I do presenting in Chinese, I can(a) use very - soph-sophisticate meaning? - to express my idea. But right now I have to use very simple but clear word to express myself. If I uh- if I use a very simple word - I would be definitely loose some(a) - some(a) subtle meaning - some subtle meaning*. So that was my - that I worry about. So, in the social science discipline, or humanity discipline, if the scholar or student can't express themselves freely - I think his paper or his presentation - wouldn't be very popular. I don't think so.

(Interview, Chao, HIST 510)

Chao was worried because he was not able to express complex ideas in English in an appropriate way. He felt that in Chinese he was able to use sophisticated language, while in English he was limited to simple words (thus losing subtle meanings). With regards to this last point, Chao further added that:

Other people can - express their - in a very - in a very effective way - very -uh - can *express very subtle meaning*. They can very freely express themselves - they can explain what they thought! *But, in my case I can't freely express what happen to myself. I need some(a) - need to - express some idea. If I can't directly express in the Chinese language, I have to - at first I have to think about in the Chinese way, and then translate it into the English. So, in this process of the translation - some of the subtle meaning was lost*. So, that is a big problem.

(Interview, Chao, HIST 510)

Since Chao was not able to express all his ideas completely freely in English (due to his linguistic gaps), he was sometimes forced to translate ideas from Chinese to English. In this process, the complexity of his ideas was not maintained, and thus Chao felt that this was a problem.

Chao's linguistic difficulties were not obvious to him exclusively, but also to his peers. One of his classmates mentioned in the interview (which took place prior to Chao's AP) that he thought nobody would be asking harsh questions, but that peers and instructors would rather ask Chao something in very simple terms and leave it up to him to elaborate on ideas:

Ya, I could sympathize with some of their difficulties. (...) Actually, I have a lot of admiration for Nasrin, for Alexei, for Chao, and so. And - it's got to be difficult to - I think - not just for his presentation - but - uh - I think we'll treat his [Chao's] presentation with a lot more respect - next week. I think as a group - I speculate - we'll be very considerate. I don't believe anybody will ask him anything too complex - linguistically. I think if we ask him questions, they will be very simple ones that he can elaborate on. Not easy ones, but linguistically simple.

(Interview, Mike, HIST 510)

When HIST 510 course instructors were asked if they made a distinction between NSs and NNSs, one of them expressed:

Well, we're certainly aware of it, and then, how do you - how do you objectively deal with it? You probably don't - probably don't.

(Interview, Dr. Kovak, HIST 510)

Thus, it can be argued that it was not only NNSs themselves who felt the limitations of presenting in an L2, but these also were perceived by the other members of the community of practice. When I asked the course instructors if they were able to help NNSs in some way, they said that they certainly could. However, for this particular course in which L2 students were enrolled, they found it almost impossible to act as language "coaches"²⁴ due to the large number of students in it.

²⁴ Both HIST 510 course instructors mentioned in their interviews that if the number of students in the course were smaller, they would be able to assist students with issues related to their oral skills.

Sachiko, the Japanese student in ANTH 610, said that she ordinarily needed more time than native speakers in order to read materials. But this seemed not to be the most difficult aspect of presenting in English. Actually, since she usually read aloud her presentation, she felt quite secure during the delivery stage of her AP. The greatest challenge (associated with her linguistic knowledge) seemed to be the kind of spontaneous talk that emerges during or after an AP. When asked in the interview what part of the AP made her more nervous, Sachiko responded:

Sachiko: When they ask me questions! Because *I often can't understand what they are asking to me!* ((nervous laughter))

Sandra: You cannot hear? Or you cannot understand?

Sachiko: Both! ((small laughs)). *And I hate it to ask several times - and the first time, Dr. Evans's presentation she gave me question - and she ask me "what did your voice come from?" [actually the question was "Where is your voice here?"] And I thought - 'cause I tried to speak in a loud voice, so - different form ordinary usual voice, so she was asking "how I make my voice louder" - and I asked again and she told me again, but even so I didn't get exactly, so I thought I need to give some answer.*

(Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

5.4 Qualities Promoted in the Faculty of Arts

Among the qualities valued and promoted in the Faculty of Arts, through my observations of class presentations, and through input from research participants in their interviews, I would argue that members of the community of practice of Arts needed to appropriate the qualities summarized in Figure 5.3:

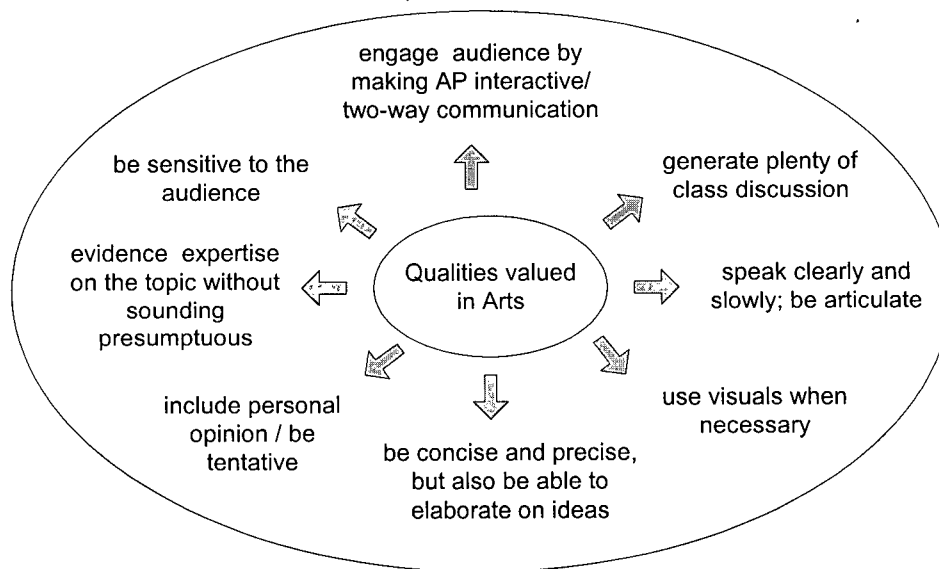


Figure 5.3 AP Qualities Valued in the Faculty of Arts

As well, presenters needed to avoid the following behaviors (see Figure 5.4):

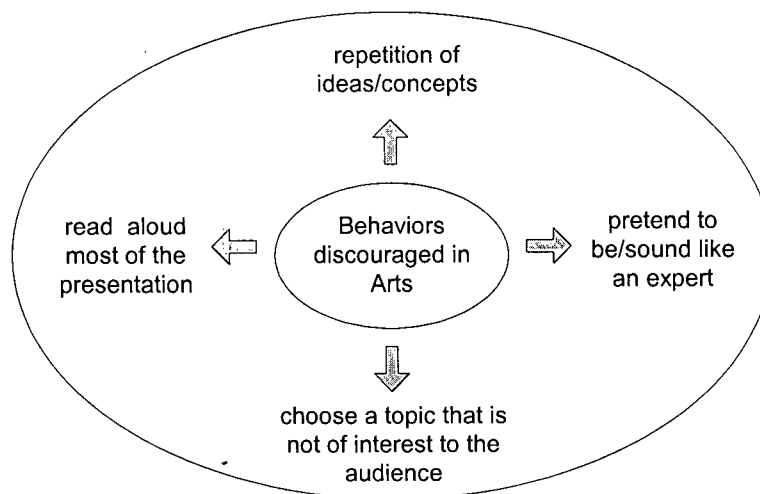


Figure 5.4 AP Behaviors Discouraged in the Faculty of Arts

While some of the qualities and behaviors valued and promoted in the Faculty of Arts were identical to those in the Faculty of Medicine, the main difference between both

discourse communities seemed to lie in the fact that while interaction between the presenter and the audience was highly expected in Arts, this was not necessarily the case in Medicine. In addition, students in the Faculty of Arts were expected to present an argument they supported, but they were not expected to have definite answers or solutions (something that students in Medicine were most likely to come up with in their presentations). Thus, as students of Arts, ideas presented tended to be more tentative in nature, and interaction between presenters and the audience generally occurred as a means of sharing opinions and exchanging points of view.

Similarly to what occurred with some students in the Faculty of Medicine, not all students were able to behave according to the expected rules. In the case of Chris, a NS of HIST 510, he started off his presentation trying to speak without referring to his notes. However, in the course of the AP he was forced to rely heavily on his notes, and ended up reading most of the AP and finishing it with an abrupt comment: [reading through his notes in silence, while the audience remained quiet waiting for him to go on] "I know there is a lot more to talk about, but I'll leave it here. I'll open it up to questions." (AP recording, Chris, HIST 510) In his interview, Chris mentioned that originally he had intended to pretend as if he knew what he was talking about and speak spontaneously, glancing from time to time at his notes. This was actually the type of presentation he thought he was expected to do. However, as he started his AP he realized he was not ready to "wing it," and thus ended up relying heavily on his written handout:

Well, before I did my presentation - I knew that I was gonna have to wing it - so to speak. And then during the presentation, I realized that - I didn't know enough to wing it, so I was gonna have to read it. So, uhm, ya I realized I wasn't prepared - a few hours before the actual presentation. And then - that was just pronounced - as I

was doing the presentation - I was thinking - "I don't really know what I'm talking about"

(Interview, Chris, HIST 510)

It was obvious to the audience that Chris was having a hard time while presenting: he paused on several occasions, and spent a few seconds reading through his notes in silence, and then went on reading aloud part of his handout. His facial expression looked tense, and he barely made eye contact with the audience. When the discussion period arrived, Chris did not seem extremely eager to respond to questions promptly; instead he chose to leave other members of the audience a chance to answer first. So this was a case of a student who was aware of the expected values promoted in the community, but who (apparently) failed to conform to them.

In the case of Sachiko (NNS), she was aware that her classmates employed a presentation style that involved more casual, extemporaneous talk. However, she recognized she was not able to present in the same way as most of her NS peers did, and thus she needed to read from her paper (handout). Even trying to make eye contact was hard for her:

(...) 'cause *I cannot present improvisation* ((small laughs)). So *I need to write down in paper*, like ordinary paper? And - it's a fifteen minutes presentation, so I needed to write - two and a half pages, single space paper? (...) *It's easier for me to read, 'cause if I try - I try to eye contact or that kind of thing, I need to memorize? I skip long sentences.* ((small laughs))

(Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

I asked Sachiko if she thought her presentation style and her classmates' style differed. When she responded, she also provided reasons why this was so. And in relation to these motifs, she also mentioned how difficult it was for her to participate in class discussions, mainly because in Japan students are not encouraged to "interrupt" the speaker.

'Cause - in America or Canada - I heard the children- student are encouraged - to speak out from childhood? So, ya I think that I noticed some of the - American Canadian people very quiet? But, basically, I guess they're get used to express their thinking - orally? Much more than Japanese. Ya. We - *in Japan - during the class - usually we don't do discussion, and we are supposed to do just listening to the teachers talking. And if I- we have question, we need to raise hand - and we- we: uh - we are discouraged to interrupt? teachers talking or other students talking. So it's very difficult for me when - when other people are talking, and it's difficult to interrupt.* (Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

In Chao's case, I observed that he usually chose to keep silent during the discussion period of APs unless he was asked a direct question. From what he shared with me, a combination of his schooling background and his lack of English proficiency prevented him from participating as much as he wished to. Thus, we can conclude that for students like Sachiko and Chao, it was not only a matter of linguistic difficulties, but also of having trouble adjusting to the Canadian classroom culture. Once again, students were immersed in a process of double socialization.

5.5 Strategies Employed by Presenters

As in the case of students in the Faculty of Medicine, students in the Faculty of Arts also resorted to specific preparation and delivery strategies with the aim of being successful presenters.

5.5.1 Preparation Strategies

Prepare an outline and rehearse it orally

Nasrin (NNS) mentioned in the interview that she had made an outline for herself, and she admitted having rehearsed the AP once--even though she hated doing this. Were she to give the same presentation in Farsi (her mother tongue), she said she would only have

looked for key terms. However, since this AP was in her L2, she had to make sure beforehand that she did actually “have enough” for it.

Annette (NNS) did something very similar, too. In order to increase her confidence, she wrote down a handout and then read it aloud a few times, pretending there was somebody listening to her. Although she did not read during her AP, the act of reading her handout beforehand several times seemed to help her.

Alexei, Chao, Kalea, and Sachiko all said that they had prepared a handout for themselves, without which they would have felt incredibly nervous (even confused) during the presentation. As Sachiko expressed in her own words:

Yes. I know these many other student - written down points on the note - they can present - their own word? But, ya, as I said if I do so, I soon feel very confused! So ((laughs)), and so always I - I write down? what I - what I'm going to say - on a paper.

(Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

Interestingly enough, while all NNSs claimed to have carefully prepared a handout for their APs and later rehearsed it orally, most NSs did not seem to feel the need to do so. Only those NSs who confessed being “nervous by nature” were the ones that went through their notes (but not complete text, for they did not write down such a thing). However, none of the NSs went through the notes “orally”; instead they chose to think about all the steps and content in their APs, and this seemed to work for them.

Choose a topic that interests the audience

Chao realized that one of the keys to engaging the audience was to choose a topic that matched their interest. So, even though Chao would have probably wished to do research on a slightly different topic (one more related to his background in Asian history),

he decided to talk about something “both sides have interest in” (Interview, Chao, HIST 510).

Prepare well in advance

Students in all three courses mentioned that they started preparing their APs ahead of time. Preparation was identified as one of the main strategies to ensure success during the presentation, and thus students tried to devote several hours (an average of 15 hours in HIST 510, ten in ANTH 610, and five in FREN 600) to thinking about the organization of their APs.²⁵ In general, NNSs spent a larger amount of time than their NS peers. According to L2 speakers, preparation usually takes more time for them just because they have to either double-check meanings in the dictionary (something NSs are less prone to do), or because they need to reorganize their thoughts in English (because they tend to think originally in their L1).

5.5.2 Delivery Strategies

Pose questions/include controversy

Since discussion is so much valued in a course such as HIST 510, students mentioned that they had purposefully included some statements that would inspire controversial responses. In Alexei’s own words,

Yes, uh, I think *I included extreme statements*, you know about - about Asia from a European point. And vice versa, to show, you know, to show the contrast, again as being positive for discussion, *you know as being something to push them to think it - over.*

(Interview, Alexei, HIST 510)

²⁵ I am not taking into consideration the amount of time students spent doing preliminary research or reading through materials.

