Exploring Persuasive Techniques used by Japanese University Students in English Oral Presentations

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ABSTRACT

This dissertation explores the use of persuasive techniques in English language oral presentations delivered by Japanese university students. In particular, it focuses on the persuasive discursive techniques employed by the presenters. The purpose of this study is to develop a better understanding of how and why Japanese university students use certain persuasive discursive techniques and if usage of these techniques affects the persuasive impact of their oral presentations.

Phase 1 of this study focuses on the audience's perspective and is comprised of three focus group sessions. Participants in these sessions rated the overall persuasiveness of four presentation videos and provided rationale, with a particular focus on the persuasive techniques employed by the presenters. Two of the focus groups were comprised of Japanese nationals, while a third focus group was comprised of non-Japanese nationals, adding a cultural comparative element to this study.

Phase 2 of this study examines the presenter's perspective and is comprised of four case studies. Exploring these case studies firstly involved documenting how four Japanese university students prepared persuasive presentations, how they delivered these presentations, and finally, how these presentations were perceived. A modified version of Hyland's (2005) Interpersonal model of metadiscourse was employed to further analyze the specific persuasive discursive techniques used by the presenters. Along with documenting and explaining the 'how', this phase additionally involved examining 'why' presenters chose certain methods or techniques.

The various forms of data collected over two phases in this study were then integrated to generate a more comprehensive overarching analysis. This analysis explored which persuasive discursive techniques were utilized by the presenters in this study, why these techniques were utilized, the effectiveness of the techniques employed, the underlying rationale behind the perceived effectiveness of certain techniques, and how other non-linguistic techniques affected the utilization of the discursive techniques.

The findings show that the more persuasive presenters in both phases of this study were not only able to implement a far greater range and frequency of persuasive discursive techniques, but they were also able to combine the use of multiple techniques throughout their presentations, and were able to utilize these techniques alongside a congruent delivery skill set. Implications drawn from this study indicate support for a multi-faceted analysis of oral presentation skill sets in future research and for educators to focus on multiple aspects when teaching presentation skills in their courses.

MACQUARIE UNIVERSITY

STATEMENT OF CANDIDATURE

I certify that the work in this thesis entitled *Exploring Persuasive Techniques used by Japanese University Students in English Oral Presentations* has not previously been submitted for a degree nor has it been submitted as part of requirements for a degree to any other university or institution other than Macquarie University.

I also certify that the thesis is an original piece of research and it has been written by me. Any help and assistance that I have received in my research work and the preparation of the thesis itself has been appropriately acknowledged. In addition, I certify that all the information and sources and literature used are indicated in the thesis.

The research presented in this thesis was approved by Macquarie University Ethics Review Committee,

Reference numbers: 5201200756 and 5201400566

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ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Completing this doctoral research over the last eight years has been a long and challenging task, but one I have enjoyed immensely. I am grateful and indebted to the support of many people and I would like to express my gratitude to all those that assisted me in some form or another, and apologize for being unable to thank each person individually here.

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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

> Of the modes of persuasion furnished by the spoken word there are three kinds. The first kind depends on the personal character of the speaker; the second on putting the audience into a certain frame of mind; the third on the proof, provided by the words of the speech itself.
>
> (Aristotle 1356a, Rhetoric 2)

1.1 BACKGROUND

My experiences teaching English presentation skills to university students in Japan over the last decade have greatly influenced my views and beliefs about this subject, and have had a direct impact in shaping this dissertation. As a trained English language teacher, my initial forays into teaching presentation skills courses focused on enhancing the presenters' grammatical accuracy and overall language fluency. Through reflection, teacher-training workshops, and independent research projects, the scope of my presentation skills teaching focus widened to incorporate delivery techniques (e.g. eye contact, voice variation, body language, etc.). Recently, this focus has expanded to incorporate the more sophisticated use of rhetoric and persuasive discursive techniques. Curiosity led me to explore how these techniques affect the persuasive impact of oral presentations. Unsatisfied with the limited answers I found in the existing literature, I determined the need to address a series of research questions to satisfy my own interests, to improve the quality of my instruction, and to provide the basis for future research.

