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英語學術口語報告：
臺灣醫學系學生之個案研究

Academic Oral Presentation in English:
A Case Study of Taiwanese Medical Students

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CHINESE ABSTRACT

中文摘要

以社會理論觀點 (sociocultural view) 為基礎，尤其以第二外語學習社會化 (second language socialization) 為理論主軸，本研究主要的目的在研究臺灣醫學系學生如何參與以醫學主題的語言課程，尤其聚焦在他們如何學習參與及完成英語學術口語報告，以期能成為更純熟的口語報告者。此研究採用個案研究法，研究對象為六位大二醫學系學生。透過多樣的資料收集 (multiple methods)，參與者本身的訪談及兩次的書面回饋報告 (self-reported forms) 為主要分析資料，其他包括問卷，課堂觀察，實地筆記，對老師的訪談，師生間的電子信件以及相關課程文件的蒐集同時也提供交叉分析的資料，以瞭解這六位學生在為期十八周的研究中，在完成兩次口語報告的活動中可能會有的變化。

本研究主要發現：(一) 就口語報告本身而言，有兩點特徵可被歸納：在一方面，學生所參與的口語報告是一個特殊的社會化過程，因為它本身是非英語母語的參與者幫助學生進行社會化，在參與活動的互動過程中讓他們了解如何完成英文學術口語報告。另一方面，口語報告是一個參與者共構的社會活動。首先，在先前的口語研究中 (Morita, 2003, 2007; Kobayashi, 2003; Zappa-Hollman, 2007; Yang, 2010)，研究者大多檢視他們的非英語母語的學生是如何達到以英語為母語者所設定的標準 (target form)，完成一場被認定是好的口語報告。但此研究並無設定學生該達到甚麼標準，相反的，根據結果顯示：參與者所認定好的口語報告標準不是事先設定的，而是透過和其他非英語母語的間接參與者 (即：老師及同儕) 來幫助他們了解好的口語報告標準為何。而這樣的發現擴展了 Duff (2003) 對第二外語學習社會化模式的定義。(二) 就此社群的參與者而言，表面看來一場口語報告似乎是報告者獨擔責任，但根據研究結果顯示：在此社群當中，所有的參與者都在不同階段扮演各自的社會合作角色來幫助報告者完成任務。更確切來說，透過老師及同儕的互相參與合作，分享學習經驗，不同的觀點及醫學專業知識，

所有的參與者都共同建構了此社群的互動特色。此發現與諸多社會理論(如:Vygotskian sociocultural and activity theory) 及語言社會化 (e.g., Duff, 1995, 2002; Morita, 2000, 2004) 的主要論點不謀而合: 相信透過與其他社群成員合作能達到學習目的。然而在互動關係上, 本研究卻顯示出不同的結果: 此社群成員的合作不是單方面的從專家 (expert) 傳遞知識給新手 (novice), 而是可以透過學生(即: 新手)之間的互動, 建構屬於他們自己對學術口語報告的認識, 進而成為更臻純熟的口語報告者。此一結果也擴大了社會文化理論中對專家及新手的二分定義 (expert-novice dichotomy).

綜觀而論, 雖然參與者看似侷限在六位醫學系學生學習英語學術口語報告之過程, 且課程本質較不同於其他研究的環境背景, 但此聚焦的個案研究卻對第二外語的社會化過程提供了不同面向的討論, 也揭櫫以醫學為主題的語言課程 (medical-theme-based language course) 在教學中的實際狀況。最後, 此研究透過檢視學生如何參與口語報告活動亦發現: 學習者的多向互動關係呈現出他們在此一社群中扮演的多重角色。最後, 根據以上結果, 研究者提出相關的研究方向及實際上的教學建議。

關鍵字: 第二外語學習社會化, 學術口語報告, 主題式語言課程

ENGLISH ABSTRACT

Framed in a sociocultural view and drawing upon a second-language socialization perspective, the present study attempted to capture a holistic understanding of how Taiwanese medical students, engaging in oral presentation activities in a theme-based language class, acculturated into academic discourse and culture and how they interacted with and interpreted academic oral presentations.

This dissertation was designed to better understand the academic socialization process of six EFL second-year college medical students when acculturating to academic oral presentations. With the use of alternative multiple methods, primarily from the participants' perspective through interviews and self-reported data, but also via supplementary sources such as questionnaires, observations, field notes, emails, and document records, several findings can be outlined.

With consideration to the oral activity, two constitutive features can be concluded from this community: first, it is a process of non-native-speaker socialization and, second, it is a co-constructed social activity. Although earlier studies (Morita, 2003, 2007; Kobayashi, 2003; Zappa-Hollman, 2007; Yang, 2010) have taken the position of examining and evaluating how their non-native English participants fulfill the standards for an effective presentation set by English-native-speakers, the present study does not hold any assumptions regarding what qualities students should develop. More specifically, according to the findings in this case, the valued qualities of completing a good oral presentation are not pre-determined; instead, students developed their own realizations of what the valued qualities of an academic presentation are through the process of being involved in the socially-constructed activity with other indirect non-native-English speaking participants: the instructor and peers. Such findings add to Duff's (2003) second

language socialization model.

Moreover, in terms of participants, despite an oral presentation task generally appearing to be performed solely by a presenter, it in fact entails multiple voices and contributions from all participants in the class and represents a social collaboration relationship among participants at different phases (i.e., before, during and after a presentation). More specifically, all participants acted in multiple roles, contributed various viewpoints, and supplied field experiences and levels of expertise within a shared repertoire, contributing to the presentation event in different ways at different stages. These findings concur with the views of context-sensitive approaches such as the Vygotskian sociocultural and activity theory (e.g., Lantolf, 2000), and language socialization (e.g., Duff, 1995, 2002; Morita, 2000, 2004), for their central spirit looks into the value and influence from social collaboration among all members in the community. However, the current study went one step further to suggest that social collaboration is not a unidirectional transmission pattern from expert to novice. Rather, in the researched context, the transmission pattern could possibly occur among novices, which is evidence of the re-constructed expert-novice dichotomy.

To conclude, despite the limited number of participants engaged and the exclusive nature of the research context, the present case study contributes significantly to further understanding second language socialization and provides a different dimension for investigating a theme-based language course. Through examination of how participants engage in oral presentations, the multifaceted inter-relationships represent students' learning and participants' interactions within the situated context. This perspective merits further research attention and offers new possibilities in language course construction toward discipline-specific orientations.

Key words: second language socialization, academic oral presentation, theme-based language course

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THIS DISSERTATION IS DEDICATED

To Mom,
for her unwavering support and encouragement

To Dad,
for his love and memories that lead my way

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Chapter 1

Introduction

1.1 Background and Rationale

The goal of this dissertation is to investigate the language and academic knowledge development of a group of EFL medical majors in Taiwan through oral presentation¹. Despite not being English majors, medical students in Taiwan are usually expected and presumed as successful language learners since they have to achieve a satisfactory score in English in order to achieve an adequate integrated grade for the entrance examination. However, attaining a superior grade in the written examination does not guarantee good oral communicative competence, especially when they are obliged to participate in academic activities in university classrooms in English. This phenomenon could possibly be explained, however, through various reasons. First, the language learning culture in Taiwan favors lectures and rote memorization of vocabulary and grammar. Oral practice is often sacrificed because of its exclusion in entrance examinations, large class sizes, and/or time limitations; therefore, students in Taiwan prefer to listen to lectures since their priority is to achieve a superior score in written examinations. Another possible reason is provided by several studies, which have reported that due to sociocultural differences and/or their lack of language proficiency, Asian students do not take active speech roles in class (Chen, 2003; Cheng, 2000; Flowerdew, 1998; Littlewood, 2000). Indeed, students in Taiwan do share a similar nature with their Asian counterparts. Although the medical majors in Taiwan are assumed to have a good command of

¹ The oral presentation task discussed in this dissertation is an individual-based article presentation, including two tasks for thirty to forty minutes: giving an oral presentation and leading a whole-class discussion (i.e., Q & A session). Due to the nature of the course (cf. Chapter 2), the reported content is medical-theme-based. As for the presenter, they are all medical majors who are at their second year in college. Therefore, different from other academic presenters (e.g., graduate students), this group of students actually fulfill the requirement beyond the expectation of what sophomores can do.

English, oral academic activities in the university classroom, such as engaging in discussions or giving oral presentations in English, are demanding for them. Further, it is also very likely that only very few of them have had related experience or training for these activities in their high school education.

Realizing this predicament and recognizing the importance of English for future careers, stakeholders in the researched medical school convened with English teachers and constructed a course (i.e., Medical English) in the fall of 1999. Over the past decade, the course construction and requirements have been modified several times due to different student needs and practical conditions; however, its pedagogical goal has never been changed: to enhance the English ability of second year medical students. It is expected that the said group of students, after this English training program, would have the English language ability to deal with the linguistic demands of their third year pre-clinical courses and future academic careers (i.e., publishing papers and attending international conferences), where they may need to enhance their credentials and develop their experience. In the course, the team teacher selected a medical-specific textbook as a guideline to direct their syllabus design and course construction. With the guidance of the selected textbook, which deals with various medical issues, such as cloning, the genome project, or ethical issues, the semester-long (eighteen weeks) class was organized so that students were required to do extensive readings, two individual oral presentations, and write a mini research final term paper. However, it should be noted that the course topics were not very medically-specific; rather, it focused on language learning for academic purposes but used medical content as the major topic for discussion. Therefore, it differed from typically recognized content-based classes, which emphasize subject-specific knowledge such as engineering, law, or business disciplines in an ESL learning context. In the observed class, the focus was laid on language learning, despite the

discussion issues being medically-related. Yet occasionally, the specialized medical knowledge was beyond the language instructors' comprehension. More details regarding the instructional framework and rationale of the course construction will be discussed in Chapter 3.

Current literature investigating theories and practices for academic purposes in the second language (L2) learning of medical students in Taiwan has been noted and discussed from various perspectives, including needs analyses and surveys of students' difficulties (Chia, *et al.*, 1999; Hwang & Lin, 2010; Tseng, 2009), problem-based learning (PBL) English curriculum design and instruction (Chang, 2001), medical majors' oral performance anxiety in an English PBL classroom (Chen, *et al.*, 2008), preferred learning and teaching styles (Cheng, 2001), the washback and stakes of English benchmark policies for graduation for Taiwanese medical university students (Lien, 2007) and study skills and practice in terms of academic writing (Lai & Tien, 2009).

The most frequently researched area is the investigation on medical students' needs in relation to language learning. Chia, *et al.* (1999) carried out an English needs analysis of 349 college students and 20 faculties at Chung Shan Medical School in Taichung. The most relevant finding to the present study is that students considered oral/aural abilities as the most important English skills to improve. In 2010, another faculty (i.e., Hwang & Lin, 2010) in the Chung Shan Medical School conducted an updated study by expanding the previous questionnaire to include new items to re-examine students' linguistic needs and perceptions. Hwang and Lin's study is consistent with Chia, *et al.*'s result that poor English speaking skill (lowerclass students: 73.2%; upperclass students: 62.0%; faculty: 50.0%; original terms and statistics data were copied) was rated among the most difficult problems medical majors faced. Similarly, Tseng's (2009) study was conducted in the same

context as the present study at Chang Gung University in Taoyuan, where 94 first-year and fifth-year medical majors completed her questionnaire. Tseng's (2009) findings also correspond to the previous two studies, indicating that medical students were primarily concerned with improving their speaking and listening abilities. Other than the required courses, they opted for training classes targeting English speaking and listening skills, which they regard as the least trained area to meet their job needs. From these three studies, we can see that medical students who are seen as upper-intermediate or advanced English learners are generally not confident in their oral competence and hope to have more opportunities to practice their oral ability. For more than ten years now, medical students have thought that their English oral ability as well as aural comprehension need a comprehensive investigation to help register improvements.

The second most frequently researched area is language teaching in a PBL (Problem-based Learning)² curriculum. As Chang (2001) indicated, collaborative learning in both PBL and language teaching reveals a shared epistemological belief in Dewey's social constructivism that learners may best shape their knowledge or ideas through reflective inquiry with social communities or learning environments. However, in her study, Chang found that limited linguistic competence hinders some students' willingness to cooperate with peers. Besides language abilities, she further indicated individual interests, personalities, and gender also impact students' performance in the researched language class. In other words, collaborative learning seems to not be going as smoothly as it appears in this group of medical learners'

² Problem-based learning (PBL) was firstly introduced and used at McMaster University in Canada. PBL instruction in medical education is seen as one kind of pedagogical strategy of active learning. By being involved in a posed problem (e.g. a patient case), learners have to explore possible solutions which are often open-ended. It features collaborative learning among student peers rather than depending on an instructor's lectures or given answers. By so doing, learners have self-directed autonomy and decide what they want to learn, which reflects characteristics of life-long learning. In recent years, PBL has been a very popular trend in medical education in Taiwan.

community. The group of medical students, who are high achievers in academic performance, distrust the effectiveness of group work. Rather, they believe in their own ability to solve problems alone, as Chang indicated, “because of this distrust in the group project, students were allowed to run their task on an individual basis” (p. 231). Therefore, in some way, it would be an interesting issue to explore how medical students perceive individual and group work in future studies. A second related study was conducted by Chen *et al.* (2008). The purpose of their study was to investigate the nature of performance anxiety among Taiwanese medical students in an English-mediated PBL group. Participants included 23 medical students (i.e., eighteen Taiwanese, one American, and four Asian students who were not specified by country) who enrolled in an international PBL workshop held by Kaohsiung Medical School. The questionnaire and anxiety evaluation data of Taiwanese participants were compared to that of the American student and four Asian students. In their findings, the researchers suggested that the Taiwanese students showed more anxiety than the American student, but less than the other four Asian students. They also concluded that giving a report, being the center of attention, and participating in oral discussions were the most common situations related to anxiety in PBL groups. Their findings imply the necessity to develop effective strategies to facilitate students to cope with performance anxiety in English discussions. In sum, the two above studies take different perspectives to discuss how language teaching can be incorporated and integrated into a PBL curriculum.

Other studies that have not been discussed so far are mainly related to the areas of how medical majors experience English learning in their academic environment and possible implementations to reduce their difficulties and lead them to academic success. To summarize, these studies have helped illustrate the reality of medical students’ language learning experience in university classrooms in Taiwan. The

medical majors, who are deemed academically superior to others, actually experience similar struggles as their peers who are non-medical-majors, especially when they need to fulfill a higher-level requirement in terms of being an academic member. They have their own specific needs in terms of language learning, and also need help from teachers through lectures and instructions.

Reviewing these studies, most research (except Chang, 2001; Lai & Tien, 2009) was conducted by quantified data (e.g., SPSS system) to portray a generalizable phenomenon in medical language education. Qualitatively examining the medical school context for learning English has not yet been examined. More specifically, research which qualitatively describes the academic socialization of EFL medical students into the English-speaking university classroom culture seems to be lacking. Thus, questions such as what students have to learn in order to become a competent member of the academic community, who the participants are in the activity, and what factors influence students' performance may all be quite important to examine. In addition, the type of interaction that occurs in such a medical learning context remains to be investigated. This dissertation explores these issues in the context of medical schools in Taiwan.

In this study, it is compulsory for students in the observed class to engage in a variety of academic activities: listening to the lectures, reading extensively, doing two individual oral presentations, getting involved in oral discussions, and writing a research paper. Hence, it seems impractical to take into account of all activities in this study. Selecting from the classroom activities, I am mostly interested in the oral presentation task, which is therefore taken as the main analytical focus of this study. In terms of the descriptions of academic oral discourse in existing literature, oral presentation has been distinctly under-researched (Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Ferris, 1998; Kobayashi, 2003, 2004; Morita, 2002, 2004). In the restricted body of

literature of academic oral discourse, surveyed topics include willingness to communicate (WTC), participation, seminar/discussion ability, classroom discourse or teacher and learner talk in general English-learning or a content course, peer feedback's influence, and teaching pronunciation (further details are offered in Chapter 2). Different from these topics, the present study resides in a theme-specific³ classroom and investigates how medical college students learn to give oral presentations, which has rarely been discussed in the existing ESL and EFL literature. Furthermore, the major resource of participants in previous studies is from English as Second Language (ESL) learners who reside in English-speaking countries, particularly graduate students or immigrants. These studies have explored an academic community from the perspective of the needs of (international) students in an English-dominant ESL context. Nevertheless, their needs and conditions may be very different from learners in an English as a foreign language (EFL) context, such as the student participants in this dissertation. Therefore, this study will shed light on a different research dimension in academic oral discourse regarding its topic and participants.

Third, as discussed at the beginning of this chapter, medical students are considered as successful language learners in Taiwan, but in fact, they may not

³ In the present study, I use the term, 'theme-based class (classroom)' several times. It is taken from Parkinson's (2000) definition on theme-based instruction to explain how I view the content of oral tasks. Based on her definition, theme-based courses should contain "learning of academic skills, grammar...in a real topic and any reference to grammar or strategies for working out the meaning of new vocabulary" (p.374). It serves three purposes: to make the material genuine by involving authentic activities, to make the content relevant and interesting, and to make materials capable of teaching appropriate genres. In the researched scenario, the topics of oral tasks are all based on one textbook entitled *An English Course for Medical and Nursing Professionals: Third Call* (2003). It covers a wide variety of biology-related and health-related topics, for example, cloning and the genome project, emergency services, ethical issues, legal issues, patient-doctor relationship and public health service, etc., with specialized knowledge sometimes beyond the comprehension of English instructors. Apparently, the material is somehow relevant to the students' major and it also builds on learners' knowledge and experience in medical courses. But as aforementioned, medical content is the theme used in giving oral presentations and class discussions. The major focus of this class is language learning rather than acquisition of content knowledge. The word 'theme' in the present study is used to explain orientation of materials in the present study and its importance to direct the content of oral presentation.

undergo as smooth a journey as expected, especially in promoting their English oral ability in fulfilling their academic requirements. Thus, the present study also attempts to understand how the group of participants gains a better understanding of academic oral presentation task through their engagement in the social academic activity of oral presentations, which many participants perceive to be the most challenging task in the class. It is hoped that the findings of this study can provide pedagogical implications for in-practice language teachers who are situated in a theme-based language classroom.

1.2 Research Problem

In light of the need for further research that focuses on the sociocultural aspects of language teaching, the present work looks at how EFL learners immerse themselves in a new academic community and become socialized through language learning. This study focuses on participants' oral presentations as a major unit of analysis to examine their socialization process to be a better oral presenter.

The purpose of the study is therefore to explore how this group of medical students prepares themselves to better fulfill the requirement of academic needs. Framed in the assumption of sociocultural theory to view oral presentation as a social activity, more specifically, the research question is as follows. On the way to become a better presenter, how do the indirect participants (i.e., the instructor and peers) influence the target students' socialization process? In other words, while most oral studies (see detailed discussion in Chapter 2) focus on either student presenters or oral activities, the present study sheds light on how other participants who are also involved in the activity contribute to presenters' understanding and influence their performance in oral presentations.

1.3 Significance of the Study

In terms of the theoretical contribution of this study, framed in language

socialization theory, research on an EFL tertiary medical-issue-based course through oral presentation tasks is unique from two perspectives. On the one hand, scholars have only in recent years started to examine and theorize about the complicated, contingent nature of second language academic discourse socialization, so we have relatively limited knowledge about this area (Belcher, 1994; Belcher & Braine, 1995). While much of the previous work in ESL contexts is data-driven, this study attempts to make contributions by addressing the limited research into EFL learners' acquisition of oral academic discourse qualitatively. Accordingly, it adds to an emerging line of research that examines EFL learner's participation and socialization within academia by taking oral presentations as a socially-constructed academic activity within such a specific content course.

Moreover, in this medical-theme-based language classroom, the issues of negotiating membership inside and outside the classroom have rarely been documented. Inside the classroom, since the language instructor is not a medical professional, how can she engage in and negotiate with medical majors? The medical majors, who play multiple roles (i.e., presenters, discussion leaders, listeners, and oral contributors), have better medical knowledge but less language knowledge than the instructor; therefore, how do they negotiate their expressions and ideas with the teacher and classmates? Does their negotiation process follow the conventional interaction mode in a traditional Taiwanese classroom: teacher initiation, student response, and teacher evaluation, especially in a large-size language classroom? If not, then what is the interaction and negotiation pattern in the classroom? This dimension is particularly significant because in the observed classroom, this student-dominant characteristic is very much in conflict with traditionally recognized Taiwanese classroom discourse. Therefore, when students fulfill the overriding position to control their oral presentation and lead discussions, the typically

acknowledged educational status of the teacher and students in Taiwanese culture is over-turned. Then, the question which follows could be of interest to find out how this occurs and in which perspective, the instructor activates (or yields) her mediating role during negotiation. Outside the classroom, this study aims to better understand how students prepare their oral presentation task. For example, do they work on an individual basis rather than depending on assistance from instructors and/or peers? If they need assistance, what format do they prefer (e.g., email, face-to-face communication, or scheduled oral conferencing)? In Q & A session, how do they undergo a discussion since everyone has different experiences and expertise? To summarize, this dissertation presents a multi-layered picture of the negotiating membership between the instructor and students inside and outside classroom.

In addition to further exploring theoretical issues, this study also provides pedagogical implications regarding the importance of oral presentations in academia. Oral presentations are recognized as an essential ability for academic community members. In the academic world, presentations take place in lectures, presenting information or results, summarizing, sharing knowledge, and attending conferences, among other situations. Therefore, oral presentations in university classrooms serve the role of placing learners in contexts that require authentic use of language in academia. Secondly, based on sociocultural theories in language learning, it is especially significant for researchers and educators to examine how to carry out oral presentations in a language classroom, not only to observe how an individual is challenged and transformed through a dynamic and negotiated process, but also how students' as well as the instructor's roles in the academic community change.

Meanwhile, from a practical perspective, the findings will be especially important for medical students because in their future careers, oral presentation skills are central to physician-physician communication; however, many studies have been

done regarding general English learning or graduate-level seminar classes (see detailed discussion in Chapter 2), but very little is known about how these skills are learned and about the doctors' dilemma in making a definitive English oral presentation (Haber & Lingard, 2001). In the present study, how this skill helps EFL medical students in the academic community is investigated as well as the journey they experience to be a better presenter. Therefore, the medical major participants' reflection on results can contribute to both medical and higher education.

In short, the primary goal of this study is to provide an in-depth examination of the learner experiences and of the development that occurs with oral tasks in an English medicine-related course in an EFL context. By drawing on various sociocultural theories, this study attempts to explore how these issues manifest themselves in the experiences of the medical students who participate in new academic communities, through oral presentations, and in a variety of ways.

Chapter 2

Sociocultural Perspectives on Academic Oral Discourse Research: A Review of the Literature

Among the various oral activities in tertiary courses across disciplines, such as seminars, interviews, oral examinations, participation in discussions, etc, oral presentations can be seen as one of the most pervasive oral activities in regular university classes. Surprisingly, in reviewing the literature, it was found that oral academic discourse is peculiarly under-researched. Among the limited literature, most studies have been carried out with indexicality (e.g., deictics, speech acts, pronouns, turn-taking, etc.) to analyze oral linguistic characteristics (Basturkmen, 2002; Bygate, 1999) or quantify results by using questionnaires (e.g., Ferris & Tagg, 1996a, 1996b; Kim, 2006).

Differing from those research foci, this dissertation's interest lies in the exploration of what and how students' learning of academic oral presentations occurs 'behind the scenes'. Framed in a sociocultural theory, it seems that depending solely on linguistic analysis or counting results in surveys is not sufficient to illustrate what the exact causes that influence students' performance, which I view as an outcome derived from various factors. In this sense, sociocultural theories which view language learning as a fundamentally social, cultural, and temporal activity provide a relatively strong and mature stance to sustain the present study. The value of conducting studies from a sociocultural stance is well supported by Wertsch's (1991) quote: "the basic goal of a sociocultural approach to mind is to create an account of human mental processes that recognizes the essential relationship between these processes and their cultural, historical, and institutional settings" (p. 6; see also Wertsch, 1990, 1998). From such a perspective, learners' development and process of learning are taken to be situated within particular contexts or the social, cultural

world which is “constituted in relation with persons acting,” (Lave 1993, p. 5; see also, Lave, 1988; Lave & Wenger, 1991; Rogoff, 1990, 2003; Vygotsky, 1978).

Therefore, to better portray a holistic picture, I will discuss below some important aspects or concepts related to the theoretical perspective of language socialization and other sociocultural approaches. First of all, this study borrows from mainly language socialization theories as a conceptual framework. Some of the important theoretical constructs include second language socialization theory (Duff, 2003), the role of activity proposed by Ochs (Ochs, 1988), legitimate peripheral participation (LPP) on learning and taking classroom as a learning community (Lave & Wenger, 1991). In the following sections, explanation will be provided on each of the above mentioned constructs.

First of all, in Section 2.1, an overview of second language socialization to emulate an orientation as the theoretical conceptual framework to answer research questions and support the entire study is introduced. Considering second language socialization as a dynamic and complex process (Duff, 1996, 2003, 2007; Duff & Hornberger, 2008), characteristics of the researched language classroom will be described. In addition, the features of key informants’ interaction in the classroom will be explained. The use of second language socialization theory will also help provide a strong stance to capture and illuminate various dimensions of socialization experiences.

In Section 2.2, I further explore how sociocultural theories discuss the importance of activity (i.e., activity theory) which is essential to the present study because it helps validate my explanation for taking oral presentations as a socially constructed activity. Following this and framed in sociocultural theory, Section 2.3 employs community-of-practice (CoP) theory to re-examine the typically recognized teacher-student position (i.e., expert-novice position) in a traditional Taiwanese

education setting. Also, it helps define the investigated classroom as a reduced version of an authentic academic community.

Finally, in Section 2.4, I review recent studies on academic oral discourse to indicate the imperative need to expand research on academic oral discourse. By doing so, we can have a better understanding of how this area has been studied. Later, a review is provided with a focus on key traits and findings of several studies which have informed this investigation. All studies reviewed have framed themselves in a sociocultural stance, discussing how ESL learners' acquisition of academic oral discourse influences their socialization into academia. Sharing a common orientation, a discussion is offered to distinguish reviewed studies and the present one in order to add further theoretical contributions to the existing body of work. At the end of this chapter, Section 2.5, a chapter summary is given.

2.1 Conceptual Framework—Second Language Socialization Theory

Background

Language socialization is a framework initially developed in the early 1980s by linguistic anthropologists Bambi Schieffelin and Elinor Ochs (1986a, 1986b) and their colleagues. It was developed with first language learners and currently considered among the most promising theories to explore second language learning from a sociocultural and sociolinguistic perspective, with numerous studies having already been produced by two generations of L2 socialization researchers (for a detailed review see Duff & Hornberger, 2008). In the 1970s, linguistic anthropologists, such as Schieffelin & Ochs (1986a), Ochs (1988), and Heath (2007) were influenced by Hymes' (1972) insights about communicative competence, while other groups of researchers, including Rogoff (1990) and Lave and Wenger (1991), were influenced by Vygotsky's (1978) belief in sociocultural and sociohistorical contexts of learning. They highlighted the importance of apprenticeship in learning activities, emphasizing

the role of more capable peers, caregivers, or instructors.

Along with this research track, language is considered to be both a major object and a medium of learning and socialization. To achieve communicative competence, membership, identity, stance and ideologies in a group, novices and newcomers get involved in explicit or implicit socialization through linguistic and social interaction into relevant local communicative practices, and thereby integrate themselves into particular cultures or communities. The socialization approach views language learning and sociocultural learning as being intertwined. This stance of viewing language itself and language learning is fundamentally different from the psycholinguistic approach which views language as a linguistic code, where the ultimate goal of language learning is the development of linguistic competence. By contrast, the language socialization approach considers social and cultural factors as an inseparable part of language learning.

2.1.1 Comparing L1 Socialization and L2 Socialization

Dating back to the early 1990s, a considerable number of studies were conducted on second language (L2) socialization. Even though L1 and L2 socializations share many similar principles, L2 socialization constitutes a more complex process than its L1 counterpart. Their relationship can be shown in Figures 2.1 and 2.2 below (Duff, 2003).

FIGURE 2.1 COMMON VIEW OF LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION (L1) (Duff 2003:3)

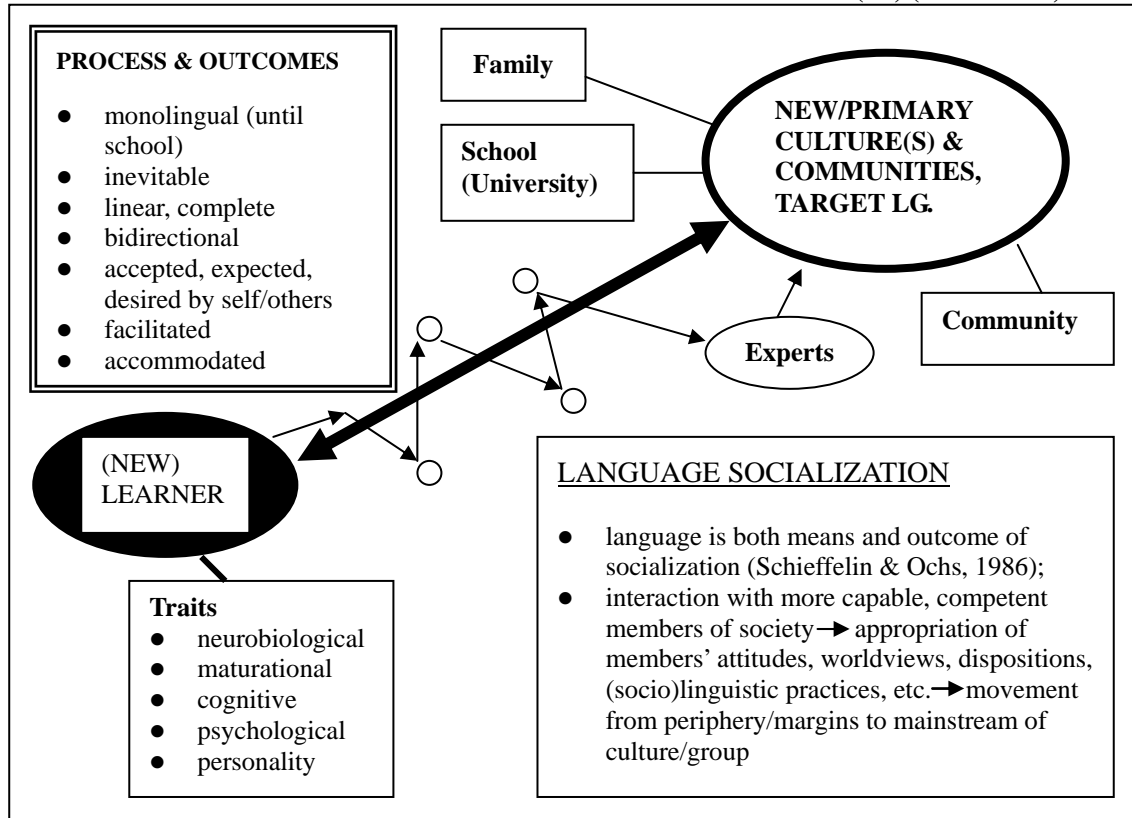
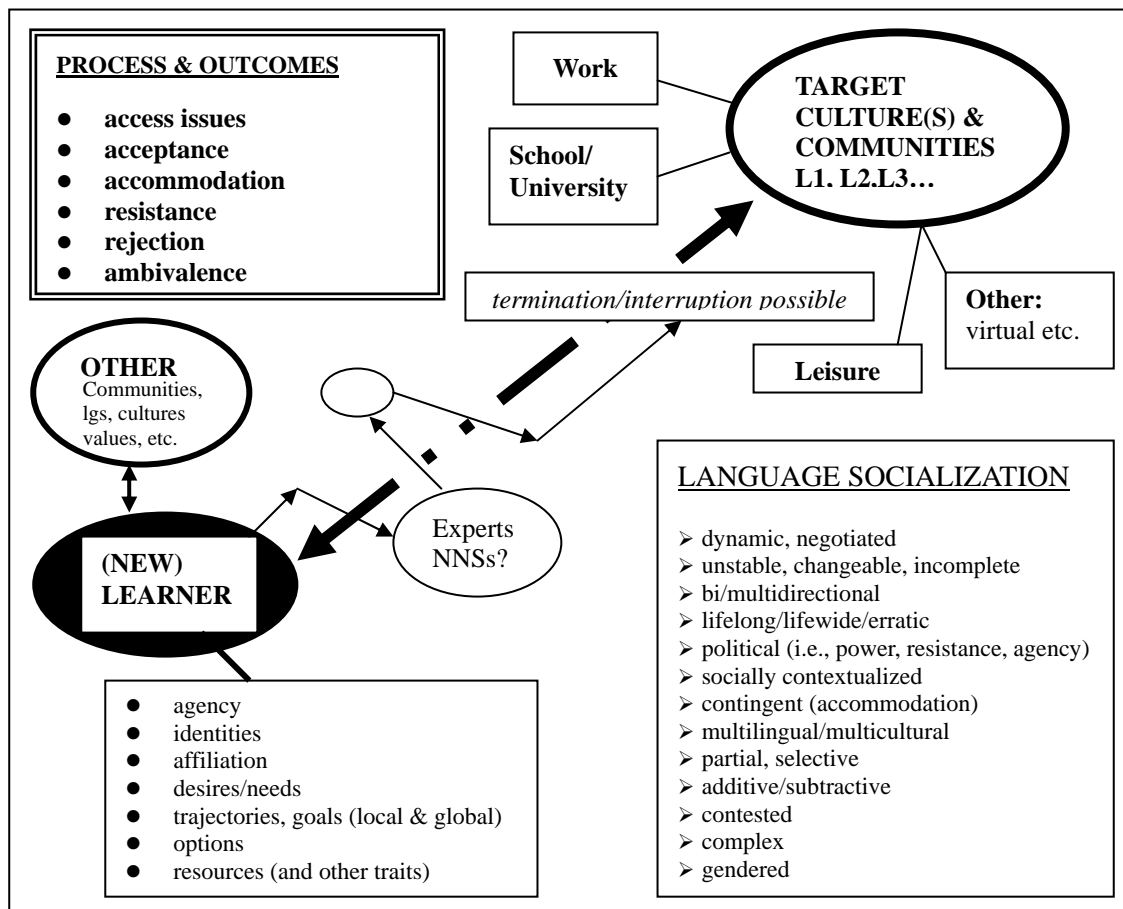


FIGURE 2.2 COMMON VIEW OF LANGUAGE SOCIALIZATION (L2) (Duff 2003:3)



As we can see from the two figures, L1 and L2 socializations differ from each other in several perspectives. First, socialization occurs through different accesses in L1 and L2, respectively. L1 socialization mainly discusses the congruence or incongruence of interactional practices or speech acts at home relating to oral and written texts and emphasizes the importance of formal education (e.g., see many studies of Heath, S. B). Embracing their first language, culture, and values, in L2 socialization, one is socialized through alternative routes, including apprenticeship or informal education. Considering learners of L2 socialization who already possess a repertoire of linguistic competence, identity to L1 cultures and values, affiliations, goals, needs, ideologies and even their own habitual learning resources or traits, they have to change participation according to changing practices through a negotiating process in order to comfortably fit into a new community.