Include a personal anecdote/a note of humor

Some participants also made use of humorous comments (or at least comments that they intended to sound humorous) in order to capture the audience's attention and keep them entertained. For instance, Mike (NS) made fun of himself (by joking about his "lawyer" style of organizing things) right at the beginning of his AP. This served as an ice breaker for him, and was also a strategy that brought him closer to the audience who laughed in sympathy. Carolyn (NS) justified her choice of topic by saying that

I chose to do a historiographical study because *it seems to be a hot topic* today. And besides, *I liked the sound of it!* [audience erupts in laughter] It's world history! It's comparative! [more laughter]

(AP recording, Carolyn, HIST 510)

Carolyn knew that none of the reasons she was giving for choosing that topic was to be taken seriously by the audience. She purposely chose to say so in order to relax the atmosphere of the AP, and she certainly succeeded in doing so.

Genie (NS), a student in ANTH 610, had prepared two overhead transparencies for her AP. When she placed the first one on the overhead projector, she realized that she had written them using a very small font size. Instead of disregarding this detail, or excusing herself, she said: "I guess I'll need to pay a visit to my optometrist any time soon!" (AP fieldnotes, Genie, ANTH 610), to which the audience reacted with laughter.

I already mentioned how Alexei had chosen to wear a T-shirt with a phrase related to his AP, and how he made a comment about this. And Nasrin chose to tell the audience how she had almost changed her mind about the topic she had chosen, but when she came across a great book she finally decided to stick to her original topic. There was no need for

either Alexei or Nasrin to make any of those comments; still, they worked in their favor since both Alexei and Nasrin later revealed to me that those comments had helped them to relax.

Chao and Sachiko, on the other hand, chose not to include any personal anecdotes or humorous comments in their APs. When I asked them about this, they responded that “I cannot make joke - I get lost if I try to! (...) In Japan we don’t do joke in formal presentation, but here I see people are happy about joke! I can’t.” (Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610). Or “That’s not for me - in this presentation. (...) Not my style - I don’t think so, no.” (Interview, Chao, HIST 510) While it was not the case that all NSs included a note of humor in their APs, and while personality plays a crucial role in how speakers organize their talk, the linguistic factor and the cultural background also influence the content of what students choose to include, and the way they do it. Alexei, Nasrin, Kalea, and Annette had all been exposed to the AP genre either in their home country or in Canada for a while. Conversely, Sachiko and Chao were relatively new to this kind of task, and still needed to learn more about how it usually worked in their corresponding discourse communities.

Avoid use of technical language

Presenters in the Faculty of Arts, as opposed to presenters in Medicine or Applied Science (see Chapter 6), tried to avoid using technical language. Of course this does not mean that terminology specific to the corresponding disciplines was to be avoided, but in general presenters chose to avoid employing technical language in their presentations, and left it instead for their written reports.

Choosing order of AP

Some students did not specifically mind about the order in which their AP was scheduled. On the contrary, other students (such as Chao), intentionally asked to have his AP at the end of the course, alluding to the fact that he would not be able to prepare well enough if he presented at the beginning:

I don't like to present in the beginning. Just in the beginning I can't do read a lot of material, I can't fully prepare for my topic. It would be just a very poor prepared presentation - and that's - that's not the way I'm doing things.

(Interview, Chao, HIST 510)

In the case of Sachiko, the opposite occurred. She chose to be among the first presenters of the day in order to get "rid" of her AP as soon as possible: "Cause, I feel nervous, so if I have longer time - to wait for my turn, and during all that time I need to keep - I feel nervous, so I just wanted to get rid of it!" (Interview, Sachiko, ANTH 610)

Use visuals

The use of visuals in the Faculty of Arts was not pervasive (at least in the three courses I had access to). In HIST 510, none of the students chose to employ overhead transparencies, and the only visuals that students used in their AP were photocopies of a map (in Chao's presentation). According to participants, visuals are not commonly used in social sciences or humanities courses:

It looks like it's possible to get away without visual aids, in history, because if you talk about ideas, if you talk about historical facts. But I think it could be a good addition if you're using for example maps, or some graphs.
(Interview, Alexei, HIST 510)

In ANTH 610, only three out of the 11 students in the course chose to use overhead transparencies.²⁶ Another kind of visual employed in this course was photographs. One of the ANTH 610 students mentioned that she did not like overhead transparencies very much, but that photographs made a nice kind of visual that the audience could actually touch and have in their hands. In FREN 600, only one of the students made use of overhead transparencies; another student made a diagram on the chalkboard, a third student brought a concrete object to pass around, and the fourth student did not rely on any visuals to enhance his AP. In short, students in the Faculty of Arts seemed to be less fond of overhead transparencies, chose to use them only in cases where they thought no other form of visual would be better, and considered other alternatives to illustrate their talks in a concrete way.

As in the case of students in the Faculty of Medicine, students in the Faculty of Arts also resorted to a variety of preparation and delivery strategies that they employed before and during their APs. A comparison of these strategies across fields can be found in chapter 7.

²⁶ It should be noted, however, that students realized the equipment in the class was not working properly. When the first student prepared overheads, she finally decided not to use them after trying the projector and finding out it made too much noise. Students were thus discouraged from using overhead transparencies.

6

APS IN THE FACULTY OF APPLIED SCIENCE

Although I'm feel nervous in presenting, but I love presentation. So I enjoy watching other people-presentation, and I learn from them.

(Interview, Viet, EECE 510)

6.1 Situating the Task

Nearing the end of Winter term I, students in the two Electrical and Computer Engineering (EECE) courses I observed in the Faculty of Applied Science were getting ready for their APs. There were five students taking EECE 512, and three taking EECE 510, all of them NNSs. I was able to observe and tape record all eight APs,²⁷ and later interviewed six of the students. Dr. Okinishi was the course instructor for EECE 510; he had taught the course for more than four years, and had employed APs as a means of assessment since the previous year. Dr. Gomez was a visiting professor who came to teach this course in his area of specialty. Both instructors were NNSs, whereas all instructors of the courses observed in the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Arts were NSs.²⁸

²⁷ I observed eight different APs, two of which were given by the same student (Luxin) who was taking both courses. Hence, there were seven different students in total enrolled in both courses, and I interviewed six of these.

²⁸ In relation to APs, I wonder whether or not the fact that course instructors in both EECE courses were NNSs implied that their AP standards were different from those of NS instructors. After all, NNS instructors themselves might have had difficulties similar to the ones their students experienced. I believe this topic warrants closer examination.

Classes in both courses were held once a week, for a three-hour period each time.

APs in both courses took place on one date (the last day of classes), and thus they were seen as a one-time event. Other tasks students were required to do are detailed in Table 6.1:

Table 6.1 Faculty of Applied Science Tasks

Course	Tasks	Grade%
EECE 510	oral presentation	20%
	final project (written report)	50%
	assignments	30%
EECE 512	oral presentations	15%
	final project (written report)	55%
	assignments	30%

APs in both courses represented between 15% and 20% of their final course grade.

As can be seen from the table, students in both courses were requested to do very similar kinds of tasks.

6.2 On the Surface Level: Descriptive Features of APs in Applied Science

6.2.1 APs in EECE 510

In this course, all three students presented their work on the same date: the last day of classes. Although students were not specifically told in advance how much time they had to present the AP, on the day of the presentation the course instructor asked students to talk for about 20 minutes, and then leave a few minutes (around 10) for a question period.²⁹

However, time frames were not strictly taken into account (see Table 6.2):

²⁹ It was clear from the observations that the time frame had not been clearly stated by the course instructor. The first presenter (Farid) was in the middle of his AP when he checked with the instructor how much time he had. When the instructor replied: "well, for the presentation 20 minutes, so you have five minutes left" (AP recording, Dr. Okinishi, EECE 510), Farid responded that he thought they had 30 minutes for the delivery, and thus now he would have to rush.

Table 6.2 AP Length - EECE 510

Shortest AP	19 minutes
Longest AP	34 minutes
Mean	24.3 minutes

While Farid took 34 minutes to present, Viet and Luxin took 20 and 19 minutes respectively. Hence, AP length in this course was variable.

All presenters chose to stand in front of the class (probably due to the fact that they were all employing overhead transparencies). Although there was a very small number of students and they all claimed to know each other, when two of the presenters started their AP they did so in a rather formal, formulaic way: *"Good afternoon Dr. Okinishi and my fellow students. Thank you for joining my presentation."* (AP recording, Luxin, EECE 510) Likewise, Viet opened up his speech as follows: *"Thank you my fellow classmates and instructor for coming to this presentation."* (AP recording, Viet, EECE 510) On the other hand, when both these students concluded their APs they just uttered the phrase: *"So that's all!"* (AP recording, Luxin, EECE 510). So while we can say their APs started with a rather formal tone, they ended with a very informal expression. Students seemed to perceive the AP as a special event where they were supposed to express themselves employing a formal register. However, they were not consistent throughout the whole AP, and the opening and closure are just an example of this.

6.2.2 APs in EECE 512

Mateo, Miguel, Mei, Luxin and Vic-Ming were the five presenters in EECE 512. All students intuitively thought they had to organize an AP that lasted around 20 minutes, and they also knew there would be a question period (this seemed to be the usual format of APs

in the Faculty of Applied Science, according to students and my observations of APs).

However, students in this course--like students in EECE 510--were not specifically told any time frame or format until the day of the AP arrived and Dr. Gomez said:

Ok, today we have the presentations. *I would like you to present for 25 minutes more or less, and then we leave like 10 minutes for questions. We will have a 15 minutes break in the middle* - Is that ok?

(AP recording, Dr. Gomez, EECE 512)

While two presenters took 29 and 31 minutes respectively, the remaining three took 10, 13, and 15 minutes (including the question period). Thus, the length of APs in this course was also quite variable (see Table 6.3)

Table 6.3 AP Length - EECE 512

Shortest AP	10 minutes
Longest AP	34 minutes
Mean	19.6 minutes

The event was perceived as a special occasion, and thus there was a certain formality attached to it. First of all, the AP did not take place in the regular classroom; instead, the event took place in the department conference room, which has the necessary equipment to project computer-generated slides. So the (unusual) physical setting itself--with its carpeted floors, chairs tidily arranged in rows facing the front, and an impeccable aura of order--charged the event with a touch of formality. All students stood in front of the class to do their APs, for most of them employed a laptop³⁰ computer to do their presentation, and one student used overhead transparencies.

³⁰ Most students in this course had prepared their presentation using Powerpoint. Hence, in order to show their slides they needed a computer and a projector that allowed them to display their work.

6.3 Underneath the Surface: Essential Aspects that Help Define APs in Applied Science

As I have just stated in the previous section, APs in both Applied Science courses shared many surface aspects in common: APs were a one-time event that took place on the last day of classes; students were expected to take a total of 30 minutes (though this was not strictly respected in either course); and it was a relatively formal event. An analysis of aspects such as content, sequence, purposes and discourse features of APs will further reveal the similarities (and slight discrepancies) that characterized the task in EECE 510 and EECE 512.

6.3.1 The Content of APs

In both cases, students were expected to orally present their (preliminary) written final projects. However, while students in EECE 510 were presenting the findings of their work (for they had to hand in their projects within the same week), students in EECE 512 presented preliminary ideas, since they were at an earlier stage in their projects (students in this course still had two weeks before the written report was due).

6.3.2 The Sequence Patterns of APs

The sequence of stages generally followed by students is found in Figures 6.1 and 6.2:

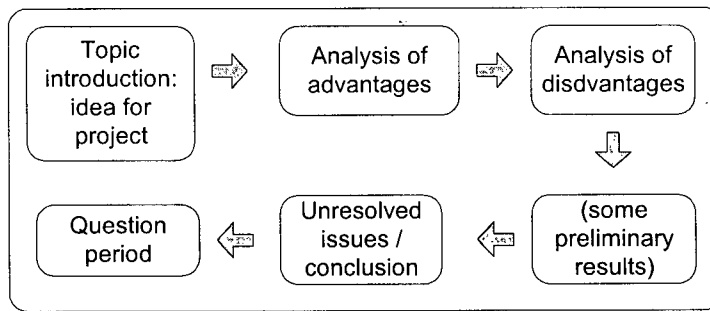


Figure 6.1 AP Sequence - EECE 510

Students in EECE 510 started with an introduction outlining their ideas for the final project; next they analyzed the advantages and disadvantages of their chosen approach and techniques. If already implemented, they showed some results of their ideas at work; if no results were available yet, students clarified this and went on with unresolved issues or problems they had, and finally concluded their AP with a brief summary of main points. A question period ensued.

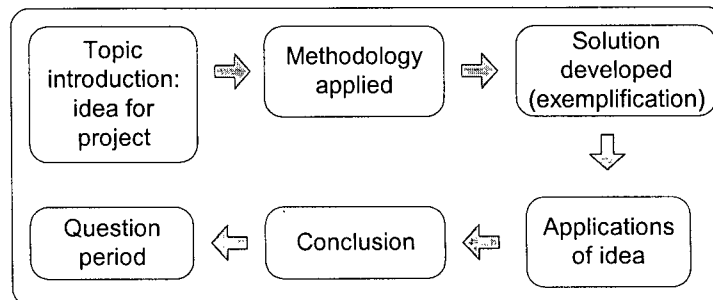


Figure 6.2 AP Sequence - EECE 512

The AP sequence in EECE 512 shared certain aspects in common with APs in the other course: students also started with an introduction of the topic stating how their ideas

had emerged. However, since students in this course had already tried out their ideas and developed a solution (i.e. usually a computer program with applications in the field), the next stage in their AP sequence was that of sharing the methodology applied and then, most importantly, showing how the solution worked. Before summarizing main ideas, students highlighted the applications of their solutions in the field. Once the delivery part was finished, there was a brief question period where the audience generally asked for more details and explanations about certain aspects of the proposed solution and its performance.