1.2 OBJECTIVES AND SIGNIFICANCE OF THE STUDY

The broad objective of this study is to explore persuasion and persuasive techniques through the medium of oral presentations and to address gaps in the research literature. The concept of persuasion has been studied for more than 2,000 years, and a number of models explaining the process of persuasion have been proposed in various academic fields (e.g. psychology, marketing, and politics). However, these models have not generated a strong consensus amongst

scholars as to how or what determines the persuasive impact of a message (Lucas, 2015). Furthermore, there are few studies on persuasive discursive techniques or studies that have approached the topic of persuasion from an applied linguistics perspective. Studies that do exist, almost exclusively focus on persuasion through writing (Hyland, 2010). For oral presentations, research attention that "has been devoted to the definition and development of presentation skills" has increased in recent years (Agnes, 2006, p. 55). Anderson (2017) describes this burgeoning area of research and instruction as 'presentation literacy', labeling it a "core skill for the twenty-first century" (p. 10) and believes that presentation skills and the rhetoric used in presentations are just as important to teach in schools as the traditional three 'Rs' (reading, 'riting, and 'rithmetic).

The more specific objective of this dissertation is to explore the different persuasive techniques used in English oral presentations delivered by Japanese university students, a context in which I have worked for a decade, from an applied linguist's view, with a particular emphasis on exploring the prominence and pervasiveness of persuasive discursive techniques. The theory of language that underpins this study is Systematic Functional Linguistics (SFL), and that language is a resource that speakers use to express meaning (Halliday, 1994). The data collection period of this qualitative study took place over a two-year period (2014-2015), and was conducted at a university in central Japan, with Japanese students presenting to their fellow Japanese classmates. The key research questions are: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation? From these questions, a host of secondary questions arose that can be organized around three contexts of enquiry. The first context involves exploring the background of the presenters. The second context involves examining the presentations, while the third context deals with the reflections and self-assessments of the presenters, and views from members of the audience. Overall, this study seeks to significantly enhance our understanding of oral presentations

as they are widely and commonly practiced in Japan's contemporary higher education setting.

1.3 KEY TERMS

Several key terms need to be defined and operationalized at the beginning of this dissertation. This section defines and makes distinctions between 'speech' and 'oral presentation', as well as 'informative' and 'persuasive' oral presentations. It also defines the term 'persuasive discursive technique'.

The term 'oral presentation' inherently implies a comparatively small audience and therefore a potentially more interactive style of delivery, often featuring visual aids (Lucas, 2015). The term oral presentation is also typically used in connection with academic contexts and purposes, and an academic oral presentation has been defined as "an academic discourse which is conducted in the university to show undergraduates' understanding of a subject to the audience" (Kaur & Ali, 2018, p. 152). Hyland (2009) further adds that presentations are typically a monologic discourse, where information is informally transferred, and are usually difficult for non-native English speakers. On the other hand, 'speech' carries with it more professional connotations and is delivered for non-academic purposes such as political, religious, or financial purposes (Lucas, 2015). For this study, the term oral presentation will be used as the context of the study is a university and the purpose of the presentations delivered was to meet academic requirements.

There are also distinct sub-types within the two oratory categories of oral presentation and speech. Collins (2012) notes that speeches typically are classified as one of four types: informative, persuasive, inspirational or ceremonial. There are two generally accepted categories of oral presentations: informative and persuasive (Lucas, 2015; Makay, 1992). Hill and Ross (1990, p. 162) further describe two types of persuasive presentations: to convince ("speakers attempt to get the audience to think or feel a certain way") and to activate ("speakers attempt to get the audience to perform some behavior"). Makay (1992) similarly describes these as focusing on attitudes or requiring action (p. 320). De Grez (2009) states there are actually three types of oral

presentation, each determined by the purpose of the presentation: persuasive, informative, and relating. For informative presentations, the purpose is seen as simply to disseminate information, or to "convey knowledge and understanding" (Lucas, 2015, p. 284). Examples of these kinds of presentations include describing objects, processes, events, or concepts (Lucas, 2015). For persuasive presentations, the purpose is to "get listeners to agree with you and, perhaps, to act on that belief" (Lucas, 2015, p. 306). This dissertation adheres to Lucas' view of persuasive presentations.