Secondly, due to this different developmental track, L2 socialization studies over the past ten to fifteen years have taken a divergent path in research work from previous research on L1. According to Duff (2007), the learners that have been studied in L2 socialization undergo similar traits as their L1 counterparts, such as at home, school, peer-group, university, vocational or workplace contexts, but up until now, research has focused more on school-aged children and adolescents than on adults (see also, Cole & Zuengler, 2003). In particular, studies have typically centralized on minority students' integration into a new domain culture by analyzing their oral and written practices. Several studies have targeted life in bilingual and multilingual communities by examining the issue of code-switching and language choice in communities, while other studies have focused on the integration of immigrants in elementary and second language content classrooms (Cole & Zuengler, 2003; Duff, 2002; Schechter & Bayley, 1997; Toohey, 2000). These studies have also

examined what the majority of students' experiences are like when they struggle, transform, and finally immerse themselves in the second-language-mediated educational or work settings. Directing attention to this perspective, some studies have discussed how students are socialized into academic discourse(s) in postsecondary programs by examining how university students learn to give oral presentations or engage in new academic literacies in L2 academic communities (Casanave, 1992; Kobayashi, 2003; Morita, 2000, 2002). Other research has focused on professional programs and workplaces (Duff, Wong & Early, 2000; Flowerdew, 2000; Goldstein, 1997; Li, 2000) and investigated how workers in specific disciplines, such as lawyers, doctors, or pilots, are expected to speak and act in a new community or culture as well as their transformation of ideology and identity.

Thirdly, whereas L1 socialization is seen as a linear, straightforward learning process, L2 socialization can lead to various outcomes resulting from different degrees of access, acceptance by the new domain society/community, or accommodation. Research into L2 socialization has often discussed misgivings, conflicts, contradictions or rejections to integration into the new L2-mediated social worlds. In other words, L2 socialization is much more complex than L1 socialization, including perspectives in cognitive and psychological elements, linguistic repertoire (i.e., pragmatics, grammatical and cultural meaning), and even sociopolitical issues.

Generally speaking, language socialization refers to

[T]he lifelong process by means of which individuals—typically novices—are inducted into specific domains of knowledge, beliefs, affect, roles, identities, and social representations, which they access and construct through language practices and social interaction. (Duff, 1995, p. 508, citing Schieffelin and Ochs, 1986a, 1986b)

From this view, the socialization process is initiated from the moment individuals come into contact with other people, as Duff indicates above. From the

above discussion, we also learn that L1 socialization is distinguished from that of L2 in terms of their individual socialization processes. Over one decade, new trends in L2 socialization theory, however, challenge certain assumptions proposed by earlier language socialization research. For instance, the stability of the target language norms should be modified by individual newcomers when they are immersed in fluid, hybrid, dynamic, multilingual and different sociocultural contexts. As Duff (2003) noted in this regard that

Language socialization is a process marked by peaks and valleys, progression and regression, times of learning and forgetting, of belonging and not belonging, of speaking and being silent, and all the tensions, confusion, and points in between. (p. 333)

What has been discussed so far is concerned with L1 and L2 socialization. According to Duff (2003), each model has its own pattern to explain its complexities. However, foreign language learners such as the participants in the present study have not been included in the model. That is, this group of medical EFL learners may experience a very different process of accommodation in socializing themselves to be more competent English academic members through engaging in oral presentation activities. However, how they accommodate or refuse to adjust to the English-learning academic context has not been discussed in existing literature. In addition, since the participants are medical majors in an EFL context, it is very likely that these participants' learning would be very different from Duff's ESL participants. More specifically, how this group of medical students builds their community of learning could be an important topic to examine. This community building could help to add to Duff's model by offering an example of how second language learners can build their own learning community. The present study, framed in language socialization theory, is expected to address the lack of culture in previous language acquisition studies and examine how participants negotiate and achieve the language

norms belonging to the observed context itself.

2.2 Ochs' Concept of Activities

After the discussion of how language socialization recognizes the importance of investigating the sociocultural context of language development, this section will explain how this school of thought regards *activity* as a mediating role to transmit linguistic and sociocultural knowledge. According to sociocultural theories, sociocultural activity in which members of a social group actively participate is the basic unit of analysis. In L1 socialization, Ochs (1988) argued that children acquire linguistic and sociocultural knowledge through participation in socially and culturally organized activities or practices. She provides a model (Fig. 2.3) which illustrates that “activity mediates linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and that knowledge and activity impact each other” (p. 15). In other words, by engaging in activities, language acquisition means gaining not only linguistic knowledge but also sociocultural knowledge.

Linguistic knowledge \leftrightarrow activity \leftrightarrow sociocultural knowledge

Figure 2.3 Ochs' Model for the Role of Activity in Language Socialization

The concept of activity found in L1 socialization is rooted in the work of Vygotsky (1978) who advocated the experimental-genetic method, which focuses on process and supplying maximum opportunity for learners to engage in a variety of activities. The Vygotskian School of psychology or sociohistorical approaches to cognitive development promotes the idea that higher mental functions of individuals develop through their participation in socially and culturally organized activities. When implementing activities, language is seen as a tool used to engage in activities which mediate the development of higher mental functions. But how can this claim be related to language learning? As Lantolf (2000) indicated, the task of psychology

is to realize how human social and mental activities interact through “culturally constructed artifacts” (p. 1) whose fundamental concept of theory is mediation, i.e., symbolic artifacts—most importantly language—to establish a mediated relationship between individuals and the external world. Similarly, Schieffelin (1990) made the following statement to indicate two components of language socialization in terms of L1 acquisition, which appears appropriate to be applied to L2 socialization as well.

The study of language socialization has its goal of understanding how persons become competent members of their social groups and the role language has in this process. Language socialization, therefore, concerns two major areas of socialization: socialization through the use of language and socialization to use language. (p. 14)

Framed in this view, then, language is seen as a major and powerful medium of socialization, and by the same token, socialization is a key to language learning. Therefore, from this viewpoint, learning is taken as a process mediated through activities and language. The present study also takes two assigned oral presentations as socially constructed activities constituting the basic unit of analysis. Specifically, examining the two oral presentation activities not only mediates language learning under a medical-content theme but also facilitates students to gain sociocultural knowledge in the English academic field. At the same time, students also learn some formulation of how to do an oral presentation by engaging in the oral activity.

2.3 A Community-of-Practice Orientation: Taking a Classroom as a Community

While drawing generally from the various sociocultural perspectives outlined above, we come to realize that this investigation focuses on language socialization theory: taking oral presentations as a socially constructed activity to fit the requirement of being a more competent academic member and viewing English as the major mediating language to construct sociocultural knowledge. In this section, another sociocultural theory will be discussed: community of practice (CoP). The present study views context as important in examining how students carry out

activities. In this study, context is defined as the classroom community in which activities are carried out. Central to this notion of classroom as a community, the section that follows will explain how this study uses Lave & Wenger's idea of legitimate peripheral participation on learning.

2.3.1 The View of Legitimate Peripheral Participation (LPP) on Learning

Traditionally, the mainstream cognitive psychologists' conceptualization of learning is regarded as an individual achievement. During the early '90s, Lave and Wenger's (1991) revolutionary situated learning theory extended learning to involve the social nature of learning. For them, knowledge is not incrementally stored in the mind, but is the result of becoming involved in activities and located in societies. Haneda (2006) interpreted Lave and Wenger's idea in a very comprehensive way by saying that,

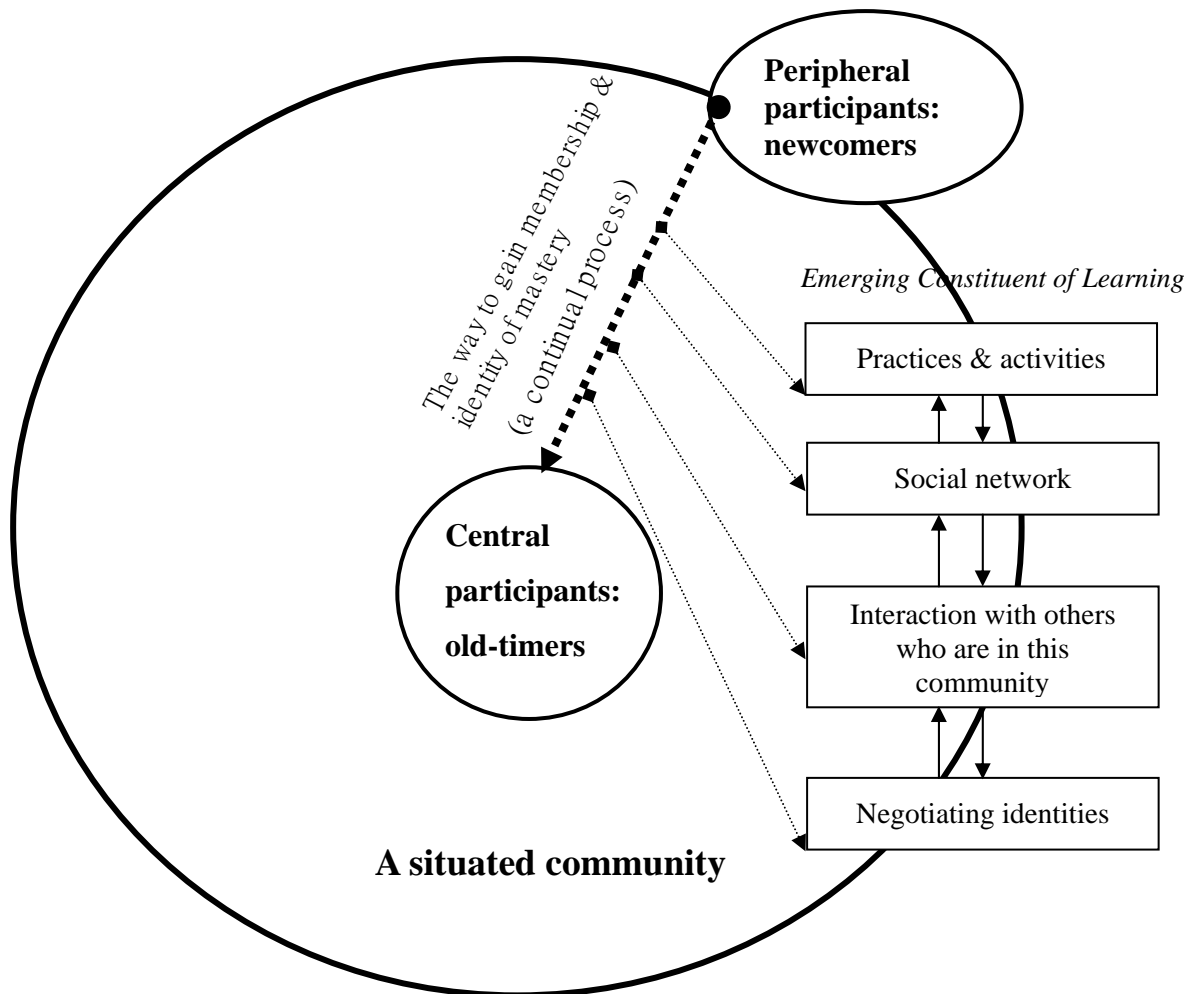
[I]ndividuals do not simply receive, internalize, and construct knowledge in their minds but enact it as persons-in-the-world participating in the practices of a sociocultural community. Accordingly, learning is an intrinsic and inseparable aspect of any social practice, not the goal to be achieved, and it occurs when people engage in joint activity in a CoP, with or without teaching. (p. 808)

Such learning is what Lave and Wenger (1991) defined as legitimate peripheral participation (LPP). 'Legitimate' indicates that anyone could potentially become a member of a community of practice or in a discourse community. 'Peripheral' explains how the marginal participants, starting from peripheral to central, acquire knowledge through their involvement (i.e., participation) with activities or practices. Gaining knowledge thus is viewed as a process, not a product. Therefore, treating learning as legitimate peripheral participation implies that learning is regarded as "itself an evolving form of membership" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 53). Lave and Wenger view learning as an integral part of social practice. In their theory, learning cannot be separated from social context. Apprenticeships, which they regard as "a

common structured pattern of learning experiences” (p. 30), illustrate their theory of learning. They both believe that knowledge is not taught, nor examined, and neither is the apprentice of a mechanical copier of patterns. Learning is part of the apprentice’s everyday existence which does not happen in a formal educational setting. Based on this rationale, Lave and Wenger (1991) gave examples of CoP from various scenarios: Vai and Gola tailors, Yucatec midwives, and meat cutters to explain how learning could possibly occur.

Through multiple social networks, relations and interactions with other members in a situated community, Lave and Wenger also argue that “identity, knowing, and social membership entail one another” (p. 53). In 1996, Lave further elaborated discourse on the fact that this connection entails that “crafting identities in practice becomes the fundamental project subjects engage in” (p. 157). This concept of multiple social networks also corresponds to what has been discussed elsewhere in the previous section, i.e., that first language socialization emphasizes the importance of formal education, whereas researchers in second language socialization, especially in a community-of-practice perspective, consider learning as occurring everywhere. To summarize the above, socialization is not a matter of learning pre-determined knowledge or skills, but a back-and-forth process involving negotiating interactions, activities and practice; it is expected that learners can finally become a full-fledged member in the community of practice. Their relationship can be depicted as follows in Figure 2.4.

Figure 2.4 How Learning Occurs from a Community of Practice Perspective



From this figure, we can see that newcomers are seen as peripheral participants in their respective new communities who move from partial participation to full participation by means of the guidance provided by more experienced CoP members (referred to as “old-timers” in Lave and Wenger’s CoP theory). In the present study, we can view the instructor and experienced presenters as “old-timers”. However, traditional models of expert-novice relationships have been questioned, since the assumption that experienced individuals are experts and newcomers are novices. But as Wenger’s (1998) later elaboration on *multimembership* indicated, community of practices can be accomplished through mutual engagement, joint activity involving a collective process of negotiation, and shared repertoires. Why is the concept of

CoP essential to the present study? First, the rationale of multimembership helps explain the blurred line between experts and novices. One may be an expert in one community but a novice in another community. With various identities in different communities, what is typically recognized as the expert-novice relationship is challenged. Therefore, it seems more appropriate to think of people's negotiations in terms of their participation in multiple communities of practice.

To some extent, this viewpoint helps better define the dynamic negotiation relationship and shifting position between the instructor and students in the present study because of the nature of oral presentation and discussion tasks. In other words, the teacher is not regarded as the only authority and students are not viewed as playing only a passive role in learning. Since these students are socialized into many overlapping communities concurrently and equipped with several memberships at the same time, for example, different English-learning experiences, disciplinary communities with interns or in-practice doctors, or institutional or student associations in their own department, they thus may have several overlapping community identities. When students bring their own language proficiency, life experience, effort put in the course, and any other related professional medical knowledge to this class, they have their own expert perspectives. On the other hand, the instructor, who is typically regarded as the only authority in the traditional education model and the only socialization agent, has her own limitation (e.g., professional medical knowledge). Therefore, the interaction among the student presenter, student audience and the instructor, both inside and outside classroom, becomes an interesting issue to explore. At different times and on different issues, is their interactional mode uni-directional, bi-directional, or even multi-directional? In terms of language proficiency, the instructor owns her profession in academic language, but what about the content matter? When the instructor is not the only

resource, who takes over the status? By incorporating the literature of classroom interaction with the concept of multimemships of CoP, it is expected to shed light on a different view to re-examine the role of learners and instructors, as proposed as the second research question in this thesis, since such an issue is not touched upon by other language socialization studies.

2.3.2 Classroom as a Community

In this study, rather than proposing a broadly generalized term, academia, the observed classroom is limited as a small-scale community of academia. However, borrowing from the concept of community of practice, how can a language classroom be seen as an academic community? At first, Breen (2001a) argued that classrooms are specific cultures and need an anthropological approach to understand socio-cognitive processes. In order to understand the formal learning of language, Breen (2001b) called for an understanding of classroom *discursive* practices, demonstrating that it is important to consider classrooms as a form of social practice. He places special emphasis on “social relationships” as these, which, in his view, can orchestrate opportunities for learning. In much the same way, Roberts *et al.* (2001) claimed that by looking at everyday life culturally and ethnographically, language learners can be taught methods for investigating the cultural and social patterns of interaction and the values and beliefs that account for them.

Drawing from their perspectives, there are at least three ways to think of the classroom as an academic community. First of all, the characteristics of this course constitute an essential entry point for medical students into a medical-disciplinary community. In this course, community learning is a “shared and connected” behavior (Tinto, 1997, p. 54) on a theme-based ground. That is, this learning community is organized around a central subject (i.e., medical content in this study). Second, this theme-based course itself constitutes distinct communities of practices

and activities, in which learners fulfill the same requirement, achieve the same pedagogical goal and seek membership. In this sense, the classroom becomes a place where students learn to become effective members. Hence, this course is designed to simultaneously teach both content and language for a homogeneous group of learners who share the same goal for learning English, for which the context ranges from an academic to occupational setting (Dudley-Evans & St John, 1998).

Finally, and probably most importantly, members constitute a society or a community where mutual learning occurring between an individual and his peers becomes the influencing power of learning and participating in a community of practice. Framed in a sociocultural view, Vygotsky (1978) constructed the Zone of Proximal Development (ZPD) stating that “children develop social and cognitive skills through participating in structured cooperative interaction with more mature members of society” (Ochs 1986, p. 6). Thus, from this view, learning cannot occur alone. Duff (2007) added that,

Experts or more proficient members of a group play a very important role in socializing novices and implicitly or explicitly teaching them to think, feel, and act in accordance with the values, ideologies, and traditions of the group. However, novices also ‘teach’ or convey to their more proficient interlocutors what their communicative needs are, and the process of socialization is therefore seen to be bidirectional—or multidirectional if multiple modes of expertise co-exist. (p. 311)

In this sense, rather than taking assimilation as an automatic process, I accept the premise that discourse socialization is an interactional and dynamic process which is locally situated in communities across disciplinary social activities which are mediated through the use of English. In this perspective, the participants and the discipline-related activities have been variable foci for analyses and are shown to be interactively linked one to another. In this study, the researched classroom is viewed as a medical academic community where the medical students are socialized to fulfill the requirements of being successful oral presenters for academic purposes. Oral

presentations are therefore regarded as a social activity in the classroom community.

2.4 Second Language Research on Oral Academic Discourse

In this section, I will review how oral academic discourse has been explored in the last two decades. Firstly, in Section 2.4.1, a summary table is presented to document the changing research trends on oral academic discourse and different research methodology orientations. By synthesizing and comparing these studies chronologically, we can see different research orientations: topic development across different phases, and shifting research methodology from a quantitative (e.g., linguistic pattern analysis) to a qualitative orientation (e.g., what an individual experiences throughout the learning process). Furthermore, in current studies, researchers pay more attention to how contextual factors (e.g., political decision) influence individual's learning. In other words, language learning and context are treated as interrelated and thus the acquisition of language is embedded in the socialization of knowledge. By reviewing all these studies, I will outline some research gaps existing in this body of literature in Section 2.4.2. Finally, I narrow my focus specifically to studies related to the main oral activity in the present study: oral presentation. It appears that in the existing literature, research on oral presentations is very limited since most surveyed studies are related to pedagogical implications, as we will see in Section 2.4.3.

2.4.1 Research on Oral Academic Discourse

A discourse community is a group of people who share a set of social conventions directed towards some purpose (Swales, 1990), so this group of people recognizes mechanisms of communication among themselves. While communicating, one or more genres are used to achieve successful comprehension in particular disciplines. Examples of discourse communities are cardiologists, electrical engineers, doctors, or lawyers. In terms of studies of academic genre,

research on discourse communities has been divided mainly into two categories: written and oral perspectives. Comparing quantity of studies in these two perspectives, research into discourse features of written genres has been much more extensive; in particular, investigation into patterns and features in specific academic and professional genres has nourished pedagogy over the past two decades (Basturkmen, 1999; Bhatia, 1993; Swales, 1990). However, only a few academic spoken genres have been explored. Although less explored so far, some studies, focusing on the oral discourse needs of non-native English speakers (NNESs) in an English-learning or English-speaking academic setting, can be discussed.

To begin with, I will present a review second language research on oral academic discourse in the last two decades through a summary table (Table 2.1), and closely examine how the oral research trend has transformed its foci. As shown in the chronologically ordered table, in the 1990s, due to the emergence of the ESP movement in the late 1960s, L2 studies concerned themselves more with relevance to learners' needs which, in turn, directed curriculum and syllabus design. Research on the oral aspect is also directed by the ESP trend.

From the first two categories in Table 2.1, we can see that researchers at that time tended to explore issues about needs analysis and oral discussion in EAP or ESP across disciplines, both of which were strongly related to the concept of ESP or EAP needs. For example, in an investigation of the graduate seminar as a speech genre, Weissberg (1993) employed a qualitative design to analyze participants' language use, the structure of their seminar presentation, and to explore the specific demands that posed for the NNES graduate students in graduate courses in the departments of animal science and agronomy. Furthermore, he compared the generic difference between the seminar presentation and the research article, in other words, spoken versus written texts. More significantly, the study revealed differences in the option

of speech style chosen by both native and non-native English speaker learners. From this finding, two factors were identified which showed why NNEs face more challenges in oral tasks: first, lack of linguistic knowledge; and second, different notions of what constitutes acceptable academic speech.

In the implication 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)

In this quote, he specifically points out non-native speakers’ dilemma to accommodate oral academic discourse and also calls for the necessity to prepare academic-specific courses for students because it is not a naturally pick-up process for learners. Rather, it takes a planned learning process for learners to cultivate themselves to be more competent academic members in their own professional fields.

In the third category, we can see that researchers have gradually moved their foci to task-based research. They have found it is useful to employ a task-oriented perspective in work on second language acquisition. In order to better understand and document how learners structure interlanguage over time, second language researchers and teachers intend to seek samples (i.e., taking task as a unit for analysis) of language use from learners. By eliciting samples of language use, researchers and teachers can probe why students cannot attend to accuracy. With this attempt in mind, several typical examples of SLA research tasks are similar to negotiation of meaning, the framework of the input and output hypothesis, and the interaction approach. This has also occurred in oral academic discourse studies as well. Student oral tasks in the classroom have received increasing attention as a unit of analysis. But if we take a closer look, what makes these studies different from most

task-based research done in the 1980s is that they have shifted their attention to look into affective and social variables (Dörnyei & Kormos, 2000; Parks, 2000; Swain & Lapkin, 2000). In these studies, experimental designs to describe individual learner's mastery of linguistic items and rules of language use are employed. Taking this perspective, then, it appears that these studies ignore some other learning factors such as learners' perceptions of a task, the subject-related matter, and social, cultural, and interpersonal messages they receive during their engagement in the task.

The increased emphasis on oral research that has been discussed above is a reflection of the requirement to fulfill oral academic needs across disciplines. All the studies were preliminary, as the researchers themselves acknowledged, and there is a need for more detailed investigation in this area. In recent years, a number of studies have moved their attention to investigate how learning communities affect learners' oral acquisition and performance. Therefore, researchers look into the learners' relationship with peers and instructors (i.e., peer negotiation, collaboration and assessment) and learners themselves (i.e., their participation and willingness to talk).

Both the fourth and fifth categories explore how negotiation processes and interactions can be extended in a language classroom. In the fourth category, assessment and support from peers are examined. Oral production is not accomplished alone; how a student interacts with his/her classmates motivates researchers to investigate something 'behind the scenes'. Therefore, they focus on learners' ability and feasibility to do peer assessment and their willingness to communicate (WTC) and class participation. For example, in the fifth category, willingness to communicate (WTC) and class participation, most studies listed in this group (Lee, 2009; Springer & Collins, 2008; Trent, 2008) used case studies to examine possible factors that influence learners' willingness to participate in oral

discussions and/or interactions. In this group, most participants are international ESL students who encounter difficulties in accommodating a new culture and meeting academic requirements, while others are EFL undergraduates in English classes. To review all the findings of these studies, the commonly mentioned challenges were poor listening comprehension, a silence culture in home countries, cultural-based turn-taking skills, or poor communication skills with instructors and classmates (Chavez, 2007; Kim, 2006; Lee, 2009; Saito, 2008; Springer & Collins, 2008; Trent, 2008). These findings demonstrate that language learning not only involves learning linguistic items or rules of language use, but also possibly involves some other factors resulting from a practical cross-cultural knowledge of rhetorical styles. These studies shed light on investigating learners' performance interaction in class, especially international students at the tertiary or graduate-level, who do not share the same linguistic knowledge or sociocultural rules and values with their native-speaker counterparts. What needs our attention is that studies of oral academic discourse in recent years (in this category) do not often take statistics or large-scale surveys to do generalizations. Rather, they take a qualitative approach to investigate complexities and transformations of individual cases. This characteristic, to a large extent, reflects the nature of the current and upcoming research tendency: second language socialization.

In language socialization theory, the locus of learning is the learner embedded in and interacting with his social context, where the goal is to realize "how persons become competent members of social groups and the role of language in the process" (Schieffelin & Ochs, 1986, p. 167). Language socialization theory has been employed by a number of researchers who are interested in the academic discourse socialization of L2 learners. As shown in the last category, this current and fruitful line of research has demonstrated the

effectiveness of the approach through examinations of the role of oral interactions, negotiations, and scaffolding in socializing learners to target spoken discourses (i.e., Duff, 1995; Morita, 2000, 2004; Kobayashi, 2003; Zappa-Hollman, 2007; Yang, 2010). Among them, three studies particularly share a common focus on oral academic presentations in Canadian university classrooms. First, Morita's (2000) work studied how a group of female Japanese TESL graduate students were socialized into oral academic presentations. Her data yielded a detailed description of the identifying features of oral presentations and students' apprenticeship into this academic discourse tradition. Second, Kobayashi (2003) looked at how out-of-class experiences (i.e., students' preparation work for presentations) impacted in-class performance. His findings detailed the language and content negotiations of a group of Japanese undergraduate learners and showed the role of peer collaboration and scaffolding in the language learning process both inside and outside the classroom. In the same vein, Zappa-Hollman (2007) examined how students across disciplinary fields (i.e., medicine, arts, and management) were socialized into oral academic presentations. Her research findings specifically revealed how the participants negotiated their challenges when preparing for and delivering an oral presentation. Furthermore, she also identified unique valued characteristics of 'good' presentations across different fields.