6.3.3 The Purpose(s) of APs

While EECE 510 students presented preliminary ideas, those in EECE 512 presented a finished work. Hence, the purposes of their APs differed slightly. Students in the first course viewed their APs as an opportunity to test their ideas. If these seemed to sound reasonable to the public (i.e., mainly to the instructor), they felt they were free to go ahead and develop them in their final project. As well, input from the instructor and peers was sought and taken into consideration. On the other hand, students in the latter course (EECE 512), experienced the AP as a chance to share their finished work with their audience. This was a time for celebration of accomplished work, and an opportunity for students to actually demonstrate the applications of their developed solutions and share them with their small community.

In addition to these purposes the task fulfilled in each course, in the case of EECE 510 Dr. Okinishi mentioned that one of the reasons for having students present their preliminary ideas was to engage them in the final term project well in advance:

I only introduced this presentation the last year. Otherwise - well I - I usually give the term project - but *from the past experience - if they don't- if they're not given the*

pressure of giving a presentation - they don't get serious enough - after all the course materials are over.

(Interview, Dr. Okinishi, EECE 510)

Thus, in this case, APs served also as a kind of “excuse” in the sense that they were not an end in itself, but rather a kind of tool that put pressure on students to start working early. In fact, Dr. Okinishi confessed that he did not mark APs very strictly, and tended to give students a similar grade.

Also mentioned as a good purpose was that of doing APs in order to gain enough practice to present at professional conferences in the field. All students were aware of how much an impact their presentations could have, for the way they were able to present influenced the way people perceived and judged their work.

Students in Applied Science as well saw APs as a good chance to practice their presentation skills (the practical aspects, such as public speaking in front of an interested audience). Furthermore, APs were an excellent chance to practice the English language. Even though students felt that their linguistic abilities in some cases did not meet their expectations, they also thought that this would not have too much of a negative impact on their grade. Thus, APs were not threatening, but rather a good opportunity to continue learning English. It is interesting, however, to see how opinions differed slightly between those NNSs who had already been studying at WCU for a while (two or three years), and those who were incoming students. These issues are further addressed in the next section.

6.3.4 Discourse Features of APs

APs in Applied Science courses were characterized, in broad terms, by ample use of technical vocabulary, as exemplified in the extracts below:

[Showing slide 7] So, probably to summarize the idea, we could say that the ideal option should be to have - *the real-time engine simulating the network* with very detailed information and *models*, and at certain- not at the *same pace as the real time simulator (xxx)*,³¹ but *every time step drops* - actually this information comes from the *real time engine* and *feeds* all the *stability assessment tools* - which could be, for example, *sophi*- very sophisticated *power flows*. And this is also the shortest way to the *critical point*. And also for *energy analysis*.

(AP recording, Mateo, EECE 512)

[Showing first and second overhead transparencies] I'm supposed to have this *control* using a *PCI controller*, using a *linear* - and *also fuzzy logic* (x). First I talk about my project, and then a little bit about *switch reluctance*, which is the name of this *model*. (...) I also designed a *circuit for simulation*. In this project, in order to have a *controller* I need a *motor for the system*. Since this *motor* is highly known in the *system*, therefore we can have a complicated (*mother board?*). But in order to *test the control system*, just I found that - having a *simple model* for that is working. This means that the (xxx) *model* works, in the *linear type* of (x).

(AP recording, Farid, EECE 510)

Terms such as *real time*, *engine*, *simulation*, *time step*, *stability assessment tools*, *model*, *controller*, and *circuit*, were the lexical items that gave meaning to the whole texts. In order to be able to successfully present and fully comprehend the APs, students were required to have knowledge not only of everyday English language (to make the oral discourse sound coherent and cohesive), but they also needed to be extremely knowledgeable of the technical terms employed in the field. One of my aims in this research project thus was to find out whether students felt they had the necessary linguistic tools to cope with the task, and in relation to this also examine the specific needs of these students.

³¹ In most cases where I have included (x) in these two extracts, the kind of terms that I was not able to understand sounded like typical technical vocabulary. Due to my lack of familiarity with the field, I was not able to decipher this information.

6.3.4.1 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Perceived Through Observations

As an observer, I must admit my huge limitations. In the case of Applied Science courses (as with Medicine courses), in many instances, it was hard for me to figure out the terminology itself,³² let alone to comprehend the content of the presentation. On the other hand, as an observer I was still able to assess: the presenters' level of language proficiency and whether they were comfortable speaking in their L2; whether presenters were familiar with the AP genre (mostly perceivable through the presenter's practical skills such as speaking in a loud voice, making eye contact with the audience, speaking at a good pace, using gestures, etc.); and whether presenters seemed to know what they were talking about (manifested, for instance, through the presenter's clarity of exposure, and ability to cope with questions framed by the audience).

From my observations, then, I was able to identify two groups of students: those who seemed to have a level of language proficiency that allowed them express themselves comfortably during the AP, and those who struggled more obviously with the language, evidencing certain limitations to make their ideas clear to the audience. Mateo, Miguel, Mei, and Farid belong to the first group of students; Luxin, Viet, and Vic-Ming to the second one. A brief description of each particular case follows:

(a) Mateo was born in Argentina. In his early 30s, he was now enrolled in a Ph.D program after having finished his Masters at WCU. He had thus been in Canada for about three years at the time his AP in EECE 512 took place. Mateo seemed to be extremely comfortable doing the AP task: he spoke eloquently, addressed the audience constantly while speaking, and had good management of equipment. In spite

³² To diminish the impact of my misunderstandings as an observer, I kept copious notes in my fieldnote book of instances in which I seemed to fail to understand words/phrases uttered by presenters. After the AP, I informally approached presenters and double checked my notes with them. I found this exercise to be of great help. Still, I am aware and so should be the reader of the many instances in which I may have misunderstood something due to my lack of familiarity with the field.

of his Spanish accent and some difficulties with grammar, it was easy to follow the structure of Mateo's AP. He rarely interrupted the flow of speech, revealing his high level of conceptual and linguistic preparation. However, Mateo's own experience with APs can be further explored through his own perception of how language (i.e., delivering it in his L2) may affect it. (Refer to the next section.)

(b) Also in his 30s and from a Hispanic origin, Miguel sounded quite proficient and comfortable delivering his AP. This student had been in Canada for over three years at the time of my observations, and thus he seemed to be fully acquainted with the kind of task he was asked to fulfil in this course. Miguel's flow of speech was smooth, although it was difficult to understand a few words he uttered. He also made a few grammatical mistakes (such as employing wrong verb conjugations), but generally this kind of mistakes would not impede communication.

(c) Mei, a Chinese female student in her early 30s, had also been in Canada for over three years at the time I observed her AP in EECE 512. Mei's repertoire of some linguistic features (such as conjunctions, linking devices, attributive terms) was quite restricted, and it was apparent to me that she had even memorized part of her AP (evidenced through the fast pace of her speech for certain sections of her presentation). Yet, though linguistically less proficient than either Mateo or Miguel, Mei seemed to have enough language competence to deliver her AP successfully.

(d) Farid, a male student in his 40s, was born in Iran. However, he had spent the last five years outside his country while studying in Canada. Currently, this was his first year in the Ph.D. program at UBC, but he had earned his previous degree at another Canadian University. Farid's speech was heavily accented, but his pronunciation of words was mostly clear. Hence, his speech was sometimes blurry but not incomprehensible. He sounded quite fluent speaking English, though his range of everyday vocabulary was quite restricted during the AP. (He tended to use several times phrases such as *as can be seen*, *as I've just said*, *next I*, making his speech sound repetitive, even if the ideas he portrayed were not.) Still, I would argue that there were no major perceivable linguistic difficulties in his AP, and during the discussion period he demonstrated his ability to cope with questions.

(e) Luxin, a Chinese female student in her 20s, was a newcomer to Canada. Having lived in Vancouver for about six months, she was still adjusting to her new life as a student in a foreign country. I was able to observe Luxin doing two APs, and this allowed me to perceive some differences between her first and second presentation. Luxin's AP in EECE 510 was the first presentation she had ever made in English, and thus this represented for her an extra challenge. She took about 15 minutes for the presentation, and it seemed as if she felt she had to rush through it even though she still had plenty of time. It looked as if Luxin had learned her AP by heart, for there was almost no stretch of spontaneous talk: she basically read through the text

she included in her slides, and in some cases briefly included further verbal explanations of what she had done. The second time I observed her, she seemed to have realized some of the weak points in her previous AP, and thus for instance she made an effort to speak more slowly during her AP. Still, her language competence was far behind that of her other more proficient NNS peers.

(f) Viet came from Taiwan. He was a young student in his early 20s, pursuing a masters degree. He had never before studied abroad, and had currently been in Canada for about four months. His English proficiency was rather weak, and thus he experienced some problems when trying to communicate ideas to his peers/instructor. He had a strong Chinese accent, employed intonation patterns that are not typical of the English language, and his grammar competence was not very accurate. If it had not been for his enthusiasm about his project, and for the visuals he employed in his presentations, I assume it would have been very difficult for the audience to grasp the content of his presentation.

(g) Vic-Ming was a young Chinese student, also in his early 20s. He had been in Canada for a few months, and this was also his first experience studying in an English speaking country. Vic-Ming's L2 competence was far behind that of his other NNS peers, and this was evident when in his presentation he was forced to stick to the phrases he had written down in his overhead transparencies, only being able to read through them without expanding on his own (except for a few cases, in which he tried to give further explanations of how he had reached a solution. In these cases, due to his stuttering speech, plenty of repetition without adding further meaning, his strong foreign accent and wrong use of certain grammar structures, it was evident that he was struggling to make himself understood in his L2.)

The two extracts below (from AP recordings) attempt to illustrate these differences among NNSs' discourse:

So - basically - the - the scheme - *it* can be summarized in this slide. We have the real time simulator providing accurate data at a very fast pace, so you can take at any moment the- the data- accurate data from any part of the system to initialize the low flow solution. Since you are taking accurate data from the real time engine - you- can-have more freedom in the convergency aspect - because, as you probably *are be* aware - if you provide good initialization data for the low flow, you make everything much easier for the conversion.

(AP recording, Mateo, EECE 512)

The first step when people come to- when people *think to upgrading* their power system *is to - is they- with-within* a power planning with more than one generating

unit- to *gene-generate* power efficiently they will think that you need to find the power motivation of the unit first. *So the unit maximum efficiency?* - then you go to the next one, and so on. But that's -that's not the case, so ((long pause while he flips through overheads)) So - *when determine-when determing* the economic distribution of a load between the various units you look at the (xxx).
(AP recording, Vic-Ming, EECE 512)

A linguistic analysis of the complete APs is beyond the scope of this thesis. However, an examination of representative portions will shed some light as to the kind of linguistic struggles NNSs had to face, especially in situations like this, where students were under great pressure and thus were not able to concentrate on all aspects of their APs. In Mateo's case, the letters in italics indicate instances in which he committed grammar mistakes (that he was probably not aware of). However, none of these problematic instances interfered with meaning. On the other hand, in Vic-Ming's case we can identify more cases of linguistic struggles. To start with, the first string of information seems rather disorganized and includes some faulty use of language and repetition that may evidence insecurity. As to the interrogative utterance that follows (*So the unit maximum efficiency?*), Vic-Ming might have been using a pragmatic strategy common in Chinese (and, sometimes, in causal oral English) that was loosely organized with the sentence topic first, followed by a comment about that topic. The final sentence in this stretch of discourse reveals another instance of doubt: is it "determine" or "determing"? It should actually be neither, and Vic-Ming seemed to be aware of his struggle, but for the sake of time (and probably also because he was not sure as to which was the correct form to be used), he decided to go ahead talking.

In the case of Luxin, I mentioned she seemed to cope with linguistic struggles. For instance, an utterance such as "At this time *I haven't got time to do results* - but I'll do it in the next two weeks" (AP recordings) illustrates the kind of grammar mistakes (wrong

choice of verb tense when using *haven't got* instead of *didn't have*; and probably a more appropriate lexical term would be *get results* instead of *do results*). As well, I spotted a few instances of incorrect spelling or grammar in her transparencies. For example, "*This project will analyzes.*" (AP fieldnotes) Though these kinds of linguistic difficulties may not have severely impeded understanding of her AP, they did reveal Luxin's plight in trying to perform in her L2. And this was even more evident when her speech was compared to that of other more linguistic proficient peers, of course.

Thus there were two distinctive groups in EECE courses, and L2 linguistic proficiency played a crucial role in how the students APs were perceived. However, as evidenced through data that comes from the interviews, those NNSs who seemed to barely struggle with English, in fact also felt that their L2 linguistic proficiency prevented them from delivering their APs in the most desired way. I examine this in the section that follows.

6.3.4.2 Linguistic Challenges of NNSs as Reported by Presenters

My perceptions are complemented with the actual viewpoints of the students themselves, who reflected on their APs in the interviews. As already mentioned, Miguel was among the group of students who spoke fluently and quite spontaneously. When asked if he would have preferred to give the same AP in Spanish (his mother tongue), Miguel responded:

I think it would be more difficult, because all the terminology is in English, right? So, to start with, how can you talk about something that you don't know how to say in Spanish? - It's happened to me several times already - the whole lot of technical terminology, how do you transfer it to Spanish? - you end up talking Spanglish!
(Interview, Miguel, EECE 512)

Hence, Miguel felt that given the large amount of technical terms he usually used in his APs, and given that he was familiar with this lexicon in his L2 mainly, doing a technical presentation in his L1 would be even more difficult, and he would end up translating from English to Spanish. However, when I asked Miguel if he thought presenting in his L2 had an impact on his AP, he responded:

Miguel: Yes, I think so. *My vocabulary is much more restricted - and*

Sandra: So, not the technical terms, but everyday language you mean?

Miguel: Yes, *standard language - idioms and expressions*

(Interview, Miguel, EECE 512)

Thus, even though Miguel mentioned that doing his AP in Spanish would be difficult for him due to the technical language (which he has mastered in English), it was the everyday expressions and idioms that seemed to affect his perception of the way he presented in English. As well, Miguel admitted to having pronunciation difficulties, and thus he always employed a “word selection strategy” (see next section) to compensate for this problem.

