POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS IN EFL TEACHING

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Advisor

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS IN EFL TEACHING

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Xia Xue (Snow)

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ABSTRACT

POWERPOINT PRESENTATIONS IN EFL TEACHING

Statement of the Problem

Microsoft PowerPoint use in education is very prevalent. Microsoft

PowerPoint is a software program that helps teachers organize their thoughts

and present their information in an orderly, attractive manner. In addition,

teachers can insert graphics, drawings and photos in their slides. Ultimately,

their slide shows will have visual appeal and ample content in EFL

classrooms.

Therefore, it is believed that PowerPoint presentations can improve the

efficiency of EFL teaching. In addition, they can help some students to better

understand the instruction of the teacher. However, PowerPoint presentations

do have some disadvantages.

The problem presented in this paper is to identify advantages and

disadvantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching. Most research

seems to indicate that advantages in using of PowerPoint presentations

outweigh the disadvantages.

Methods and Procedures

A brief review of literature on the features of Microsoft PowerPoint will

be conducted. A second review of literature relating to research on advantages

and disadvantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching will be

completed as well. The findings will be summarized and recommendations

will be made.

Summary of Results

Through a review of the literature, it becomes evident that most research shows advantages of PowerPoint presentations outweigh the disadvantages. It seems that a plethora of research strongly supports the advantages of PowerPoint presentations.

In a word, it is hoped that this paper analysis may contribute to use PowerPoint more efficiently in EFL teaching.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

It is a PowerPoint world, surrounded by complex images, movement, and sound. It is thought that part of our human evolution has focused on making our technology reflect the color and clamor of our surroundings.

Microsoft PowerPoint helps users create on-screen descriptions, demonstrations and summaries of information. PowerPoint presentation is one example of a technology that migrated from business and industry to education. It was first adopted by business executives and salespeople who used it to give reports at meetings and presentations to clients. It was believed that it's capability to demonstrate and clarify information became evident and it began to make its way into education.

It is generally believed that PowerPoint presentations can enhance the effectiveness of EFL teaching. However, PowerPoint presentations do have some disadvantages in EFL teaching. For example, there is a trend that more and more teachers are just clicking the mouse all the time when they are giving the lectures. Instead of interacting with students during the class, they just sit in front of the computers without leaving their chairs.

Therefore, the papers primary focus is on whether research supports the idea that PowerPoint presentations can improve the efficiency of EFL teaching.

Statement of the Problem

The problem presented in this paper is to identify advantages and disadvantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching. Most research seems to indicate that advantages of PowerPoint presentations outweigh the disadvantages.

Purpose of the Research

The perception by both educators and non-educators alike is that PowerPoint presentations can improve the efficiency of EFL teaching. The purpose of this research paper was to determine whether research supports this concept.

Significance of the Problem

A plethora of research shows various advantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching. It becomes evident that PowerPoint presentations can contribute to improvement in EFL teaching.

Assumptions

For the purpose of this paper, it is assumed that all research and review of the literature are accurately reported. It is also assumed that review of the literature will offer recommendations on how best to use the research available.

Delimitations of the Research

The research will be conducted through several sources about PowerPoint

presentation in EFL teaching. Key search topics included "what is Microsoft PowerPoint", "features of Microsoft PowerPoint", "advantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching", "disadvantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching", and "how to use PowerPoint more efficiently."

Method of Approach

A brief review of literature on the features of Microsoft PowerPoint will be conducted. A second review of literature relating to research on advantages and disadvantages of PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching will also be completed. The findings will be summarized and recommendations will be made.

Definition of Terms

PowerPoint. PowerPoint is a type of presentation software that allows one to show colored text and images with simple animation and sound (Design for multimedia learning, 1997).

EFL Teaching. Teach English as a foreign language (Design for multimedia learning, 1997).

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

<u>What is Microsoft PowerPoint?</u>

Microsoft PowerPoint is a complete presentation program that "allows teachers to produce professional-looking presentations in EFL classroom. In a PowerPoint presentation also is called a slide show" (Cashman & Shelly, 2000, p. 15) Cashman and Shelly (2000), identify that PowerPoint gives teachers the flexibility to make presentations using a projection device attached to a computer and using overhead transparencies. In addition, teachers can take advantage of the World Wide Web and run virtual presentations on the Internet. PowerPoint also can create paper printouts of the individual slides, outlines, and teachers' notes (p. 16).