Table 2.1 Summary of L2 Studies on Oral Academic Discourse

CATEGORIES	STUDY	FOCUS	PARTICIPANTS & SITES	METHOD
I. Needs analysis of instructors/ students/ specific field	Yook & Seller (1990)	Investigation of the needs and concerns of Asian students in speech communication performance classes	21 Asian students in a speech communication course at a large Midwestern U.S. university	Qualitative approach
	Ferris & Tagg (1996a, 1996b)	Exploration of instructors' needs in U.S. college/university with regard to aural/oral tasks	More than 900 content-area instructors from four different U.S. colleges/universities in various academic disciplines	Survey
	Ferris (1998)	ESL learners' views of aural/oral skills required for academic purposes	768 ESL students at three tertiary institutions in the U.S.	Survey
II. Seminar-type discussion in EAP/ ESP	Weissberg (1993)	Exploration of the graduate seminar as a speech event and its oral task demands on NNSs	10 NNSs presenting in graduate seminars in the departments of animal science and agronomy	Qualitative approach
	Tracy (1997)	An in-depth discussion on the activity of departmental colloquium as a dilemmatic setting	Faculty and graduate students in the communication department at a large U.S. university	Qualitative approach
	Basturkmen (1999)	To illustrate some language features in student-led talk	A corpus of about 30,000 words was collected from video recordings of a naturally occurring seminar class in a MBA course at Aston University, U.K.	Data-driven description (corpus analysis)
	Basturkmen (2002)	Exploration of interaction patterns of discourse organization in seminar-type discussions	A Masters of Business Administration program in a UK university setting	Using IRF exchange structure to analyze 10,000 words from 10 different seminar discussions
III. Taking oral tasks as an analyzing unit	Bygate (1999)	Examining how quality of language and purpose of tasks would influence the performance of subjects on two types of unscripted tasks	67 Hungarian secondary school learners of English aged 15-16	Grammatical pattern analysis
	Dörnyei &	Investigating affective and social	46 Hungarian students, aged 16-17,	Data-based study

	Kormos (2000)	variables on L2 learners' engagement in oral argumentative tasks	studying English at two Budapest secondary schools	
	Swain & Lapkin (2000)	Discussing the use of native language as a socio-cognition mediating tool in collaborative dialogues	Comparing two groups (12 and 10 in each) of English-speaking students enrolled in French immersion classes in Toronto	Language analysis (mostly, turn taking)
	Parks (2000)	Students' different investments were related to the value attached to the classroom language learning, task preference, and attitude to group work	3 Francophone students in an ESP tourism course	
	Tulung (2009)	Discussing oral interactive discourse occurring in an ESP course, in an EFL setting; mainly focusing on two kinds of communicative tasks: jigsaw and decision making	8 participants who were enrolled in the required course preparation for pre-medical students conducted by the language center in an Indonesian university.	Classroom-based research
IV. Peer assessment/ support in oral performance	Patri (2002)	To investigate the agreement among teacher-, self-, and peer-assessments while testing oral presentation skills	56 native Chinese students aged from 18 and 21 years, from the City University of Hong Kong	Questionnaire/ survey
	Cheng & Warren (2005)	An investigation into the reliability and potential benefits of incorporating peer assessment into English language programs	51 first-year full-time undergraduates in Electrical Engineering at the Hong Kong Polytechnic University studying an EAP subject	Questionnaire/ survey
	Chavez (2007)	Comparing language-use practices found in in-class peer work with those in teacher-led instruction	20 video-recordings from three instructors' German-as-a-foreign-language classes in a large public American Midwestern research university	Qualitative approach
	Saito (2008)	Regarding oral presentations in an EFL classroom, this study examines the effect sizes of	74 Japanese freshmen, economics majors, took part in the study	Statistical analysis (SPSS)

		rater training on peer assessment and comments		
V. Willingness to Communicate (WTC)/ Classroom Participation	Jones (1999)	From a cross-cultural perspective, the author discusses various studies to conclude possible reasons that may cause Asian students' silence or reticence in academic group discussions in higher education	A position paper	N/A
	Liu & Zhao (2004)	Exploring how negotiated interaction between students and teachers result in more language learning	Six College English classes (average of 54 Chinese native speaker students in class) in Nanjing Normal University	Audio-recorded, transcribed, and doing language analysis to discover interaction patterns
	Kim (2006)	To understand East Asian international graduate students' perception of identifying the importance and requirements of listening/oral skills and challenges they face	280 East Asian graduate students in non-science and non-engineering disciplines responded to a web-format questionnaire, at a major US research-oriented university	Statistical analysis (SPSS)
	Springer & Collins (2008)	To probe participants' oral interaction occurring both inside and outside the classroom	2 university-educated L2 speakers of English in their thirties, taking an advanced English conversation class at a local community centre in Montreal	Qualitative approach
	Trent (2008)	To understand the process of how participants participate in oral activities within an undergraduate classroom	8 undergraduates at the University of Hong Kong who enrolled in an EAP module class	Qualitative approach
	Lee (2009)	To examine what factors influence participants' oral classroom participation and how these components impacted their oral interaction in discussions	6 Korean native speaker graduate students, aged late 20s to late 30s, with prior teaching experience in Korea	Qualitative approach

VI. Socialization of ESL high school/ graduate-level students	Duff (1995)	To investigate how participants enacted the “felelés” (an institutional assessment tool), which at the time of the study was being replaced by other types of oral interaction and assessment in the then English-medium classrooms	Students in dual-language (DL) Hungarian-English high school programs in Hungary	Ethnographic method
	Morita (2000)	To explore discourse socialization through oral academic presentations and to study how they learned oral academic discourse to meet the requirements of a successful oral presentation	Conducted in two graduate courses in a TESL program at a large Canadian university, by involving both non-native- and native-English speaking students	Ethnographic method
	Morita (2004)	To examine how L2 learners negotiated their participation and membership in their new L2 classroom community, particularly in open-ended class discussions.	6 female graduate students from Japan and 10 of their course instructors	Qualitative multiple case study
	Kobayashi (2003)	To study students’ peer support in OP tasks beyond the classroom, especially their collaborative negotiation process	3 Japanese undergraduate ESL students in a content-based ESL course	Case study
	Zappa-Hollman (2007)	To analyze and compare OP activity characteristics across post-secondary settings in three disciplines (i.e., medicine, arts, and applied science)	6 non-native graduate students who study at a large research-based university in Western Canada	Qualitative multiple case study
	Yang (2010)	To investigate the negotiation and challenges	5 Chinese ESL students of Commerce in a	Case study

		experienced by participants through their engagement in a group oral presentation	regular content course at a Canadian university	
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In this section, a discussion has been presented of how research trends (in terms of topic development and methodology) in oral academic discourse have shifted. Based on the above, the following section will specifically focus on some gaps that the present study can fulfill in terms of oral academic discourse.

2.4.2 Research Gaps in Oral Academic Discourse

The studies reviewed so far have focused on oral academic discourse practices. Based on these studies, several perspectives can be generated in the present study. First, it is undeniable that delivering formal oral presentations is one of the required skills in academic contexts. However, despite the pervasiveness of oral presentations in regular university courses, very little research has investigated the development of ESL students (Yang, 2010), as well as their EFL counterparts. Most literature relating to oral presentations surveyed, surprisingly, is limited in terms of pedagogical implementation. Usually, it is a part of the skills that academic programs aim to train students to be a more skillful presenter. The importance of these skills is demonstrated over hundreds of academic programs, especially in the business field, which provide tips for learners to follow, including how to prepare and deliver a presentation and lead a discussion. They also include advice on how to compose and display visual aids and how to cope with nervousness (e.g., Academic Skills Program in the University of Canberra). However, very few formal studies discuss what challenges learners may encounter in fulfilling the requirements or how sociocultural or psychological factors could influence their preparation work and performance in an academic setting across different language-learning contexts. Consequently, it is worthwhile to expand our research to investigate what learners

encounter in their process of learning academic oral discourse so we can facilitate a smooth transition for students from the periphery to become full-fledged members in an academic community. Through students' own reflections, thus, the present study can make a different contribution in further discussing how students become more capable academic members through participation in oral academic presentations. To examine students' own perspectives and experiences by incorporating their voices in the present study, it is assumed that learners can reflect and record their views because "instructors do not always know with what tasks their students are struggling, and, more importantly, why they are having difficulties" (Ferris, 1998, p. 292-293), and further "the students themselves are the best sources of information on their own difficulties" (p. 312).

Second, as for research methodology, the current trend has shifted from a quantitative (e.g., linguistic pattern analysis) to a qualitative orientation. In other words, individuals' complexities, including psychological conditions, past learning experiences, situated contexts which may bring various influences such as political or cultural factors, or even involving power relations in social structures, are further explored rather than simply searching for generalizations to explain an overall phenomenon in the current studies. Therefore, how the target group of EFL medical students represents their own unique characteristics to fulfill the requirement in academic fields becomes an issue worthy of exploration which, to the best of our knowledge, has not yet been targeted in the previous studies.

Third, in terms of the researched context and participants, in the literature reviewed, the researched contexts and invited participants are almost all international students at the tertiary or graduate-level in an ESL context, but few studies discuss second language socialization in an EFL context. Despite the fact that a few studies (Cheng & Warren, 2005; Liu & Zhao, 2004; Parti, 2002; Trent, 2008) have been

conducted in Hong Kong or China, there are no studies that have been done in Taiwan. As for participants, none of the listed studies invite medical students as major participants. Therefore, the observed context, classroom, and participants in the present study are unique compared to others in the above referred studies.

Fourth, if we shift the focus to the studies of English for Specific Purposes (ESP), it also shows an unbalanced research tendency of medical discourse research. Most ESP researchers studying the medical genre are curious about the generic conventions and constituent elements in medical research paper writing, such as the order of moves, the use of verbs (e.g., tense agreement) in reporting statements or citations in different sections; however, this has mostly been done by means of corpus analysis (Li & Ge, 2009; Luzon Marco, 2000; Nwogu, 1997; Thomas & Hawes, 1994; Webber, 1994, 2005; William, 1996; Williams, 1999). These studies have focused on written text analysis work, and only very little attention has been devoted to oral interaction (e.g., Webber, 2005). Haber & Lingard (2001) highlighted the importance of successful oral communication among physicians in clinical care and exchanging updated medical knowledge. Especially, the oral presentation of patient cases acts as a means 'for the collaborative conduct of medical work, the teaching and evaluation of clinical competence, the negotiation of professional relationships, and the reproduction of professional values' (p. 308). The two researchers contend that while most previous research has been done to describe language characteristics and socializing effects of oral discourse among physicians, they have not analyzed *how* learners acquire these socialization techniques to be competent members in the target community via oral presentations. Therefore, by applying rhetorical analysis to explore medical discourse among physicians, in particular, in oral presentation tasks, Haber and Lingard intend to explain how medical students learn oral presentation skills and what professional values they gain through the process. In their analysis

employing rhetorical analysis, they generate four important components in oral presentation tasks: message, audience, purposes, and occasion in their medical-discipline scenario. But what distinguishes their study from the present one is that I do not specifically discuss valued oral presentation characteristics from rhetorical analysis, which is more linguistic-oriented; rather, I began from participants to probe the social context of the classroom and also explore how contextual factors impact participants' teaching and learning. Hence, this study aims to shed light from a different perspective to re-examine oral practices in an EFL academic community.

2.4.3 Discussion on Related Studies and Gaps

After discussing a general phenomenon of studies on oral academic discourse, this section will specifically focus on academic oral presentation (hereafter, AOP) activity. In particular, several recent qualitative studies examined the challenges and socialization process of ESL students, including Morita (2000, 2004), Kobayashi (2003), Zappa-Hollman (2007), and Yang (2010) which share a similar orientation with the present study. In order to present a distinct dimension from these studies, a comparison between studies will be offered, and it is expected that following these previous studies, the research on oral academic discourse can be expanded to a wider scope.

The study conducted by Morita (2000) explored the discourse socialization of nonnative- and native-English-speaking graduate students through oral academic presentations. It was an 8-month ethnographic exploration framed in language socialization theory to examine what participants have done to fulfill the requirement of the speaking activities in two graduate courses in a TESL program and how they learned oral academic discourse to meet the requirements of a successful oral presentation. Along the same line, in 2004, Morita used socialization theory to investigate how L2 learners negotiated their participation and membership in a new

classroom community, especially in open-ended class discussions. Similarly, grounded in the work of language socialization and Vygotskian sociocultural theory, Kobayashi (2003) took the oral presentation task as a unit for analysis and examined students' group interactions not only 'inside' the classroom, but also those which occurred 'beyond' the content-based class. He aimed to investigate how key non-native-English participants become more competent presenters through group presentation work to fulfill the academic requirements in an English-speaking classroom. Another study was carried out by Zappa-Hollman in 2007. By using a qualitative multiple-case study approach and drawing on second language socialization theory, she investigated the discourse socialization of six non-native graduate students through their participation in oral presentations in regular content courses at a Canadian university. Finally, a very recent study was conducted by Yang in 2010. Framed in activity theory and language socialization theory, he examined the challenges that students face and the negotiating process that students go through in a Commerce course at a Canadian university through analyzing their experiences in preparing and performing a group oral presentation task. In particular, Yang's study exemplifies tangible illustrations of how the five ESL learners struggled to use their limited English conversation abilities to socialize themselves into their disciplinary-specific community.

Taken as a whole, the overarching finding of these studies reveals the contextually-grounded nature of academic oral practices regarding the oral academic discourse acquisition of ESL college/graduate-level students. To recap, these investigations bring up some other key issues and aspects that future research should consider and discuss, as how they guide this study. First, from a sociocultural and language socialization view, situated context is definitely one of the essential factors influencing learning. It is also presumed that being in different situated contexts,

learners experience different socialization processes. In the previously mentioned studies, participants were college/graduate-level students (many of them have working experience) in ESL content courses or seminars where English is taken as the major vehicle to communicate. In the present study, however, participants are sophomore medical majors in a medical-theme-based language course in an EFL context. Viewing the observed classroom as a small-scale academic society, comprising medical majors and EFL learners, and further being in a school that sets demanding pedagogical goals for them, what are the unique contextual characteristics belonging to this particular group, including unique communication pattern inside and outside the classroom and their interaction with those who are also involved in the activity.

Second, from a micro-level, to learn about an individual's transformation, it appears reasonable to expect that this group of medical EFL learners may experience different socialization processes from their ESL counterparts since they are situated in different contexts. For example, they may encounter different difficulties and use different strategies to cope with problems. Also, the observed participants may have different perceptions regarding their learning process in terms of using oral presentations as a socially constructed activity to step into an academic community. In the aforementioned studies, researchers have indeed investigated what ESL students experience and learn from oral presentation tasks. Generally speaking, the findings indicate that ESL participants regard oral presentations/tasks as relatively demanding, especially open discussion, due to their lack of training and experience in speaking English spontaneously. For example, in Zappa-Hollman's study in 2007, she identified participants' presentation challenges and their coping strategies. She recognized that participants' L2 academic discourse socialization is a dynamic and complex process, especially for those whose domestic academic discourse values

differ from those of new contexts. Similarly, what this dissertation is interested in is that, being in a different context, how do the observed participants view their own socialization experience, and what do they consider it to be? How do they fulfill requirements by being a better academic English presenter? What is emphasized here is the students' own voice instead of the evaluations from the instructor alone. Therefore, in the present study, participants are provided various opportunities to reflect on their perception toward learning, including interviews, two self-report forms (given immediately after their presentations), and supplemented by the researcher's classroom observations and field notes. In other words, by examining one kind of academic oral practice in which the participants are involved, as well as the *processes* of L2 socialization while students are engaging in this class, the present study aims to explore how every individual fulfills the requirement set by the academic community.

Finally, since the nature of the observed class is different from those in the cited studies, how does classroom interaction progress? Learners play multiple roles in terms of oral presentation activities: as a presenter, he/she has to be a leader to guide a whole-class discussion and a listener to respond to feedback from the instructor and peers. When they are not acting as the presenter, they have to be an attentive audience member to respond to the presenter's speech so that comments or questions can be made. On the other hand, the role of instructor has never been discussed in any of the previously mentioned studies. This is because the previous studies have all focused on content-based courses, where the role that instructors (who are presumed as fluent English speakers) play is not given particular attention. However, what is significantly different in the present study is that the role of the instructor is considered.

In the class, the language teacher is perceived to have achieved high academic achievement and plays a crucial role as the major resource as an academic socializing

mediator for students. But the fact is that the instructor is a professional in terms of English study, but she is not a professional in medical content knowledge. Since the discussed issues in the class are medical-related, for the group of medicine majors, it is very possible that they occupy a more professional status than their language teacher in the class. In other words, the typically perceived dichotomy between novice-expert in education scenarios seems not applicable to the researched context. Concurrently, another issue is how the instructor situates her role in this class in terms of language learning and social patterns valued in the academic field.

In this sense, the communication occurring among all participants who may be involved in the oral presentation task is therefore of interest to explore. Possible participants of the oral presentation tasks may include their instructor and the audience in the class. While previous oral studies often look at activity itself or student presenters, how indirect participants can contribute to learning has often been neglected. Therefore, the major goal of the present study is to examine the contribution of all participants, including presenters, peers, and the instructor in the given context. That is, while student presenters are engaged in the oral activity, how the indirect participants (e.g., peers and the instructor) influence students' socialization to be a better presenter.

2.5 Chapter Summary

From the reviewed literature on academic oral discourse, it has been shown that a relative lack of investigation into this area exists, especially in terms of academic oral presentations. More specifically, oral presentation tasks in EFL theme-based classrooms at the tertiary level have hardly appeared in existing literature despite the necessity to deliver successful oral presentations in academia as well as in the medical field. In other words, how oral presentation tasks as a social activity facilitate socialization of the researched participants into the academic world is not well

documented. Thus, it is difficult to assess the relative contributions that such oral interactions with the instructor and audiences may make to the language learning process. To address the need, the present study attempts to extend a further understanding of students' development in academic oral discourse, especially in fulfilling one of the basic communicative competences to be an academic member: giving a successful oral presentation. The purpose of drawing on sociocultural theory is due to the goal of investigating unique EFL sociocultural influence that brings a very different learning scenario from ESL learners. It is presumed that such an understanding can outstrip the relatively restricted knowledge on learners' acquisition in academic oral discourse.

Chapter 3

Methods of Inquiry

In this chapter, the interpretive nature of qualitative study is discussed in Section 3.1. Following the qualitative case study paradigm, this research places its emphasis on ongoing reflections through collaborative and negotiated dialogues among all the participants within this community, including administration staff, homeroom teachers, team instructors, the instructor of the course, learners and the researcher (see Section 3.2). These dialogues intend to provide “thick descriptions” (Geertz, 1973) of the investigated classroom by triangulating multiple data from various sources, such as weekly self-reports from presenters, exploratory and semi-structured interviews with instructors and learners, classroom observations and field-notes. Based on the findings of these data, multiple accounts and viewpoints from different participants are subsumed (see Section 3.3). Through this investigation, the participants’ voice and reflections of their learning, collected on a regular basis, provide the opportunity to explore participants’ challenges, developments, changing views, thoughts, and emotions across time. In Section 3.4, three tables are presented to illustrate data collection procedures and finally a summary of this chapter is offered in Section 3.5.

3.1 A Qualitative Approach

Qualitative case studies constitute a research methodology with a long tradition in education. In second language learning and applied linguistics research, case studies have also increased in popularity (Duff, 2008). One of the benefits of qualitative research methodologies is that it draws from multiple sources of data; therefore, it contributes to furthering our understanding and broadening our views of learners’ experiences and insights within their contexts of engagement. To explore multiple natures of possibilities in human learning behavior, this study employs a

qualitative multiple case study design (i.e., on six focal student participants) to perform both within- and across-case analyses to explore how participants co-construct the oral activity. It should be noted that this study emphasizes particularization and uniqueness of each case (Duff, 2008). In other words, every learner is seen as a unique and individual case. In several ways, the present study shares the characteristics of an ethnographic case study; for example, its longitudinal nature yields the possibility of tracing the development of participants over time. Furthermore, by examining a delimited sample of cases, this study also looks into how culturally and socially constructed oral practices facilitate language and sociocultural knowledge development. Also significantly, the most typical data collection strategy, using multiple resources to triangulate collected data, is utilized in the present study. It is hoped that through rich in-depth narrative accounts, this investigation can provide a lens into participants' lived, perceived, and experienced journeys in terms of engaging in oral academic activities to develop their language and socially constructed academic knowledge.

Framed in this orientation, this study employs a process-oriented, multiple case study design (Merriam, 2001; Silverman, 2000; Yin, 2008) to better understand part of the complexities of second language academic and professional discourse socialization. This study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of learning behavior and the reasons that govern such behavior. By exploring the experiences of six learners in depth in a real classroom context, this dissertation attempts to portray "concrete and complex illustrations" (Wolcott, 1994, p. 364) of the individual cases, while also aiming to identify some general trends and significant patterns among them. As pointed out in the previous chapter, this study sees academic oral presentations as a language socialization activity, thus the main focus of this inquiry is the participant students' perspective. It attempts to understand them by triangulating multiple

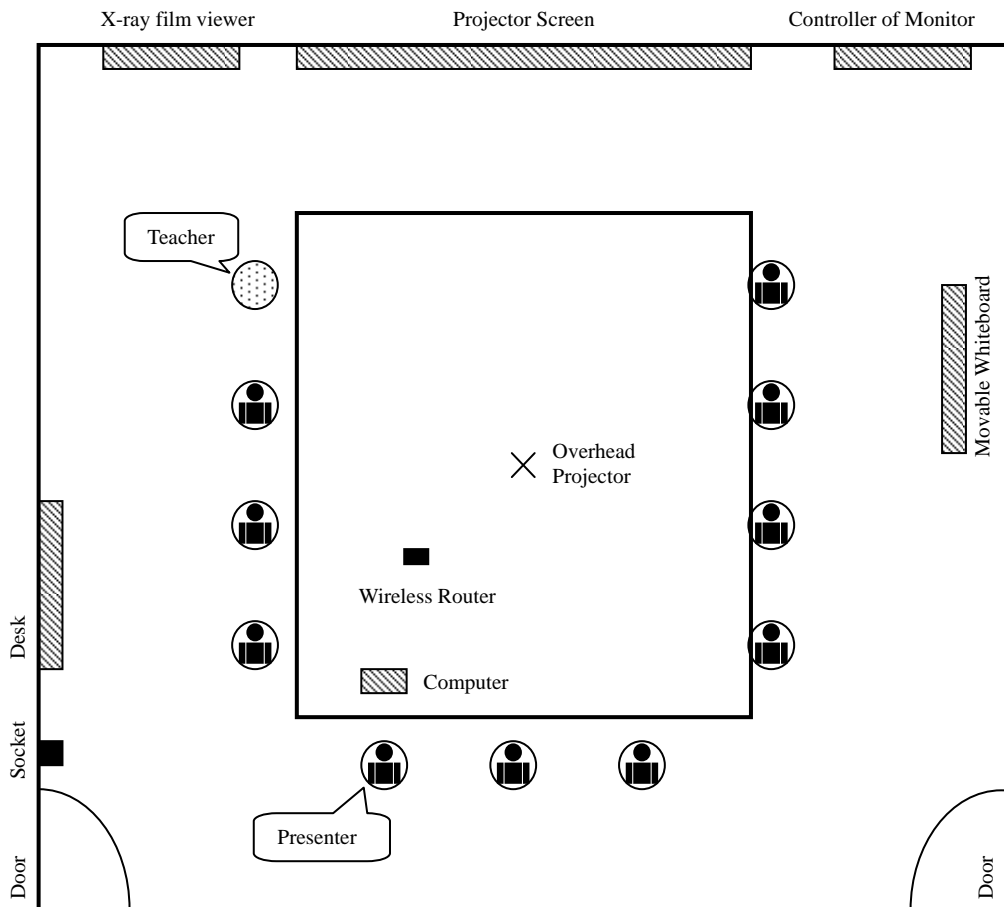
perspectives (i.e., multiple methods) in implementing the requirement of oral tasks. Therefore, participants' narratives such as interviews, self-report forms, self-reflections in conferencing, and practice of oral presentations are the main source of the database, though other data, for example, field notes, classroom observations, and document collections are also used. In what follows, a description of the general context of the present study (sites, the observed campus and class, and participants), details of source, and analysis procedures will be given.

3.2 Research Design

3.2.1 Site

A classroom's spatial arrangement affects the movement and activity of participants considerably. The study was conducted at the School of Medicine at a major northern Taiwanese university (hereafter, X University). X University is one of the pioneer schools which implemented PBL (problem-based learning) curriculum in Taiwan, so the students of Medicine there are privileged to use very new and modern PBL classrooms due to the need to simulate clinical situation within the hospital setting. The classrooms are small with about ten to twelve seats and authentic facilities in the hospital, including an X-ray film viewer, a projector, a project screen, wireless router, and a movable whiteboard to serve various purposes—seminar, case report, or briefing. At X University, there are thirty PBL classrooms. The layout of the classroom is shown as follows in Figure 3.1. Through using the project, every listener in the classroom can see PPT slides very clearly. Also, the wireless router provides a convenient access to the Internet for presenters or anyone who wants to share instant information with the whole class.

Figure 3.1 Layout of the PBL Classroom



3.2.2 Participants

The participants are classified into two categories, including the instructor and student participants.

The Instructor

The instructor, Ann⁴, accomplished her Ph. D. study under TESOL program in the U.K. In terms of teaching experiences, she had some experience on teaching English for Specific Purpose (ESP) courses, e.g. business and nursing English for several years. In addition, she has experience teaching engineering English in doctoral program in the school as well as EMBA courses. Currently, she is teaching undergraduate English courses, Nursing English, and Medical English. More

⁴ The name is pseudonyms.

specifically, how the instructor conceptualizes the issues and problems she found while she is teaching oral presentations (e.g. her perception, procedure, etc.) in this context will be the focus of the present study. In addition, her roles in teaching oral presentations will be also discussed.

Student Participants

All participant students in this dissertation are members of the medical school at X University enrolled in the autumn term of 2009. From the large pool, student participants were purposely sampled. Although I had good rapport with students from both genders, the rationale behind my selection of six male students as the major focal students was due to three reasons: One, male students are the overwhelming majority in medical school. Second, prior to the commencement of this study, four out of the six student participant were in my freshman English class while two were new faces whom I met in Ann's class. Hence, for most participants, familiarity may allow for better access to them through feeling more comfortable in sharing their experiences. Third, they are students who demonstrated high openness to share their views, experiences and commitment to the present study. Their thorough reflections helped me interpret data in various dimensions. Still though, I am aware that this gendered sampling unavoidably affects the kinds of inferences or interpretations of this investigation, as does my own perspective as a female researcher.

On the basis of the biosketches provided in subsequent sections, regardless of experience in doing oral presentations, it has to be noted that although the participants do not represent an entirely homogeneous group (e.g., one is an international student who has a different English learning journey from his counterparts in Taiwan, one is a much more senior learner who has touched upon tremendous medical-related materials in practice), they share some commonalities. For the most part, they are privileged students with different kinds of sociocultural and economic capital: their

families are (at least) above economically comfortable, their parents are well-educated, they started their English study at childhood without interruption, and they all graduated from highly reputed senior high schools. These factors shaped the participants' views and experiences in English study, and will therefore be considered as important clues to provide a holistic account of students' practices in the oral tasks in which they were involved in this class. The descriptive features of the six experienced presenters' main traits and academic background information are summarized in the following table (Table 3.1). This will allow for references to be made regarding aspects of oral presentation tasks in the subsequent sections.

Table 3.1 Student Participants' Profiles

Name ¹	Mark	Jay	Andrew	Tony	Peter	Nick
Age	19	26	20	20	19	19
Previous educational background	An international student, coming from Macaw	Got a Bachelor Degree from Department of Occupational Therapy at National Yang-Ming University	National Taichung First Senior High School	The Kaohsiung Municipal Kaohsiung Senior High School	Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School	Taipei Municipal Jianguo High School
Age when started learning English	Kindergarten, aged 4 or 5 or so (without interruption)	Cram school, aged 10 (without interruption)	Cram school, aged 6 (without interruption)	Cram school, aged 10 (without interruption)	Cram school, aged 10 (without interruption)	Cram school, aged 9 (without interruption)
Academic-specific-related English learning experiences	-doing several oral presentations	-doing two oral presentations -reading textbooks -reading journal papers -writing patients' history	-doing two oral presentations -some experience participating in seminar discussions	None	-participating in discussions/seminars -writing summaries	-participating in discussions/seminars -writing summaries
Most confident in:	Reading	Reading	Reading and writing	Reading	Listening, speaking, and writing	None
Less confident in:	Listening, speaking and writing	Listening and speaking	Speaking	Speaking	Reading	Writing
Formal English Proficiency Test	TOEIC 755	TOEIC 665	TOEIC 605	TOEIC 605	GEPT High-intermediate (Pass)	N/A ²
Expectations of this course	"I want to learn more medical vocabulary and give a good oral presentation. I want to chat with foreigners with fluent English" (Questionnaire)	"I want to seize every opportunity in this class to practice speaking. I know if I keep silent, I know I'll stay in the same place. So I try all my best to practice in class." (Interview) "I hope I can overcome the difficulty to speak in public and improve my English conversation ability" (Questionnaire)	"I hope I can make oral presentations frequently. Moreover, I hope I can have the ability to understand others' oral presentation." (Questionnaire)	"I hope I can promote my oral and listening ability" (Questionnaire)	"First, I can read professional journal articles. Second, I can have a smooth conversation with foreign patients in clinic. Finally, I expect to acquire the ability to write English research papers." (Questionnaire)	"I expect to learn what I haven't learnt before. Also, I hope I can feel at ease when I speak in English in public" (Questionnaire)

(Cont'd)

Name	Mark	Jay	Andrew	Tony	Peter	Nick
Concerns about this course	“It may be difficult to present oral reports in front of all the classmates. My English is not very good and my grammar is poor. I am afraid that I cannot present a fluent oral presentation in the class” (Interview)	“My insufficient vocabulary and poor oral ability” (Interview)	Not referred	“Oral proficiency is my biggest worry” (Interview)	“My reading speed is too slow. Some sentences are not comprehensible to me or sometimes, what I think I understand about the text is not exactly what the author wants to express.” (Interview)	“In my previous learning experiences, I just crammed two or three days before examinations came. When the examination ends, my memorization ends, too. So now, I worry so much that I can’t say a word in public. I don’t know what to memorize before going to the class!” (Interview)
Cognition of essential English language skills in medical discipline	-presenting oral reports -carrying on conversations	-presenting oral reports -carrying on conversations -reading to understand English textbooks and medical journal articles	-presenting oral reports -carrying on conversations -reading to understand English textbooks and medical journal articles -understanding class lectures -writing test answers -writing research papers	-carrying on conversations -understanding English textbooks and medical journal articles -understanding class lectures -writing test answers	-presenting oral reports -carrying on conversations	-presenting oral reports -carrying on conversations -reading to understand English textbooks and medical journal articles

¹ For ethical consideration, all participants’ names are referred to by pseudonyms.

² In the time frame of this investigation, Nick has not yet taken any formal English proficiency test.

3.2.3 Class Routine

Throughout the semester, the textbook, entitled *An English Course for Medical and Nursing Professionals: Third Call* (2003), is utilized for this course. It covers a wide variety of biology-related and health-related topics, for example, cloning and the genome project, emergency services, ethical issues, legal issues, patient-doctor relationship and public health service, etc., with specialized knowledge sometimes beyond the comprehension of the English instructor. It is assumed that students with specialized knowledge in a certain subject area could contribute to expanding the perspectives of other students.

In terms of the requirement of oral tasks in the class, each student is required to make a handout which includes a vocabulary list and a summary based on the assigned reading. In their presentations, they are asked to talk for 20-30 minutes, using technical aids, such as PowerPoint slides. After reviewing key terms or vocabulary and reviewing the main idea, beyond what has been discussed in the textbook, presenters have the responsibility to prepare some questions in advance and lead a discussion on the issue for about 10-15 minutes. During this time, they have to invite classmates to get involved in the discussion and give feedback, share personal experiences, or offer thoughts (see the instructor's demonstration sample in Appendix 2). All the students should actively participate in the class and contribute their own ideas not only regarding the reading content but also the discussion amongst all the participants (including the teacher and presenter) in class. During the discussion, all learners share their own thoughts, in-life experiences, knowledge and reflections with the other students. An important point is that the discussion leader is not the instructor—the presenter is.

3.3 Data Collection and Database

3.3.1 Weekly Self-report Forms (SRFs) by Presenters

Throughout the semester, each student reported twice on his oral presentation. Right after class, a set of questions for the student presenters to respond to was provided (see Appendixes 3 & 4 for SRF 1 and SRF 2 respectively). After students sent their reports, the instructor wrote them back with some responses and made a hardcopy as part of the data. Sometimes, the instructor posed some questions and asked students to expand on something they wrote. In this way, the report created a space for negotiation between the students and instructor. Each week, the rotated presenter had to fill in a self-report form for self-evaluation of their oral presentation, reflect difficulties he/she has encountered before/during/after the presentation, consider how peer feedback affected his performance, and plan how to be more effective in the future. They could respond freely in the language they preferred; and in most cases, they chose to write in Mandarin Chinese.

This data collection method played an essential role in this project for the following reasons. First of all, the reports are immediate reactions from learners. Their descriptions in the form are often direct, sometimes emotional, and sometimes inquisitive, which allowed for a better understanding of the students' everyday classroom experiences. Secondly, they provided an opportunity for the students to delineate the process they experienced, including their efforts, thoughts and feelings behind what they represent in public while doing an oral presentation. In my view, it captured some invisible aspects of class participation which would have been difficult to observe or realize at the surface level. To illustrate this point, one student in his self-report form wrote that he felt so depressed because he did not do a good job in his first English oral presentation. He stated that he had spent over ten hours and had done more than five rehearsals before the formal presentation. In his report, he made

some reflections and said that even though this presentation might not have been successful, he had gained some insights from this experience. He wrote that he expected to improve in his next oral presentation. If this report had not been given, the opportunities of exploring the effort spent behind the unsatisfactory performance would be missed. Thirdly, this weekly reflection demonstrated their ongoing struggles in the learning process, and the instructor could provide prompt guidance. By doing so, the teacher, as well as the researcher, can stay close to the learners' experiences by reading their weekly reports. Fourthly, with the report, trust and rapport are established between the teacher and learners, which is considered as a fundamental ground to continue the study.

3.3.2 Exploratory & Semi-Structured Interviews

Interviewing is one of the most common methodological approaches used in qualitative research. The types of interviews have been classified differently for different purposes (Merriam, 2001). To give an example, May (1997) illustrated the main types of interviews in social research: the structured interview, semi-structured interview, unstructured or focused interview, and the group interview. In his book, Oppenheim (1993, p. 65) defines exploratory interviews are concerned with “trying to understand how ordinary people think and feel about the topics of the research”, intending “to develop ideas and research hypotheses rather than to gather facts and statistics” (*ibid*: p. 67). Conversely, standardized interviews are more likely to be conducted in a large-scale survey, and are thereby called the “mass production” stage, as opposed to the “research and development” stage (*ibid*: p. 66). Given the nature of the interview used in the present study, it could be considered as belonging to the former, i.e., what Oppenheim called an exploratory interview or a depth interview.