Mateo, the student I identified in this group as the most comfortable one giving an AP, also had something to say regarding his L2 proficiency and how it affected his AP:

I wish I- could speak English like I speak my first language [Spanish]. At this point, I feel I- I have no problem presenting in front of an audience, I even enjoy it! I am comfortable giving talks, and be able to explain my ideas - but sometimes I'd like to be able to speak in a more elegant way. (...) I feel that my language is rudi- rudimentary? in some cases. And although I practice beforehand what I want to say, I - sometimes I don't know how to say things, although I know NSs would know how to say them! Also, I have an accent, and I don't know how to pronounce a few words. I know the word, but I forget the pronunciation! So I want to use it [the word] but then I don't know if I should or not. (...) I try to sound very natural when I present, because this is the best way to engage the audience. So, definitely, if I spoke English as my first language, I would be able to sound much more natural!

(Interview, Mateo, EECE 512)

Notwithstanding Mateo's high level of L2 proficiency, he still felt that it prevented him from sounding "natural" or from having the freedom to choose the lexical items and expressions he wished. In addition, he felt that his Spanish accent and lack of knowledge of pronunciation of certain words also hindered his ability to express himself in his L2. In sum, he felt constrained due to his minor (perceived) linguistic limitations.

When asked whether she enjoyed giving presentations, Mei made specific reference to her L2 proficiency, and how this affected the way she performed this kind of task:

Enjoy? No - I don't think so. But - *now I am more used to give presentation, because now I speak better English. But when I came here - it was very difficult for me, because I couldn't understand what other people were asking me, and I got nervous. Now it's better, because I know more English, and I can explain my ideas.*

(Interview, Mei, EECE 512)

To Mei, improving her English meant that she was now able not only to speak, but also to understand people. She felt much better now that she could explain her ideas in English, something she was not able to do on her arrival in Canada, more than two years ago. In fact, Mateo, Miguel, and Farid had also been in Canada for a few years at the time of their APs, and all of them made reference in their interviews to how their stay in Canada had allowed them to improve their linguistic abilities, and thus made them feel stronger in this aspect.

When asked which part of the AP she preferred--the delivery period or the question period, Mei explained that since she had improved her English, she preferred the second period because she could talk and because mistakes were not so obvious in this stage:

I think - [I prefer] *the question period, because you can talk, and if you make mistakes it's not so obvious. Because when you are presenting it has to be like perfect, if not people will think that - you will not make a good impression. But when they*

ask you questions and you can talk more free, then it's better. *Now, at least, because I know more English.* That is actually the main point, the English.

(Interview, Mei, EECE 512)

Mei also stated that the fact that she had to give her AP in her L2 influenced the way she presented, especially because she felt she was not extremely fluent in English. In her own words,

(...) it's not so easy - *for the vocabulary. Sometimes you end up paying attention to the language and not to the topic of your presentation!* And that's bad.

(Interview, Mei, EECE 512)

What may occur if students do not feel proficient enough in their L2 is that they end up concentrating on the language even more than on the content of the presentation. And of course, this is not a desirable situation. This relates to Skehan's (1996) work on task-based instruction and performance, where he contends that "it is useful to separate learner goals into three main areas: accuracy, [linguistic] complexity, and fluency" (p. 46), arguing that these three main areas are in constant competition with each other. Thus, under stressful conditions (such as an AP, for instance), students may tend to emphasize one area over the other. As Skehan illustrates,

One could speculate that the tendency to be inaccurate on this basis relates to how well established the particular part of the interlanguage system is. But it is also possible that inaccuracy is the result of the competence-performance relationship, and of the way in which communicative pressure has led to an error being made which, under other circumstances, would not be: a lapse. (pp. 46-47)

Students like Luxin or Viet, for instance, felt that their linguistic competence was one of their main concerns when presenting, especially because they could not speak

English very fluently or correctly. (This of course, in addition to the fact that they were not very familiar with the AP task itself. These issues will be further discussed in Chapter 7.)

It's easy to use you native language. That's the most thing that make me nervous! using another language. Because - I don't speak good English, so I have problem to communicate. I don't know much vocabulary, and I am afraid make mistakes! I - I don't know [if] people understand me - But I think sometimes not because they - looking at me with big eyes! ((small laughs)).

(Interview, Luxin, EECE 510)

Luxin was conscious of her linguistic problems, and she was actually afraid that sometimes her message might not come across due to these difficulties. Viet also mentioned similar concerns in his interview:

I - this my first presentation in English, and I was- was very nervous! ((small laughs)) But - I don't know - I think my - most important problem is my English. I speak good, but maybe not so good for presentation! I don't know - but I - need to learn more words - a- and the English expression. Because - I hope I can learn all this to do better presentation in the future. I know other people like me learn, and they do better - presentation. So, I think I can too!

(Interview, Viet, EECE 510)

Although he felt he spoke English well, Viet also realized his L2 linguistic competence was not enough to do a good presentation. He needed to learn more vocabulary and expressions, and hopefully this would aid him in future times. He viewed English as his most important problem. (However, as I will discuss in Chapter 7, there were other non-linguistic struggles students had to cope with, and these were by no means less important than the linguistic constraints.)

In sum, speaking English as an L2 implied for all NNSs that they would have to face the challenge of conveying ideas in a language they were not fully confident with, and which they felt had a negative impact on their APs.

6.4 Qualities Promoted in Applied Science

As with the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Arts, students in the Faculty of Applied Science also tried to behave according to the qualities and values promoted in their field. Figure 6.3 attempts to illustrate these qualities as evidenced through the specific task of APs.

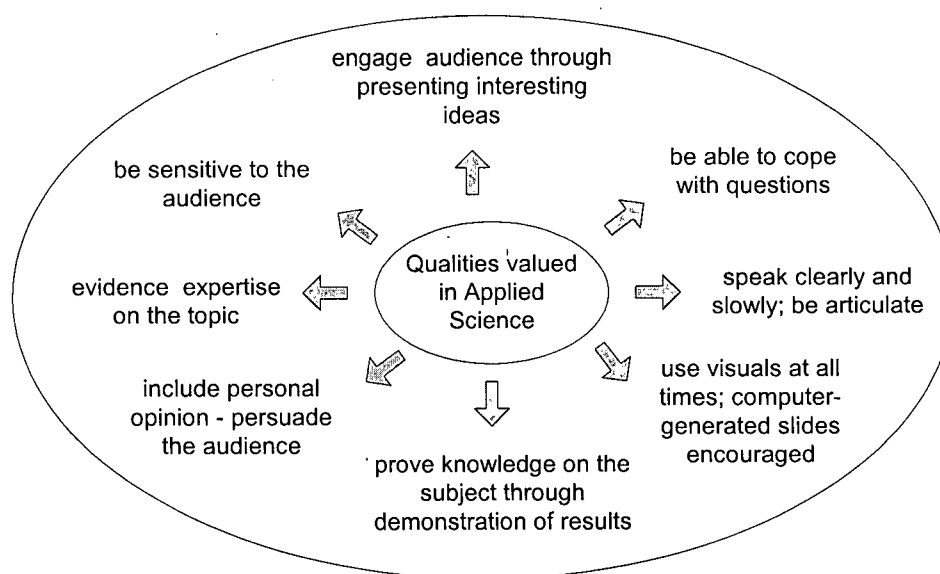


Figure 6.3 AP Qualities Valued in the Faculty of Applied Science

Again, some of the qualities (such as engaging the audience and being sensitive to it; speaking clearly; and being able to cope with questions) are qualities that the students in the other two faculties explored were also expected to account for. A distinctive value promoted in the Faculty of Applied Science, on the other hand, was the idea of proving the knowledge or mastery of a topic not merely through an exposition of ideas, but rather through a demonstration of results. Hence, students in Applied Science courses were usually expected to apply their knowledge by developing a concrete solution, and showing the

community how this solution was applicable to real life situations. Consequently, a less tentative nature characterized the discourse expected from students, who needed to sound convincing and persuade the audience that their ideas in fact were worth hearing. As well, students in the Faculty of Applied Science always relied on visual resources for their presentations. Given the interactive nature of some of the students' projects, presenters in EECE 512 usually chose to employ a laptop computer to produce Powerpoint slides, and in some cases to run the programs they designed, demonstrating their proposed solutions at work.

With regard to the behaviors discouraged in the field, these are summarized in Figure 6.4:

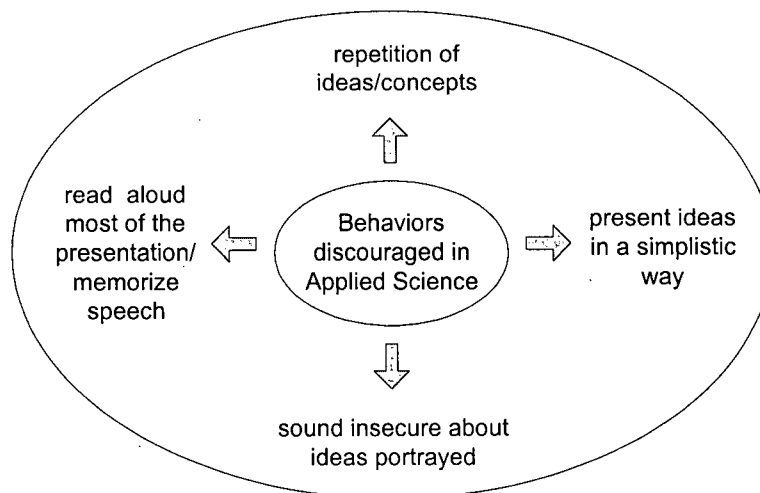


Figure 6.4 AP Behaviors Discouraged in the Faculty of Applied Science

Students and instructors in Applied Science viewed either *reading aloud most of the presentation* or *memorizing speech* as negative behaviors. In addition, repetition of ideas or concepts without a clear objective was discouraged. Ideas should not be presented in a sim-

plistic way, but rather showing the audience the complexity of a solution through a detailed description of how it was developed. In order to be taken seriously, students needed to sound convinced of their ideas, and thus weak arguments were discouraged.

6.5 Strategies Employed by Presenters

Similar to the case of students in the other two faculties explored, in order to perform the AP task according to the values promoted in the field, presenters resorted to a wide spectrum of preparation and delivery strategies.

6.5.1 Preparation Strategies

Prepare well: Master the topic of the presentation

In order to be able to persuade the audience about the solution developed, presenters needed to show extreme confidence in their work. Hence, students felt they should prepare themselves well in advance, and learn everything possible about the topic. According to Miguel, he needed to prepare himself well (through testing his solution several times, for instance), because

the person needs to be 100% sure that what she or he is saying is correct. Otherwise, the audience notices immediately. (...) So that's why it's imperative that you know what you're talking about. I cannot give a presentation about fish, because I don't know anything about fish! But for the topic of my presentation, I was well prepared.
(Interview, Miguel, EECE 512)

Mateo also mentioned in his interview the crucial role preparation played, explaining that he could not start even thinking about his AP until he was totally convinced that his solution worked. Once he obtained the desired results and confirmed them several times with different methods, he was ready to organize his AP. He felt at this point that the knowl-

edge he had on the topic was essential in order to organize his AP, and without it he would have failed.

Organize AP in advance

Gathering the necessary knowledge to present the topic in front of an audience did not suffice to become a successful presenter. Thus, in addition to preparing themselves well in relation to the content of the AP, students also mentioned the importance of organizing the ideas to talk about.

Once I - know exactly what I want to say, then I think how I want to say it. I want to be very effective in the way I present, so that's why I believe it is very important not only what you say, but also how. (...) I usually use my laptop and prepare the slides including the main points. Then, when I present, I just refer to these points but explain to the audience directly, instead of writing everything on the slide. And for this I need to be prepared.

(Interview, Mateo, EECE 512)

Rehearse (aloud)

Although all students mentioned doing a rehearsal of their APs before they actually took place, the way in which students practiced differed. Some of them (like Viet and Luxin) chose to look for a peer and ask them to be their audience, simulating a real AP situation. Others (like Miguel or Mei) said that after over two years of giving presentations at WCU they did not need to rehearse orally any more -- they "*had done much of that already*"! (Interview, Mei, EECE 512) But what they did mention is that practice took the form of going over their AP in their minds, and probably rehearsing aloud just a few words that they knew caused them difficulty (due to pronunciation, mainly). In Mateo's case, even though he had already done a number of APs in the past years, he said that if time

permitted him, he always preferred to rehearse it aloud, since this gave him a sense of exactly how much time the AP would take and how coherent his talk sounded:

I - I like to rehearse my presentation, and I generally - try to do it orally. Because this is the only way in which I can test how long it will take me (or approximately how long), and then I decide if I have to avoid some information or not. As well, I can realize if my talk makes sense. And also, since I know that it's not the same to speak English than my first language, I am usually more nervous when I speak English and that's why I prefer to rehearse orally! (...) Also, I usually have to check the pronunciation of some words, which I forget.

(Interview, Mateo, EECE 512)

Rehearsing it orally also allowed Mateo to release some of the tension he usually felt due to the fact that the APs had to be delivered in his L2.

Speaking English the moment before the AP

To some students, one of the biggest issues seemed to be that the AP was delivered in English. Hence, as a strategy to loosen up their tongue and reduce the level of nervousness, they engaged in informal conversations in English, even if these were not related to the topic of their presentation. As Farid and Luxin mentioned in their interview:

Farid: I realized Luxin was very nervous. We talked to each other before coming to class - we talked around one or two hours. Actually, one of my aims - to talk to Luxin so much was that - she's very nervous, and I try to make her calm. And also it was - since I didn't have a chance to rehearse at home, it was a good chance for me for two hours speaking in English.

Sandra: So were you - during these two hours, were you speaking English and talking about what you were going to present?

Farid: No, we talked about other things!

Luxin: *I just tried to talk about other things, because I feel nervous. And talking in English helps me for the presentation.*

(Interview, Farid and Luxin, EECE 510)

6.5.2 Delivery Strategies

Word selection

One of the participants (Miguel) mentioned that he paid special attention to the words he employed, and tried to avoid those terms which were difficult to pronounce. (Even so, he mentioned that people sometimes seemed not to understand him.)

Establish and maintain eye contact with the audience

Engaging the audience was seen as a key to success. Thus, presenters tried to employ certain strategies that enabled them to attract the audience's attention. One of these strategies was establishing and maintaining eye contact.

I try to make eye contact with the audience. This is what gives me an idea of whether people or not are following - what I'm saying. And if I see faces that are bored - well, I try not to look at them! But people who pay attention usually give you an idea if you are doing well or not. Some people nod - and this is like - kind of they are saying 'it's ok, go ahead!'