PowerPoint contains several features to simplify creating a slide show. For example, teachers can utilize PowerPoint to create a presentation, and then they can modify the presentation to fulfill specific requirements. According to Cashman and Shelly (2000), "Teachers can quickly format a slide show using one of the professionally designed presentation design templates. To make their presentations more impressive, they can add tables, charts, pictures, video, sound, and animation effects." (p. 16)

In addition, Cashman and Shelly (2000) state, "Teachers also can check the spelling of their slide shows as they type or after they have completed

designing the presentations." (p. 17)

<u>Features of Microsoft PowerPoint</u>

Stemler (1997) states that several auto features make it easier for teachers to perform their work. AutoCorrect corrects their typing errors and capitalization mistakes, and AutoClipArt provides ClipArt suggestions that relate to presentation topic. Also, the AutoContent Wizard has been enhanced to change teachers' messages depending on the age of their students, type of students, and time allotted for their presentations (p. 339-340).

Furthermore, Stemler (1997) indicates that after teachers have created presentations, they should consider using the StyleChecker to scan their work for design problems, such as spelling errors, incorrect and inconsistent use of capitalization or punctuation, and inconsistent use of font sizes and other style attributes. They can customize the StyleChecker to match the design rules they want their presentations to follow (p. 341).

Although most on-screen presentations are presented in color, students' handouts are often printed in black and white. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) suggest using the PowerPoint's Black and White View to see how teachers' presentations will look in black and white. In this view mode, all text is converted to black, the background is converted to white, and other objects are printed using a combination of white, black, and shades of gray. Teachers can change the way objects appear if they don't show up well (p. 7).

Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) claim that using the new Animation

Effects toolbar, teachers can bring "life" and impact to their presentations by adding motion and sound effects to objects. For example, if they click the Laser Effect button, the text on a slide will appear from the upper-right corner of the slide and drop into position with an accompanied Laser sound effect (p.8).

<p style="text-align: center;">Advantages of PowerPoint Presentations in EFL Teaching</p>

It should be understood that using PowerPoint in EFL classes does have great advantages both for teachers and students.

Catherina (2006) indicates that students think PowerPoint based lectures are more interesting than traditional lectures (p. 4). Moreover, Fisher (1998) reports that student scores on tests are even improved with PowerPoint lectures as opposed to traditional lectures.

Aly, Elen, and Willems (2004) point out that PowerPoint based lectures focus attention and reduce distraction (p. 42). Szaboa and Hastings (2000) find similar trends in their study at Nottingham Trent University in England. Besides, seventy-two percent of students who are surveyed say that they want PowerPoint presentations to be adopted in EFL classes (p. 32).

Miltenoff (2003) indicates that PowerPoint can be used as a multimedia and interactive tool. Pictures, animation, sound effects, and music can greatly enhance the quality of the presentation. It is much easier to use attractive fonts, photos, clipart, tables, and graphs in PowerPoint. And the hyperlinks on the slides allow users to get more information than is found in books and broadens

the field of view of students. Most importantly, slide shows are adaptable to many EFL teaching environments, including face-to-face and online (p. 120).

In addition, comparing PowerPoint presentations with handwriting, teachers can immediately appreciate the value and impact of using PowerPoint presentations. According to Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), "On the one hand, PowerPoint presentations are more effective and they can take less time and effort to create. On the other hand, teachers can improve the quality of PowerPoint presentations while dramatically reducing their production time and budgets." (p. 95)

The colors used in PowerPoint presentations can influence how students respond to teachers' messages. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) stated "Colors can bring emotion to PowerPoint presentations. However, used improperly, colors can also undermine themes of teachers' presentations and distract students." (p. 99) In addition, teachers should also be aware that "a significant portion of students—may be color-blind and not perceive the differences between two or more colors. Keeping all these points in mind, teachers are best advised to keep their color selections simple and restrained." (Coulthard & Hutchinson, 1996, p. 100)

Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) indicate that fortunately for teachers, Microsoft hired professional artists to compile PowerPoint's numerous color schemes. A color scheme is a set of eight colors that teachers can apply to individual slides, notes pages, and student handouts. The eight main colors

include a background color, title text color, text and line color, fill color,

shadows color, and three colors for accents (p. 99). Coulthard and Hutchinson

(1996) present the idea that by using color schemes, teachers ensure that all

the colors in their presentations are balanced and will work well together. Also,

color schemes make it easy to apply a new set of colors to their presentations,

just as using templates makes it easy to change overall design (p. 90).