In regards to this type, I will borrow Merriam's (2001) definition on the interview structure continuum as a base for interviewing work. In her book,

Merriam (2001) shows a table (Table 3.2) to demonstrate different ways of structuring of an interview.

Table 3.2 Interview Structure Continuum (Merriam 2001, p. 73)

<i>Highly structured/ Standardized</i>	<i>Semistructured</i>	<i>Unstructured/ Informal</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● wording of questions predetermined ● order of question predetermined ● oral form of a survey 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● mix of more- and less-structured questions 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● open-ended questions ● flexible, exploratory ● more like a conversation

One end of the continuum is highly structured and resembles a questionnaire-driven interview while at the other end are looser, open-ended, informal conversation formats. In the present study, I will adopt the semi-structured interview as the primary type which “allows the researcher to respond to the situation at hand, to the emerging worldview of the respondent, and to new ideas on the topic” (Merriam, 2001, p. 74). In my view, situated interviews work from an exploratory nature and semi-structured format may allow for a greater scope in asking questions and collecting responses. Also, the freer and more flexible conversation may yield lines of investigation that the interviewer has not considered. The participants in the interview come from three groups:

(a) Administrative staff ⁵ : homeroom teachers, the head of the Language Center, and the coordinator of this course for one time (during the semester)
(b) The instructor who is responsible for the course: this interview was conducted in the beginning and at the end of the semester (in the 2nd and 17th week respectively) to learn the teacher’s voice and views on the learners’ performance and development of the oral presentation tasks throughout the whole semester. (See Appendix 5)
(c) Students: six students taking this compulsory course for one time (in the 17th week) (See Appendix 6)

However, there have been some limitations of treating the interview as a research means (see Seale 1998, p. 209-210). One of the main problems is concerned with

⁵ The purpose of interviewing administrative staff lies in better understanding the rationale for the course, transformation for the past few years, and its current development. Being curious about the administrative staff’s cognition of constructing such a content-based course, their varying struggles and transformation would be part of issues which need to be investigated.

issues of invalidity (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000). For instance, a researcher may transcribe and interpret the data based on his personal value and judgment, and this may in turn affect the validity of the research outcomes. As such, in order to minimize the degree of invalidity, in addition to listening to voices from various resources, I also use other supplementary methods such as observations, field notes, collection of documents, weekly self-report forms, and writing conferencing, to triangulate and strengthen the data.

3.3.3 Classroom Observations and In- And After-Class Field Notes

By attending the class every week and observing and interacting with the students, regular observations of everyday activities can be studied in the classroom situation where they normally occur. According to Atkinson and Hammersley (1998, p. 11), observation can be divided into two distinctive types: participant and non-participant. The former is carried out when the researcher plays the role of both participant and observer in the events and process being researched, whereas the latter is conducted when the researcher simply observes the process of events as an uninvolved outsider, and plays no direct part in what is being observed. In regard to my own position in this study, I see myself as playing an integral role combining the temperament of participants and non-participants.

On the one hand, I consider the design of this naturalistic inquiry to be best described as “emergent” (Lincoln & Guba, 1985, p. 41). This became somewhat obvious as I worked with these six students throughout the 18-week duration of the course. As I met with these students in 2-hour weekly class sessions in Ann’s class, observing and recording their oral presentations, looking into how they participated in oral discussions in class, I came to realize the extent to which the instructor/student relationship, that is, “social coparticipation” (Lave and Wenger 1991, p. 14), impinges upon the students’ socialization in their disciplinary communities of practice. In

some way, the relationship is apprentice-like because the instructor shared her previous learning experiences and guidance in some way to help the students become involved in the academic world. Because of this, as an observer and recorder (by writing fieldnotes throughout eighteen weeks and two tape recordings in the 8th and 16th week respectively), I have gained insight into the students' circumstances and hence understand more of the perplexities they may encounter.

Concurrently, field notes were written which include observations of student practices in and out of the classroom. In such situations, the students provide the most immediate reactions and often have some questions to ask their instructor about the classes, assignments, or concerns that they want to let her know about. Since it is impractical to transcribe and take notes of all the conversations that occur, my strategy is to hold a short conversation with Ann weekly and with participant students when time allows. Information obtained is analyzed, and detailed summaries of the most relevant conversations are later transcribed. As my role developed, on the whole, triangulation was attempted to substantiate the different sources of data and continuously compare them when analyzing the data.

3.3.4 Documents

There are three major sources in document collections, and these include the syllabus, writing reflection, and oral presentation materials. How these documents will be represented and what the purposes they served are listed below (Table 3.3).

Table 3.3 Documents in Database

<u>Sources</u>	<u>Purposes</u>
(1) Syllabus	➤ To triangulate data in interviews
(2) Students' reflection (i.e., <i>SRFs & interviews</i>)	➤ Learners are given a chance to voice and speculate their learning process.
(3) Students' oral presentation materials	➤ Materials such as PPT slides or handouts are collected and compared as one part of the data to evaluate how participants transform or develop different strategies to make the two oral presentations.

3.4 Data Analysis Procedure

As mentioned earlier, the thesis is designed to apply *multiple methods* to gain an in-depth understanding of the particular group of EFL medical students (McDonough and McDonough, 1997; Silverman, 2000). To better illustrate and integrate all the methods utilized in this study, data collection work and analysis procedures will be shown in Tables 3.3, 3.4, and 3.5, named Stage I, II, and III respectively.

Table 3.4 Data Collection (Stage I)

IN THE BEGINNING OF THE SEMESTER (1st to 2nd Week)

Research Method: Participants: Objective:	Questionnaire to the Student The 6 students It is expected to investigate learners' English learning background and experiences of doing oral presentations before, needs and interest, degree of reliance on peers—all focusing on establishing a particular group of students' profiles and intending to further analyze research data collected from the interviews at later stages. More specifically, it aims at digging into the whole learning community.
Research Method: Participants: Objective:	Interview and collection of document (e.g., syllabus) Homeroom teachers, the head of the Language Center, the coordinator of this course, and the instructor To learn the goal and purpose of setting up this course, which further triangulates with the teacher version questionnaire data, examining if there is any discrepancy on learning goals between stakeholders, course instructor and students. Specifically, the instructor's belief in teaching oral presentation is the main focus to be investigated.

Table 3.5 Data Collection (Stage II)

IN THE MIDDLE OF SEMESTER (An ON-GOING procedure):

Research Method: Participants: Objective:	In-class observation & In- and after-class field notes The instructor herself To further triangulate with all the other data, extensive and detailed notes on classroom discourse and affective variables will be recorded.
Research Method: Participants: Objective:	Self-report Forms (SRFs) The 6 students Learners' self-reflection to triangulate data in interviews.
Research Method: Participants: Objective:	PPT File and Presenters' handout The 6 students To examine how the presenter goes through his presentation and the interaction between the presenters and peers.
Research Method: Participants: Objective:	Any record beyond the classroom, i.e., email and drop-in conferencing Anyone out of the 6 participants To further triangulate with other data and log their concerns or obstacles in completing the project.

Table 3.6 Data Collection (Stage III)

IN THE END OF THE SEMESTER (17th Week)

<p>Research Method: Participants: Objective:</p>	<p>Individual Interview The 6 students To investigate the individual’s problems (focus: doing oral presentations) and the ways they used for coping with the problems, the extent to which conferencing could help them make progress during their accomplishment of the two oral presentation tasks as well as how they consider their interaction mode with instructor and fellow students.</p>
<p>Research Method: Participants: Objective:</p>	<p>Interview with the Instructor The instructor To explore the instructor’s own reflection and observation of learners’ performance and development in oral presentation tasks throughout the whole semester.</p>

After the first stage is finished, I transcribed the recordings, read the transcripts line-by-line, marked recursive and relevant parts in different colors and take notes in the margins until the initial categories emerged. Analyzing the interview data from Stage III in the same way, I constructed a list of tentative categories until arriving at several common categories. Meanwhile, the two sets of interview data (Stage I and Stage III) were triangulated with the collected data in Stage II. After all the data were coded and analyzed, I tried to identify how the categories (and subcategories) were related and how they could be synthesized and represented in a significant way to explain my research question.

Taken together, with the use of alternative multiple methods—triangulating data collected from interviews, field notes, observations, records of oral presentations, and documents—the researcher constantly evaluates the reliability and the validity of the analysis (see Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2000; Silverman, 2000). In essence, the use of triangulation from various sources of data is a means of continually checking the reliability of the analysis of data. This in turn helps evaluate the validity of the research data and thus the outcomes of this study. In addition to this, for the issue of ethical consideration, since the interviews are conducted in Chinese, it is very possible for the researcher to misinterpret the interviewee’s expression. In order to avoid this

flaw, another instructor is asked to check the translated content, ensuring the validity and reliability of this study. Furthermore, the interview transcripts that were translated will be cross-referenced with the informants—to validate whether my interpretation fits with the reality of the informant’s perspective (Birbili, 2000). Again, this helps evaluate the validity of my data and thus the outcomes of the research. Such a consistently comparative analysis is expected to provide a more complete understanding and illustrate a depiction of a group of medical students’ ongoing negotiating process, situated in an English-mediated context, to become more capable members in their community.

3.5 Chapter Summary

In this chapter, the study’s qualitative approach as a base to underpin the whole study was initially explained. After that, profiles of the research sites, details of the course, and the focal students in this study were introduced. Section three focused on discussing the constitution of the database: primarily from the participants’ perspective, including interviews and self-reported data, meanwhile adding supplementary sources such as observations, field notes and document records. Finally, three tables were presented to explain the data collection procedure throughout the eighteen weeks. Concurrently, I consider the issue of consolidating reliability and validity so that I can avoid possible criticisms in this matter.

Chapter 4 Methods of Socialization in Oral Presentation Tasks: The Instructor's Roles

“Doing research is a very lonely journey, but being with students, sharing my experiences, and seeing their growth are the happiest things in my teaching career.”

(The instructor's words, Interview)

4.0 Introduction

As discussed in Chapter 2, Ochs (1988) argued that participation in socioculturally constructed, language-mediated activities is essential to acquire both linguistic and sociocultural knowledge (see Figure 2.3). She also indicated that,

The notion of social activity is of central importance to the sociocultural perspective. Social activities involving language are structured by linguistic and sociocultural knowledge; at the same time it is through participation in these structured activities that children and other novices acquire knowledge in these two domains. (p. 21-22)

Framed in this perspective, oral academic presentations are viewed in this study as a *sociocultural activity* in which learners participate so as to be more capable academic members. It seems adequate and necessary then to expand on previous studies' findings (Duff, 1995, 1996; Morita, 2000, 2004; Kobayashi, 2003; Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) to further discuss how EFL learners possibly learn academic discourse through this sociocultural activity. More specifically, this study attempts to investigate how the indirect participants influence the way the presenter completes the activity.

Lave and Wenger (1991) assert in their study, “To become a full member of a community of practice requires *access* to a wide range of ongoing activity, old-timers, and other members of the community; and to information, resources, and opportunities for participation” (p. 100-101, *italic added*). The issue of “access” seems to be a problem encountered by the participants in the study. Language

learning resources are a serious concern. Andrew reflected this sentiment in his interview,

「如果不是因為這堂課，我應該不會知道要怎麼做英文的 oral presentation. 醫生在醫院或參加研討會都要做 presentation, 但是我不知道誰教這個?」
“If I were not in this class, I don’t think I would have learned what an English oral presentation is. I know it is required for in-practice doctors to report patient cases or attending conferences, but I don’t know who can teach me these skills.” (Interview)

Another participant, Jay, also indicated the same apprehension.

「大家都知道出去工作之後，英文口語報告很重要，像醫生經常要參加研討會。但是好像沒管道去學，該怎麼做？補習班好像也沒教這種東西。」
“Everyone knows doing English oral presentations seems required and important, for example, doctors attending international conferences. But the problem is that we don’t have access to learn. I don’t think Bu-Shi-Ban teaches this sort of thing.” (Interview)

From their thoughts, it can be learnt that on the way to becoming a capable presenter, this group of EFL students do not appear to have a sufficiently available social network to practice and improve their oral presentation skills. Participants’ concerns seem to make it reasonable to presume that the lack of access indeed influences learners’ process and outcomes of acquiring the language and sociocultural knowledge of delivering a successful oral presentation. In other words, learners have to strive hard to look for resources that may be helpful for them to increase their participation in oral activities.

In addition to the challenges learners must face, one important area that has not been examined is the involvement of other members of the classroom community. In this case, the members include the instructors and the peer audience. Through close observation, both inside and outside of class, and via interviews, it is interesting to find that student presenters did not prepare for the oral task alone; rather, their presentations were shaped significantly by other indirect participants who also engaged in the presentation. In other words, stepping away from investigating how student presenters engage in the activity, what seems to be more interesting is that the sociocultural activity is not only constructed by presenters alone, but also by those

who also participate in the activity through various accesses. In the collected data, the indirect participants may not tell presenters what to do in a straightforward manner, but rather provide the very resource that is vital to student presenters' acquisition of skills for academic oral presentations. For example, the method of showing the most updated medical knowledge information became an important element in ensuring a successful academic oral presentation in many of the students' definition of a good presentation.

Therefore, when this study takes a position to frame oral presentation as a sociocultural activity existing in a particular academic community, instead of looking at what students do to cope with the requirements (e.g., Morita, 2000; Kobayashi, 2003), how presentation rhetoric may vary across disciplines (e.g., Zappa-Hollman, 2007), or what challenges and experiences learners may have in the process of being better presenters (e.g., Yang, 2010), it seems equally important and necessary to go to another dimension to investigate *who* is involved in the activity in the context. Since an oral presentation is a co-constructed activity composed by presenters and audiences, isn't it important and necessary to discuss how the indirect participants influence the oral presentation performance? However, it seems likely that previous studies did not really take participants into consideration.

On the surface, participants, including the presenter, the instructor, and peer audiences, compose an oral academic presentation in the observed classroom. The presenter (referred as direct participants in this study) acts his or her role as a speaker while the instructor and peers (both referred as indirect participants in this study) act as the audience. Through the interaction between the speaker and audience, a presentation is constructed. But, what is beneath the surface? That is, besides being the audience, do the instructor and peers play any other role while engaging in

the activity inside and beyond the classroom?

To shed light on indirect participants, therefore, I decided to take a different sort of instrument to discuss learners' acquisition of linguistic and sociocultural knowledge and focus on how *others* who are also involved in the activity influence presenters' engagement in the academic activity. It is expected that from a different facet, the present study can investigate how all participants, including presenters and non-presenters, together composed the community of practice. In other words, the value of examining the role of indirect participants lies in better understanding the influence of indirect participants (i.e., the instructor and peers) in the community. This perspective is expected to shed light on how the indirect participants shape student presenters' understanding, thoughts, and the way to prepare and present their oral academic tasks, i.e., how the indirect force facilitates students' engagement in the sociocultural activity as to be fuller academic presenters. From the findings derived from this project, such recognition and learning are not from the learners' perspective alone. Yet, what more important than academic and linguistic demands is the interpersonal and pedagogical aspects given by the indirect participants. In other words, this study not just explores what individual students do to accommodate themselves in the university classroom, but also elucidates what the language teacher and peers can do to benefit learners in this classroom community. As a result, two important participants will be examined in this study. They are the instructor and the peer as audience. This chapter will deal with the influence of the instructor. Chapter 5 will examine the influence of the peer.

4.1 Instructor Role in Previous Literature

Taking such a perspective to triangulate data, it is found that the two imperative participants, the instructor and peers, shape and reshape presenters' preparation and

performance continuously. On the surface, the instructor and peers seem not directly related to how presentations were completed, but instead, seemed to contribute indirectly to the actual student presentation. That is, the instructor and peers have influence that is not immediately tangible. For example, in general, a vocabulary list is not often included as part of an academic presentation. However, in the instructor's modeling, she provided a list of vocabulary and also elaborated each word in her presentation since the nature of the course is a medical-based theme. Therefore, it is necessary to provide a basic introduction to technical terms and related information in the presentation. The influence is that every presenter followed her presentation pattern exactly, doing the same explanation for vocabulary as well. Such a practice could be a result of the teacher's influence. The EFL students in this course do not have many outside sources, and hence must gain their conceptualization of doing an oral presentation mainly from the instructor, who is the only near-native English speaker in this community. Therefore, what the teacher lectures, and how she acts, instructs, suggests, and demonstrates seems to significantly shape the students' understanding and engagement in the academic event.

Typically, for instructors who teach speaking skills, several techniques are often employed in a language classroom, such as encouraging authentic language use and various strategic devices, capitalizing on the natural link between speaking and listening, or practicing pronunciation in order to fulfill various needs across different learning contexts (e.g., Brown, 2007; Larsen-Freeman & Anderson, 2011). Behind the variation of conducting these teaching forms or activities, the teacher's roles may vary. Previous studies have shed light on teachers' roles in language classrooms, which are shown in the following table (Table 4.1).

Table 4.1 Various Language Teachers' Roles Discussed in Previous Studies

Researchers	Discussion on Language Teacher's Roles
Karavas-Dukas (1995)	Four main categories: source of expertise, management roles, source of advice, and facilitator of learning
William & Burden (1997, p. 165)	Mediator, advisor, facilitator, consultant, co-communicator, partner and joint problem solver, and feedback provider
Cohen (1998, p. 97-102)	Diagnostician, learner trainer, coach, coordinator, language learner, and researcher
Harden & Crosby (2000, p. 334-347)	Information provider, resource developer, planner, assessor, facilitator, and role model
Harmer (2001)	Controller, assessor, corrector, organizer, promoter, and resource
Qin and Tian (2007)	Teachers' role in multimedia environments: a combination of knowledge conveyor, classroom organizer and administrator, director, cooperater, language instructor, facilitator of students' autonomous learning, supporter and evaluator, and researcher into education and pedagogy
Wang (2007)	Teacher's multiple roles in multimedia EFL public speaking classroom: resource, organizer, evaluator, director, facilitator, and controller

Initially, research in this area tends to discuss the language teachers' roles across various contexts based on students' needs. These researchers shed light on discussing how teachers should position themselves in appropriate roles. In the later studies, the focus is gradually moved to investigate teachers' roles in multimedia environment where computer plays a major assistance in teaching and learning. Yet, these categorizations seem to be too general to attend to a teacher's specific role in one particular teaching activity. Since this study views activities as the central organizing concept for learning, it is necessary to examine how the teachers can specifically influence the way students learn the activities in the classroom. In addition, given the limited sources that EFL learners may have, it seems that teachers would play an even more important role.

4.2 The Instructor's Role in the Present Study

In the present study, through oral presentation activities, it is found that the teacher plays multiple roles. However, among these numerous characteristics,

particularly in the classroom, the instructor has shaped students' oral activities by being an *editor* and *counselor* in her conferencing which are significantly influential for this group of students. However, this influence has not yet been discussed in previous studies. Unlike their ESL counterparts in other settings who may have increased language exposure, resources, or tutors (such as in ESL environments) (e.g., Kobayashi, 2003; Morita, 2004), this group of EFL students relies tremendously on the input from the only expert, the instructor, on the way to prepare and present an oral task. As a non-native-English-speaker, however, the instructor has her own constraints as well as privileges compared to native-English speaking teachers in an ESL context. Therefore, she develops a unique form of expertise that is very different from the typically recognized instructor role in other language classes. That is, instead of being recognized as a course lecturer, in fact, she plays multiple roles to influence student presenters' oral performance. In particular, she shapes students' participation in oral activities especially via her editing and conferencing. In other words, different from the roles of teachers in previous studies, the teacher in this community plays many additional roles. The teacher is a lecturer to teach lessons, an audience member who can "provide prompt assistance to presenters" (Fieldnotes, 10/21/2009), a negotiator to "clarify the presenter's intended meaning" 「老師會幫我解釋清楚我想表達的意思」 (Peter's SRF(I), and a "lubricant, adding humor to construct a friendly and relaxed atmosphere" (Tony's interview). In addition to the more traditional roles of a teacher described earlier, the present study also finds the instructor's multiple roles in *conferencing*. Findings gained from participants in the present study indicate how the instructor, enacting her role in one-on-one conferencing, has contributed to student presenters' preparation and performance; especially in her role as an editor and counselor. The collected data reveal that

conferencing has certain influences that should not be omitted, especially for inexperienced presenters. On the one hand, the language facilitation provided by the instructor is not just an editing or proofreading task; rather, students feel that the instructor is an editor with approval power. By her approval, students feel at ease to follow the checked handout or PPT slides to complete an oral presentation. The multiple roles of the instructor in conferencing will be further discussed in the following sections. First, the instructor's role as an editor will be discussed. Second, the role of the instructor as a counselor will be discussed.

4.2.1 As an Editor with Approval Power: *“I believe the teacher could provide me with the most direct answer in terms of how I can work on my presentation”*

The instructor often received email from students asking for suggestions or corrections on summaries or other items. Often, the teacher edited directly in the email and gave a quick reply to students. However, it is interesting to find that the teacher's role as an editor might be oversimplified if we neglect the after-effect of this type of correction. The collected data show that students often expressed a sense of relief after they received a reply from the teacher's confirmation indicating that the students' work seemed fine since this also indicated a tacit approval from the instructor. To further discuss this finding, two perspectives will be examined. Viewing the teacher's role as an editor, the first perspective is to discuss how her approval in emails and one-on-one conferencing comforts learners' uneasiness in preparatory work. The second perspective is to discuss her quick reply as evidence of reassurance to resolve students' uncertainties.

First of all, how does the instructor play her role as an editor? At first glance, the primary facilitation that the instructor provides is to act as a counselor for presenters to resolve confusion in language use. When students were negotiating their presentation content with the instructor, they received feedback and advice from

her. Based on the negotiation and discussion, presenters oriented themselves to the oral task. As such, the discussion with the instructor allowed students to understand the teacher's expectations and have more confidence in accomplishing the task. A typical reply in emails is as follows.

(Mon, Nov/02/2009)

Hello Tony,

You did a very nice job in designing your handout—the layout and expression are clear. Also, your questions are inspiring for discussion as well as the 'pop quiz' (I like it very much :-)

I just edited some grammatical mistakes in the paper and hope it's clear to you. Let me know if you need any further clarification. Good luck in your presentation!

p.s. I left your handout in my mailbox and you can pick it up anytime.

Tony mentioned the following in his interview, “I tried hard to meet the instructor's requirements, and I believe the teacher could provide me with the most direct answer in terms of how I can work on my presentation.” To him, consulting with and pre-checking by the instructor is one part of a solid preparation process before his formal presentation.

The instructor, conversely, regards giving feedback as her responsibility as a teacher. Therefore, despite facing such an intensive duty, Ann thinks she just played her proper role as a language teacher, as revealed in a chat with me.

「我覺得面對這群學生壓力好大! 我試著盡力幫助他們, 但是我不確定能給多少…我想頂多就是幫忙修改文法之類的, 沒甚麼其他了吧!」)

“I feel so stressful to face my students in PBL classes. I try my best to help them, but I'm not so sure how far I can go...I think that what I can provide my students is to fix their language use, but not much beyond this, I think.” (Fieldnotes, Nov/15/2009)

Ann feels that she can only provide students with what she knows regarding such issues as grammatical accuracy. However, such a statement shows a conflictual interpretation of the teacher's role between Ann and her students because students in fact considerably appreciate how their instructor facilitates their preparation for the oral task, as Jay's example demonstrates.

Email from Jay (Mon, Oct/05/2009):

老師,

我是醫學二 Jay (*anonymous*). 附檔是禮拜三 oral presentation 的 PPT 及 summary. 麻煩老師看是否有哪裡需要修改的 (尤其是討論問題的部分), 謝謝老師!

Reply from the teacher (Mon, Oct/05/2009):

Hi there,

I've revised both files somewhere else. As for the discussion question 3, I think you need to paraphrase it because it is not so clear. I'm not quite sure what you mean by 'How is the brain of Humphrey Ocean different from those of the rest of us?' Who are 'the rest of us'? For other minor problems, I just corrected them directly. Please check them out.

Let me know if you need any further help. Good luck to your presentation!

Such an editor's role, which seems trivial to the teacher, in fact serves as "an official approval" of a good presentation to the student. It seems that the students wanted to get an "identity" from the instructor to recognize if such work is good enough, which is also a power indication to provide student presenters with a sense of security to confirm an oral presentation's appropriateness. To students, the consolidation in conferencing is important, as Jay indicates in his interview, talking about how the email conferencing makes sense to him.

「老師在回我的 email 裡，其實也沒做多大的改變。就是改了 summary 裡面的一個句子的時態跟一個討論問題。但是這對我來說很重要，因為老師看過就好像蓋過章一樣，我就可以放心跟著這份講義走，就不會差到哪裡去了。」

"In fact, my teacher did not do too much editing (in my handout and PPT files). She just edited verb tenses in a sentence in a summary and one discussion question. However, the editing is very important to me because it's like a certificate which makes me feel safe and relieved to do my oral presentation. With it, I know everything will not be too bad." (Interview)

Jay's excerpt shows that the teacher's editing on his mandatory handout eases his mind and boosts his confidence to complete the oral task. In their interaction, it shows Jay concerns about his summary writing and discussion questions most. To address his concerns, as he indicated in the email, the instructor also gave him comments on the submission. Such interaction via email, in Jay's eyes, "prevented losing face in front of classmates due to ungrammatical use or inappropriate question design" (不會因為文法錯誤或是討論題目設計得不好而在同學面前丟臉。) (Interview). It allows the students to have confidence that they won't make unnecessary

grammatical errors, and hence save face (which can be a thorny issue if they feel the teacher corrects another student more than they). In particular, since these students are all high-achievers and have succeeded in a highly competitive environment (as evidenced by entry into pre-med) and are still within a competitive environment where their peers are also their competitors, their need for grammatical correctness will most likely also be very high so that they can maintain/enhance their position amongst their peers and in the eyes of their instructors. In other words, editing in conferencing cannot be simply regarded as a language teaching and learning issue; more accurately, it shows a deeper psychological level which is very possibly neglected in teachers' and researchers' eyes. To students, with the teacher's preview and editing, they gained the teacher's approval of their preparatory work.

In addition to being an editor providing approval of the student presenters' preparation work, the teacher's quick replies to all questions is another reassurance conveyed by the teacher, which gives the students the feeling that there is always someone to rely on. In the observed classroom, excluding face-to-face consultation, the instructor received fifty-six emails in total from students throughout the term, with questions varying from person to person. Further, replying to students' emails appears to be very pressing for the instructor, as indicated by the instructor's speed at which she responded to students' questions. It seems to be an indication of the uncertainty she feels regarding how to best provide instruction for presentations, and so makes it a priority in responding to their inquiries to alleviate their anxiety as best she can. As she indicated,

「我會很快回信，因為我知道學生在等。我回信只是一個 click 的動作，但是對要做 presentation 的學生來說，他們會焦慮，會緊張。」

“I reply to emails as soon as I can because I know my students are waiting. For me, it's just takes a click to reply; and I know it's the source of anxiety and nervousness for student presenters.” (Interview)

To Ann, it is a simple action to reply to students' email because she does not want to augment her students' anxiety keeping them waiting. In reviewing all email dates, it was found that students often emailed the instructor on Sundays or Mondays (two days before the class on Wednesdays) with Ann usually replying by Monday. Ann's prompt replies were tremendously appreciated by the students, as Mark said, "I really appreciated my teacher's quick reply. She makes me feel she is always there even though she is not physically present." (Interview) 「我真的很感激老師都能很快就回我 email, 那感覺很像說...即使我沒看到她, 但是老師也能幫助我很快完成準備的工作。」

From another perspective, "always being there" seems to imply that besides regular office hours to conference with students, the unseen spared time and not-physically-presented talks in email were important for both students and the instructor. Students did not want their problems or concerns to remain unsolved or unnoticed; therefore, the teacher's in-time facilitation was critical for their preparation and performance in the presentation tasks. Being a language facilitator who at the same time also provides assurance for presenters is a different dimension to re-examine the teacher's role. In other words, through editing, the teacher makes a valuable contribution to make oral presentations become less anxiety provoking.

4.2.2 As a Counselor for Emotional Stability: *"She is also very sensitive to our needs and is always ready in that respect."*

For decades, many researchers and educators have been aware that anxiety is one of the major sources for learning frustration. Accordingly, many studies have explored, described, and even measured anxiety in learning in order to help learners deal with this problem so that they can improve their performance in speaking (Hewitt & Stephenson, 2011; Lucas, 1984; Phillips, 1992; Woodrow, 2006;), writing (Cheng *et al.*, 1999), reading (Saito *et al.*, 1999), and listening (Kim, 2000) (see a review of foreign language anxiety and achievement in Horwitz, 2001). Yet, most studies take

the same position as Horwitz (2001), believing there is no such thing as a facilitating method to reduce anxiety since language learning is a varied and psychologically intricate phenomenon. In other words, effective methods to reduce anxiety are quite limited in terms of language learning. However, in terms of oral academic discourse acquisition, findings gained from this study that show how a teacher can help students resolve their uncertainties and doubts (i.e., in this study: editing their drafts via email or face-to-face conferencing) have provided an avenue to reduce learners' unease, and therefore contradict Horwitz' (2001) position.

From the data, it is found that students' face-to-face conferencing with the instructor seems to play a major role in their preparation work in which friendly discussions and a feeling of companionship that is conducive to establishing intimate bonds between the instructor and students is evident. This intimate connection is shown mainly via three perspectives: the teachers' awareness of the students' on-going development, as an attentive listener, and the teacher's background as a learner and as a teacher.

4.2.2.1 The Teacher's Awareness of Students' On-going Development

The instructor's comments were not randomly made, but the results of her close observations and intensive negotiations with students. From the participants' reflection in the interviews which will be discussed below, it can be learnt that the instructor carefully monitored her students' progress and development.

In Tony's case, the teacher's awareness of his on-going development allowed him to take the right path to move on so as to be a more seasoned presenter. Born and raised in Kaohsiung, he graduated from the best senior high school in Southern Taiwan. In terms of his English study, he regards himself as an inferior learner compared to his classmates coming from Northern Taiwan. Though living in the

largest metropolitan city in Southern Taiwan, in his view, he thinks English learners in Kaohsiung are less capable of speaking English because of fewer opportunities for exposure to English learning than students in Taipei. In the profile data, he showed his severe concerns about his English competence, especially regarding his oral ability.

In the observed class, he likes to talk to Ann. In Ann's impression, Tony is "not a fluent speaker, [and] I know he suffered a lot in preparing for oral presentations. But I know he made a lot of effort to improve his performance throughout the whole term" (他的口語能力沒有很好，他整學期遇到蠻多挫折，但是很認真。整個學期口語報告的能力進步很多!) (Interview). From Tony's view, he considers that his teacher provided him much facilitation to be a more competent presenter.

「不管是在課堂或是我們在面談的時候，她就是很有耐心聽我的破英文。我還記得第一次面談的時候，我鼓足勇氣問老師可不可以聽我排練十分鐘然後給我一些意見，我知道這樣問很尷尬，因為老師很忙啊，她竟然答應了耶！老師人真的很好。」
"My teacher has a lot of patience to listen to my non-fluent English no matter inside or outside the classroom. I still remember in my first conferencing, I asked if she could spare ten minutes to see my rehearsal and give comments. Actually, I felt a little embarrassed to say so, but unbelievably, she said 'yes'. She is a really nice person."

Triangulating the collected data in Tony's files, it was found that the instructor paid detailed attention to his oral performance. Helping him cope with the tremendous challenge of speaking in public, Ann provided several concrete comments and suggestions to guide Tony to be a more competent presenter.