(Interview, Mateo, EECE 512)

Mei also mentioned the importance of looking at the audience. She compared APs in Canada with those in China, where “*we used the blackboard a lot, so that [looking at the audience] was a problem.*” (Interview, Mei, EECE 512)

Use gestures - vary tone of voice

Another strategy that served the purpose of keeping the audience's attention was that of varying the tone of voice, avoiding monotonous speech sound. As well, using hand gestures or facial expressions was considered a good strategy to keep the audience's attention. In this respect, while some students seemed to be extremely aware of these strategies, others were still trying to figure out how they worked:

Viet: *I think we should use some - hand gesture. And - what do you think? ((asking peers))*

Luxin: I have no idea. - *Yes, I think gesture is - is a good way.* Farid, what do you think?

Farid: I don't know what to say!

(Interview, Viet, Farid, and Luxin, EECE 510)

Use visuals

As already mentioned, the use of visuals (overhead transparencies or computer generated slides) was pervasive, even imperative, in the Faculty of Applied Science. Students more experienced presenting were usually aware of many aspects at the time of preparing their transparencies/slides, and also of the role these played in their APs. For instance, Miguel described the way he usually prepared overhead transparencies, paying attention not only to the content but also to the style:

I try to keep things as simple as possible. I usually make them black and white - because sometimes I have to use the overhead projector - and it's much easier to print them out. I am generally very laconic in the things I include in my transparencies. I don't know if you noticed that my presentation was absolutely plain. A few letters and maybe a border around them - but no decorations or the like. I think this helps emphasize more on the content of the transparency. It doesn't look as nice as the other ones, but this is not a beauty contest! - I am providing information. I don't know if you recall it - there was an overhead with some data about generating times. That transparency, for instance, is very important. Because from there I take the conclusions - so basically, it's what reflects what I did and what I have obtained - and these are the conclusions. And that transparency was simply a table - with nothing that would distract people's attention. If people wanted to find something, it was there - and they could find it quickly: method, time, number of iterations. That's it. Maybe it's because I'm not so good! [adorning] ((laughs)) But in general I do not like to adorn transparencies - (1) I like them plains. And I try to employ the biggest font size I can.

(Interview, Miguel, EECE 512)

Less experienced students, on the other hand, were still in the process of finding effective ways of designing their overhead transparencies.

In short, students in the Faculty of Applied Science revealed through their APs that they were aware of the wide variety of presentations strategies they could use, and each student in particular also seemed to have developed their own strategies to compensate for any problems they might have. It also seemed that the more experience a student had giving APs, the more confident they felt, and the more aware they were of the kinds of strategies at their disposal.

7

DISCUSSION AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE STUDY

7.1 Exploring APs Across Faculties

Having provided a detailed analysis of the task focusing on each faculty cluster in particular, in this section I wish to make a comparison of APs across all fields explored in this study. Such a comparison will be useful to highlight the peculiar traits of APs in each discipline, providing a basis for describing the task in a broad context. As I will discuss later in further detail, task understandings are constructed through the inclusion of different levels of information. A comparison of task features across faculties provides an understanding of how the task is perceived and enacted within and across each field, thus providing information at the more general level. Next, I will analyze the task as it is understood at the community of practice level, and finally at the more local, personal level. I will end the chapter making reference to the classroom and research implications that can be drawn from this analysis.

7.1.1 Comparison of Descriptive AP Features Across Fields

To start with, all faculties shared APs as a course requirement. This speaks of the pervasive use of APs across fields, and thus also amply justifies focusing on it closely. A comparison of main features of the task in each course is provided in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 AP Descriptive Features Across Faculties

Faculty	Course	Regularity	Average length (in minutes)	Presenters per date
Medicine	BIOC 600	ongoing	36.3	2
	NRSC 605	three-time event	15.3	9
Arts	HIST 510	ongoing	82.7	1 or 2
	ANTH 610	three-time event	11.5	11
	FREN 600	two-time event	21.3	2 or 3
Applied Science	EECE 510	one-time event	27.6	3
	EECE 512	one-time event	21.2	5

While APs in the Faculty of Medicine and the Faculty of Arts were either a two time-event, three-time event, or ongoing, APs in the Faculty of Applied Science were a one-time event. Students in Applied Science courses were actually presenting a final project and thus it made sense that the task be scheduled at the end of the course. Conversely, since students in the other two faculties were either providing a critique of somebody else's work (in the case of Medicine courses), or were presenting ideas and concepts they were working on as the term went by, it also made sense that APs were scheduled as either ongoing or on specific dates during the term.

Regarding the length of APs, the fewer APs per date, the longer the APs tended to be. Thus, the number of presentations scheduled per date seemed to determine the length of the task in each case (or vice versa). This is clearly shown in Table 7.2. For instance, the longest APs took place in HIST 510, where there was just one presenter per date. Conversely, the shortest APs took place in ANTH 610, the course in which there was the largest number of presenters per date.

Table 7.2 AP Length Across Courses

Course	Total number of students	AP length	Number of APs per class
HIST 510	12	82.7	1
BIOC 600	15	36.3	2
EECE 510	3	27.6	3
FREN 600	5	21.3	2/3
EECE 512	5	21.2	5
NRSC 605	27	15.3	9
ANTH 610	11	11.5	11

7.1.2 Comparison of Essential AP Features Across Fields

7.1.2.1 AP content

With regard to the content of the APs (see Table 7.3), this is another feature that is distinct across faculties.

Table 7.3 AP Content Across Faculties

Faculty	Course	AP content
Medicine	BIOC 600	research article
	NRSC 605	
Arts	HIST 510	research topic
	ANTH 610	- report of fieldwork findings - research proposal
	FREN 600	abstract concept
Applied Science	EECE 510	final project
	EECE 512	

While Faculty of Medicine courses required students to present a critique of a research article, students in the Faculty of Applied Science were asked to present their final

projects. The content of APs in the Faculty of Arts, on the other hand, included either a research project, an abstract concept, a report on fieldwork findings, or a research proposal. The APs in this last cluster were less homogeneous than those of the other two faculties. However, it evidences a common underlying pattern of APs in HIST 510 and ANTH 610, where students' presentations dealt with stories that involved human beings, whereas APs in FREN 600 were more abstract (in keeping with the theoretical nature of this course).

In any case, the content of APs was in accordance with the type of work usually performed by academics and professionals in each field. For instance, BIOC 600 and NRSC 605 students were exposed to and asked to criticize an experimental research article, which is the kind of material they will both have to write and read in their academic and professional lives. Likewise, students in Applied Science were required to present the results of a developed solution (or the plans they had to reach such proposed solution), something they are expected to do in their academic and professional lives. As an obvious illustration to justify this claim, I would contend that, for instance, students in BIOC 600 courses would never be expected to make an AP whose content was that of an abstract theoretical term (a task FREN 600 students had to fulfil, on the other hand). Or students in HIST 510 courses, for instance, would most likely never be asked to demonstrate the results of a proposed solution, basically because this is not the type of activity a historian does. And students in ANTH 610 courses would rarely be expected to show and criticize results of an experimental study, especially because social scientists within a postmodern or interpretive paradigm simply do not work with experimental models. Consequently, the kind of content students were required to present in their APs was not haphazardly chosen or determined.

Relating these arguments to the theoretical framework of the study, each *community of practice* at WCU involved students in a *socioculturally organized activity* that responded to the characteristics and expectations of each field. Accordingly, students in each community of practice were asked to perform a task that gave them practice in a kind of activity, and exposure to a kind of material that prepared them for their professional lives.

7.1.2.2 AP Purposes Across Fields

The different purposes APs served gave students a chance to become socialized into the academic world through observing and performing a task organized around the intellectual values and academic skills promoted in graduate school. Coinciding with Morita's (1996) findings, "[t]he OAP task employed in graduate seminars had specific sociocultural goals and was organized in relation to these goals." (p. 205)

An examination of AP purposes reveals some overlapping goals of APs across faculties. For instance, among the shared purposes of APs across fields were: (a) familiarizing students with a kind of task widely used in the field (both in the academic community and in the professional community); (b) providing students with an opportunity to practice presentation skills (practical skills such as preparing for and speaking in front of an audience, preparing visual aids, and so forth); (c) encouraging students to prepare the material and know it well; and (d) providing NNSs with a chance to practice speaking in their L2 and encouraging them to participate.

In addition to these shared purposes across disciplines, there were some other purposes (perceived either through observations of the task performances, or through instruc-

tors' and students' perspectives) that APs seemed to serve in each particular field or even course. These purposes (which I hereby call "exclusive") are illustrated in Figure 7.1:

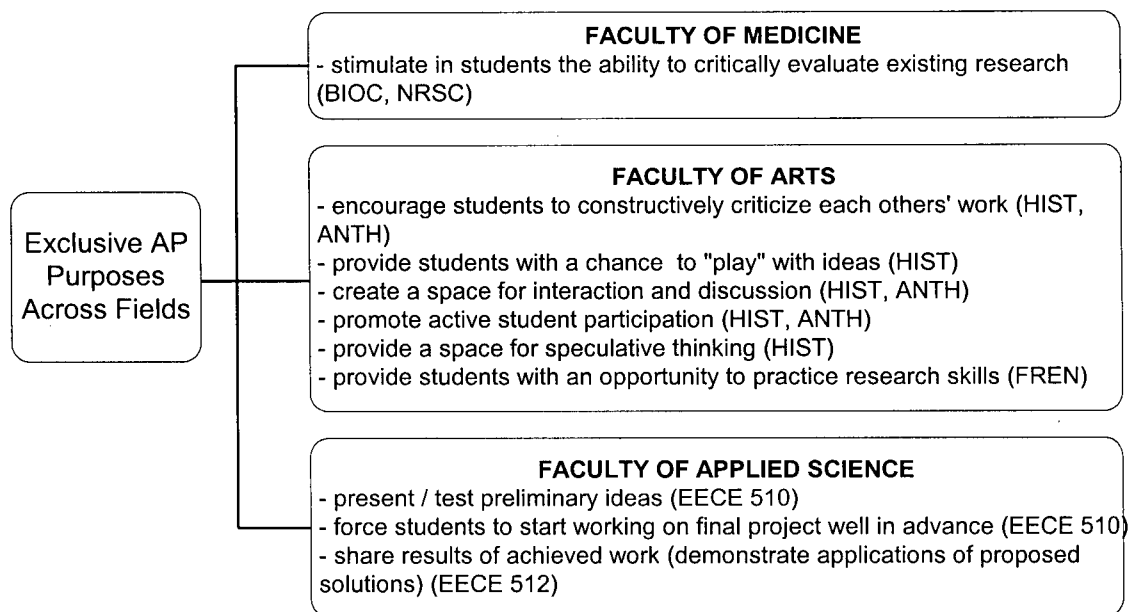


Figure 7.1 Exclusive AP Purposes Across Fields

Each of the AP exclusive purposes in turn is related to the kinds of behaviors usually promoted and expected from members of the academic community in each case. For example, since students in the Faculty of Medicine were expected to critically evaluate existing research in both their life as either academics or professionals, this purpose was attached to the AP task. Similarly, students in the Faculty of Arts were encouraged to discuss and participate actively, criticizing each others' work--a behavior also typically found among academics and professionals in the humanities and social studies.

On the other hand, in the case of a purpose such as *forcing students to start working on the final project well in advance*, no connection can be made between the purpose and a specific value promoted in the field (of Applied Science, in this case). Rather I would con-

tend that such a purpose originated from a particular situation in the course (i.e., prior students taking EECE 510 did not start their projects in the right time), and consequently the course instructor decided that it would be advantageous to have students prepare an AP in order to encourage them to start working earlier. Hence, we can say that an additional purpose was attached to the task, a purpose that did not emanate from the discipline values, but rather as a consequence of the needs of the specific community of practice in which it was enacted. (Refer to section “The co-constructed nature of APs” for further discussion on this topic.)

7.1.2.1 AP Discourse Features Across Fields

With regard to the discourse features of APs across faculties, based on my observations and analysis of APs performed by students (both NSs and NNSs) in each course I concluded that there are in fact certain linguistic patterns that seemed to be typical of each discipline. For instance, in Medicine courses APs were structured mainly around technical scientific language, and the same applied to presentations in the faculty of Applied Science.

On the other hand, students presenting in Arts courses made use mainly of everyday language and expressions, technical terms being less usual. This of course has its implications, especially when considering the linguistic challenges that NNSs of English face when giving a presentation in their L2. While for some students the technical terminology represented the main linguistic source of problems, to most students it was in fact the everyday language that they felt hindered the delivery of their presentations (and in some cases, even the preparation). Students felt that the fact that the AP was performed in English implied that they were not able to be as straightforward as they wished to, or that some of the subtle meanings were lost in the translation process. Even those students with a high

level of L2 proficiency felt that their presentation was negatively affected by the fact that they did not speak English as their mother tongue. Some instructors who made reference to this point also recognized that speaking English as a second language seemed to have an impact on the presentation, even if they were not able to verbalize how it is manifested. In short, we can say that the fact that APs were performed in English impacted NNSs in all cases, affecting individuals at different levels.

Much has been argued about the NS/NNS dichotomy. According to Davies (1991), "the dichotomy of NNSs of English versus NNs of English is power driven, identity laden, and confidence affecting" (as cited in Liu, 1999). Furthermore, with the globalization and the recognition of world English "languages" (McArthur, 1998), there seems to be a need to challenge the stereotype of NNS of English. In her 1996 study, Morita re-examined this dichotomy and concluded that it was not very helpful in explaining the language socialization of graduate students, since both groups of students (i.e., NSs and NNSs) seemed to go through similar socialization experiences. Although I agree with Morita's contentions, the findings of this study seem to favor the dichotomy in some aspects. While all students--whether NSs or NNSs--were immersed in an academic world that was new to them in similar ways, it was those students who came from different previous educational experiences that seemed to experience a more clear "cultural shock", mostly due to their lack of prior exposure to the AP task. In addition, although it would be unfair to argue that NSs did not have to cope with any kind of linguistic struggles, the linguistic challenge faced by NNSs was greater than that of their English speaking peers. Several examples were included in previous chapters of this thesis to illustrate this point. In sum, although I do not strictly uphold the NS/NNS dichotomy, I still believe it does apply to the groups of students in this

project. However, I also think that there seems to be another dichotomy within the group of NNSs: those who were more socioculturally/linguistically proficient, versus those who were less socioculturally/linguistically proficient.