It has been said that a picture is worth a thousand words. Although this

phrase is overused, its truth is undeniable. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996)

indicate that graphics add personality to teacher presentations and convey

information more efficiently than text alone. Unfortunately, many new

computer users struggle with the tendency to place too many graphics on a

single screen. To assist teacher plans of how and when to use graphics, apply

these basic principles: strive for simplicity, use emphasis sparingly, and ensure

a visual balance between graphics and text (p. 124).

Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) find that PowerPoint's AutoLayouts

already encourage a balanced and visually appealing use of graphics. The

Microsoft ClipArt Gallery mini-app provides a one-stop shopping mall for all

the clip art images. A clip art image is a computer graphic or picture that

teachers can insert into their documents, usually without having to pay

royalties or licensing fees to the artist or designer. Microsoft's ClipArt Gallery

provides hundreds of images organized into over 25 categories. Teachers can

also use the Gallery to add their own images, delete existing images, and move

images (p. 125).

In addition to clip art images, teachers can insert graphic files into their presentations. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), state that a computer graphic file is usually created by an artist, designer, or desktop publisher. However, teachers can easily create their own graphic files if they have access to a scanner. A scanner is a hardware device that converts photographs and other paper-based material into computer images. Just as a photocopier makes a representation from paper to paper, a scanner makes a copy from paper to computer. Once it is saved to the disk, teachers can insert a computer graphic file into PowerPoint using the Insert, Picture command (p. 132).

According to Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), "Most teachers recognize the benefit of using graphics to improve their effectiveness in communicating information. Clearly, a chart or graph is easier to decipher than rows and columns of tiny numbers." (p.131)   Furthermore, Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), state that PowerPoint makes it relatively easy for teachers to include graphs in their presentations. It comes with a powerful supplementary program called Microsoft Graph. The Microsoft Graph helps them produce great-looking charts and graphs within PowerPoint. Graph does not replace a full-featured spreadsheet application like Microsoft Excel, but it does provide a more convenient tool for embedding simple charts into presentations (p.132).

While PowerPoint presentations help teachers improve teaching, they also help students absorb teachers' messages. Cashman and Shelly (2000) find that

students learn most effectively when their five senses are involved. Researchers have determined that individuals remember 10 percent of what they read, 20 percent of what they hear, 30 percent of what they see, and an amazing 70 percent when they both see and hear. That is why it is important to attend class instead of copying classmate's notes. When students see and hear instructor deliver a lecture and write their own notes, they are apt to interpret the concepts correctly and recall this information at the ever-important final exam (p. 15).

In addition, Roblyer (2003) indicates that many teachers report a simple, but highly effective use of PowerPoint presentation. They set up a computer in EFL classroom to display automatically advancing frames of spelling words, vocabulary words, and information. According to teachers who have used these strategies, students seem to attend to and retain much of what they see on these slideshows (p.179).

Because of all these advantages, there are more and more PowerPoint presentations used in EFL class.

Disadvantages of PowerPoint Presentations in EFL Teaching

Although PowerPoint presentations have many advantages, PowerPoint presentations in EFL teaching are hampered by several problems as well.

First, Klemm (2007) thinks that more teachers are just clicking the mouse all the time when they are giving the lectures. Instead of interacting with students during the EFL class, they just sit in front of the computers without

leaving their chairs (p. 45).

Second, Miltenoff (2003) indicates that teachers do not need to write information on the blackboard, but just click the mouse. Therefore, it is very easy for teachers to give too much information in one class, which can difficult for students to comprehend. What's more, students are easily overwhelmed with a large amount of information given in the PowerPoint presentation (p. 67).