Your performance is much better than my expectation. Maybe you can prepare early and thoroughly so that you can draw confidence. I believe it can definitely reduce your stage fright. Let me know if you need my help! (The instructor's feedback for Tony's SRF I)

By the way, the content in your PPT slides seems not so organized and I can't see its coherence (it looks like a tangle of random thoughts). Please be sure that they are well organized, otherwise, your delivery will not be smooth and effective. (Adopted from one of the instructor's emails to Tony, Dec/21/2009)

I can tell how much effort you've put into preparing your oral presentations! Your revised version of the PPT slides indeed made your discussion go fluently. Also, I noticed you didn't read the script on hand this time. I know it's hard, but you did it so well. Keep up the good work! 加油© (The instructor's feedback on Tony's SRF II)

From the above data arranged in a chronological order, it can be seen that Ann keeps track of Tony's development. Throughout the course, her feedback was not just simple or general comments; instead, she used specific and precise words and instances to facilitate Tony to be a better presenter. As Tony reflected in his interview,

「她不是只是給一些很 general 的建議，類似甚麼 “very good!”，“great!” 的評語。老師給的建議跟評語讓我知道她是真正關心學生進步的老師。同學做完報告，她給建議是列點式的，所以每個人都會知道下次可以改進的地方在哪裡，非常清楚的知道。」

“She does not only provide general comments, like “very good!” or “great!”. Instead, her precise suggestions and comments let me know she is the teacher who is indeed aware of her learners' development. It is also true when she gives comments after my classmates' presentations. Usually, she gives comments point by point so that everyone understands exactly what she expects us to improve the next time.” (Interview)

It is also because of the instructor's thoughtfulness of her students' progress that students feel close to her. In the class, the teacher paid special attention to her students which often surprised them. Andrew's and Nick's words can also be examples to illustrate their close relationship.

「老師的記性很恐怖(笑)…才第二堂課就都記得每個人的名字。更可怕的是，誰上次做報告或說了甚麼，她在上課舉例的時候都說得出來…她記得每件事，她就是這樣讓我們覺得她把每個學生都放心上，你不認真都不行(笑)。」

“The teacher's retention is awfully great (laugh). She could remember everyone's name in our second meeting. More than that, when she did her lecture and needed examples, she could recall who did or said something to make her lecture come alive...She remembers everything and that's the way she makes us feel that she cares about everyone. Her care of us makes me feel that I have no excuse for not working harder (laugh).” (Interview, Andrew)

「老師都知道我的弱點在哪裡，所以她給建議的時候就是用很直接清楚的方式，而且我們的討論氣氛也很輕鬆愉快，老師感覺很親和。也是因為這些討論的過程，讓我覺得要完成 presentation 好像也沒這麼難。」

“Because she knows me well, she gives me direct advice and creates a friendly and relaxed atmosphere in conferencing. She is a very friendly teacher. It is all these above occurrences in our interactions that makes me feel that to face the challenge in completing presentations is not that difficult.” (Interview, Peter)

These two excerpts evidently show how students appreciate their teacher's efforts and they try extremely hard. Because of her close attention to students' progress, she can provide precise comments and encouragement to her students.

From the students' point of view, they thought the teacher kept her eyes on them. Also because of the intimate relationship and trust built through conferencing, learners took the oral event seriously and also felt less anxious to cope with the challenges while implementing the requirements.

For the instructor, Ann, her rationale of being a caring teacher is that,

「我知道對非英文主修的大二學生來說—要做一場英文的 presentation 真的很挑戰... 即使大家都認為他們是優秀的學生。所以我不想太 pushy 或 demanding, 因為每個人開始的起點不同。我不能一廂情願的認定他們全都有優秀的口語能力, 然後就用唯一的標準要求每個人都要達到相同標準。每個學生都是獨特不一樣的！」

“I know it's really a lot for a non-English major to do an English oral presentation in his second year of college. It's really too challenging, even though they are usually regarded as superior learners. Therefore, from my perspective, I don't want to be too pushy or demanding because everyone starts from different points. I mean, I can't just overwhelmingly think they are “all” superior learners or take one rubric as the only standard and ask everyone to reach the benchmark. Every student is unique and different!”

From Ann's excerpt, it is not difficult to realize why students feel she cares about them. Her coaching provided a tutorial-like direction to release students' worries and anxiety. The one-on-one conferencing also provided opportunities for consulting, rehearsal, feedback and correction as a method to provide specific help for students. Through this process, the instructor sought to help her students optimize an educational experience and to assist their socialization into the academic culture. The consulting relationship developed over an extended period, during which student needs and the nature of the relationship tended to evolve. Finally, because the instructor's awareness of these changes, she gave different attention, facilitation, advice, information, and encouragement in conferencing discussions so as to be close to the learners' various needs. Throughout the whole term, the instructor and her students established an intimate and personal connection naturally.

In the existing literature, however, taking such a view to examine interpersonal relationships between the teacher and students in an oral academic activity has not been discussed. But, again, it does not imply that this area should be neglected.

Instead, through this sociocultural view to examine the teacher's role in the students' learning, it was found that her encouragement provided another dimension to re-interpret the role of positive feedback in students' acquisition of oral academic discourse. It is a different form of encouragement because it contains two deeper levels to care for students: close attention to learners' development and awareness of learners' changes. Most importantly, it seems this understanding of students' development and changes contributes to raising learners' intrinsic motivation (see Ellis, 1997; Lightbown and Spada, 2006) to work harder.

4.2.2.2 Being an Attentive Listener

Anxiety might be regarded as the primary source of anxiety by most speakers (Zappa-Hollman, 2007). The group of student presenters in this study suggested an identical feeling also. For example, Tony was tongue-tied several times in his first presentation (Fieldnotes, 10/14/2009); Peter reflected, "I can't believe that I stood in the front to speak English. It's really scary!" 「真不敢相信我竟然站在大家面前講英文，真是嚇死我了！」(SRF I) and Nick said this after his second presentation, "I worried all night and couldn't sleep well. This morning, I woke up at 5a.m. It's really painful. Finally, I can get a good night's sleep tonight." 「我昨天就很擔心今天要做的 presentation 都睡不好，今天早上五點自己就醒過來了，好痛苦喔。我今天晚上終於可以好好睡一覺了！」(Fieldnotes, 12/09/2009).

From the above excerpts, it can be learnt that before and during the oral presentation, student presenters indeed suffer from anxiety significantly. Interestingly, it was found that in some cases, students could release some emotional problems by broadcasting problems to the teacher who played the role of an attentive audience. The emotional problems could be reduced either by the pressure of completing a fine presentation or relating to personal life.

As discussed previously, in building her intimate relationship through professionalism and sensitivity of students' on-going development, the instructor was considered as a very approachable, understanding, and encouraging person by students. Conducting conferencing in her study room, she sat next to the students, so students felt close to her. During conferencing time, she often chatted and laughed with students, as if one of their friends. While students were explaining what they wanted to express or demonstrate in their presentation, she was a listener who opened her minds to listen to various views and was ready for students' possible uncertainties. During the process, she was an attentive and patient negotiator who clarified presenters' expressions and provided additional explanations when necessary. Above all, the valued qualities that student presenters mentioned were not about her professional knowledge but her patience as a good listener. In particular, students showed their appreciation of her patience in listening to students' frustrations in presentations. By so doing, one student indicated that, "her attentive listening to my problems makes me feel that we are in the same boat" 「老師很認真聽我敘述問題，讓我感覺她會幫助我一起解決問題。」 (Mark, Interview).

「在討論的時候，老師就跟上課時候一樣，就是會很認真聽學生講，也很有效率馬上解決問題。」

"In conferencing, the teacher acts the same as how she acts in class: listening attentively and solving our confusion efficiently." (Tony, Interview)

「我最感激老師總是當個有耐心的聆聽者，而且她也是一個超有效率的 problem shooter.」

"I appreciate most that the instructor can always be a patient counselor and an efficient problem solver." (Andrew, Interview)

「不管是跟老師單獨討論，或是在課堂上做口頭報告，老師永遠是我的好聽眾...她常常提出一些問題讓我知道她是真的有在聽。」

"No matter whether discussing in the individual conferencing with the teacher or making an oral presentation in public, she is always my best audience...She often raises related questions which lets me know that she IS listening." (Jay, Interview)

From the above excerpts, it shows that the instructor is a good listener for her students and such behavior initiates a network of contacts for students' access to

accomplish the academic requirement more easily.

However, according to Ann, listening to students' problems is not as easy as it appears. She indicates that,

「要聽這群學生說話不容易，因為他們在某種程度上來說是非常敏感的，因為臉皮比較薄（笑）。所以我得很認真聽他們說話，然後我要做出比較婉轉的回應，不然有些學生就會覺得自己的問題很 silly，就再也不會再問第二次問題了。」

“It's not as easy as it sounds to listen to the group of students, who are very sensitive to some extent, because they do worry about losing face (laugh). Hence, I have to listen to them carefully and respond in a euphemistic way. Otherwise, some students would feel that they ask silly questions and they would close up, not asking questions anymore.” (Interview)

The instructor's reflection on the complexity of being an attentive listener shows that careful listening conveys not only understanding of the questions, but also expresses the teacher's empathy for the students and her understanding of what the student confronts. By so doing, when a student feels the empathy, the listening and feedback mode opens a way for clear and effective interaction in conferencing.

Furthermore, it was found that in some cases, the talk in conferencing was not only limited to negotiation of presentation content. Rather, it sometimes related to students' frustration in life. At first glance, it seemed to not be directly related to completion of the oral presentation event, but consistently, the instructor played her role as an attentive listener to liberate students' tension brought by their daily life. Jay's case appears to be an exemplary demonstration to illustrate this perspective.

Jay's Case: “To me, she is not a teacher, but more like a friend”

Jay was born and raised in Ping Tung. Prior to studying at X University, Jay earned a Bachelor degree at National Yang-Ming University. Despite being viewed as an easy-going friend and resourceful senior classmate by his peers, he indeed had some frustrations in life which could not be understood by his classmates owing to the age disparity. As such, due to being away from home and the inherent age gap, he had few people to talk to in school. As he stated,

「我很幸運家人很支持，但話說回來我也 26 了。為了不讓家人擔心，有些事我就不跟他們說了。在學校，同學又比我年輕好幾歲，我已經當過一次大學生了，我知道他們正在經歷甚麼，但是他們不懂我的生活是甚麼…但是老師不一樣，她很認真聽我講話，讓我覺得：她是挺我的朋友，她也是我在學校極少數，嗯，我可以放心說話的人。」

“I’m lucky I’m well-supported by my family, but I’m already 26. I hide something because I don’t want my parents to worry about me. On the other hand, my classmates are much younger than me. I know what they’re experiencing at their age, but they don’t know what I’m going through...But the teacher is different. She is an attentive listener so that I feel that she is not a teacher, but more like a friend. In school, she is also one of the few people whom I can feel comfortable to talk to.” (Interview)

This statement also corresponds to his response to both the questionnaire and interview, where he referred to his appreciation of the instructor. One response in his second oral report form stated, “Dear teacher, I feel much better after the last meeting with you. I do appreciate your patience to be my listener! Thank you, really. You are the best!” (SRF II) (老師，上次跟您聊過之後心情真的好多了。謝謝妳的耐心當我的聽眾，真的謝謝妳。You are the best!). When I had the chance to have an interview with Jay, I came to realize why he said so in his report form. Before his second oral presentation, he broke up with his girlfriend whom he had had a steady relationship with for more than seven years. During that time, in fact, they were thinking about engagement within one or two years. However, the girl’s family disagreed with the issue while Jay’s family was happy to see it.

Due to this event, Jay acted differently from what he used to be. When he sent his email to Ann just the day before the oral presentation, Ann sensed something wrong. For one thing, in Ann’s impression, Jay was not a person who waits until the last minute. But this time, she could tell that Jay’s email was hurriedly written. For another, it was obvious that Jay’s draft of the handout and PPT files were done roughly, unlike how he acts regularly. Therefore, instead of giving comments via email, Ann just wrote, “Can you come to see or call me? I’m available in my office this afternoon until 4:30” (Email files, Tuesday, Dec/15/2009). I did not attend the conferencing, but according to Ann, it was a friend talk. In that talk, Ann indeed

provided feedback to his presentation drafts, but it took just five minutes. For the rest of the hour, Ann listened to his frustration of straddling between the two families.

Apparently, what they talked about in conferencing was irrelevant to language teaching and learning, but such an intimate connection between the instructor and Jay is a tangible instance showing how the instructor facilitates students to release possible anxiety arising from personal issues. In my own field notes recording Jay's second presentation performance, my remarks are, "He did the presentation fluently and confidently, as usual." (Fieldnote, Dec/16/2009) I could not tell any nuance between his performance on that day and any other regular class.

It is obvious that Jay's emotional difficulty had been removed temporarily while he was performing his presentation. His problem may still exist, but due to the 'friend talk' with his teacher, he had normal behavior in his performance. To Jay, actually, his language teacher did not just help him be a better presenter, but also eased his mind to be a calm and confident presenter. His case evidently shows the calming influence did not end with the conferencing. As such, it provided me another angle to re-interpret the role of the instructor.

4.2.2.3 Teacher's Background: As a Learner and as a Teacher

Another way of building an intimate connection with the students is the sharing of the teacher's past learning experience. As a non-native-English-speaker teacher, Ann has her strengths; especially, her background as an EFL learner which helps her better understand what her students may encounter. By sharing her past learning experiences and feelings in conferencing, students feel that they are not alone. It seems that the instructor's experience in language learning allows her to approach her students' difficulties easily and have more empathy of the situations the students may come across. Peter's reflection is an example to illustrate Ann's strength in this

regard.

In Peter's case, he consulted with his instructor several times via emails and face-to-face conferencing before his formal oral presentation. Throughout the term, he tried hard to meet the instructor's requirements, and believed the teacher could provide him with the best facilitation.

「在跟老師討論的過程中讓我學到一場好的 presentation 是要花費很多時間跟很長的過程去醞釀的。這跟我之前習慣的學習經驗很不相同。我很幸運有老師一路陪著，她好像都能預料說，比如我會遇到甚麼問題？所以可以這樣這樣、那樣那樣做，就像打預防針一樣（哈）。」

“The discussion in conferencing made me realize a successful presentation takes time and requires a long process to prepare and present. This is a very different experience from what I was used to in high school. I feel lucky because my teacher is with me along the way. It seems that she can predict what I will encounter. So, she would tell me to do this and to do that. The feeling is like taking a vaccine (laugh).” (Interview)

In conferencing, they go through a series of back-and-forth decision-making processes in which they have to come to a conclusion to take or leave some ideas and make it tangible in concert with the PPT slides and a mandatory handout. As Peter reflected, the key challenging component was the language barrier because he had to demonstrate in a foreign language what he had prepared. He indicated that it was a very demanding process because “No matter how well I've prepared, the most horrible feeling is that I have to stand alone on the stage to complete my presentation,” he continued, “but I think the luckiest thing is that my teacher is with me all along the way. She shares her previous experiences or thoughts and offers some doable suggestions. By so doing, doing an oral presentation becomes not so depressing.” 「不管我準備得再周全，最令我害怕的是：我得一個人撐完全場…還好老師一路都陪著。她都會分享經驗或想法，然後給可行的建議，讓口語報告變得沒那麼可怕。」 (Interview). A similar argument can also be witnessed in Nick's second conferencing.

「在我第二次面談的時候，老師就有稍微先說我這篇不簡單因為裡面專有名詞很多，建議我在 PPT 上直接標音標，以免吃螺絲。她好像都能事先看出在哪裡可能會有問題，然後先預防。」

“In my second consultation, the teacher gave me a gentle reminder saying that the assigned article is not easy because it is full of technical terms. Therefore, she advised me to mark KK beside each term so I can avoid being tongue-tied. It is an example to show how she can predict which part may be problematic to me and she tries to prevent it from happening.” (Interview)

Due to similar learning experiences, the instructor knows well what her students may encounter in certain circumstances or a particular session when they fulfill their role as an academic presenter in the classroom. The teacher describes in conferencing and her lecture how she coped with possible language and psychological difficulties when she was a learner and approaches the problem by capturing optionally available solutions. Such a sharing, according to participants, plays an essential role to release their tension and make the nerve-racking mission possible.

「我喜歡聽老師分享以前她自己如何準備口語報告的經驗，還有怎麼做等等…老師的經歷讓我知道：『喔！老師也曾那麼窘過，所以我也不是例外嘛！』」

“I like to hear the teacher’s sharing of her past experiences on preparing and doing oral presentations. Her experiences make me realize that ‘well, she also went through this passing phase’, so I’m not alone!” (Tony, Interview)

「有一次老師在面談時跟我聊到她以前在國外唸書在語言上面臨的一些挫折，我聽了真的覺得很親切…澳門跟台灣雖然相距不遠，但是學英文的過程卻不太一樣。老師分享的挫折我也有，而且現在也正在經歷…我不敢說自己現在喜歡做 oral presentation，但是老師這樣打強心針的效果就是：現在我覺得做 presentation 也沒想像中那麼難了。」

“Once, the teacher shared her frustration in language learning when she studied abroad. I really feel we are so close...Macaw and Taiwan are not distant, but the process to learn English is different. I have the same feeling as the teacher’s frustration, and I’m passing through it now. For now, I can’t really say that I like to do oral presentations, but at least I think doing presentations is not as difficult as I thought.” (Mark, Interview)

Even though the learning process is individualized and differentiated from one another, the teacher’s background as a learner and a teacher indeed provides an intimate bond to bridge the distance between the teacher and students. With her past learning experience, the teacher plays a guidance and expert-like role to anticipate potential troubles and assist her students in undertaking the challenge.

In terms of the challenges that students encounter, as noted earlier in Chapter 2, a few recent qualitative studies have investigated the socialization processes and complexities experienced by ESL students in graduate-level content courses or

seminars (Lee, 2009; Morita, 2000, 2004; Weissberg, 1993; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) and content-based language courses in undergraduate classrooms (Kobayashi, 2003; Parks, 2000; Yang, 2010). These studies have suggested various reasons to explain why and/or how ESL students regard oral academic discourse challenging, especially when participating in discussions. Particularly relevant to the present study, Morita (2000) and Yang (2010), focusing on oral presentation tasks, revealed the experiences of graduate students in a TESL program as well as undergraduate students in a management course of a Commerce program. In Morita's (2000) study, she discussed what difficulties that the group of non-native-speaker presenters encountered in an ESL context, including linguistic, sociocultural, and psychological difficulties, while Yang (2010) reported on his participants' concern over their underdeveloped English conversational ability, unfamiliarity with participatory communication modes in the Canadian classroom, and limited experience with group work. Similar to these two studies, participants of this dissertation voiced that oral presentations were a stressful challenge in various ways, and expressed this sentiment in their interviews.

「我很擔心自己是否能完全表達想說的意思。我需要偷看一下小抄或是硬背起來。我也很擔心被老師或同學打斷問話，因為腳步就亂了，然後開始舌頭打結...」

“I do worry about my ability to express myself fully in English. I need to depend on my notes and memory work. I'm really afraid of being interrupted by the instructor's or classmates' questions because I will lose my tempo and become tongue-tied.” (Mark, Interview)

「每次都只能簡單的英文表達讓我很沮喪。有時候腦海裡或許有好的想法，但是配上我那少得可憐的表達技巧，一切都化為烏有...的確啦，用簡單簡短的句子的好不是很好，但是起碼很安全。」

“I feel frustrated because I can only use simple English to express myself. Maybe I have a good idea in mind, but it will sound simple due to my limited expression... Using simple and short sentences is definitely not good enough, but it's safe.” (Tony, Interview)

「有些同學就是能很快的反應，但是我就是需要思考再說話的人。一來我不想讓我自己說的話膚淺，另外，我也從沒被教過怎麼在說話當中當那個主動說話的角色。」

“Some classmates can respond quickly and smoothly to others' opinions. But I need take some time to think before speaking up because for one thing, I don't want my answer sounding superficial, for another, I was not taught to take an active turn to jump into conversations in any class.” (Nick, Interview)

「老師叫我們讀的我真的都有讀!但是每次老師要我們提出自己的想法或是主動分享經驗就讓我很不知道該怎麼回應。因為以前老師不是這樣教的。我習慣接收教科書給的東西，還有老師教的。」

“I really did all the readings, but I just felt lost when I was asked to think critically and respond actively. I was not taught to do that in my senior high school. I was used to accepting everything I read in textbook and everything I was taught in lectures.” (Tony, Interview)

According to the above excerpts from the interviews, it can be surmised that participants have various concerns about their fulfillment of oral presentations, as other studies have suggested. Having similar feelings, students in this study also considered oral academic activities as nerve-racking and their frustration came from their restricted English oral ability, their unfamiliarity with social participatory etiquette in English academic discourse, and their restricted training of speaking in public. However, unlike other studies which pinpointed problems, it seems that the students in the present study took advantage of their teachers' unique background, so a portion of their difficulties were eased and leeway was also provided because their teacher could anticipate and understand what problems her students may encounter.

4.3 Chapter Summary

Thus far, we have discussed how the instructor influences student presenters' preparation and performance through conferencing. In conferencing, the instructor plays a number of roles, including as editor and counselor. However, differing from the general categorization of teachers' roles in other studies (see Section 4.0 Introduction), these two roles seem to re-interpret a teacher's role as an editor and counselor in learners' oral presentation tasks. On the one hand, the role of editor seems not worthy of discussion for a language teacher; however, it was found that the teacher's editor role has its influence that is nevertheless important. Editing not only provides instruction as to the adequate language use, it is also an official approval of a good presentation to student presenters. Furthermore, the instructor's quick reply to

all questions provides a comforting approval that allows students to ease their mind and lower their anxiety.

In addition, the instructor acts as a counselor in her conferencing for emotional stability, which helps build an intimate connection between the teacher and students. Why, then, does the instructor's conferencing provide an intimate and emotional strength for presenters? As gleaned from the data, she is very aware of the students' on-going development, and so can give precise comments and sincere encouragement which make students know that she follows them closely. Based on this finding, her awareness of the learners' development increases their intrinsic motivation and pushes them to strive harder. In addition, being an attentive listener reduced student anxiety. More significantly, the attentive listening was not just limited to the content of presentations; moreover, it could be regarding participants' personal lives. Through listening, students may not rid themselves of all their troubles in doing oral presentations or their worries about life; but rather, because of the teacher's sensitivity and patience to be a caring audience, possible anxiety was partly removed and student presenters felt better to perform the oral task. Finally, because of the instructor's background as an EFL learner and teacher, it seems that she has more identification with and understanding of her students' situation, feelings, and motives. In other words, she may have more empathy to predict learners' difficulties and provide them optional solutions. By so doing, part of their difficulties can be eased.

As participants reflect, they feel more confident to face challenges in fulfilling the requirement of doing oral academic presentations. From the above discussion, it can be seen that the instructor has numerous responsibilities to enact her roles appropriately to fit students' various needs. By discussing her dynamic roles in conferencing, it seems that in addition to language facilitation, what student

presenters gained in conferencing is the instructor's affirmation and support from an affective perspective. Being an indirect participant inside the classroom, however, the instructor plays her role different from how one is traditionally recognized in the educational arena. In Chapter 6, this perspective will be further discussed.

Chapter 5 Methods of Socialization in Oral Presentation Tasks: Peers' Roles

“My feeling to classmates is complicated. On the one hand, we compete with each other, but on the other hand, we are also fellows on the same boat. The truth is that I can't finish my presentation without them.”

(Jay, Interview)

5.0 Introduction

As discussed earlier in Chapter 4, oral academic presentations are viewed as a socioculturally co-constructed activity in this study. When we take a closer examination of co-participants in an oral presentation in a language classroom, it is very likely that the presenter is not the only one who constructs a presentation. Rather, there are three key informants (i.e., the presenter, the instructor, and the student audience) in a language classroom who seem to co-construct the activity of an academic oral presentation. Rather than just focusing on the presenters, this study aimed to better understand how the other stakeholders who co-constructed the oral academic presentation could possibly contribute to presenters' engagement in completing the oral task. Further, if the indirect participants could contribute to construct the oral activity, then in which way do they influence presenters' engagement?

As discussed in Chapter 4, the instructor's role, especially her role in conferencing, aims to better explain how the indirect but integral participants, i.e., the instructor and peers, in the oral activity may contribute to student presenters' involvement and the shaping of their decisions, thoughts, and understandings of the target task. In this chapter, we will move our attention to explore how the other groups of indirect participants, i.e., peers, may contribute to student presenters' engagement in oral presentations.

Compared to findings in previous studies of the role of peers' cooperation in oral activities⁶, findings in the present study show that the results are not entirely straightforward. First, in terms of cooperation among peers in oral activities, the results in this study seem not so negative as Chang's (2001) findings, indicating that EFL medical students were reluctant to get involved in team work. Rather, student presenters in this study expected and needed to cooperate with peers, especially for constructing interaction in the oral presentation task. Furthermore, as for the time phase where cooperation occurred, data in the present study differed from those in Kobayashi's (2003) and Yang's (2010) studies, both of which indicated a heavy reliance on peer cooperation in preparing an oral presentation task. By contrast, in this study presenters did not rely on peers when they were preparing an oral academic presentation task; rather, they relied on peers' cooperation to co-construct the oral task during their presentations.

To a certain degree, the data in the present study show participants' reliance on peers; nonetheless, differences from the above studies suggest how peer cooperation works in completing an oral activity, the results of which imply diverse outcomes. This study therefore aims to shed light on how peers contribute to the construction of

⁶ In the past decade, several researchers have shed light on the role of peers' cooperation in oral activities (Basturkmen, 2000; Chang, 2001; Patri, 2002; Kobayashi, 2003; Morita, 2004; Saito, 2008; Taylor & Wigglesworth, 2009; Yang, 2010). Focusing on the particular context and oral academic presentations, three studies are particularly relevant: Chang (2001), Kobayashi (2003), and Yang (2010). The first study is related to the context of Taiwanese medical school students while the latter two are associated with peer influence in oral presentation tasks. In the context of Taiwan, Chang (2001) pointed out that due to various reasons, such as limited linguistic competence or worries about unfair duty division in group work, medical students in her study were unwilling to cooperate with peers. Students preferred to work on an individual-basis in their PBL project, which was originally designed to encourage group cooperation (see Chapter 1). In an ESL context, Kobayashi's (2003) ethnographic research concluded that the three Japanese ESL undergraduate students' depended heavily on collaborative dialogue (mainly in L1) in their preparatory activities, including making a PowerPoint document, rehearsing, and performance-coaching. Similarly, the five Chinese ESL students in Yang's (2010) study showed intensive cooperation among peers in doing group presentations, including both their negotiation in preparing oral activities as well as their in-class speaking tasks. The two ESL studies, although focusing on different groups of students but the same theme, indicate that students who need to learn team work in the host Canadian university culture opt to cooperate with peers in preparing and delivering their presentations.

academic oral presentations. In other words, the focus of this chapter is to explore the ways in which peers influence presenters in constructing better understandings of how a competent oral academic presentation is built and delivered. The data analysis in this study focused on decoding data from participants' retrospections or reflections from interviews and self-report forms (SRFs), discovering recursively reported themes, and triangulating with two other sets of data from observations and field-notes. This study hence assumes a position from the participants' views to explore what they think they have gained from peers and how those peers have influenced their realization and performance to fulfill the requirements of an oral task. Through the analysis process, understandings began to emerge indicating that peer influence in the oral activity is not to be as simple as it first appears. The following sections will approach the issue of peer influence from two perspectives. First, peer contribution during and after presentations will be examined. Second, learning as a result of peer influence will be discussed.

5.1 Contribution of Peer during and after Presentation

5.1.1 Contribution during Presentation

In a class, it is usually presumed that learning mainly occurs through the instructor's lectures and modeling. Charlton (2006) asserted the importance of lectures,

Lecture's effectiveness is that they are formally-structured social events which artificially manipulate human psychology. A formal lecture is a mutually-beneficial 'collusion' between class and lecturer to improve learning. Lectures are delivered by an actually-present individual, and this creates a here-and-now social situation which makes lectures easier to attend to... Furthermore, to allow the potential for repeated interactions to allow trust to develop between lecturer and class, it is much more educationally-effective for lectures to be given as a course rather than as one-off interactions. (p. 1261)

In this class also, it seemed to be expected that the teacher lectures and models so as to guide students to present effectively and become involved in the social activity more easily. Based on the interviews with the instructor, Ann holds this

belief and expectation as well. She made the following statement.

「這群學生知道自已的程度還不錯，但是他們卻不知道該用什麼樣的好方法去呈現一場口頭報告，之後也可以從中得到更多自信去站在講台上。但即使他們大部分都被認為是聰明的學生，我還是得秀給他們看，告訴他們怎麼做才行。我總不能就把他們丟在那讓他們自生自滅！我是希望他們能照著我的模式做他們自己的報告。」

“They know their language ability is fine, but what they don’t know is how they can deliver their presentation in a more effective way so that they can have more confidence to stand in front of stage. Even though they are regarded as a group of talented students, I still have to show and tell them what to do. I can’t just leave them alone! It is expected that my modeling allows them to follow up.”(Interview)

The teacher’s reflection shows that she considers her lectures and modeling essential and necessary for students because they demonstrate an effective oral academic presentation and may allow students to have more confidence while standing in front of audiences.

However, although the instructor indeed provided a model for students, it is interesting to note from observations and field-notes that the teacher’s lectures and modeling appear not to be the only pattern for students to follow. Rather, student participants develop conceptualizations to perform their oral presentations and build their realization in terms of awareness of engaging audiences through their observations and emulations of peers who also show them other options to perform a presentation and ways to engage in a discussion. Put simply, beyond the instructor’s lectures and modeling, participants in fact form concepts of oral academic presentations from peers’ performance or their way of engaging audiences. From another point of view, it seems that participants’ realizations of oral presentations is not limited to the instructor’s teaching or modeling; rather, through interactions with and observations of peers, participants form some realizations of oral presentations that are not shown or demonstrated by the instructor. Such a finding shows that in this community, peers do not simply act as an audience or verbal contributor; instead, they have considerable influence and constitute one of the major resources for participants to construct realizations as well as to develop further understandings of

completing oral presentation tasks. Adopting this perspective, it seems likely that in certain classroom environments, oral academic presentations are a socially-constructed activity which demonstrates the importance of investigating how peers enact their influence in oral academic activities. This perspective seems to have been overlooked and not discussed in previous studies, but shows its significance recursively in this study.

Firstly, as recursively referred by participants across data resources in interviews and self-report forms, participants indicate that what and how peers demonstrate in their presentation influence participants' realizations of oral presentations indirectly, as the example provided by Jay's interview suggests. Here is a conversation between Jay and the researcher.

(R: researcher; J: Jay)
J: 「上次 Anita⁷帶討論問題時用 debating 的方式讓我印象很深刻。」
R: 「喔?! 你認為她的方式對你來說有甚麼特別的嗎?」
J: 「我們班應該沒人知道要怎麼做英文的辯論吧...但是她就是用了這個方法帶進問題討論的部分。」
R: 「你認為那次的效果好嗎?」
J: 「很不錯啊!因為她那篇在講代理孕母嘛,本來就是醫學倫理學很受爭議的一塊,暫且不說辯論的形式正確或不正確,但的確讓站在兩邊的人都有機會說出自己的想法和論點,而且每個人都有輪到說話的機會,所以也不怕沒人發言的尷尬。」
R: 「那你會考慮在以後的報告用這樣的方式嗎?」
J: 「如果我要報告的題目也是爭論性的,我就會考慮用這種方法。但是有時候聲音不只兩邊,比如說有醫生的角度,家人的角度,病人的角度,整個社會觀感等等,所以我也許不叫同學辯論,但會用角色扮演,這樣或許能得到更多不同角度的回應。」

(Interview, translated)
J: "The way that Anita leads her discussion, using debating, impressed me a lot."
R: "Really? Why do you think it's different?"
J: "I don't think anyone in our class knows how to conduct an English debate, but she used this method to lead a discussion in Q & A."
R: "What do you think of this method?"
J: "It's pretty good. The topic in her assigned reading is the issue about surrogate mothers. It is a controversial issue in medical ethics. Regardless of whether the debating format is correct or not, it indeed allows participants in two sides to voice their own thoughts and arguments. Furthermore, everyone gets his turn to talk, so the presenter can avoid the embarrassment of audiences that are reluctant to talk."
R: "Then would you consider adopting this method in your own presentation?"
J: "I would if my presented topic is an arguable issue. However, I would modify it a little

⁷ The name is pseudonyms.

because sometimes the voice is not just from two sides; for example, the perspectives could be from doctors, families, the patient, or society as a whole, etc. So, maybe instead of debating, I would choose role-plays as the method so that I can get more reflections from different perspectives.