7.1.3 Comparison of AP Qualities Across Fields

In her study, Morita (1996) explored the values and academic skills promoted in graduate school, specifically in two TESL courses. The findings of her study revealed that there were intellectual abilities and academic skills that were valued at the graduate level:

The main intellectual values included ability to think critically, learn collaborative and independently, and make connections between theory and practice based on the literature and students' own interests and teaching experiences. Intellectual flexibility.... [being] a good synthesizer of information.... [and] to be able to articulate one's thinking in spoken and written communication...[were] the main academic skills graduate students needed to have. (pp. 88-89)

Similar to Morita's study, in this work I examined the qualities and behaviors valued and discouraged in graduate school. However, I explored these aspects across a variety of disciplines (other than the one explored by Morita). In this way, both studies complement each other since they focus on common aspects but in different academic contexts.

An analysis of these qualities suggests that, on the one hand, there are certain qualities common to all faculty clusters. For instance, engaging the audience, being articulate, and sounding knowledgeable are qualities desired in all cases (as observed and also as expressed by participants). On the other hand, there are other qualities which respond to the expectations of each field in particular. Such is the case of being able to present visually, for example. While students in Arts courses were not strictly required to employ any kind of visual aid, students in Medicine and in Applied Science found visuals (such as overhead

transparencies or computer-generated slides) to be an essential component of their APs. By the same token, being able to generate full discussion was a quality emphasized mostly in Arts courses, while Medicine and Applied Science courses apparently did not expect this same behavior. Giving personal opinions and sounding tentative (rather than making deterministic comments) was expected from students in Arts, whereas students in Medicine were expected to contribute with a straightforward, solid critique (where tentativeness was discouraged), and Applied Science students were expected to present and defend their solutions as if these were given truths.

All three faculty clusters coincided in discouraging behaviors such as reading aloud the whole presentation or unnecessarily repeating ideas or concepts. Pretending to sound like an expert was frowned upon in Arts courses, and this is in keeping with the expected tentative nature of students' discourse. The same applied to Medicine courses, where pretending to be an expert in the topic was considered a wrong behavior, given the presenters' novice status in the field.

When comparing the findings of this study with those of Morita (1996), the following can be said: thinking critically, working independently (rather than collaboratively), and making connections between theory and practice (all values promoted in TESL courses) also were found--though not equally emphasized--in the faculties examined in this study. Morita also reported that graduate students in TESL were expected to articulate their ideas clearly both in written and oral language. Since I focused on just one oral task, and since data were gathered around this task, I can only make reference to the oral expectations of students in the courses I examined. These coincide with Morita's claim, for students in all three faculties were expected to have their thoughts clear in mind, and to express them

in a clear fashion. However, given that I do not have data to support this claim, I cannot contend that the same applied for written tasks these students performed (although I would suspect it would also be congruent with Morita's view).

7.1.4 Comparison of AP Strategies Across Fields

As illustrated and discussed in previous chapters (4 - 6), students in all courses employed a wide array of preparation and delivery strategies. While some of these overlap across fields, others seem to be specific to each community of practice, and some even pertinent to students in particular.

Among the strategies common to all faculties, preparing ahead of time was a preparation tactic applied by all students in the seven courses I observed. Even in cases where students had not been able to prepare well enough, they admitted that this strategy was in fact one of the most important ones in order to raise the chances of a successful presentation. Rehearsing aloud the presentation was another strategy employed by students across all courses. However, students in Arts courses usually prepared a full handout of their AP detailing exactly what they planned to say, while students in Medicine or Applied Science courses tended to employ the overhead transparencies or computer-generated slides as a written guide to rehearse their APs. In Medicine and Arts courses students tried to include humorous comments or personal anecdotes that helped them connect with the audience and work as well as an ice breaker for the presenters.

The inclusion of visuals in the APs (already briefly discussed in a previous section) was another strategy employed by students. Table 7.4 summarizes the kind of visual

resources employed in each course, and whether they were used always, usually, sometimes, rarely, or never (as observed).

Table 7.4 AP Visual Resources Across Faculties

Course	Overhead transparencies	Computer-generated Slides	Objects/ photographs	Handouts	Chalkboard
BIOC 600	Always	Never	Never	Never	Never
NRSC 605	Always	Never ^a	Never	Never	Never
HIST 510	Never	Never	Never	Rarely	Never
ANTH 610	Rarely	Never	Rarely	Rarely	Never
FREN 600	Rarely	Never	Sometimes	Usually	Rarely
EECE 510	Always	Never	Never	Never	Never
EECE 512	Rarely	Usually	Never	Never	Never

a. Students in NRSC 605 and BIOC 600 courses mentioned that for other courses they usually employed computer-generated slides instead of overhead transparencies. However, for these two courses they were not allowed to use this type of material, although students were not clear for which reasons.

Students in Medicine courses tried to choose a topic that they were familiar with, while students in Arts courses tried also to take into account the audience's interests when choosing a topic. In Arts, students tried to pose questions and include controversy in their APs, thus stimulating plenty of talk.

Regarding the strategies employed by individual students to effectively deliver their APs, the following can be mentioned: Miguel (EECE 512) employed a word selection strategy to avoid lexical terms he could not pronounce confidently; Sachiko (ANTH 610) chose to read aloud her AP because she felt this was an acceptable way of delivering her AP for the course, and besides, she felt that she was not able to produce the kind of fresh talk NSs are able to produce. Sohan (BIOC 600) pretended the audience did not know as much as he did, and in this way he gained more self confidence; and Lin (BIOC 600) and Luxin (EECE

510 & 512) chose not to look at the audience so as not to feel intimidated. Among the personal strategies regarding timing of APs, while Sachiko (ANTH 610) chose to do the AP early in the day in order to get over with it as fast as possible, Chao (HIST 510) preferred to present at the end of the course; this, he thought, would give him more time to prepare his AP.

7.2 The Co-constructed Nature of APs

In addition, besides the general comparison of the task which reveals common and differential patterns across disciplines, I also want to place an emphasis on how the task meaning is not merely determined by each discipline, but how it is also socially co-constructed/negotiated by the specific community of practice in which it takes place. As discussed in Chapter 2 of this thesis, when examining the question of how the task is understood and construed by each student, we need to focus not only on the expected behaviors and values promoted in the field, but also on those emerged and encouraged as a result of the specific community of practice in which it takes place (Wenger, 1998). Researchers that have employed the discourse community (Swales, 1990) or community of practice (Lave & Wenger, 1991) metaphor highlight the role of members of a community working as a team, and complementing each other's views and understandings through constant participation and joint negotiations. In a recent work, Prior (1998) examined the "mediated" nature of academic writing, arguing that "literary products do not emanate from a single author but are jointly constructed by various parties in addition to the actual writer, as he or she reads, discusses, revises collaboratively, and so on." (as cited in Flowerdew, p. 130) A similar claim may be made for academic speaking. In light of these views, in this

study I focused on the co-constructed nature of APs as students of each community of practice worked jointly (though mostly inadvertently) to reach an understanding of the task.

Students in each course learned about APs through being exposed to them as well as through doing them, and this all occurred within a group of social beings performing a socioculturally organized language-mediated activity. The first APs in the course usually set up a kind of model. Students observed the presenter's way of organizing the AP, of expressing himself/herself, and they also observed the responses produced by peers and the course instructor. All these became reference points that students chose to either include or exclude in their own presentations. Thus, we can say that students came to the classroom with certain preconceptions of how APs should be done, but it was not until the first APs were performed that they confirmed whether or not these preconceptions were applicable to the pertinent course. Hence, understandings of how APs should be given were co-constructed in the sense that how the community of practice viewed and responded to particular APs in turn shaped the following APs. Each AP had an impact on the rest, to put it in a straightforward way. As a concrete example of how this occurred, I refer to Charles' interview:

Well, I could have gone on for hours! But I chose to include the main points. *I think that the first two APs [referring to José's and Sohan's APs] somehow were too detailed - and included too much information? That's why I decided to make it shorter.*

(Interview, Charles, BIOC 600)

Based on the previous APs he had observed in the course, and on the impact they had in the audience, Charles decided to make his AP shorter. Thus we can say he accommodated his vision of task according to the classroom context in which it took place.

Of course, in cases where all presentations were scheduled for the same date (like in ANTH 610, EECE 510 and EECE 512) or where a number of presentations were scheduled for the same date (as in NRSC 605 or FREN 600), students had less opportunities (due to timing reasons) to incorporate in their own APs what they learned from observing others. However, any instance in which students observed an AP was taken by them as a potential learning experience on how to be a successful or an unsuccessful presenter. And it was in the case of NNSs that this was mentioned more often. Probably this was due to NNSs' limited exposure to the AP genre, and therefore observing others giving an AP and recognizing about the behaviors that were positively valued by the audience gave them hints as to how they should behave themselves as presenters.

To illustrate another instance of how the meaning of task is socially co-constructed, and how individual students incorporated this knowledge to their own understanding of task, I focus on Luxin's (EECE 512) case. Luxin was the last one to perform the AP in EECE 512, and although all APs were scheduled for the same date, she still managed to adjust her preconception of task to her co-constructed conception of task:

I - yesterday I give my first presentation, and it was - I think it was ok, but today better. (...) I - because Dr. Okinishi mentioned to Farid in his presentation that he - the presentation must be of 20 minutes or so? Then I say to myself "oh, I think my presentation is not ok because it is 15 minutes I guess". But I cannot worry much, because I had to present next! But I try to speak for longer time - because [if it] is too short - I don't think Dr. Okinishi will accept it!

(Interview, Luxin, EECE 512)

After observing an AP in her course, and realizing that the course instructor meant to be quite strict about the AP time frame, Luxin tried to adjust the pace of her AP to the expected 20 minutes. Even though she was not able to do so in the end, at least she was now

aware of what she should try to do. Her understanding of the task was modified by how it was enacted by somebody else in her course, and by how it was perceived by her course instructor. Once again, this points to the co-constructed nature of task since what was perceived as good or bad in the particular community of practice influenced how students organized and perceived their own APs.

7.3 The Local Nature of APs

In addition to this co-constructed nature, I would like to address the local nature of the task. When analyzing the writing task, Casanave (1995) contends that

characterizing disciplinary communities with this broadly conceived metaphor has helped writing scholars understand the legitimately different ways that academicians conceptualize and talk about their worlds. Nevertheless, it has met with limited success in terms of being adequate for helping us understand individual writers in specific settings. (...) It is at the personal level--the level of the individual--that all conceptualizations of context and community become instantiated in the lives of real people engaged in real writing tasks. (p. 88)

Casanave then makes a case for the "importance of the local, historical, and interactive aspects of the contexts that writers in academic settings construct for themselves" (p. 88), arguing that the local factors are found both outside the writer (people, settings, assignments), and inside the writer (intentions, intellectual histories, interests). I contend that the same applies to oral tasks such as APs. Hence, without discarding the community of practice metaphor, I also want to emphasize the local, personal, and interactive nature of the task context through an analysis and discussion of how individuals constructed their notion of the task.

Similarly to what occurred to the students in Casanave's (1995) study (refer to Chapter 2), students in the courses I observed constructed task contexts not only by taking into account the expectations of the discipline and of the particular community of practice, but also by incorporating their personal intentions and histories. Sometimes, these personal histories facilitated an oral task such as APs, and sometimes they may have hindered it. Morita (2000) examined the role of expertise and personal identity in shaping the students' perceptions of task, arguing that "in performing an [AP], students had to negotiate different, sometimes conflicting identities within themselves in addition to negotiating expertise with peers and instructors" (p. 303). Hence, views of self, previous personal experiences (e.g. teaching, or doing other APs) also strongly influenced the way APs were perceived by each student.

According to my observations of how students performed the task, and based on the personal information provided to me by students in their interviews, particular experiences of individuals strongly shaped the way their APs were organized and delivered. For instance, in the case of Alexei (a NNS HIST 510 student), his previous experience working for a media company helped him to prepare himself to speak in front of an audience. Although the kind of activity he was used to performing when working for media purposes was not identical to the AP task, his previous experience aided him in succeeding to communicate his message with clarity to the audience. In the case of Mateo, (a NNS in EECE 512), the fact that he used to work as safety manager training employees in the company he was working for also provided him with strategies that he applied in his AP (e.g, how to organize main ideas, how to maintain engaged the audience, etc.). Sohan (a NNS in BIOC 600) had taught an undergraduate course in his home country. This experience provided

him with the necessary confidence to sound authoritative in his AP. Miguel (another NNS in EECE 512) had also worked for a company in his home country, where he had taken a course on presentation skills. This course, he argued, helped him to concentrate on the main structure an AP should have. Although he never had a similar discussion about AP structure during his graduate studies in Canada, he still felt he could apply his previously acquired knowledge to the AP situations in a course such as EECE 512. All these are instances in which personal histories seemed to have aided students in their completion of the AP task.

On the other hand, the following illustrations attempt to exemplify how these personal histories can negatively affect students' understanding and performance of a task such as APs. In the case of Lin (a NNS in BIOC 600), her prior experience with APs involved a smaller number of participants (in the audience), and a different classroom setting where interaction was not encouraged. Hence, when Lin performed her AP reading aloud and avoiding any kind of eye contact or interaction with the audience, her AP was perceived as not fully meeting the course expectations. Her course instructor encouraged Lin to include more interaction in further occasions, and her peers thought Lin should try to avoid reading and instead explain with her own words what she meant. Otherwise, they thought it was difficult to follow the thread of her AP. As another example, Sachiko (a NNS in ANTH 610) also read aloud her handout for the presentation. Sachiko was used to doing this in her home country, and it seemed to work even for another AP in a different graduate course at WCU. However, the ANTH 610 course instructor rejected the way Sachiko delivered her AP, and indirectly criticized it when making the general comment "I thought you [to all students in the class] would be ready to explain things in your own words. I didn't expect you to read a piece of written text--that I will read when I get your final paper!"

(fieldnotes, Dr. Evans, ANTH 610). Thus, we can say that Sachiko's prior experience reading aloud APs hindered her AP delivery in ANTH 610. What may have been acceptable for the other courses in which she gave APs was not acceptable for the ANTH 610 course.