Third, Roblyer (2003) states that students need ample online development time to take full advantage of the benefits of PowerPoint technology. This presents a problem in most EFL classrooms due to insufficient numbers of computers. So educators should try their best to increase the number of computers if conditions permit (p. 167).

Fourth, integration of PowerPoint technology into the curriculum presents additional problems. Mayer and Moreno (1998) indicate that students need sufficient time to focus, build, and reflect in order to ensure quality projects. The conventional school schedule, often broken into 50-minute blocks, does not lend itself to serious project development. If PowerPoint is going to have a major impact on learning, educators will need to look at ways of infusing more flexibility into students' daily schedules (p.312-313).

Finally, Boyle (1997) warns that technology such as PowerPoint is a mixed blessing. It helps teachers communicate information more quickly, but do not necessarily help them analyze whether or not information is accurate,

relevant, or current. The more information they have, the more important it becomes to learn critical analysis, visual literacy, and information literacy skills (p. 24).

<div align="center">How to Use PowerPoint More Efficiently</div>

In addition to the actual slide presentation, PowerPoint enables teachers to create and print handouts for students. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) state that a handout consists of two to six slide images printed on a single page. Handouts help support teachers' presentations by keeping students focused on what teachers are saying and by not requiring students to write down everything they see on the projection screen (p. 5).

Preparing handouts for students is a courtesy. However, according to Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), "Teachers should not provide too much information in students' handouts; otherwise, there is no incentive to sit through presentations" (p.163). Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) indicate that many teachers create students' handouts in which important information is missing from the slide representations on the page. As teachers proceed through each slide, important information is provided so that the students can fill in the blanks in their notes. Not only do the students have to pay attention in order to compile a complete set of notes, they may also remember the important concepts better by having to write them down (p. 164).

Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) state that PowerPoint allows teachers to

include and print a notes page for each slide to assist them in the actual delivery of presentations. Teachers can then use these notes pages for studying, take them to the podium, or hand them out to students when supporting information for their slide show is necessary (p. 5).

In preparing for a presentation, teachers should consider creating notes. Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996) state "Many accomplished teachers have adopted the recipe card format for their notes. These notes help them avoid a common pitfall among novice presenters—putting too much text on the slides. Keeping their slides brief and to the point" (p. 158). In addition, according to Coulthard and Hutchinson (1996), "Use the notes pages in PowerPoint as a replacement or complement to their recipe cards to store reminders to themselves. These notes pages also come in handy for question periods at the end of presentations" (p. 159)

CHAPTER 3

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Through a review of the literature, it is obvious that advantages of

PowerPoint presentations outweigh the disadvantages. In addition, most

research supports the view that PowerPoint presentations can improve the

efficiency of EFL teaching.

PowerPoint is a multimedia application that presents information with

both audio and video capabilities. This function makes PowerPoint an ideal

tool for teaching and learning the English language. In addition, PowerPoint

enhances teacher lectures by highlighting keywords in the presentation, and

displaying pictures and diagrams. The goal of the teacher is to create

PowerPoint presentations that communicate messages effectively.

It is important that teachers have a clear understanding of PowerPoint

presentation objectives and can verbalize the information that they want to

communicate to students.

It is believed that the current widespread educational uses of PowerPoint

indicate an even heavier reliance on it in EFL classroom of the future. More

educators will use PowerPoint when they see the powerful capabilities it offers

to enhance EFL classroom learning.

Involving students in teacher PowerPoint presentations means they must

be visually interesting, aesthetically pleasing, and relevant. In my opinion,

PowerPoint presentations should include the following slides:

Firstly, use a title slide to act as the backdrop for students entering EFL classroom at the beginning of PowerPoint presentation.

Secondly, use an introduction slide to set the stage for PowerPoint presentations to motivate students to learn and know their time class time will be worthwhile.

Thirdly, use an agenda or objectives slide to prepare students for what is coming up ahead in the presentation.

Finally, use a closing slide to reiterate and summarize the main ideas, to draw conclusions, and to revisit the presentation objectives.

To sum up, the research conducted prior to and writing of this paper helps me to know more about PowerPoint presentations and what contributions they can make to improve the efficiently in EFL instruction.

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