Jay's reflection shows that Anita's debating method influenced Jay's realization of leading a discussion. Because of Anita's trial of a new method and her demonstration in class, Jay observed that this method seemed feasible and effective to engage audiences. Further, her demonstration stimulated Jay to consider that its feasibility could be especially workable to lead a discussion in an argumentative article, and beyond that, would transform its format into a role-play which may motivate multiple voices in a discussion. This strategy for leading a discussion was not demonstrated by the instructor nor offered in the class textbook. As Jay reflects, he would adopt this method in a future presentation if the topic is argumentative-oriented. Although Jay did not use this method throughout the term, this experience gained from peers was internalized in his mind, according to his reflections. Despite this influence not being promptly shown in class, it seems reasonable to assume that peers' influence does exist.

Jay's example shows that student presenters observe techniques from peers' presentations, which may not be taught in lectures or textbooks; at the same time, they also observe flaws from peers as well, such as reading scripts instead of speaking naturally, or failing to construct discussable questions. By observing these good and bad examples, students emulate correct models and internalize them as one part of their own presentations, as will be shown in the following sections. According to the collected data from participants, the process of realization via peers is a very essential social practice for them to have a better understanding of academic presentation requirements. This does not suggest, however, that the teacher's lectures or modeling should be waived, but shows another perspective of truth: peers have a

certain indirect force to influence students' understandings of the oral task. If this is truly the case, it then appears necessary to further investigate how peers play their role to participate in and co-construct the oral activity so as to provide its implementation significance in teaching oral academic presentations.

Nevertheless, in reviewing previous studies, the most frequently researched line in terms of peers' roles in an oral activity has been related to various factors which may influence classroom participation with the teacher or fellow students; for example, how sociocultural differences or language abilities influence students to engage in oral activities (Lee, 2009; Liu, 2001, Morita, 2000, Yang, 2010) or how student actually approach classroom interaction (Tsui, 2008, Lee, 2009). Generally speaking, this line of research explores possible factors brought by contextual environments that may influence students' willingness and ability to participate in oral activities. Another line of research, through data-driven description (e.g., corpus analysis or IRF exchange structure) or language analysis, has examined classroom interaction by comparing language-use practices found in peers' classroom interaction to teacher-led instruction (Chavez, 2007), while some ESP-oriented studies have investigated how various classroom interaction patterns (or language features) were represented across different disciplines. For example, Basturkmen explored language features in student-led discussions (1999) in a MBA course and interaction patterns of discourse organization in seminar-type discussions (2002) in a Business Administration program. Similarly, some researchers have examined how in-class interaction could be differentiated from that occurring in an occupational setting (Springer & Collins, 2008).

Integrating the above studies, it can be seen that they all focus on how focal students interact with peers inside the classroom or how they approach the local culture and particular genre so as to be a capable oral participant in a community. To

expand the aforementioned studies' scope, the present study would like to shed light on how peers influence students' minds to implement a presentation, i.e., how peers' in-class involvement and performance could influence participants' realizations and preparatory work in their own presentations. Although the influence may not present itself immediately, it seems that peers' performance indeed brings some influence to help participants construct some realizations *during* and *after* an oral presentation.

From the data in the present study, the first and also the most direct evidence of peers' contribution is that rather than the teacher's modeling, peers' presentation performance was a more achievable resource to gain some conceptualizations for making a presentation by engaging in the process of negotiation in the oral activity. According to students' interview data, it was found that they felt that the teacher's presentation demonstration of was not an easy model for them to emulate; instead, in their views, what was demonstrated by peer presenters actually provided a more approachable model to fulfill the role as an academic presenter. Despite the fact that teacher's model presentation in the third and twelfth weeks made a strong impact on students in that class through explaining the requirement of a good oral presentation and demonstrating how it could be done, students felt her modeling was hardly attainable, as Peter notes in his interview.

「老師示範得很好，但是我做不到。我真的不覺得自己可以做到那樣的程度。」
“The teacher's model presentation was so great, but way beyond my abilities. I don't think I could ever reach that level.”

As all participants indicated, peers' oral presentations were more approachable for students to emulate and such emulation teaches them how to organize their own presentations and avoid ineffective techniques. As Tony pointed out in his interview,

「老師的 presentation 示範得很清楚，但是我覺得同學做的 presentation 我比較有可能做得來。」
“The teacher's presentation is exemplary enough, but I think my classmates' presentations are more doable.”

While the same comment was echoed by other participants as well, it seems that student presenters, to some extent, were influenced by peer performance and behavior in presentations. In other words, it appears that students' presentations shape peer audiences' understandings and conceptualizations of oral presentations through the performance of the presentation itself rather than the content.

This occurrence was especially true for the first presenter in each presentation session since there was no student presenter for him to follow, even though the instructor has done her modeling already. Nick, the first presenter in the second round, revealed his anxiety and panic before the commencement of his presentation.

He wrote these words in his second self-report form,

「我做第二次口頭報告的前一晚根本沒什麼睡著，因為第二次的方式跟要求跟第一次的不一樣，我是第二輪第一個要報的人，所以沒有同學可以觀摩。」

“I was sleepless the night before my second oral presentation. The procedure of the second presentation is much different from the first. I don't have anybody to follow.” (SRF II)

He also said this in his interview,

「在做第二次口語報告的時候，我覺得自己很像衝鋒陷陣的砲灰，燃燒自己照亮別人（笑）」

“When I was doing my second oral presentation, I considered myself as a sacrificed pioneer who burns himself to light up the road and guide the followers (laughs).” (Interview)

By his vivid metaphor, we can see the nature of emulation among peer presenters. That is, presenters attempted to learn the practices and models (both good and bad) of delivering an oral presentation by observing and emulating peers' performance. It seems that through observing a lively peer's demonstration, students felt more at ease to start their own presentation. This suggests that oral activities are not simply a process of speaking; rather, to the group of participants, a presentation is an occasion which provides resources for all participants to co-construct some realizations in the particular community.

5.1.2 Contribution after Presentation

Although it seems that an oral presentation is a co-constructed sociocultural

activity in this class, how exactly it is constructed is another issue. It is interesting to find that at different time phases, the instructor and peers, i.e., the two main indirect participants, provide different resources of contributions to help the presenter build his own presentation. As for the instructor, it was discussed that she provided her facilitation as an editor and counselor through conferencing, which not only supplied assistance in language use but also offered a secure base at the psychological level. Moreover, participants' co-constructed relationships with the instructor occurred *before* the presenter's performance. On the other hand, as for peers, besides co-constructing a classroom interaction during a presentation, what seems to be more important and deserves more attention is the influence that is brought by peers. While being in the class, participants may not be completely aware that they are observing and emulating how their peers engage in discussions or perform their presentations. Nonetheless, as shown in interviews and self-report forms, their reflections show that what their peers do and how they act in class helped participants shape part of their realizations in their minds and adopt similar strategies in their own presentations. Simply put, students' co-constructed relationship may not only exist during the class, but also elicits effects after class.

As indicated in different sources of data, the after-effect brought by peers is one of the major resources for students to form conceptualizations of doing oral academic presentations. By integrating the findings, it appears that there is much reflection and realization going on after the class is finished. That is, participants reflected in interviews and self-report forms that their realization of doing an oral presentation stemmed mainly from peers. Therefore, peers' performance or the method employed for engaging in discussions indirectly allows participants to form realizations of oral academic presentations. In effect, such a realization, first, appears to influence participants to decide how they would like to present their own performance; secondly,

it makes participants re-define the oral presentation activity in a unique form that they recognize. Such an identical realization could be seen in the data; for example, students employed certain strategies repeatedly once they recognized the methods were effective, such as using pictures to introduce vocabulary. As such, this chapter aims to explore how and in what way peers influence participants' engagement in an oral academic presentation. In addition, an exploration of the unique patterns that the participants adopted to fulfill an oral academic presentation task in this community is presented.

5.2 Learning as a Result of Peer Influence

5.2.1 Realization of Elements of Effective Presentation Strategies⁸

In terms of students' realizations, the first and perhaps most salient finding was their awareness in identifying effective presentation strategies. Based on the data from in-class observations and field notes, it is interesting to find that all participants employed different strategies to engage audiences during presentations, for example, using the whiteboard to write or draw, showing a diagram or table, or using a debate to contrast different voices from conflicting perspectives. The data suggest that students know the importance the audience and try various strategies to engage listeners. In doing so, participants reflected in their interviews and self-report forms that engaging audiences successfully is the one thing that concerned them most, and as such was what they strived hard to achieve.

「我們(即:該班學生)做中文的報告很多次了, 台下同學很常就是會在下面做自己的事, 比如說看自己的書。但是在這堂課, 我會想用些特別的方法想抓住同學的注意力, 可能是人少, 所以每個聽眾的回應都很重要。」

“We have done many oral presentations in other classes, but some of my classmates would be inattentive when someone else is doing his presentation. But in this class, I would like to employ some different methods to catch everyone's attention.” (Nick, Interview)

⁸ Again, what they have realized may not be the most effective strategies of oral presentations in the target form, as discussed by Morita (2000) and Zappa-Hollman (2007), but it is *participants' own realizations* after they took participate in the classroom interaction.

「我很在意同學和老師會有甚麼反應，我不指望會有什麼熱烈討論啦(笑)，但起碼我不想讓他們在聽我的報告時睡著。」

“I do care about my classmates’ and the teacher’s response. I don’t really expect to have a hot discussion (laugh), but at least, I don’t want to see them fall asleep in my presentation.” (Tony, Interview)

「一個人要獨撐四十分鐘的 presentation，如果沒有同學幫忙回應根本就撐不起來。」

“It is impossible for a presenter to have a forty-minute-long presentation without classmates’ responses.” (Andrew, Interview)

「這次的報告能引起這麼多同學的討論，真的讓我好開心，很有成就感:D」

“I really feel so happy and proud to provoke so much discussion on my presentation this time :D” (Jay, SRF II)

Their reflections show that student presenters set the goal to engage audiences in their presentations, including being attentive or getting lively feedback; it could also be that having an active discussion is a source for formulating a sense of achievement for a student presenter.

It seems likely that if student presenters themselves come up with ideas to engage audiences in their presentations, then, a question we may raise could be how the concept of using certain strategies is formed since the instructor did not teach or show students how to use effective strategies to take into account audiences’ attention or interest in any lectures or modeling. Furthermore, for this group of students, what are the unique strategies that they consider effective? As many textbooks have suggested, there are innumerable strategies for presenters to employ for delivering an effective presentation. However, it seems that participants in this study had their own way of constructing their understandings of an effective presentation through their engagement in the oral event. That is, through engaging in other fellow students’ presentations, students consistently experienced the process of listening to, responding to, observing what and how other presenters have done to fulfill their role as a presenter, and reflecting, so students develop some criteria for deciding how they as a presenter would like to engage audiences in their own presentations. As such, peers’ influence contributes to exert its impact until student presenters create their

own presentations. Such a reflective process, therefore, allows students to build their own concepts of effective strategies to make audiences more engaged. It is also interesting to note, as aforementioned, that certain strategies were repeatedly used in student participants' presentations. The question derived from this observation could be: What are the students' preferred techniques and why do they think these strategies are more workable than others?

Such an investigation could be important because this observation appears to first show how participants develop their understanding of effective strategies to engage audiences successfully through peer presenters' influence; and second, reveals which presentation strategies are considered effective for this group of students. In other words, through peers, how did the group of students construct their rationale of the elements to compose a good oral presentation? The significance, however, does not lie in its wide implementation in other teaching contexts, but in its illustration of the importance of recognizing the unique needs of an ESP context.

Triangulating the collected data in this study, through observing and sometimes interacting with peers, the realization of effective presentation strategies are especially evident in three perspectives: awareness of using attention getting strategies, selecting adequate materials to support presentations, and making a presentation emotionally charged. More details will be further discussed in the following.

5.2.1.1 Awareness of Using Attention Getting Strategies

One prominent influence gained from engaging in oral presentations with peers is their awareness of using some attention getting strategies to engage audiences. The first device is related to the way they introduce vocabulary. The group of student particularly preferred showing vocabulary supported with pictures to help with understanding. Due to the nature of the class being medically-content related, describing technical terms such as syndromes was a difficult task. Therefore, to

elicit reactions, students often presented provoking images to raise audience attention, help explain and understand new vocabulary, and guard audience against boredom.

For example, in Mark's response in his first self-report form, he wrote,

「Lisa⁹今天做的報告幾乎在每個單字旁邊放了圖片，我覺得這種介紹單字的方式很有趣也蠻酷的（我的比起來真的讓人很想睡覺>_<）。下次我也想試試看！」
“It really impresses me that Lisa exemplified a picture beside each vocabulary word in her presentation. Compared to my long, tedious list, her vocabulary session looks really fun and cool. I want to try it out next time!” (SRF I)

In fact, Mark was just one of the presenters who followed Lisa's strategy to supplement vocabulary with pictures. From the data in the field notes, several other presenters were recorded, including participants (e.g., Mark, Peter, Andrew) and two other non-participants of this study, emulating Lisa's behavior when introducing vocabulary. It seems that by observing peers' presentations, students come to realize that one of the effective, workable strategies to engage audiences is to show authentic pictures to support vocabulary, especially for the case of introducing or memorizing technical terms.

「病名真的很難解釋，所以秀出圖片，然後說：‘The syndrome is just like that!’就好了(笑)！」
“It is certainly challenging to explain medical terms about diseases. However, with pictures, I just show them and say, ‘*the syndrome is just like that!*’ (laugh).” (Andrew, Interview)

「用圖片幫助加深單字的印象我自己是覺得很有用!不只是做報告好用，準備期中考背單字的時候，大家也會分享檔案，背起單字輕鬆很多。」
“I personally think pictures help me a lot in memorizing vocabulary. Not only for the purposes of doing a presentation, but also in the case of preparing the mid-term examination. We share PPT files when we are preparing for the mid-term examination and pictures make the job much easier.” (Nick, Interview)

From the above quotes, it can be surmised that owing to the nature of the course being content-oriented, introducing and memorizing vocabulary is a task that students need to pay particular attention to. Yet, through Lisa's performance, other fellow students came to learn that the presentations strategy is indeed workable, so they

⁹ It is a pseudonym for privacy. Lisa is the other presenter who did her presentation on the same day as Mark; both of them are the first presenters of the rotation in the semester. Even though she is not one of participants in this study, her presentation impressed Mark and he made the above reflection on her presentation in his first self-report form.

repeated the tactic when they presented. Such a mutual influence between the student presenter and student audience is interesting because it shows a different route of learning which goes beyond expert (i.e., the instructor in this context) and novice (i.e., students), and portrays another dimension of the learning relationship among novices. This perspective deserves more discussion, which is offered in the next chapter.

5.2.1.2 Selecting Adequate Materials to Support Presentation

In addition, the realization of engaging audiences in this case could also be related to selecting adequate supplementary material for audiences. Derived from the collected data, interestingly, it seems that the sense of choosing adequate materials to facilitate their presentation has not been taught or shown in the instructor's demonstration; rather, it is often gained through peers' performance. That is, how presenters should select related materials to strengthen their presentation is not introduced in the instructor's lectures, but participants sense the importance by observing peers' performance. According to the data from self-report forms and interviews, all participants revealed that observing peers' performance allowed them to know what kind of materials could be suitably selected while some others could not. That is, when observing the interaction between the presenter and the audience, students learn how adequate the selected material is. If material is adequately selected, peer audiences would be more willing to listen to the presentation or get involved in discussions; however, if the material is not adequately selected, audiences would be less engaged.

Then, in this case, what is adequate and what is not? Gained from the data, it seems that participants learn from peers' interaction that the adequacy of selecting materials lies in its acceptance by audiences. That is, to this group of students, audiences' reaction to presenters' selected materials is one method for them to learn

what is adequate for this community. In this study, such an adequacy could be witnessed from two perspectives. First, when a presenter needs supplementary materials to facilitate a presentation, the content should not go beyond the audience's comprehension. As Jay reflects in his interview, to fulfill academic requirements, student presenters, on the one hand, have to follow the conventionally accepted norms set by the instructor and peers; while on the other hand, their performance has to be innovative, interesting and memorable. He remarks,

「這堂課的基本要求就是你一定要讀完 reading, 所以我就不想再重覆每個人都已經知道的東西。像有些同學重覆內容大家就會想睡覺...有些同學是講太多課外的, 那也很無聊, 看起來好像豐富, 但是實際上我們都聽不懂。拜託...有些是醫學專業的東西耶, 我覺得沒必要。」

“The premise of this class is that everyone has finished reading the assigned article, so I don't want to repeat what everybody already knows. Some of my classmates just repeated what we've already known and it really makes us sleepy when some of them added too much irrelevant supplementary materials. But the fact is it really makes us confused because it's medical-content-related. I don't think it's necessary.” (Interview)

This excerpt shows that he observed some inappropriate presentation behavior from other peers' demonstrations and came up with a sense of what to avoid in his own presentation.

Furthermore, for this group of students, adequacy could also be explained as the ability to provide supplementary information that is not too distracting from the reported assigned reading, but with certain innovations that allow fellow audiences to learn extra knowledge beyond the reading content. As Nick indicated in his interview, he recounted his struggle in deciding appropriate additional materials.

「我不想冒險去把主題扯太遠, 不然又會收不回來。所以在做報告很難的地方就是要找出恰當的點來呈現內容, 不能扯太遠又不能沒創意。但是這個很難, 因為該拿捏多少老師沒辦法教, 只能看同學在課堂上怎麼做, 還有自己做的時候, 同學之間互動的經驗。」

“But, I don't want to take the risk of going too far, otherwise I would lose control over my presentation. Therefore, in this class, I'm trying hard to catch the nuance between what's appropriate and what's not, or how creative or formal I have to be. It is much more than language itself; it's the principle of academia...which is much more complicated for me because it cannot be taught explicitly by teachers, but by constant observation from peers and the interaction experiences in my own presentation.” (Interview)

Nick's reflection shows that he became aware of the need to strike a balance to represent the content of the reading which should be conventional on the one hand and innovative on the other. This seems an unstated principle in doing oral presentations, but not shown in both the teacher's instruction and class textbook. In Nick's case, he gained the conceptualization of selecting appropriate materials to strengthen his presentation, but not deviate too far from what he should do. Such a realization and awareness, in this study, is acquired through students' engagement in the oral activity with peers. That is, through observation from peers, participants realize what kinds of materials are adequate for this audience.

Also, by engaging in the socially-constructed activity, learners observe, practice, and emulate patterns that they regard as appropriate and effective. In their minds, they also internalize the gain as one part of learning to become a more skilled presenter in their own performance. In particular, through the audience's prompt reactions, all students increasingly developed an idea of what an academic presentation would be like in the context of seminars and gradually trained themselves to be a more experienced academic presenter.

5.2.1.3 Making a Presentation Emotionally Charged

Nevertheless, as shown in the data, peer influence on presenters' strategies to engage the audience is not only grounded in reporting the assigned reading effectively in the ways that they consider as adequate; moreover, the influence is expanded to the strategy of making their presentation emotionally charged, especially in the Q & A session. Jay's case could be an instance to explain peer contribution to make his presentation more appealing. In Unit 2 entitled *Cloning and the Genome Project*, Ben¹⁰ started his presentation like this,

"I don't know how much you know about infertility. Uhm- but for the topic that I'm

¹⁰ Similar to Lisa, Ben is also a pseudonym for privacy. Ben is not one of participants in this study, but his presentation impressed Jay, who made the above reflection on his presentation in his interview.

going to do my oral presentation on, I want to start from my aunt's story.”
(Fieldnote, dated Sep. 30th)

Ben's presentation was a memorable one since it was the first and only presentation that did not follow the procedure modeled by the instructor. He firstly brought a personal life experience of his aunt to share how she has suffered from infertility for thirteen years and had experienced several failed treatments. Surprisingly, this approach aroused the audience's attention at the beginning of his presentation and later provoked a lively dialogue in the following discussion phase, including some ethical issues such as the legalization of zoosperm exclusion. Of all the presentations that this author was present for in the observed classroom, it was perhaps the most engaging and emotionally charged presentation task.

However, the end of Ben's presentation brought another new beginning because his performance made others come to realize they could have different possibilities for creating effective presentations. That is, Ben's performance promoted the incorporation of real-life stories as a vehicle to move and impress audiences and internalized it as a strategy for their own presentations.

According to the data gained from interviews and self-report forms, several participants revealed the impact brought by Ben's presentation.

「我在做 reading 的時候就會站在一個角度去解讀這篇文章。但是當這篇文章被帶到課堂被大家不同的觀點及故事一起討論的時候就很有趣。不一樣的人就帶出不同觀點和想法。我自己做報告的時候也覺得 Ben 這樣的方式最能引起大家共鳴。所以在我第二次做報告的時候就多帶 opinion questions 來討論，效果比我第一次還熱絡。」

“When I read a text, I stand in one position and make one interpretation. However, I'm often amazed by classmates' different interpretations to the same text. It's really fascinating—different people, different opinions and views. I myself also like to use Ben's method to engage audiences. Therefore, I preferred opinion questions for the Q & A session in my second oral report in which audiences were more engaged than they were in my first presentation.” (Tony, Interview)

「在 Ben 的口頭報告那次，他用自己家人的經驗帶出報告的主題。我覺得那是很吸引聽眾注意的方法。對我自己來說，生活經驗的分享很吸引我，也是透過這些真人真事讓無聊的內容變得親切。我很喜歡聽這樣的分享…本來還會擔心這樣做會不會不夠正式，但其實後來同學也常用這樣的方式帶討論。」

“In Ben's presentation, he used a personal experience to lead his presentation. It's really an effective strategy to engage audiences. To me personally, life-experience sharing attracts me most. Also, real people and real events make a dry presentation come alive.

I'm very happy to listen to them... In fact, I've been worried if this method would not be formal enough, but it later became the most frequently used strategy by other presenters.”
(Nick, Interview)

Sharing personal life or experiences, however, seems not to be one of target forms (e.g., see Morita, 2000) in a typically-recognized academic presentation. However, in this case, peer audiences played a sharing source by adding personal life experiences and knowledge to enrich the discussion content. Their process of interaction was undertaken based on the assigned reading, but their discussion process was not done in a vacuum; rather, the presenter and audience members had to recall their own language reservoir, personal experience and world knowledge, knowledge of social interaction, medical knowledge (even though several of them indicated their medical knowledge is limited), and stances to trigger what has been constructed in the mind and further extend their stock of knowledge if possible. Therefore, in the interaction process of discussions, they produced various interpretations and dimensions or levels of understanding of a text.

Furthermore, most participants reflected that sharing life stories is an interesting and expected interaction in the Q &A session. It was also one of their favored strategies to elicit more discussions and reflections from peer audiences, as indicated in participants' reflections.

「我喜歡跟同學討論生活的故事，因為印象深刻。這些故事有可能會發生在周遭，同學們說的故事就像我自己生活真實的一部分。」

“I like to listen to classmates discuss compelling life stories. Many of the stories have universal appeal. My classmates' stories are also part of my life. They are real.” (Andrew, SRF II)

“I expect the discussion session most because it is very interesting to listen to various viewpoints and life stories from different people, including the teacher's as well.” (Peter, SRF II, exactly the same words as the original)

「我最喜歡討論的部份，因為那不像 reading 那麼 dry and boring (笑)或是一個人站在台上報告那麼緊張嚴肅，那是大家一起分享想法的時候，很有趣，因為你不知道同學會分享什麼。」

“I like the discussion session most because it is not as dry and boring as reading (laugh) or nerve-racking as someone standing alone on the stage to fulfill his duty as a presenter. Rather, it is a moment for sharing, so it is interesting because you'll never know what fellow classmates may bring to the discussion.” (Mark, Interview)

It seems that to the group of students, a life-experience-sharing discussion in the Q & A session is not only a linguistic interaction process, but also involves personal experiences or memories of past events. It is a reciprocal relationship between the presenter and audiences. By such an active engagement, students consider their construction of meaning of the assigned reading and expand their views through having a discussion with peers.

5.2.2 Realization of the Responsibility as an Academic Presenter

5.2.2.1 Updating the Information Provided by the Textbook

First of all, some participants reflected that their awareness to fulfill an academic presenter's responsibility is to update the information provided by the textbook. One instance is how Peter's careful attention to the information in the textbook influenced Tony's awareness of being a responsible presenter. In his first presentation, Peter found that the mentioned number of zizygotic and monzygotic twins provided by the textbook was out-of-date. Thus, he tried to find related information via the Internet and a research paper to provide updated medical statistics (Fieldnote dated Oct, 28th). Some other peers mentioned that Peter's behavior was impressive and set a precedent because they had learnt to be cautious of the information provided by the textbook, as for example, the reflection in Tony's interview shows.

「Peter 的那次報告讓我印象很深刻!他更正了教科書裡的數據,自己做了一些功課找出最新的數據。所以後來我自己做第二次報告的時候,我對課本裡的內容就不敢大意。我的那篇在討論天花,裡面還在說 President Bill Clinton. 真的有點過期了啦(笑)!所以後來我也就跟著補充一些最新的資料在我自己的報告裡。」

“Peter's presentation impressed me a lot! He provided us the most updated statistics by paying extra effort to check recent research. It influenced my second oral presentation because I become cautious of the content of the reading. The topic in my presentation referred to smallpox. But one part talks about President Bill Clinton's argument on the issue. That's really out-of-date! (Laugh) Therefore, I also added some updated information in my own presentation.” (Interview)

Obviously, Peter's behavior of modifying statistics in the assigned reading raised Tony's awareness of the numbers provided by the textbook. Such awareness

is not taught or reminded by the instructor; instead, Peter's demonstration indirectly shaped other students' realizations of knowing the importance of double checking information given by the reading. Through Peter's performance, students learned indirectly that if the statistic is not correct or current, it is the presenter's responsibility to provide an updated one. Another similar example is from Mark's interview, showing his sense of connecting his responsibility as a presenter to his future career,

「醫生工作的其中一部分就是要知道最新訊息，不斷的更新自己知道的東西。這堂課的口語報告就給我類似這樣的訓練。如果我要報告，我會把課本裡提到的數據或病名再 Google 一次才安心，就覺得站在台上不會覺得心虛沒自信。」

“I think one of the duties of being a doctor is to keep himself/herself posted with the most updated information. The oral presentation task in this class provides such training. In my turn to give a report, I'd feel safe and right to re-check the statistics or technical terms provided by the textbook via Google. By so doing, I won't feel I'm lacking in confidence.” (Interview)

From the above excerpts, it shows that from Peters' cautious attitude toward data given by the textbook, students learned that providing the most updated figures shows responsibility as an academic presenter. It seems that this kind of realization gained by the interaction with peers is a very essential social practice for them to have a better understanding of academic presentation requirements that could not be gained without fellow participants' contributions.

5.2.2.2 Knowing Best and Acting Professionally

Yet, providing updated information is not the only realization that students regard as important for an academic presenter; moreover, they also consider that a presenter should know the topic best and act professionally when presenting, as Andrew reflected in his interview,

「做口頭報告這件事，對我自己來說是很寶貴的經驗，因為它讓我學到該怎麼做好一場好的報告…事先看過文章不是只是簡單的看過，我必須很深入的去了解他在說甚麼。也就是我必須要真的看懂，然後我才能盡我的責任當一個稱職的 presenter 跟聽眾互動。其實就好像一種專業的責任：當你站在台前，你就被期待應該要非常熟悉報告的內容，而且要表現得很專業。像有些同學的報告就看得出來很盡責準備過，而不是隨便混過去就好了。」

“The practice (*i.e., oral presentation*) is very valuable for me personally because it makes me learn the procedure and mode of academic presentations...Previewing the article is not just previewing anymore because I’m forced to analyze it in depth. I have to read it with a certain intensity so that I can fulfill my responsibility to be a good presenter to have a lively interaction with peers. It is like an academic responsibility. When you stand and present in the front, you’re expected to know your material and act professionally. For example, we can tell some students were well-prepared instead of just letting it go.” (Interview)

Andrew’s case shows his realization of being a responsible presenter entails knowing the topic best because he thinks that this is expected by the audience. In the collected data, such a realization is not provided through the instructor’s reminder, but from his observations of other peers and involvement in the oral activity with other fellow students. Through this engagement, students further develop their conceptualization of doing an oral presentation, including discussion manner for taking turns during interactions and realizations of the responsibilities of an academic presenter. Afterwards, students became more aware of the natural behavior of turn-taking in a discussion and also realized the academic presenter’s responsibility to be cautious of the information in the assigned reading. In addition to these perspectives reported by participants, there was another realization that they considered important to be a successful presenter: employing various strategies to engage audiences in the Q & A session.

5.2.2.3 Employing Various Strategies to Engage Audiences in the Q & A Session

To better understand the expectations and fulfill academic demands of higher education, and besides language itself, students often reported difficulties in learning English-speaking classroom culture and appropriate classroom behavior. Presumably, this group of college students had to learn the new academic culture of higher education. Therefore, they needed to learn the expectations and academic demands in order to become a competent member of this academic community. The group of students in this community reflected that they felt it was challenging to meet the academic demands of participating in the discussion of the Q & A session. For

one thing, audience members had to jump-in dialogues freely and quickly. However, this is not the communication pattern that this group of EFL students is used to. Nick's remark can be used as an example. He indicated one major reason that made him feel anxious to sit in the class,

「一開始上這堂課我超緊張的! 有些同學就是可以反應得很快又順, 但是我說話一定得花時間想一想, 因為我不想讓自己說的答案沒內容, 事實上我也不知道怎麼切入別人的對話?」

“It was really nerve-raking to be in this class at the beginning of this semester. Some classmates could respond quickly and smoothly compared to others' opinions. But I need to take some time to think before speaking up because for one thing, I don't want my answer sounding superficial, for another, I am not used to taking an active turn to jump into conversations in any class.” (Interview)

Nick's words indeed reflect many non-native English-speaking students' dilemma, as several previous studies have suggested (Hall, 1993, 1995; Liu & Zhao, 2004; Morita, 2000, 2004; Kim, 2006; Kobayashi, 2003; Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman, 2007), indicating the difficulties of taking part in class discussions and knowing the appropriate interaction pattern, since it is not the interaction pattern in an ordinary Taiwanese classroom. In most Taiwanese classrooms, interaction in class usually takes the form of the teacher's initiation, lectures, students' response if any, and the teacher's comment and evaluation, especially in a large-size language classroom. It is thus not difficult to imagine how the students struggled when required to participate openly and actively in discussions in this class.

In Nick's case, by engaging in numerous practices in discussions throughout the term, gradually, he revealed his change in terms of taking turns during the process of interaction as follows.

「像我上次上課 (*i.e.*, 15th week) 就參與討論好幾次, 感覺好像比較能跟同學交談的感覺了。要插話還是覺得怪怪的啦, 但是跟同學在討論問題時的對話練習還是有差, 像現在不像之前那種插話那麼突兀, 是接話的感覺, 就接著別人說的話, 感覺比較順。」

“Last week (*i.e.*, 15th week), I was involved in the in-class discussion several times. The feeling is more like a natural conversation. I still think cutting others' words is odd for me, but through many practices with others in the Q & A session, I feel smoother to continue other peers' topics. The feeling is much better.” (Interview)

Nick's case explains how the in-class interaction has its influence on participants' learning about academic discussion manners. Through the interaction process in the oral presentation activity, Nick had a better conceptualization that turn-taking is one part of appropriate discussion manners in an academic community. He felt weird to take part in a dialogue because he is a slow thinker and feels reluctant to interject due to many reasons, including, oral competence, personality, and not being taught how to participate in a discussion. However, through plentiful practice in interactions, he gradually understood that he needs to engage in others' discussions when he is in an academic discussion setting, of which it seems that he made progress toward the end of the term. Therefore, Nick's case shows that the classroom interaction allowed him to realize that participating in the interaction is a natural part in discussions, which again, is not taught by the instructor, but gained from his interaction with peers.