Luxin and Viet (both NNSs in EECE 510) had never been actively involved in an AP before. Both came from Asian countries in which they were not usually expected to participate orally in class. Furthermore, since they had arrived in Canada just a few months earlier, and since this was their first experience studying abroad in a Western culture country, APs were not part of their personal histories. Hence, they brought with them not only little knowledge on how to organize and deliver an AP, but also limited awareness of the kinds of strategies they could employ to be successful presenters. After delivering their APs, both of them realized that they still needed to gather more knowledge about how to become a successful presenter, and they thought they could do so through observing more APs and through performing more tasks of this kind.

The purposes underlying APs were also attached to the task meaning. In addition to the purposes determined by the discipline (i.e., each faculty), and those that emerged from the community of practice (i.e., each course), there were other more personal purposes that were also connected to the task, and which speak of the local nature of task context. Specifically in the case of NNSs (the focal participants of this study), APs were viewed as a chance to practice speaking English. And it was by no means coincidental that the less L2 proficient the presenter, the more this purpose was emphasized. When students such as Lin, José, Sachiko, Luxin and Viet mentioned in their interviews that the AP task represented a great chance for them to improve their linguistic skills, they were revealing their own con-

ceptions of the task. Students attached to APs the additional personal goal of improving English through the task.

In sum, it would be erroneous to view APs as a task with fixed interpretations or understandings attached to it. Rather, I would argue that while there are certain aspects (such as the ones incorporated in the comparison across fields) that are usually determined by the context of each discipline, and others by the context of the community of practice, ultimately each AP is prepared, delivered, lived and perceived by each individual involved depending also on a number of local, personal variables.

7.4 Gaining Membership as a NNS: a Complex Socialization and Negotiation Process

In keeping with the aims of this study, in this section I wish to discuss the role APs played in the double socialization of NNSs when trying to gain membership into the academic community of WCU. In chapter 2 of this thesis I made reference to the concept of language socialization and to how it views the development of language and culture as simultaneous. As a sociocultural approach, language socialization focuses on the language development in relation to the social, cultural, and historical contexts in which social contact takes place. In light of these notions, I want to make reference to the double process of socialization NNSs go through when they are immersed in a new culture such as WCU, in what is for them a “foreign” country.

Most likely, all graduate students--regardless of their NS or NNS status--had to negotiate their entrance to the new academic world of WCU. This view is congruent with Morita's (1996) perception, who argued that “graduate students, whether NNSs or NSs, had

to learn the new academic culture of WCU graduate school and of each graduate seminar when they began their programs" (pp. 186-187). However, it was NNSs who seemed to have to cope with a few more extra challenges than their NS peers. Two major challenges can be identified: the first one related to the NNSs linguistic abilities, and the second one relates to the sociocultural challenges faced by this group of students.³³

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I made specific reference to the linguistic challenges particular NNSs faced when preparing for and delivering their APs. Students felt they took more time to read than NSs did; they also had to consult more often the dictionary, and this slowed their pace; they had pronunciation problems to cope with; they found it hard to choose the appropriate language expressions to save time and be concise; in some cases they believed that in the translation process (from their L1 to English) some subtleties were lost, and hence their ideas sounded less complex than they actually were; and they usually had problems when trying to produce the kind of spontaneous talk their NSs could produce so spontaneously. Although some NNSs mentioned that doing their AP in their L1 would be difficult due to the technical vocabulary (which they learned in English), the majority of students--regardless of their level of English proficiency--mentioned that if they had to give the same AP in their L1 they would do much better. While these were the personal impressions of NNSs themselves, some of their NS peers and instructors also seemed to be aware of the linguistic difficulties of NNSs. In relation to the NNS linguistic challenges, NS peers and course instructors mentioned in their interviews that they felt NNSs had to make a huge effort in this task. My observations of student presentations also attest to the fact that these

³³ Morita (1996) identified three main kinds of problematic areas for graduate students: linguistic difficulties; sociocultural problems, and psychological difficulties. Although students in this study also faced psychological difficulties (as revealed in some of their interviews), I did not have the chance to explore this kind of struggles in detail. Still, I want to acknowledge them as a third type of problem students had to cope with.

challenges were not merely a perception, but rather a reality. I illustrated with examples of AP recordings (and fieldnotes) how NNSs' speech differed in terms of their lexical density, and the kind of expressions students chose. As well, a "foreign" accent was perceived by most NNSs as a linguistic difficulty (although it might not have hindered their performances as much as they felt they did). In some cases, NNSs sounded as if they were giving an oral performance of written text, and I pointed to how this might be the result of students' linguistic insecurities.

In sum, APs were a task in which students not only relied on their existing linguistic abilities, but they also had a chance to incorporate new linguistic knowledge through performing and observing APs. In the same way children learn how to speak their L1 through trial and error, NNSs of English were learning how to become proficient speakers through actually using the language to speak and to understand others. So far, I have made reference to the first kind of main challenge NNSs faced. Next, I will make reference to the sociocultural gap perceived by students, and to how APs were a good opportunity for these students to gather the sociocultural knowledge they needed in order to gain membership into the academic world.

NNSs, as I have already mentioned, came from various cultural backgrounds. While some of them had had some previous exposure to Western education, others were experiencing the "cultural shock" for the first time. This means that, in addition to the language difficulties NNSs had to face, they also faced the challenge of learning about a new culture, and trying to adapt to it. Through the AP task, NNSs were exposed to a kind of socioculturally organized activity which, in most cases, was not typical of the educational systems these NNSs came from. Hence, those NNSs who were involved in such an activity for the

first time in their lives had to figure out the rules and norms of the activity, as well as the goals surrounding it. The kind of extemporaneous talk students were expected to produce in their APs differed in some cases with the kind of interaction NNSs were expected to produce in their home countries. For instance, students who came from China mentioned that classes in Canada differ from those in China, because classes in China are lecture format (where the course instructor does all the talking), while graduate course classes in Canada tend to be seminars (where student participation and interaction are encouraged):

Because - uh- in China- most of the graduate courses are given by the - by the instructor or the- the professor. (...) just a few class take the form of seminar.

(Interview, Chao, HIST 510)

A Japanese student also noted a difference between the way American children were raised, and the way Japanese children were raised, arguing that their difference in upbringing impacted the way people expressed themselves as adults in any context:

'Cause - in America or Canada - I heard the children student are encouraged - to speak out from childhood? So, ya, I think that I noticed some of the American people very quiet? But, basically, I guess they're get used to express their thinking orally? Much more than Japanese. Ya. We - in Japan - during the class - usually we don't do discussion, and we are supposed to do just listening to the teachers talking. And if I - we have question, we need to raise hand - and we: uh- we are discouraged to interrupt? teachers talking or other students talking. So it's very difficult for me when - when other people are talking, and it's difficult to interrupt (...) If we miss timing, we cannot speak out.

(Interview, Mariko, ANTH 610)

While the first step was for NNSs to become aware of these differences (which they did mostly through observing others present first), the second step implied trying to behave according to the expected values, rules and norms of WCU. Through choosing certain strategies that would help them cope with either their linguistic or sociocultural challenges,

NNSs made an effort in trying to learn about the academic culture of WCU through participation in their APs. APs thus played a crucial role in NNSs process of gaining membership into a new academic world.

7.5 Pedagogical Implications

This study has focused on a comparison of APs across three different faculties, revealing the main traits of the task in each context and shedding light on some of the challenges faced by NNSs of English studying in an English-speaking environment. The unit of analysis chosen for this study is the language-mediated task of APs, viewed as a socio-culturally organized activity through which students experience a complex process of socialization into a new academic community. Even though generalization is not the intention of this study, given its scope and nature, some useful pedagogical implications can and should be derived from it.

In the first place, since the study suggested that the AP task is pervasive across a variety of disciplines, and given that an increasing number of NNSs are choosing North American or Canadian schools in pursue of a graduate degree, paying attention to the kind of previous exposure these NNSs have had to the task will reveal to the subject matter course instructors the series of struggles this group of students has to overcome before they are ready for the task. Hence, this study calls for raising the awareness of instructors who include APs as an assignment, but who fail to recognize the linguistic and sociocultural challenges that NNSs seem to go through when presenting for their course. The first step towards facilitating the AP experience for NNSs (i.e., their language socialization through this task) is recognizing students' needs and limitations, as well as their strong points.

Second, most opportunities for instructors to provide meaningful feedback to students were not fully exploited. From my observations and from what students shared with me in their interviews, instructors tend to provide general comments on the students' performances, and this of course implies that unless the students are self-reflective on their APs, or provided they are able to discern weak and strong points in their performances, the APs they perform fail to act as a strong opportunity for these students to improve in further occasions. Comments such as "good job," or "very nice presentation" do not provide students with enough information they could potentially incorporate in future APs. On the contrary, if students are given the chance to discuss with their instructors practical as well as conceptual aspects of their presentations, the task may become a much richer and useful experience in terms of the academic apprenticeship process.

Thirdly, an analysis of the linguistic features across fields revealed that APs differ in terms of the language demands posed on students, thus yielding useful implications for EAP courses. Students usually enrol in this type of courses with a view of acquiring enough linguistic knowledge to cope with their academic studies in an English medium school. Not all students will have the same linguistic necessities, therefore EAP instructors should examine the particular linguistic needs of students in order to plan their courses, choose materials, and assess students.

Finally, those NNSs that had not had prior experience with the task at the time this study was conducted expressed that the task was a major, crucial event in their lives. Hence, this calls for an awareness of instructors and NS peers of the impact the AP may have on these students' academic careers. Since task interpretations or misconceptions can occur due to lack of exposure to the task, scaffolding on the part of the instructor and/or peers

would especially benefit those students who are new to it. Involving students in peer assessment may prove to be a way of providing a space for reflection on the task. If properly guided, students may make informed judgements and provide useful feedback to aid their peers. As well, communicating task expectations (such as precisely describing the task structure, even modelling it in front of students, and specifying time frames) will aid in lowering the students' level of anxiety (which in the case of NNSs is high already due to linguistic and sociocultural factors).

APs are a kind of task which by no means should be understood as simple or straightforward. Rather, APs should be considered as a challenge and a chance for students to become socialized a step further into the academic culture. With this view of task in mind, much more can be done to aid students in this language socialization process.

7.6 Limitations of the Study

In this section I will make reference to some of the limitations of the study, of which I am completely aware. As I have already described in Chapter 3, this study employed a qualitative research design. Thus, data were collected from different sources, whenever possible. Since respecting the participants' wishes and feelings was foremost to me, I tried to gather the data provided that I was sure the participants involved felt comfortable with either my presence or that of the tape-recorder.

Originally, I had planned to video-tape participants. However, most participants did not feel very comfortable with the idea of being video-taped, and consequently I had to change my mind, deciding to employ a tape recorder instead. Although audio-recorded data proved to be extremely useful in that I was able to recurrently listen to it, video-tapes would

have also given me the chance to concentrate on the participants' gestures, movements, and other kinds of information (e.g., details of classroom setting) that I was not able to capture on tape. Although I made my greatest effort at taking fieldnotes of all these aspects, I am positive that if I had had the chance to go over a video of the APs, I would have discovered many details that escaped my senses the first time I observed them. As well, in more than one case I was given permission to observe the APs, but I was not allowed to tape-record them.³⁴ Hence, in these cases I tried to make copious fieldnotes of the event, but this inevitably implied that I was not able to go over the original speech event again for data analysis purposes.

Ideally I would have liked to go over the tapes together with the participants. This would have given participants a good opportunity to reflect on their APs in more detail, and I assume that participants' reflections on the task (after listening to it again) would have proven most useful. However, all students were extremely busy at the time data collection took place, and involving participants in a review session (longer than the 20-minute interview I asked for) would have been very inconsiderate of me.³⁵

The fact that I was given permission to observe quite a large number of APs ($n = 56$) in seven different courses had its advantages and its disadvantages. On the one hand, having access to such a variety of classroom contexts allowed me to examine the task across a

³⁴ In one course (ANTH 610), due to the delicate nature of the AP topics, even though the students were willing to be tape-recorded during their APs, the course instructor did not give me permission to do so. In two particular cases, students specifically asked me not be tape-recorded because they did not feel good enough about their linguistic skills. Although AP audio-recorded data from these two participants would have most likely proven very rich for my analysis, I am still very grateful to these two participants for allowing me to observe them and interview them.

³⁵ In some cases, where participants seemed to be very interested in listening to their AP again, I offered them copies of the tape.

number of fields. On the other hand, since I was not familiar with most of the participants and contexts I observed, this implied that my understanding of how the task was enacted were inevitably influenced by my lack of specific linguistic and content knowledge of each field. Also, while the sample of students observed is relatively large, increasing the representativeness of the group observations, this in turn meant that I was not able to have a very close contact with each of the participants. In many cases, I was not able to interview participants I had observed because it was very hard for both of us to agree on a good time for the interview. In the end, I decided that interviews with 20 NSs and 16 NNSs would give me a chance to follow these cases more closely. Still I think that interview data from all 55 participants would have been useful especially for the triangulation of information. Regarding the interviews with instructors, I was only able to interview five out of the nine instructors in the seven courses. Again, their busy schedules prevented us from finding a good time to do the interviews, and thus in four cases I lost a good chance to obtain another view on the performance of students' APs.

Although I had designed a written questionnaire for students, in the end I decided not to distribute it due to the students' heavy work load for their courses. Information gathered in this questionnaire would have confirmed information gathered through interviews, and would have also given students a chance to reflect on their APs with more time.

In addition, since in this study I concentrated on just one instance in which students performed their APs, I was not able to draw any conclusions on how this event may have affected students' future performances. Given the possibility, it would have been very revealing to observe students' APs on more than one occasion, and over an extended period of time.

Finally, although the analysis was based on the triangulation of actual data gathered from participants, in any case what the reader has access to are my interpretations of these data. As a human being, my subjectivity inevitably came through in this analysis, and thus the reader should keep this in mind when going through the pages in this work.