5.3 Chapter Summary

Thus far, this chapter has shown how peers have influenced student presenters to understand, shape and reshape, and finally create their own realization of fulfilling the role as an academic presenter. In the following chapter, the findings in Chapters 4 and 5, and the instructor's role in conferencing and peers' influence during and after class, respectively, are combined to offer a further discussion on what these findings mean in terms of academic oral presentations.

Chapter 6 Discussion and Conclusion

6.0 Introduction

Framed in a sociocultural view and drawing upon a language socialization perspective, the present study attempted to capture a holistic understanding of how the six Taiwanese medical students acculturated into academic discourse and culture and how they interacted with and interpreted academic oral presentations. Thus far, as shown in the previous two chapters, we have examined closely the academic discourse socialization experiences of Taiwanese medical majors by investigating their preparation, performance, reflections, thoughts, and feelings about engaging in oral presentation activities in the theme-based language class.

Based on the findings, this final chapter aims to address the research question and further provide theoretical and pedagogical implications. Firstly, Section 6.1 attends to explaining the role of the participants in this community, in addition to discussing the instructor's and peers' roles, respectively. Secondly, theoretical contributions and practical applications for higher education contexts with EFL Taiwanese medical students (i.e., Section 6.2) will be explained. Finally, the limitations of this study are addressed and recommendations for future research are provided in Section 6.3, followed by concluding remarks and reflections in Section 6.4.

6.1 Discussion

Based on the findings in Chapters 4 & 5, it can be learned from the data that to fulfill various needs, the participants' interaction relationships are dynamic, fluid, and transforming at different stages and with different issues by employing various strategies emulated from peers. Such relationships correspond to the views of L2 language socialization, asserting that the process is much more complex than L1 socialization (Duff, 2003) since every student brings their own personal histories,

interests, goals, and investments to this class. By engaging in the assigned oral tasks with peers, they learnt how to employ various strategies to implement successful negotiations in presentations and discussions. Obviously, these principles and experiences are not explicitly taught in textbooks and are hard to describe in lectures. However, resembling Ochs' Model (1988) for the role of activity in L1 socialization (Fig 2.3), through real engagement in socially constructed oral activities, knowledge is constructed both directly (i.e., through conferencing) and indirectly (i.e., through observation or emulation of peers). As for the theoretical contribution, the focus in the following discussion sections is on what the findings mean in terms of the *oral activity* and *participants* who are involved.

6.1.1 Discussion of the Oral Activity

According to the data, all participants who were involved in the oral activity changed their position to fulfill an expected role in their interactions. Through exposure to and participation in oral presentation tasks, this group of medical majors gradually and collaboratively developed their realization and skills pertaining to how to make a presentation effectively in academic contexts. However, such a realization co-constructed by the participants in this community is not validated by commonly known theories in textbooks; rather, the realization was gradually developed through the instructor's conferencing and participation with fellow students in class. Then, what does this finding mean in terms of an academic oral presentation? And, in terms of theoretical contribution, how does the finding expand or challenge existing sociocultural theories? Based on the data, two constitutive features in an oral presentation could be seen in this community: it is a process of non-native-speakers socialization and a co-constructed social activity.

6.1.1.1 A Process of Non-native-speaker Socialization

As was discussed in Chapter 2, earlier studies (Kobayashi, 2003; Morita, 2003

& 2007; Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) have centered on how non-native learners approach the target form to be a rounded presenter in an academic community. However, what differentiates the present study from earlier studies is that it does not hold any assumptions regarding what qualities students should fit in. That is, in earlier sociocultural studies referring to oral activities, most researchers have taken the position of examining and evaluating how their non-native participants fulfill the standards for an effective presentation set by English-native-speakers. Also, they have taken account of the non-native-speaker students' process of socialization, i.e., how they socialize themselves to be a better presenter. However, students in this study did not have direct resources or opportunities for encounters with native speakers for them to undergo the process of socialization. Whereas ESL learners in earlier oral studies fit themselves into the target culture while they were situated in a native-speaker community, participants in the present study are all non-native-speakers, i.e., socialization occurring in this context is entirely amongst non-native speakers, including the instructor who is also a non-native speaker and a non-expert in the students' medical field, and yet appeared to be the major resource for students to learn language and sociocultural knowledge. Taking a further step to look deeper into the data, it is surprising to learn that the instructor's contribution is more than language facilitation. She, in fact, played an important role in conferencing at the affective level.

On the other hand, the other group of indirect participants, i.e., peers, plays their multiple roles as a presenter, an audience, and an evaluator to co-construct students' realization of how to make an oral presentation. Further, drawing from the data discussed in previous sections, the student presenter's modeling role seems to be even more influential and approachable than the one done by the instructor. The data show that through students' engagement in the activity with other fellow students,

the oral activity in this context is a process that is constructed, co-constructed, shaped and re-shaped into its final form. For this reason, a significant question here is how students construct their realization of the oral activity. According to the findings in this case, the valued qualities of completing a good oral presentation are not pre-determined; instead, students develop their own realization of what the valued qualities that an academic presentation should have through the process of being involved in the socially-constructed activity with other indirect participants. That is, rather than adapting what is provided in the theory-based textbook and teacher's lectures, it seems more significant to find that students themselves define and assign meaning of an effective AOP through their own engagement in co-constructing the activity with other participants. Such a finding adds to Duff's second language socialization model that was discussed in Chapter 2.

6.1.1.2 Adding to the Concept of Socialization

According to Duff's socialization model, socialization is a process that approximates a person's understanding of the target community. In her studies (2003 & 2007), ESL students reach diversion on the way to approach the target culture. She found that ESL students have various pathways to reach the target form, but her participants never attained it. It then seems reasonable to believe that EFL learners who have considerably less language exposure than ESL students do would encounter more difficulties in reaching the target form. In this study, participants seem able to formulate a target model based on theory-based textbooks and the instructor's lectures and modeling. In contrast to students in an ESL context, it seems that ESL students can formulate the target model from much more sources found in the academic community. For the group of EFL medical students, such type of community resources seemed scarce. In Duff's discussion of second language socialization, limited learning resources experienced by EFL learners in this study has not been

found.

Since the participants have limited resources to rely on, the teacher then becomes the best model that the students could learn from in their context. However, it is interesting to find that students do not just rely on their teacher's input. Rather, the students in this study learned greatly through observations from their peers (the instructor has her prominent role in conferencing though). Peers as a resource for learning in this academic presentation then becomes an important contribution of this study. More specifically, peers' performance and reactions in the oral activity in fact led student presenters to formulate realization regarding the importance of engaging audiences and fulfilling the responsibility as an academic presenter. For example, Anita's debating method influenced Jay's realization of leading a discussion; Lisa's strategy of using pictures to introduce vocabulary impressed fellow students, leading to emulation of the same method in several presentations; and Ben, who used his aunt's case to provoke the audience's interest and attention (cf. Chapter 5).

Through such a process, what student presenters have produced in their own performance is an outcome involving a process in which they observe, learn the effective strategies, emulate and finally incorporate the same method from peers in their own presentations. In other words, what their peers show them is a role model which according to participants is more attainable than the one demonstrated by their instructor (see Peter's, Tony's, and Nick's interview data in Chapter 5). However, peer models that students consider effective is not validated, but recognized by the group of students. This perspective, therefore, is different from several other oral studies (Kobayashi, 2004; Morita, 2000; Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman, 2007) in terms of defining and explaining what a good oral presentation is because the group of medical students themselves assigned meaning and constructed an understanding of an oral practice is through their engagement in the class with peers. It appears that

there is no particular form to define a good oral presentation; rather, it depends on who the people in the community are, and what knowledge they hold and offer the class. That is, both the instructor and the students continuously negotiated a well-accepted pattern in completing an oral presentation in this community.

6.1.1.3 A Co-constructed Social Activity

As discussed in Chapter 5, due to the unique nature of a theme-based language class, the instructor is a language counselor and a mediator for learning academic speaking manners in conferencing, but she is not the resource of discipline-specific knowledge. Rather, fellow students who are medical majors could provide content knowledge when the discussion is related to the medical field. Therefore, one focal issue of this dissertation discusses the reconfigured expert (i.e., the instructor) and novice (i.e., students) relation in this theme-based class. Generally, the accepted belief in Taiwan is that students are not inclined to challenge the teacher's authority; however, the findings of this theme-based classroom seem to suggest that academic discourse socialization is not an overwhelmingly oppressive, unidirectional process of knowledge transmission from the expert to the novice (i.e., from the instructor to students), but rather a complex, locally situated process that involves dynamic negotiations of expertise. While earlier studies conducted by Duff (2003 & 2007), Morita (2000), Kobayashi (2003) and Zappa-Hallman (2007) have aimed at investigating the challenges that ESL learners face in fulfilling the requirements set by professors and approach the target form recognized by English-native-speakers in an academic community, in the present study, due to its co-constructed nature, the target form seems not to be so clearly defined. Rather, the interpretation of oral presentations is assigned after all participants are involved in the activity. Through social collaboration, all participants co-build their realization of an oral presentation which was uniquely constructed using English as the medium to serve two purposes:

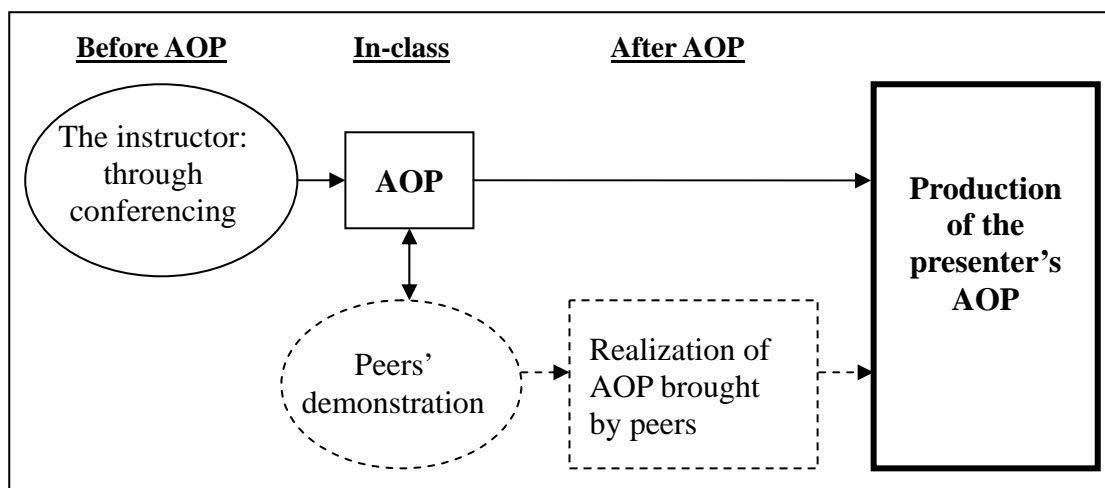
one is to learn oral presentation skills and the other is to discuss medical-related issues in English.

In particular, co-construction of the activity with peers allowed students to develop their mental image of what they regard is a good oral presentation, what the expectations of other people are, and what seems to be necessary to engage audiences. The data shows that through engaging in the co-constructed activity, peers seem to drive each other to learn further. It seems that in the participants' minds, presenting in a manner similar to their peers provides comfort and ease. Meanwhile, when students co-constructed the oral activity, the finding of the role of peers, who are novices as well, is a breakthrough for re-examining the typically considered expert-novice dichotomy in sociocultural theories. As such, an influence brought by peers is shown in multiple layers, and actually indirectly broadens the belief of knowledge transmission from the expert to the novice in sociocultural theories. That is, most sociocultural theories typically recognize the mono-direction from the expert to the novice for knowledge transmission. However, in this case, it was witnessed that learning proceeded through novice-novice interactions. Given that judging whether their realizations attained the target norm for academic oral presentations was not the focus in the present study, how well they have met the target form, as discussed in Morita (2000) or Zappa-Hallman (2007) across different disciplines, deserves further investigation in future studies. Nevertheless, regardless of judging if participants' realizations were accurate or not, the present study seems to show that through engagement in the oral event with peers, students could also form conceptualizations of doing an oral presentation.

To integrate the discussions in Chapters 4 and 5, how the instructor and peers have helped student presenters co-construct their presentation can be shown in the following figure (Figure 6.1). In terms of the instructor, she provided assistance

through conferencing, while peers offered their contribution through demonstrating different types of strategies to present or lead a discussion. What was given by the instructor and peers, through various ways, shaped students' feelings, understandings, thoughts, and realizations of doing an academic presentation. Finally, the student presenter selected and employed certain realizations in his own performance, and very possibly, how he acted in his presentation influenced other students' realizations afterwards.

Figure 6.1 How the Instructor and Peers Help Students Construct an AOP



The instructor is not the only major resource for the group of students, according to the data. As for the key metaphorical concepts of experts and novices, through such a socially constructed interaction with each other, participants in the situated community share multiple perspectives, experiences, and expertise; and finally, the interaction unfolds and learning occurs. Some researchers (e.g., Casanave, 1992; Prior, 1998) have considered that such a disciplinary socialization is a two-way negotiation between caregivers and children (or “old-timers” vs. “new comers” in CoP theory). These theories view learning and socialization as a bidirectional process in which experts and novices influence each other, rather than a unidirectional transmission of knowledge or skills from the experienced to the novices (e.g., Lave & Wenger, 1989; Rogoff, 1990). But the findings in the present study

appears to show another dimension for examining the influence among novices because, thus far, it seems reasonable to conclude that the peers' force in the co-constructed activity could be one of the imperative influences to form participants' conceptualizations of making an oral presentation.

6.1.2 Discussion on Participants

By framing oral academic presentations as a sociocultural activity, this study addressed an emerging area of research in applied linguistics that explores the decisive but indirect role of the instructor and peers who influence learners' academic discourse socialization. Differing from previous studies that have documented how individual students actively accommodate themselves to learn social and linguistic knowledge in the target culture, the present study sheds light on *who* may influence EFL participants' engagement in academic presentations. In triangulating collected data, it was found that the indirect participants (i.e., the instructor and peers) are not simply enacting their roles as lecturer and listeners; rather, beyond the typically recognized roles, they in fact play multiple roles that at first may not be obvious. In other words, the indirect participants shape student presenters' understandings, thoughts, and the preparation methods for presenting their oral academic tasks, i.e., the indirect participants influence students' engagement in the sociocultural activity so as to be more rounded academic presenters.

6.1.2.1 A Broader View on Expert-novice Dichotomy

When sociocultural theories were reviewed in Chapter 2, key metaphorical concepts of experts and novices were discussed. Through the observation of the students' and teacher's discourses in the classroom, it seems that their identities were not fixed as an 'expert-novice' dichotomy. Rather, their interaction during the presentation and discussion was dynamic and negotiable. On the one hand, in terms of language learning, the teacher represented a legitimizing identity. That is, the

teacher's discourse was situated in her social role as a teacher, so she maintained her authority as a power-holder, especially when it was necessary to re-direct and guide the flow of the oral presentation (e.g., changing subject, joking, limiting time, etc.). On the other hand, in terms of content knowledge, the teacher's role was in conflict with her traditionally recognized role in the educational arena because of her limited medical content knowledge. Therefore, in this case, the distribution of expertise (i.e., expert-novice relationship) in oral presentations was dynamic, unfolding different relationships among participants who had varying knowledge, perspectives, experiences, and expertise.

From the data, it seems that the instructor is constrained by her limited content knowledge so she becomes a silent audience when students are undergoing their collaboration to construct a medically themed interaction. An in-class interaction example (in which Peter as a presenter talking about how cancer leads to death) can be given to explain this characteristic (rf. next page).

Example (Class dated Dec. 30th)

(A: the instructor, P: Peter, FS: fellow students)

P: They (*i.e.*, *cancer cells*) not controlled by the body and they do nothing but consume nutrient. When time passes, there are more and more cancer cells so the normal cells not to get enough nutrients and then die. Then, the cancer cells will cause the body cannot function normally. The more cancer cells, the weaker the body is. In the end, there are not enough normal cells to support the body and that is why people die of cancer. However, cancer cells do not appear like magic show; they come from normal cells. Can you provide any idea to say, urn...how it does come? ((Then he looked around his classmates)).

FS 1 (Nicole¹¹): Uhm...Maybe related to what the patient eats in his daily life.

FS 2(John) : Sleeping and exercising.

P : Yeah. What else?

FS 3 (Lin) : Some people get some bad genes from their parents.

P : Yeah, we've learnt it in our Biology class, right? Tumor-suppress genes, remember?

A : *What is it?*

P : They are some important genes because they can produce proteins to remove some factors that may cause cancers.

A : ((Nodding her head.)) *OK.*

FS 4 (Ben) : If children get sick tumor suppressor genes from parents, they have high risk to get cancer, for example P53 gene.

A : *What is it again?*

FS 4 (Ben) : P53 protein 是一個重要的蛋白質。他就是在 DNA 細胞進行分裂的時候要 check 每個 DNA。如果遇到有問題的，P53 就會停止分裂，讓其他的蛋白質進行修補。但是如果 P53 有問題或是 DNA 複製時結構不是很穩定，就容易引起突變，就變成癌細胞¹²。

A : ((Nodding her head again.)) *That's really something I don't know.*

¹¹ The fellow students' names in this interaction example are all pseudonyms.

¹² Classroom interaction is sometimes done in L1. Given the fact that the teacher in this class is not a medical professional, in some occasions, Chinese was utilized as a tool to achieve a better understanding. In particular, several times, when the instructor and students encountered technical (medical) terms, they used their native language to achieve a consensus of mutual understanding. At this point, the instructor ignored the requirement of speaking English in class; rather, all participants used L1 as a communication vehicle to learn content knowledge that may be challenging for the instructor as well.

This interaction example shows that the language teacher in the class is a professional in terms of English study, but is not a professional in medical content knowledge. Since the discussed issues in the class are medically-related, it is very possible that the participants, being medicine majors, constitute an equivalent professional status than their language teacher. In other words, the typically perceived dichotomy between novice-expert in education scenarios seems not applicable in the researched context.

Furthermore, given that the course was constructed with the goal of providing students' sufficient oral practice in class, most of the time, the instructor offered ample opportunities for learners to practice how to take part in a discussion. That is, instead of using a direct utterance to explain thoughts, the instructor did not interrupt learners' dialogue unless it was deemed necessary to do so. Therefore, the "speaking right" was yielded to student audiences who have to construct a process of negotiation by sharing life experiences or personal opinions so as to form a basis for presenters to continue the discussion, particularly during the Q & A session. Yet, this privilege, which fostered more speaking and thinking, seems not to be the case for ESL students, as has been shown in many studies which have discussed ESL students' marginal status and reticence in class participation (Lee, 2009; Morita, 2004; Kim, 2006).

In this case also, communication of knowledge in oral presentations was not a simple unidirectional transmission from the instructor to students or the presenter to the audience. Rather, all the participants in the oral presentations had various levels of experience and expertise in different domains of knowledge, hence, the interaction which took place in class was represented as a dynamic, complicated, and shifting construction between experts and novices during the negotiation process.

Obviously, communication of knowledge in oral presentations was not a simple unidirectional transmission from the presenter to the audience. For example, all

participants employed different strategies to reach mutual understandings or personal goals and interests, e.g., Ben used his life story to elicit more discussions and responses from the audience. Furthermore, by incorporating multiple viewpoints in the practice of oral presentations, all members made new connections or raised new ideas to collaboratively contribute to their own learning and development in the situated academic community. The data show that participants' process of interaction demonstrated the fact that the interaction among the instructor, presenters, and student audience was not deterministic, but changing and transforming dependent upon different moments and discussed content.

To conclude, the findings from this theme-based classroom seem to suggest that academic discourse socialization is not an overwhelmingly oppressive, unidirectional process of knowledge transmission from the expert to the novice (i.e., from the instructor to students), but rather a complex, locally situated process that involves dynamic negotiations of expertise among all participants. This finding concurs with the views of context-sensitive approaches such as the Vygotskian sociocultural and activity theory (e.g., Lantolf, 2000), and language socialization (e.g., Duff, 1995, 2002; Morita, 2000, 2004), for their central spirit looks into the value and influence from social collaboration among all members in the community. However, the current study goes one step forward to suggest that the social collaboration is not a one-directional transmission pattern from expert to novice. Instead, it could be a relationship occurring among novices, which adds a new dimension to expert-novice dichotomy in sociocultural theories.

6.1.2.2 The Instructor's Contribution

Firstly, when the research went deeper to investigate the teacher's role, it was found that she simultaneously played several roles, as other language teachers do. Of particular interest, it was discovered that her contribution in conferencing seemed

worthy of further discussion. This does not mean, however, that her roles inside the classroom were not influential and hence could be overlooked, but rather, the findings derived from the data regarding the teacher's roles in conferencing seemed to merit further discussion.

The first justification for this exploration results from the scarcity of this perspective within the literature. Currently, we have very limited understanding as to how a language teacher can use conferencing as a means for socialization. By reviewing previous literature, it can be found that numerous studies have discussed teaching and learning oral academic discourse (cf. Table 2.1 in Chapter 2); nonetheless, teachers' outside-classroom roles in conferencing have not been given enough attention. Several explanations for this can be provided. First, for many college-level teachers, conferencing could be regarded as a time-consuming means of instruction since it is not their primary responsibility; more specifically, time spent with students in this capacity could be viewed as time taken from their own research. Therefore, conferencing is not a frequently discussed topic in research concerning language teaching and learning.

Second, in the limited research on conferencing spanning the last three decades, most studies have focused on tutorial sessions or teacher-student conferencing in writing instruction (e.g., Ferris, 1995, 1997; Goldstein, 2005, 2006; Hyland & Hyland, 2006; Kroll, 1990; Leki, 1990; Zamel, 1985). In these studies, some researchers have indicated that to compensate the insufficient written commentary on student papers, teachers need to hold conferencing meetings with students because "dynamic interchange and negotiation is most likely to take place when writers and readers work together face-to-face" (Zamel, 1985, p. 97). In addition, Weissberg (2006) also suggested that teacher-student conversations "play a role in finding solutions to the

writing problems” (p. 26).

What this relates to in the present study is that the instructor in fact edited student presenters’ writing in handouts and PPT slides. In the conferencing, the primary intent of the face-to-face meeting was to shape the learners’ prepared written work. Therefore, the conferencing content is a dialogue between the instructor and students discussing language use, starting from writing problems and expanding to oral presentation concerns. That is, while the on-hand materials (i.e., the handouts and PPT slides) were prepared, the conversation in conferencing may go further to consider the feasibility of the discussion questions in the Q & A session or any other concern regarding completing presentation tasks (e.g., anxiety in this study). All in all, the conferencing process demonstrated that the consulting dialogue was not only restricted to giving instruction for conducting a successful oral presentation; rather, the basic purpose was to discuss concerns about writing in mandatory handouts so as to be a guide for directing the presentation flow and bolstering confidence, as several students show in the data.

「就像一種互相牽連的關係。一方面，我用講義練習我的表達，另一方面我用演練的方式 check 我的講義。如果中間有不順，我就會請老師幫忙。」

“It is kind of a mutual influence. On the one hand, I used the handout to go through my talk, but on the other hand, I used the rehearsal talk to check my handout. I’ll ask for help from my teacher whenever I have concerns.” (Jay, Interview)

「如果老師看過我準備的 handout，我會比較有自信。」

“If the instructor checked my handout, I felt much more confident.” (Peter, Interview)

「手邊的講義給我很大的安全感，因為我可以依賴它，如果沒有講義，我會不知道怎麼進行下去。」

“The handout is like a secure base that I can depend on. I know I won’t get lost if I follow it.” (Nick, Interview)

「事先請老師看過講義會讓我安心許多，因為老師她會確實知道我想說什麼。所以如果我卡住了不知道怎麼說，她可以當我的 backup。」

“Talking to my teacher before a presentation makes me feel much more confident because I know my teacher has previewed my handouts and she knows exactly what I want to express, so that I believe she can be my backup when I encounter breakdowns.” (Andrew, Interview)

As these participants indicate, preparing a handout helped them set their minds at ease and organized their thoughts in a more coherent way. With the handout, they could also rehearse their talk so that they could practice fluency and ensure time was controlled. By so doing, their confidence was increased. To student presenters, handouts played a guidance role to assist the presenter in going through content smoothly and in a controlled manner.

Third, in the researched context, due to limited outside experience in learning oral academic presentations, the teacher became one of the major resources for students to consult. In view of this, it would seem appropriate to examine how the teacher's instruction, behavior, rationale, and way of transmitting academic knowledge influence learners to be better presenters. In this case, the conferencing occurring between the instructor and students was originally seen as a consultant interaction in which the instructor may resolve learners' concerns or difficulties in fulfilling the requirement of doing an oral academic presentation. However, by triangulating various sources of data, the function of conferencing in this context was not as simple as it first appeared.

Compared to the instructor's modeling presentation and lectures in class, her role in one-on-one conferencing represents an interesting feature that deserves more attention, in which an intimate, reassuring, and dependent relationship between the instructor and students was witnessed. In the current study, instead of being just a consultant, the teacher played multiple roles to shape the student presenters' preparation and performance. In addition to advising, the relationship between the instructor and students in conferencing was a professional one, as well as an intimate, interpersonal bond which developed over an extended period, varying across different student needs. As an editor, the instructor approved learners' preparation work and

helped develop learners' professional knowledge to meet the requirement of completing a good oral academic presentation. But in taking a closer look, an intimate, interpersonal relationship that eases presenters' anxiety when the instructor plays her second role as a counselor was revealed, offering emotional stability for learners to undertake challenges or overcome anxiety they have before and during the oral task. Taking Jay's conferencing case as an example, the teacher was a careful observer who kept all her students on track through regular contact so as to ease anxiety and raise intrinsic motivation; an attentive listener, who pays close attention and sensitivity to listen to the clues or undertones of her students' words and difficulties no matter whether they are shown explicitly or implicitly so as to reduce students' anxiety while facing the pressure of oral presentations; and, a senior friend in the same boat who can anticipate problems before they become serious and share her similar learning experiences. Taken as a whole, the instructor's conferencing provides a soothing environment for students to lessen their disquietude, concerns, nervousness aroused by presentation tasks or even personal matters. Students may still feel anxious about the challenges in accomplishing oral presentation tasks, but her comforting listening and cheerful encouragement made them feel presentations were not as depressing and insurmountable as they once thought.

In view of this, it would seem appropriate to conclude that the teacher's multiple roles in one-on-one conferencing are significant in two perspectives. One, in terms of language learning, her role as an editor helped pinpoint student presenters' exact writing problems and provide direct commentary. With this approval, learners felt reassured and less anxious. Second, her role as a counselor indeed influenced presenters' engagement in the oral activity, whereby students' anxieties and concerns were mostly eased. Such a scaffolding role played by the instructor is supposed to

be expanded to the classroom, as would be expected in most educational arenas. However, in this study, as for oral presentation tasks, it is interesting to find that peers seemed to play a more influential role inside the classroom.

6.1.2.3 Peers' Multiple Roles

In addition to the instructor's contribution in conferencing, the academic socialization is understood in this study as an intensively social action involving observations, emulations, and practice through engaging in the oral presentation task with peers. Engaging in the oral event, students observe other peers' performances and internalize certain mental images of doing an oral presentation. Eventually, they emulate some qualities that they consider valuable and necessary to be an academic presenter. Therefore, as shown in data, participants in this study developed their own realizations of the discussion manner for turn-taking, responsibility of being an academic presenter, and awareness of the importance of engaging audiences. Based on the findings in Chapter 5, students have learnt from peers in terms of, first, their awareness of using some attention getting strategies to engage audiences, including using pictures to introduce and memorize vocabulary (e.g., Lisa's demonstration), selecting adequate materials to support a presentation (e.g., Jay's and Nick's reflection), and making a Q & A discussion emotionally-charged (e.g., Ben's presentation). Second, students also learned responsibilities required of an academic presenter by updating information provided by the textbook (e.g., Peter's cautious attitude toward the numbers provided by the textbook), being the one who knows best and acts professionally (e.g., Andrew's reflection), and learning the importance of participating in Q & A session (e.g., Nick's learning about academic discussion manners).

These realizations come from participants' engagement in the oral activity with

fellow students. That is, the co-construction of their realization of making an oral presentation is not built in a vacuum; rather, it depends heavily on the interaction between the presenter and his fellow classmates. This constitutes a very different finding from earlier studies (Kobayashi, 2007; Morita, 2003; Yang, 2010) because the present study sheds light on peers' multiple roles in an oral presentation task. Peers in this class are not just a silent audience; rather, they have to be a presenter in their own turn and must also be an evaluator to judge other peers' performance in which they construct some valued qualities to complete their own oral presentations. This finding is very different from what we would expect in a language classroom because the instructor becomes a shadow participant in the oral presentation task since the discussed content is medically-related and so peers become the attainable model instead. Such an interactional relationship is shown in Table 6.1, which represents the social and collaborative nature of an oral presentation task in the situated classroom.

Table 6.1 Key Informants' Fluid Roles in Class-interaction & Negotiation

Informants Negotiation objects	Presenter	Non-presenter (audience peers)
Language use	A learner and a role model for peers	An observer and an imitator, learning norms of good oral presentations from peers
Medical content discussed in assigned readings	*who knows best	Information receivers (sometimes they are knowledgeable, too.), comment-givers, and feedback-providers
Life-experience sharing	A question designer and a discussion leader	*They may not be experts, but they are major vocal contributors in this session

Due to the class' unique medical-based nature, the instructor altered her role as a naive listener. At this moment, expert and novice relations are reorganized: the instructor who has her institutional role and status was not always regarded as a master-of-all. In other words, her role was transformed depending on the topic of

the moment's interaction. Therefore, when it comes to different classroom activities, key informants' (the instructor and students) roles alter and make various contributions by providing various knowledge, experience, expertise and viewpoints. As for the presenter, he had to be the one who 'knew best' for his assigned reading. Sometimes, to lead a whole-class discussion and to reach deeper understandings, he had to make connections between the issues described in the article and the peer audiences' own experiences or background knowledge. For non-presenters, their major mission was to be an oral contributor who brought in personal life experiences, knowledge, and expertise to participate in the dialogue.

The shifting roles between the instructor and students in this case, therefore, appear to expand the expert-novice dichotomy in sociocultural theories. Unlike many sociocultural theories indicating an obvious and static child-caregiver or apprentice-master interaction, in the present study, the most significant socialization process quality which occurred in the observed class was that of an on-going continued discussion created on a moment-to-moment basis rather than a simple dialogue between the rigid roles of instructor as an expert and students as novices.

6.2 Implications

Drawing on information provided by the participants, relevant literature, and my personal interpretations and insight provided by the data, several suggestions can be outlined. The suggestions are categorized into three directions: to researchers, to course designers, and to instructors.

6.2.1 Suggestions for Researchers

From the conclusions of this study, we can learn that the local classroom context—the social, cultural, historical, curricular, pedagogical, interactional, and interpersonal context—is inseparable from learners' participation. This finding has

significance for research. That is, research into learners' participation should seriously consider the classroom context in which they participate. This view coincides with Springer and Collins' study (2008), explaining the critical role of *classroom context* in second language learning. They discussed how a language classroom influences language learning by remarking that,

When adults arrive in a community where the dominant language differs from the one(s) they speak, language classes often constitute the first sustained contact with the new society. These classes may play an important role in the newcomer's integration into the host community, and the adults who attend them arrive with a number of expectations (p. 40).

Therefore, a de-contextualized account without considering the actual classroom context cannot reflect the situated nature of participation. As Morita (2004) indicated, by closely probing the students' visions and experiences within the classroom, a study can show "how the classroom can be an important locus where learners negotiate their roles and positions in various levels of the academic communities that surround them" (p. 577). The results of this study point to the value of research that looks closely into individual learners' actions, intentions, performance, and perspectives, as well as the contents in which they participate. Such an inquiry within the corresponding classroom contexts, therefore, reveals various possibilities and further interpretations rather than just viewing participants' classroom behavior as a simple reaction.

6.2.2 Suggestions for Constructing a Theme-based Language Course

Initially, the concern of consistency in language course construction should be considered. In terms of oral activities, as reflected by several participants in this study, there is a huge gap between senior high school English courses, freshman English, and this theme-based language class. As the first questionnaire showed, only a very few students had experience or similar training in delivering English AOPs in senior high school. Among those who had done AOPs before, they had

only done so one or two times (except Mark who experienced a different learning route from his Taiwanese counterparts). Additionally, with the large number of students in their freshman English class, containing about fifty students, many students actually avoided oral practice opportunities intended by the instructor; that is, students can hide in a big-size class by being silent. However, when they become sophomores and it is compulsory to take this theme-based language class, they are required to perform two individually-based forty-to-fifty-minute oral presentations and lead whole-class discussions. Needless to say, they were not ready to undertake the oral task and their anxiety, frustration, and disorientation was expected. Therefore, it is advised that a more detailed design to re-construct a smooth and reasonable consistency to bridge language courses at different stages should be seriously examined.

Second, as mentioned in the opening chapter of this dissertation, differing from traditionally recognized content-based courses in an ESL context, this class is defined as a theme-based language course. Under this presumption, then, how extended does the discipline knowledge of medical content have to be in a language class? This question might be one of the biggest concerns when an institution in Taiwan is considering the possibility of constructing English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses. Many language instructors doubt the feasibility of constructing such a language course since they are not equipped with discipline-specific content knowledge. Language instructors are uncertain about how much they can contribute in such a scenario where they may confront many unexpected challenges beyond language learning. It seems that the typically recognized educational status of teachers in Taiwanese culture is very likely to be overturned in such a theme-based language class.

Through the findings of this study, however, we have recognized that first, the classroom interactional feature of such a theme-based course is not fixed as an expert versus novice relationship; rather, the exchange of expertise across multiple fields creates a dynamic, interactive, and negotiable relation among all participants who engage in the classroom, of which students appreciate much. This broader level of social/cultural relationship may help release instructors from the worry of failing to provide relevant content knowledge in such a setting.

Second, in order to avoid ‘building castles in the air,’ the course construction should critically examine practical physical conditions and actual student needs. Taking this class as an example, on the one hand, through the instructor’s observations and previous teaching experience, she believed even though most medical majors are at least upper-intermediate learners and highly motivated ones who are capable of learning independently, the group of students still needed her facilitation through her lectures and demonstrations. However, on the other hand, based on student participants’ reflections in interviews, we came to realize that the teacher’s demonstration was not as attainable as the ones completed by fellow students. Obviously, the discrepancy between the teachers’ viewpoints and students’ actual needs demonstrates a huge tangible gap in the class. Although the course was launched with a positive intent, and eventually received positive feedback from students, a more definitive plan and a better understanding of the learners’ practical needs may definitely enable a more consistent, smooth, and effective development of their language study. Therefore, course designers are advised to take into account students’ previous learning experiences, assumptions, and expectations, particularly since these may clash with those perceived by the teachers.

6.2.3 Suggestions for Teaching

Even though generalization is not the intention of the present study, given its

scope and nature, some useful pedagogical implications can nevertheless be derived from it. This study has implications for pedagogy in three respects. In the first place, it is without doubt that instructors should yield more opportunities for oral practice, but what we should be concerned with more is about *how* and *in which way*. In particular, it seems likely that academic manners in delivering oral presentations are not tangible enough for teaching and learning. As Weissberg (1993) noted, students cannot pick up such knowledge automatically. However, teaching speaking etiquette (e.g., participation in Q & A discussions) or strategies of academic talks (e.g., using pictures to introduce vocabulary) is often excluded in syllabus design and formal instruction. Therefore, teachers cannot just overwhelmingly believe in the benefit of independent study and leave students alone to achieve certain goals without providing guidance, even though the students in this study are regarded as very motivated and advanced language learners.

The first suggestion is to facilitate students to better prepare their presentation. All students' reflections indicated that scaffolding from the instructor, for example previewing their handouts or PPT slides and clarification of meaning in presentations, indeed encouraged them to be more willing to participate in discussions, for both presenters and audience members. By using such strategies as explicit guidance or scaffolding, presenters as well as audience comprehension in discussions will in turn help learners' engagement in oral activities. Within the LPP framework (see Chapter 2), these strategies increase *transparency*—"a way of organizing activities that makes their meaning visible" (Lave & Wenger, 1991, p. 105). Strategies may include explicit instruction of the recognized academic speaking manners which are unfamiliar to EFL students.

In this case, data show that students depended heavily on the instructor's conferencing to help them prepare an oral presentation task. In brief, it is important

for EFL teachers in Taiwan to incorporate teacher-student one-on-one conferencing with other classroom activities in oral instruction, providing scaffolding for their students whenever possible during the process of their oral performance. And so conferencing should be used as an integral part of EFL oral classrooms. It is expected the findings in this study will help English language teachers in Taiwan provide an efficient EFL oral pedagogy which directly supports students in their learning—especially when the course is concerning oral academic presentations.

Yet, given that conducting oral conferencing may consume considerable amounts of time and require good interaction skills (see similar argument in writing instruction, Hyland, 2003), we shall incorporate some characteristics in the present study to construct an effective conferencing. First, quick email replies may require only a few minutes, but it significantly sets students' minds at ease. Second, with strong awareness of learners' development, a teacher can provide short, quick, but effective feedback or suggestions to learners. Finally, an effective conferencing does not always require large amounts of time. An experienced, perceptive teacher can provide great help in just a few minutes by making the right suggestions or asking the right questions. Also, effective conferencing takes close observation and careful listening, which can increase a teacher's access to students.

The second method to approach academic interactional features of delivering oral presentations and class discussions is to video record students' performance, invite them to watch it, and have a subsequent discussion. Following this format would allow the instructor sufficient time to provide instruction without worrying about interrupting presentations. Also, learners would be given more opportunities to check their comprehension and be more aware of certain communication features, such as turn-taking, interjecting at the right moment to interrupt or continue a topic, using body language appropriately, or employing strategies to create an active

discussion atmosphere. If possible, the instructor can provide authentic presentations done by English native speakers in academic communities to demonstrate what the form should be like, in which step-by-step tangible guidance should not be taken for granted by thinking that students can learn academic etiquette simultaneously. Based on the reflections provided by the student participants, appreciation of the step-by-step instruction which helped them visualize the expected performance was reported, which also offered them easier entry into the academic community. The participants' reflections also indicated that for students in the medical field, context-specific English for Academic Purposes (EAP) courses seem to be particularly desirable and useful.

If video recording students' performance is not feasible in the classroom, writing self-reflection forms continuously is alternative. Through on-going reflections, learners record what and how they experienced the oral event so that they will not simply forget. Rather, by recalling and writing it down, learners will become more aware of their actions and incorporate this learning into their next oral performance. However, again, a well-planned guideline of questions in a self-report form should be offered. Exploring thoughts, feelings, and experiences without any guidance would run the risk of leading students nowhere and reflecting on trivial matters.

The third feasible suggestion is to encourage students to investigate authentic language use of a target community. We should recognize the teacher's weaknesses (but she has her advantages though) and make use of supplementary materials (e.g., DVDs produced by native speakers) to introduce the target form which help students to observe and emulate. Take the students in this study as an example. Teachers can design some guidance/indexes for learners to investigate genre-specific patterns in medical presentations, so student awareness of authentic language use can be trained.

For example, what are the actual strategies that doctors-in-practice employ in their presentations? What are the procedures they follow to finish a medical presentation? What visual aids do they use in presentations? What characteristics do audiences recognize as being part of good oral presentations? Such awareness and observation ability should be incorporated into university classrooms so that students can be independent observers and learners in their future careers.

Finally, as reported by several participants, questions brought up by presenters definitely influenced the classroom discussion atmosphere. However, the tactics to design questions were not discussed in Ann's lectures or the textbook. In some cases, the problem was not because students were poor questioners, but because of their lack of strong foundations (e.g., their content knowledge and/or life experiences) upon which to build better questions to create an engaging environment for discussions. Therefore, before the formal presentation, presenters should be ready to ask better questions by working with teachers to, for example, awaken and/or build robust prior knowledge before developing questions. Since discussion questions dominate the Q & A session, creating debatable and engaging questions should be critically considered and carefully designed. Discussion questions should avoid closed-ended questions which are easy to code and quick to answer (e.g., yes/no questions); instead, more open-ended questions should be taken into account (e.g., opinion questions which involve different views and take more cognitive demand to activate prior knowledge). Since students cannot pick up these strategies automatically, as shown in the data, guidance and analysis of discussion questions by the instructor before the formal presentation is therefore essential for students, and provides a secure base to enhance confidence. On the other hand, how to handle questions is another must-learn strategy for presenters. On several occasions of my observations, students were ill-prepared when they encountered unexpected reflections from the

audience. Most of time, the instructor ‘rescued’ the presenters, but in a real presentation event, presenters are not always lucky to have a backup person. To conclude, how to ask questions and how to deal with questions are essential, but often neglected abilities for the presenter to learn.

In this dissertation, many of the challenges and voices connected with academic oral discourse socialization were shared and outlined, although examined here for medical students specifically, they might also apply to students from other disciplines as well as to some course designers and instructors who are involved in theme-based teaching in their own classrooms. It is also hoped that these recommendations can be kept in mind by those who strive to find ways to improve our pedagogy in teaching oral academic discourse and to contribute positively to the English study experiences of their students.

In terms of language use, the instructor plays her role as an expert, by giving comments or suggestions to help students deliver their presentations effectively. However, when it comes to the content of an assigned reading, the presenter usually is the person who knows the content best; at this moment, the instructor becomes a novice in medical field so she can hardly provide responses to the presentation. As moving forward to the Q & A session, peers need to step out of their normal role, shifting from the role as an audience to be an active contributor to share their thoughts and ideas; they may not be experts, but they are major vocal contributors in this session while sometimes they are also knowledgeable in engaging discussions. Such a contribution also represents the social and collaborative nature of an oral presentation task in the situated classroom. Therefore, this interaction process demonstrates the fact that the interaction among the instructor, presenters, and student audience was not deterministic, but changing and transforming dependent upon different moments and discussed content.

6.3 Limitations and Directions for Future Research

6.3.1 Limitations

Most likely, all participant students had to negotiate their entrance to the new academic community through engaging in oral presentation tasks. However, one perspective that could be argued is that representation in this study comprised just one slice of the complex existing phenomena, where additional interpretations could be derived from and thereby enhance the results.

In the L2 socialization framework, one still remaining problem is how to document and evaluate the outcomes of L2 disciplinary socialization and not just experiences or processes of socialization. The difficulty here lies in determining what counts as a related outcome or as evidence of socialization (Morita & Kobayashi, 2008). It is true that relevant outcomes are unique to each individual, according to every learner's personal goals or the pedagogical goals set by the institution. In the present study, the outcomes of socialization are not quantified with specific linguistic gains; instead, all intended and unintended results were analyzed and triangulated to depict participants' interactions within the situated context, especially the viewpoints from student participants. By closely examining the multiple personal networks of social activities surrounding the learning context both on campus and in class, it is helpful to provide concrete explanations of the students' socialization *process*. However, in terms of their socialization *outcomes*, this lies beyond the scope of the present study. From the results of the investigation of learners' background, all participants showed their strong ambitions and urgent needs to improve oral competence at the beginning of the term. At the end of the semester, they also voiced satisfactory remarks in their overall development of knowing how to deliver oral presentations and be involved in discussions. But this study did not examine *how far* they have come in cognitive, linguistic, and sociocultural aspects. This

perspective, therefore, merits further consideration in future studies of L2 socialization theory.

As for data collection methods, two retrospections are made. Firstly, the instructor's role as a language facilitator in conferencing has been discussed, but her mentoring practice (i.e., her consulting work with students) should be allotted more consideration, given the rewarding feedback from the focal students. Accordingly, more opportunities or reflections for Ann to discuss issues from her perspective when she was situated in the classroom should have been performed. Prior to the commencement of this study, more consideration of the data collection techniques and increased sensitivity of mismatched viewpoints from participants may have been needed, which in turn, could have provided even further refinements of the study.

The second retrospection is related to recording employed strategies across different time phases. Originally, the various strategies employed by participants were not planned for inclusion when designing this study. However, when I was observing, I found participants actually used different strategies to make their presentations or discussions more effective. But unfortunately, when the realization came, it was impossible to go back to the scene and record the appropriate timing when they were using certain strategies. Therefore, in this study, it could not be concluded whether they used different strategies when they became more seasoned presenters in their second oral presentations or when they gained more awareness of the various kinds of strategies at their disposal.

6.3.2 Directions for Future Research

It was beyond the scope of this study to explore in greater detail the following relevant issues.

First, this study focused on oral academic discourse socialization with less attention paid to written academic discourse socialization or the connections between

these two notions. Future investigations could also examine how students' opportunities for and engagement in other forms of oral production (e.g., informal conversation, conversation practice with peers and their instructors) may impact their academic oral socialization and vice versa.

Second, it would also be valuable to examine the same learners' participation in multiple contexts. For example, a text analysis can be implemented to compare and contrast how presenters prepare and perform Chinese and English oral presentations, respectively. They may represent various results in cognitive, affective, linguistic, or pragmatic perspectives.

Third, future studies may go further to investigate how the EFL student presenters' process negotiated meaning when conferencing with the teacher, and/or examine the students' oral discourse to determine, for example, how students revise their handout drafts after conferencing. Although the current study focused on a group of EFL medical students and affirms the value of one-on-one conferencing, especially its implication at the psychological level, it does not mean this result can be applied to other language contexts. Future studies may possibly explore how different groups of EFL learners or instructors negotiate meaning in different contexts of conferencing, which are culturally embedded and socially constructed in different academic communities of practice. Another possibility is to involve two to three people as a group to conduct a conferencing. That is, a dialogue between an instructor and a group of two or three students. It is very possible that a very different form of negotiation process and influence on participants may occur from what was observed in the current study.

Fourth, what seems to be interesting and imperative to learn is how can the meaning and realization derived from the data fit the bigger international academic community? That is, how does this accepted pattern in the community situate within

the bigger academic environment? Thus far, since the question is not discussed in this study, a further investigation of this perspective is suggested.

Finally, while so many researchers have investigated the impact of student peers in written discourse (e.g., peer coaching or peer evaluation), one potentially fruitful line of further research may concern the role of peers in academic oral discourse. Will the result be the same for other groups of students (e.g., low achievers or non-medical majors)? Will the group of students have similar interaction patterns or levels of dependence with peers in doing conversational (general) English oral activities in preparatory and performance stages, respectively? It would also be informative to investigate voices from female learners who were not in attendance for the present study. These questions deserve further investigation, so we, as language teachers and/or researchers, can have a more explicit understanding of how oral activities are implemented by different learners.

6.4 Concluding Remarks

Despite the limited number of participants engaged and the exclusive nature of the research context (i.e., a theme-based language EFL course for Taiwanese medical sophomore students, all males), the present case study contributes significantly to further understanding L2 socialization and provides a different dimension to examine a theme-based language course, which has scarcely been discussed in the Taiwanese language-learning context. Through one typical and major academic activity, oral presentations, the present study provides a rich, participant-informed description of the complex interaction among students, course designers (i.e., the team teachers), their instructor, their informed task, and the wider academic environment in which they were all embedded. These multifaceted inter-relationships represent students' learning and participants' interactions within the situated context which therefore deserves further research attention and merits new possibilities in language course

construction toward discipline-specific orientations.

To me personally, I think conducting this study has made a very valuable and rewarding contribution to my growth as a language researcher and teacher. By listening to participants' multiple voices and engaging in learners' complex interplays with the context, this study has helped me pave the way for further understanding students' learning and socialization processes, the educational/classroom context, and the ever-changing nature of educational practices. This understanding also offers me a useful window to re-examine and re-interpret my role as a researcher and teacher with a broader view. In this sense, then, I shall convey my deepest appreciation to the focal participants who have educated and socialized me to be a better learner, researcher and teacher within the academic world.

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Appendix 1. Syllabus of the Course

Medical English

Fall, 2009

Textbook:

Third Call: English Course for Medical & Nursing Professionals, Elsevier Pte Ltd. (2003).
Taipei: The Crane Publishing Co., Ltd.

Course Objectives:

This course aims to help medical students acquire the English skills they need for future professional success. Basic English medical terms are introduced and practiced in class. Medical science readings are covered and students are required to make oral presentations based on the readings and supplemental materials. In addition, students are also expected to write a short academic paper with the assigned topic. Students are divided into small groups; each group consists of approximately 10 students.

Grading Criteria:

Attendance and Participation	20%
Mid-term Exam	30%
Two Oral Reports	30%
Term Paper	20%

Notes

1. **Classroom:**

- 1.1. LL1 for Weeks 1, 10 and 11 (all students together)
- 1.2. PBL classrooms for other weeks

2. A **model oral report**, based on the reading of Unit 3 (pp.31-32), is given by the professor in Week 3.

3. **Oral reports:**

Each student has to give two oral reports during the semester--during Weeks 4-8 and Weeks 13-17. During these periods, two students give oral reports – 20 minutes for each presenter and 15-20 minutes for discussion (approximately 80 minutes in total).

3.1. Oral Report (1):

- 3.1.1. The main focus of the first oral report is the readings of Units 1, 2, 4, 5, 6 and 7. Each presenter is required to illustrate the meanings of words/phrases, the main idea of the assigned reading, and some issues arising from the reading.
- 3.1.2. Audience members have to take turns giving some feedback by raising 2 or 3 questions for further discussion. In response to the questions, each presenter should try to make connections with the key points of his/her presentation.

3.2. Oral Report (2):

- 3.2.1. Topics for the second oral presentation are related to the themes of Units 8~12.
- 3.2.2. The second oral presentation summarizes the readings, and offers an introduction to the term paper, including a short outline or abstract of the three cited references.

4. **Mid-term Exam:**

- 4.1. Covers Units 1 to 7.
- 4.2. Tentative structure: Listening, Vocabulary, Grammar and Sentence structures, and Reading Comprehension.

5. **Term Paper:**

- 5.1. The term paper is an *individual* task; yet, cooperative brainstorming is highly recommended. Topics for the term paper are closely relevant to what was covered in the second oral presentation (i.e., the themes of Units 8~12).
- 5.2. The length of the term paper is 4-5 pages and typeset in 1.5 spacing and 12-point Times New Roman, with at least 3 in-text citations and 3 entries listed in the works cited.
- 5.3. The criteria for grading the term papers focuses primarily on a well-organized structure, coherent argument, convincing supporting details, valid conclusion and effective English expressions.

Medical English

Fall, 2009

Weekly Schedule

Week	Date	Planned Schedule
1	09/16	Introduction to the course (grouping) 【Classroom: LL1】
2	09/23	Introduction to the research paper, bibliography, documentation and “plagiarism” (1) Homework: (1) Find one journal article in the medical field; (2) Survey forms (Due date: 11/25) Questionnaire to explore learning context and learning experiences/attitudes
3	9/30	Guidelines for oral presentation skills: Taking <u>Unit 3 Emergency Services</u> as a model oral report Reading: <i>Extreme Weather Causes Medical Chaos in Chicago</i> (pp.31-32) In-class activity: (1) Investigate and discuss research papers in medical genre (2) Demonstrate samples of projects (3) Decide rotation order of two oral presentations Homework: Preparation for the <u>first</u> oral presentation
4	10/07	Unit 1 Art and Medicine Reading (1): <i>Endure! How Paul Klee’s Illness Influenced His Art</i> (pp.2-4) Reading (2): <i>Artists Really Do Have Different Brains</i> (pp.7-8) In-class activity: (1) Introduction of ‘note-taking’ strategy (2) Sharing of generic articles
5	10/14	Unit 2 Cloning and the Genome Project Reading (1): <i>Human Cloning and the Challenge of Regulation</i> (pp.16-18) Reading (2): <i>Twins: Nature’s Clone</i> (pp.22-23) In-class activity: Sharing of generic articles
6	10/21	Unit 4 Matters of the Mind Reading (1): <i>A Head Injury Leads to a Change in Character</i> (pp.42-44) Reading (2): <i>A Different Way of Thinking</i> (pp.51-52) In-class activity: Sharing of generic articles
7	10/28	Unit 5 Global diseases Reading (1): <i>Is Smallpox History?</i> (pp.63-64) Unit 7 Longevity Reading (1): <i>The Spanish Live Long and Healthy Lives</i> (pp.92-93) Reading (2): <i>Longevity: The Ultimate Gender Gap</i> (p.99) In-class activity: Sharing of generic articles
8	11/04	Unit 6 Legal Issues Reading (1): <i>New Law Protects Nurses Who ‘Blow the Whistle’</i> (pp.81-83) Reading (2): <i>Complaints: Listening, Acting, Improving</i> (pp.85-86) In-class activity: Sharing of generic articles
9	11/11	Review: Units 1-7; Survey forms due
10	11/18	Mid-term Exam 【Classroom: LL1】
11	11/25	Watching a movie and discussion 【Classroom: LL1】 Homework: Essay map

Project Goals: (1) Investigation of medical genre; (2) Note-taking and questioning strategy; (3) Give Oral presentation (I)

Week	Date	Planned Schedule
12	12/02	Introduction to the research paper, bibliography, documentation and “plagiarism” (2) In-class activity: Summary writing practice; introduction to the second oral presentation and report format Preparation for the <u>second</u> oral report Essay map due
13	12/09	Unit 8 Depression and Stress Reading (1): <i>The Dangers of Overwork</i> (pp.110-111) Reading (2): <i>Post-Christmas Traumatic Syndrome</i> (pp.114-115) Unit 9 Ethical Dilemma Reading (1): <i>Ethical Dilemma: Dealing with Racist Patients</i> (p.124) In-class activity: Oral report on research paper summary
14	12/16	Unit 9 Ethical Dilemma Reading (2): <i>Boy Refuses Cancer Treatment in Favor of Prayer</i> (p.130) Unit 10 Patients and Doctors Reading (1): <i>D.J. Whitehouse: Consultant Physician</i> (pp.137-138) Reading (2): <i>The Emperor Has No Clothes On</i> (pp.142-143) In-class activity: Oral report on research paper summary
15	12/23	Unit 11 Disability, Private/Public Health Service Reading (1): <i>Don't Hang up: Use of the Telephone by People with Communication Difficulties</i> (pp.153-154) Reading (2): <i>Hospital Food</i> (pp.182-183) In-class activity: Oral report on research paper summary
16	12/30	Unit 12 Lifestyle, Health and Illness Reading (1): <i>Obesity – About the Size of It</i> (pp.167-168) Reading (2): <i>Why Are Women More Affected by Drink than Men?</i> (pp.173-174) In-class activity: Oral report on research paper summary Homework: Peer feedback
17	01/6	Writing Conferencing (3 in one group)
18	01/13	Course Review / Term Paper Due: Jan. 11 (Monday) by 16:00

Project Goals: (1) Give oral presentation (II); (2) Summary writing; (3) Academic research paper

Appendix 2. Unit 3 as a Model Presentation

Unit 3 Emergency Services (p.31)

Vocabulary

- **grind to a halt** (v. phr.) to stop slowly 逐漸停止
- **snowplough** [= *snowplow*] (n.) a vehicle or device for removing snow from roads or railways 剷雪機
- **miraculously** (adv.) surprisingly 令人驚訝地
- **shawl** (n.) a large piece of cloth worn especially by women or girls over their shoulders and/or head 圍巾
- **Isphahan** (n.) Iran's third largest city
- **casualty** (n.) a person injured or killed in a serious accident or war 傷者；死者；受害人
- **collide** (v.) to hit something violently 碰撞；相撞
- **fracture** (v.) (n.) to break 折斷；骨折
- **vertebrae** (n.) any of the bones or cartilaginous segments forming the spinal column 【解】脊椎骨
- **osteoporosis** (n.) a disease in which the bones become extremely porous, are subject to fracture, and heal slowly 【醫】骨質疏鬆
- **humerus** (n.) the longer bone of the arm or forelimb, extending from the shoulder to the elbow 肱骨
- **arteriosclerosis** (n.) a chronic disease in which thickening, hardening, and loss of elasticity of the arterial walls result in impaired blood circulation 【醫】動脈硬化〔症〕
- **tibia** (n.) the inner and larger of the two bones of the lower human leg, extending from the knee to the ankle 【解】脛骨
- **hemiparesis** (n.) slight or partial paralysis at up body 【醫】半身輕度癱瘓
- **carotid arteries** (n. phr.) either of two major arteries of the neck and head 【解】頸動脈
- **extensive plumbing repair** (n. phr.) a kind of cardio-operation 支架撐開術
- **pneumonia** (n.) an acute or chronic disease marked by inflammation of the lungs 【醫】肺炎
- **aortic dissection** (n. phr.) separation of the layers within the aortic wall 大主動脈內層剝離
- **crop** (n.) -- **a crop of something** (phr.) a number of things that happen at the same time 〔同時產生的〕一批；一群；大量
- **strenuous** (adj.) needing or using a lot of physical or mental effort or energy 費勁的；費力的
- **vasoconstrict** (v.) to narrow the lumen of blood vessels 【醫】使血管收縮
- **heedless** (adj.) not giving attention to a risk or possible difficulty 不留心的；不注意的
- **exertion** (n.) the use of power to make something happen 努力；費力；用力
- **frostbite** (n.) injury to someone caused by severe cold, usually to their toes, fingers, ears or nose 凍傷

Summary

The reading describes emergency situations which happened during a winter in Chicago. A number of people sustained serious injuries in the snowstorm.

Paragraph 1

After a heavy fall of snow in one day in the first week of January, the city of Chicago was practically paralyzed.

Paragraph 2

The snow was ploughed up and the main public roads were opened to traffic. The doctors and the nurses went back to their duties.

Paragraph 3

When the temperature dropped sharply, people tried as much as they could to keep warm and protect themselves from the severe weather condition.

Paragraph 4

Despite the efforts they made, a number of people still received serious injuries, which include fracture, frostbite and sprain, in the snowstorm.

Paragraph 5

More cases of people suffering from serious injuries are subsequently reported.

Paragraph 6

An account of the extreme case of a young woman who suffered terribly in the severe weather is used to end up the reading.

Discussion Questions

1. What does the word “miraculously” (¶2) indicate?
2. What does the word “ghost-like creatures” (¶3) refer to?
3. What does the word “casualties” (¶4) imply? Why does the author use this word in the beginning of this paragraph?
4. What does the word “A very important lady” (¶4) infer?
5. What does the word “extensive plumbing repairs” (¶4) mean?
6. Continue question 5, what does the sentence mean by “too far gone for extensive plumbing repairs”?
7. What does the sentence, “Indicative of our times was the young woman admitted to my service...” (¶6) mean?
8. What does the phrase “a rip-roaring pneumonia as well as extensive frostbite” (¶6) mean?
9. In order to prevent similar medical emergencies mentioned in the article from happening, any possible advice would you like to give to people?

Appendix 3

SELF-REPORT FORM FOR THE FIRST ORAL PRESENTATION (OP 1)

Name _____ The Date of Your Oral Presentation _____

Topic: _____

1. How much time did you spend preparing for your OP? How did you prepare your presentation? How many times did you rehearse before the formal presentation?
2. Did you encounter any difficulties while doing your OP? Please explain what you think the possible reasons for the difficulties could be. What do you think you can do to improve the next OP?
3. How do you think your peers helped you during the process of delivering your OP? Whose (or what kinds of) responses, if any, did you receive in the discussion session? And how do you feel about the response?
4. Any thoughts or concerns that you would like to share with your instructor?

Appendix 4

SELF-REPORT FORM FOR THE SECOND ORAL PRESENTATION (OP 2)

Name _____ Date of Your Oral Presentation _____

Topic: _____

1. (1) Did you spend more time preparing for the second OP?

(2) How did you prepare your presentation?

(3) Did you rehearse this time? _____ If so, how many times? _____

2. Which was the most challenging part during your preparation (e.g., insufficient time to rehearse) and presentation phases (e.g., nervousness, linguistic problems in expression)?

3. Please mark (✓) a score to evaluate your own performance for the two oral presentations.

	5	5.5	6	6.5	7	7.5	8	8.5	9	9.5	10
1 st OP											
2 nd OP											

Appendix 5. Sample Questions for Formal Interview with an Instructor (who is also one of the pioneers launching the course and former coordinator of the last academic year.)

INTERVIEW QUESTIONS:

- I. 對課程目標的了解? 對學生的期望? 這堂課原本醫學系已經拿回自行負責, 是什麼原因又回歸到由英文老師負責? 您認為當時重新整合這堂課最大難處在那裡? 99 學年度即將有護理英文的課程, 您能預期有面臨什麼困難或不確定嗎?
- II. 學生方面: 您認為學生需求為何? 就以往經驗, 學生曾遭遇那些學習困難? 學生對這堂課的反應? 您認為學生有達到您預期的學習目標嗎?
- III. 授課方面: 在教授這堂課的過程中, 您覺得較有壓力的那(些)方面? 有成就感的是那些方面? 您認為: 如果有專業的醫學領域醫師或老師跟您一起教授這堂課程會讓您覺得有幫助或是反而不容易整合課程內容? (或是沒意見?) 請解釋。
- IV. 教材方面: 覺得教科書的內容是否符合這堂課的學習目標? 有何優缺點? 會補充其它講義嗎? (If so, in which perspective?) 覺得教科書難度如何? 符合學生需求嗎?
- V. 評量方面: 您最著重學生那方面的表現(或學習態度)? 在這堂課給最後成績時, 您會把所有項目分數化? 或標準僅供評分參考, 您會有自訂標準? 您對目前的評分標準(如下)有任何建議嗎?

Attendance and Participation	20%
Mid-term Exam	30%
Two Oral Reports	30%
Term Paper	20%

對這堂課有何其它想法或建議?

Appendix 6. Sample Questions for Formal Interview with Student Participants

I. Background

- 家庭背景
- 教育背景
- 選擇長庚醫學系的原因
- 特別喜愛或擅長的科目
- 學習英文的經驗及感受
- 曾經嘗試過的學習英文的方式
- 談一談在英文學習過程中，曾經對自己曾經有過重要影響的人/事/物

II. Studying at X University

- 描述對目前自己的學習狀況（不限定於英文）？與同儕，老師之間的相處如何？
- 進 X University 之後，有選修過，或是正在選修的英文相關課程包括？
- （曾在我的大一英文課的學生）：請描述你對當時上課的學習及自我表現如何？
- 上大學後，除了選修課之外，平常有特別花時間自修英文嗎？請說明。
- 在學習英文方面，你如何看待口語能力上的學習？你曾經針對這方面做過什麼特別的努力嗎？

III. In the observed class

- 你認為系上及英文老師們開這堂課的目的是什麼？你做到了什麼目標？
- 你對這堂課的瞭解是如何？在即將接近學期末的此時，你有發現任何與你在學期初認知上有何不同嗎？
- 對你來說，這堂課有什麼不同於其他英文課的地方？
- 你認為這本教科書的內容如何？
- 這堂課最大的挑戰是什麼？你是如何克服？有影響力的人/事/物？你認為自己在這堂課進步最多的是？
- Any other thoughts?

IV. In terms of oral presentations

- 請描述在兩次的口語報告經驗上有何不同？準備方式？呈現方式？心境上的不同？或任何你願意分享的想法。
- 你認為口語報告最困難的地方在於？有成就感的部分是什麼？你學習到最重要的經驗是什麼？
- 在你準備報告時，哪方面是你認為最重要的步驟？在報告時，你最要求要達到什麼目標？
- 你認為老師提供了什麼樣的幫助？來自同學的幫助是什麼？
- 你會如何描述班上的氣氛及互動情形？
- 讓學生看整學期發言次數的登記表，討論個人的發言模式（ex.次數，長短，先後—

讓學生自己解釋其中的原因)

- 你對誰曾做過的報告印象最深刻? 請解釋。
- 你認為哪場報告做得最好? 是甚麼特質讓你認為這位同學報告得很好?” 請解釋。
- 從老師及同學的口語報告中, 你學到了什麼是一個好的學術口語報告? 你看待的標準為何?
- Any other thoughts?

V. Future plan

- 有什麼英文選修課是你之後有興趣去修的? 請解釋。
- 你認為英文對你將來的醫生工作重要嗎? 請解釋。
- 你會希望學校能提供什麼(你認為會有幫助的)選修課?
- Any other thoughts?