7.7 Suggestions for Further Research

This study attempted to fill a gap in the literature on oral academic tasks. However, based on the reduced scope and on the limitations of the present study, I would like to mention a few implications for further research. First of all, to my knowledge this is the first study that investigates APs across such a variety of disciplinary fields. Hence, further studies to confirm or contrast the views and information conveyed in this study are needed. Also, it would be interesting to include other academic fields thus far not explored, and which also pervasively employ APs in their courses.

In order to gain a more comprehensive understanding of how students perceive the task, and of the role the task plays in their language socialization, it would be useful to follow closely the students' preparation of the task, asking them to keep a log book on their AP preparation process (where they could take down notes about information which is difficult to recall after the event, such as amount of hours spent reading or preparing visuals).

The role of feedback (either peer feedback or instructor feedback) would also be an interesting area to investigate. From the limited amount of data gathered on the topic, I concluded that feedback is usually left for the end of the course, and is given in the form of a short comment or just the final mark. However, this may not be the case in all fields, or in

all courses. Hence, examining the feedback surrounding APs seems also an area worth of studying.

For future projects that may follow up on the role of APs in NNSs language socialization, I would suggest employing a more ethnographic approach. Probably engaging a smaller number of students in the project (equal number of NSs and NNSs, to contrast their experiences and perceptions) would prove useful. A reduced number of participants followed up during a more extended period of time by means of an ethnographic approach would allow for a more exhaustive examination of the role of APs. As well, further research on other types of oral academic tasks is warranted. The role of tasks such as group discussions, or in-class debates would certainly provide useful insights.

7.8 Summary and Concluding Thoughts

This study investigated the role of APs in the language socialization of graduate students (focusing on NNSs of English) into the academic world. The three research questions I tried to respond were:

- 1) How are APs organized, performed, and perceived by instructors, presenters, and classmates? What are the characteristic discourse features and expectations associated with APs within and across fields?
- 2) What purposes do APs fulfil within the graduate school context? What role do they play in the language socialization of graduate students, particularly of NNSs of English?

3) Are there any specific difficulties or challenges that NNSs of English have during the preparation and delivery of their APs? If so, how do NNSs cope with these difficulties? How are these difficulties perceived across fields?

A qualitative approach that involved several kinds of data gathered throughout a four-month period was employed. Fifty-six APs were observed, and 36 students and nine instructors interviewed. Data from this study yielded useful in showing how the socioculturally organized task of APs involved NNSs in a complex process of socialization, whereby students were apprentices of both the English language and the western education system (more specifically, the "Canadian way" of giving an AP).

The analysis chapters of this thesis allowed to respond to the three research questions I started with. Question 1 was partially addressed in chapters 4, 5, and 6, by focusing on how APs were organized, performed, and perceived by instructors, presenters and classmates in each course, and by referring to the characteristic discourse features and expectations of APs in each field. I found that APs differed across disciplines in terms of their regularity, length, content, and purposes (first part of question 2).

In chapter 7, the comparison of APs across fields proved useful to highlight not only the pervasiveness of the task in a variety of disciplines, but also to shed light on the task characteristics across fields (second part of question 1) in the broad academic context of WCU (i.e., a typical North American university). By focusing on the task in each particular course and field, and by later focusing on personal experiences and perceptions of the task, I was able to show how the AP context is co-constructed by the community of practice in which it takes place, and ultimately by each individual.

In chapters 4, 5, and 6, I focused also on the linguistic and sociocultural challenges faced by NNSs, making reference to some of the strategies employed by students to cope with these challenges (question 3). And in chapter 7, I made reference to the role APs played in the language socialization of NNS graduate students (second part of question 2). In keeping with Morita's (2000) findings, this study revealed that NNS graduate students faced linguistic as well as sociocultural challenges when observing, preparing for, and delivering an AP. However, although Morita's study placed emphasis on how the NS/NNS dichotomy was problematic in describing the participants in her study, in the present study I contend that NSs in fact seemed to go through fewer struggles than NNSs did. Still, by no means do I wish to stigmatize NNSs as less proficient or less prepared, for this is not the case. My focus on the difficulties that this group of participants experienced (as I gathered through my observations and through the participants' interviews) aims to shed light on the complexities underlying the AP task, calling for more awareness of some of the issues NNSs have to face.

I would not like to leave my readers without sharing with them my reflections on this research project. The idea of exploring the complexities around APs, as I have already mentioned, was motivated by a number of reasons. Had I not been so interested at a personal level in having APs as a research focus, I do not think I would have succeeded in making this such a rewarding experience. Thus, if I can provide other novice researchers like myself with a piece of advice, I would argue that motivation is the key element to start any research project.

As a novice researcher, I set out to the field full of expectations as well as fears and uncertainties. As I encountered the people that made this research project become alive, I

began to make sense of the knowledge I had so far been able to gather indirectly through readings and the expertise of experienced researchers. The participants in this study helped me realize how fortunate I was to have access to a “slice” of their experiences in graduate school, experiences that were full of emotions above everything else. Although there are many things I would do in a different way were I to start the project again, I am glad to be able to say this has been an incredible learning experience, one that has helped me to grow as a human being and as a researcher.

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Appendix A: Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Exploring Oral Academic Presentations through Discourse

Principal Investigator: Dr. Patricia A. Duff, Associate Professor
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Co-Investigator: Sandra Carolina Zappa (this research is for a MA in ENED degree)
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Purpose of the study: The main purpose of this study is to explore oral academic presentations (OAPs) through an analysis of discourse. Both native and non-native speakers are invited to participate in the study, but the main emphasis will be placed on the language socialization (Ochs, 1988; Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986) of non-native speaking graduate students. The theoretical framework of language socialization views the learning of language and the learning of culture as interdependent. Hence, employing this framework, the present study aims to illuminate the language socialization of non-native graduate students through OAPs. OAPs are tasks that require students to employ specific skills and language resources. Through tasks such as OAPs, and specifically through the language used in such tasks, students are socialized into the academic world. OAPs prove to be challenging for most graduate students (Morita, 1996, 2000 in press), particularly in the case of non-native speakers of English studying in an English speaking medium. It is hoped that analysis of the discourse data gathered in this study will yield useful insights that allow for a better understanding of OAP tasks. A deeper knowledge of the strategies, beliefs, stances, skills, language resources, difficulties and struggles involved when preparing for and when giving a presentation will hopefully help improve graduate students' future OAPs.

Study Procedures: Graduate students' participation in this study will not interfere with their course work/time. The co-investigator will employ the following methods to gather the data for this study:

- a. During class time, the co-investigator will be doing class observations taking field notes.
- b. With the participants' consent, the co-investigator will either videotape or audiotape the OAPs normally given during class time. OAPs will not be interrupted by the co-investigator for any reason.
- c. Participants will be invited to an individual interview with the co-investigator (15 to 20 minutes long). This will take place at a convenient place and time for the participant (not during class time). The interview will be audiotaped with the participant's permission. In the interview the co-investigator will ask the participant about his/her views on OAPs.

- d. The co-investigator may informally ask some questions to the participants a few minutes after they have given their OAPs.
- e. Participants will be invited to fill out a questionnaire about OAPs (which will take them about 15 to 20 minutes to respond) at the end of the course. This will also take place not during class time, but at a convenient time and place for participants (e.g., after class in an empty classroom).
- f. Participants will be invited to participate in an individual review session with the co-investigator (20-30 minutes of length), where participants will have the opportunity to make comments about their own OAP(s) while watching the videotaped presentation. Review sessions will be audiotaped with participants' permission.
- g. Documents such as handouts that participants prepare for their OAP(s) will also be collected with participants' permission.

Confidentiality: The only persons authorized to access the data will be the participants, the principal investigator, and the co-investigator of this research project.

The university's name and participants' names will not be used in the co-investigator's M.A. thesis or in any other reports. Pseudonyms will be used instead. All data will be protected so that no student can be identified as a participant in this research. All written questionnaires and videotapes/audiotapes of presentations, interviews and review sessions will be kept in a locked and secure environment and will be destroyed after a period of five years.

Refusals: There will be no penalty for non-participation in this research. Participants have the right to withdraw from the study at any time. It is absolutely not a problem if participants do not wish to be interviewed, or observed, or if they wish their OAP not to be recorded (audiotaped/videotaped).

Compensation: No financial compensation is being offered in exchange for participation.

Contact: If participants have any questions about this research, they may contact the Co-investigator Sandra C. Zappa in person, at home by telephone (XXX-XXXX) or by e-mail (sczappa@interchange.ubc.ca). They may also contact the Principal Investigator, Dr. Patricia Duff, by telephone (822-9693) or by e-mail (see page one). Participants should feel free to ask any questions about this research at any time. If participants have any concerns about the rights or treatment of research participants, they may contact the Director of Research Services at the University of British Columbia, Dr. Richard Spratley, at 822-8598.

CONSENT FORM

Project: Exploring Oral Academic Presentations through Discourse

Principal Investigator: Dr. Patricia A. Duff, Associate Professor
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I have read the Informed Consent Form, and I understand the goals of this research (observations, interviews, review sessions, recording of presentations, and questionnaires). By writing my name and signing below I agree to participate in this study, and I also understand that my participation is voluntary, and that I may refuse to participate at any time without penalty. I know that if I wish to have more information about this project, I am always free to ask for it.

I have received a copy of the Informed Consent Form.

Name (*please print*)

Signature

Date

Appendix B: Sample Interview Questions

SAMPLE INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

Project: Exploring Oral Academic Presentations through Discourse

Co-investigator: Sandra Carolina Zappa

MA in ENED (TESL) Candidate

Department of Language and Literacy Education, University of British Columbia

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Interview points with students (conducted after their presentation)

(1) Choice of materials for the oral academic presentation (OAP):

- What led you to choose this particular article/topic for your presentation?

(2) Preparation for the OAP:

- Could you tell me step by step what you did regarding the preparation of your presentation? (i.e., describe the process in detail)
- Do you usually do the same whenever you prepare for an OAP?
- Do you rehearse your OAP aloud? (if not mentioned before)
- How much time did you spend preparing for this OAP? How much time do you usually spend?
- Did you feel the need to consult somebody (e.g., the instructor, a classmate) when preparing for your OAP? Did you consult somebody?
- Did you feel satisfied with your preparation (before actually giving the presentation)?

(3) Performance of the OAP:

- How do you think your OAP actually went?
- Did you have to overcome any kind of difficulties while presenting? How did you cope with them? How did you feel about that?

(4) Feedback:

- Did you receive any feedback about your OAP? From whom?
- What kind of feedback did you receive? Where you satisfied with it? What else would you have expected (if anything) as part of the feedback?
- Did you know in advance which were the evaluation criteria for your OAP? Do you think it was met?

Page 1 of 2

(5) Your experience as a presenter:

- Was it the first time you were asked to give an OAP?
- How do you consider yourself as a presenter (e.g., experienced, inexperienced)?
- Do you think presenting as a student and presenting as a teacher can be compared? How?

(6) Characteristics of a good OAP:

- What do you think makes a presentation successful? (i.e., which are the qualities of a good presentation? And of the presenter?)
- Do you think there are any specific skills required for performing a successful OAP? Which ones?

(For non-native speakers)

(7) Cultural and linguistic aspects

- Did you feel comfortable presenting in your second language? Do you think this might have affected the way you presented in class? Do you think this might have affected the way you were evaluated?
- Do you find any specific differences between the classroom culture of Canada and that of your country of origin? Which ones?

Interview points with instructors (conducted at some point during the semester)

(1) Which are the pedagogical purposes of asking students to give an OAP? How are OAPs linked to the course objectives?

(2) What do you think constitutes a successful presentation?

(3) What are the evaluation criteria for the OAPs?

(4) Do you make a distinction in the evaluation of any aspect between native speakers (NSs) of English and non-native speakers (NNSs) of this language? Why (not)? What differences have you observed between the presentations of these two groups (NSs/NNSs)?

(5) What kind of feedback do you provide the presenters? When?

(6) How do you think you can help students to improve their skills as presenters?

(7) How similar are the OAPs required in this course to those required for an MA/Ph.D. defence or for future professional work in this field?

Appendix C: Transcription Conventions

Transcription Conventions

[beginning of overlapping speech
=	speech that comes immediately after another person's; shown for both speakers
-	short untimed pause
(words)	words not clearly heard
(x); (xx); (xxx)	one unclear word; two unclear words; three or more unclear words
<u>underlining</u>	spoken emphasis
CAPITAL	loud speech
<i>italics</i>	italics are used to draw attention to a particular segment that is the focus of an analytic point
"..."	in excerpts, quotation marks indicate reported speech
((comments))	comments or relevant details pertaining to interaction
[]	author's insertion or rephrasing
:	unusually lengthened sound or syllable
.	terminal falling intonation
,	rising, continuing intonation
?	high rising intonation, not necessarily at the end of a sentence
x-	(attached) cutoff often accompanied by a glotal stop

Appendix D: Detailed List of Participants

Detailed list of participants

Course	Instructors	NS students	NNS students		
			Names	Country of origin	Time using English ^a
BIOC 600	Dr. Morgan Dr. Klum	Charles Joseph Edward Stephanie Frank Mary Bettina Cynthia	Jose Sohan	Mexico India	1 month 13 months
NRSC 605	Dr. Thomson Dr. Stevens	Mark Anne Lisa Patrick Hugh John Robert Patricia Maddy Stuart Grace Dominique	Lin Carl Elena	China Germany Poland	6 months 2 months 2 months
HIST 510	Dr. Samuels Dr. Kovak	Sylvia Myriam Chris Carolyn Mike Jim	Alexei Nasrin Chao	Russia Iran China	5 years 2 months 2 years
ANTH 610	Dr. Evans	Leslie Nicole Stella Peter Virginia Megan Susan Stephany Virginia	Sachiko	Japan	4 years

Course	Instructors	NS students	NNS students		
			Names	Country of origin	Time using English ^a
FREN 600	Dr. Hubert	Jessica Antonie	Kalea Annette	Greece Quebec	30 years 7 years
EECE 510	Dr. Okinishi		Farid Viet Luxin	Iran Taiwan China	4 years 4 months 4 months
EECE 512	Dr. Gomez		Mateo Miguel Mei Luxin Vic-Ming	Argentina Venezuela China China China	2.5 years 3 years 3 years 4 months 4 months

a. In this column I detail the number of months or years that these NNSs have been either studying in an English-speaking environment or have used the English language actively for professional or academic purposes.