When delivering a persuasive oral presentation, there are a multitude of persuasive techniques available to speakers. Persuasive technique is defined in this study as a verbal or non-verbal mechanism or strategy deliberately employed by the speaker to shape, reinforce, or alter beliefs, behaviors, or feelings, about an issue, object or person (Fogg, 2003; McCabe, 2012). This study focuses primarily (but not exclusively) on persuasive discursive techniques. Persuasive discursive techniques are defined in this study as deliberately verbalized phrases or words, intended to enhance the impact and persuasiveness of the message being delivered in the oral presentation. Persuasive discursive techniques fall under the umbrella of the more encompassing term of rhetoric, which has been the focus of studies dating back to Aristotle (Fahnestock, 2011), meaning the techniques could also be described as 'rhetorical devices'. The distinction between the two terms lies in the speaker's intent to utilize the techniques for persuasive purposes, rather than for other rhetorical purposes (e.g. coherency, prosody, or discourse markers). The term 'persuasive discursive technique' is also part of what Hyland has defined as metadiscourse: "the range of devices writers use to explicitly organize their texts, engage readers, and signal their attitudes to both their material and their audience" (Hyland, 2010, p. 217). Although Mauranen (2001) believes that written and spoken work should be analyzed with different frameworks, this thesis agrees with Hyland (2010) and Adel (2010), who both state that metadiscourse markers work similarly in speech and in writing, meaning similar analytical paradigms may be used.

Focusing solely on persuasive discursive techniques however, does not reveal the whole picture of how presenters attempt to persuade their audiences. Therefore, this study also explores related persuasive techniques such as delivery techniques (e.g. eye contact and gestures) and structural techniques (e.g. front-loading and back-loading arguments). It is hoped that examining the multimodal aspects of oral presentations – as recommended by Morell (2015), Kress (2000), and Kaur and Ali (2018) – has led to a more robust study.

1.4 METADISCOURSE

The biggest challenge facing this study and establishing which persuasive techniques presenters use and if they are effective or not, was the lack of a pre-existing or established model or framework for integrating and analyzing persuasive discursive techniques. Although a pre-existing or established tool is not always necessary for qualitative research, particularly case study research (Saldaña, 2013), this study adopts Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse as a structural framework, for analyzing the persuasive discursive techniques in the case study participants' oral presentations (Phase 2). This section provides a brief overview of Hyland's model and the term metadiscourse. Hyland's model is primarily intended for work with written texts, but as many parallels exist, this suggests it can be adapted for use with oral presentations as well. Hyland (2005) defines metadiscourse as: "the cover term for the self-reflective expressions used to negotiate interactional meanings in a text, assisting the writer [or speaker] to express a viewpoint and engage with readers [listeners] as members of a particular community" (p. 37) and "refers to interactions between the writer and reader" (p. 45). It also "reveals the presence of the author in the text and his or her awareness of a reader" (p. 60).

Metadiscourse is a field of enquiry that plays a vital role in organizing and producing persuasive writing, and embodies the idea that writing and speaking are more than just the communication of ideas. "Metadiscourse is a widely used term in current discourse analysis, that refers to the ways writers or speakers project themselves in their texts to interact with their receivers" (Amiryousefi & Rasekh, 2010, p. 159). According to Hyland (2004), writers or

speakers do not simply create a text to convey information. They attempt to attract their audience and to motivate them to follow along. To communicate effectively, writers and speakers need to anticipate their audience's expectations, and try to engage them and affect their understandings. Writing or speaking is, therefore, viewed as a social and communicative process (Hyland, 2004; Hyland, 2005). Cultural values and conventions shape the use of language and rhetoric (Kubota, 1992) and can affect perception, language, learning, communication and the use of metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005, p. 113-115). For example, "metadiscourse markers are used to guide readers through a text (in western cultures); in a reader-responsible culture like Japanese, connections between various parts of a text are more commonly left implicit" (Adel, 2006, p. 149).

Metadiscourse is important because it serves as an "orientation to the reader and is crucial in securing social and rhetorical objectives" (Hyland, 2005, p. 54). Writers can draw "on the rhetorical resources it [metadiscourse] provides to galvanize support, express collegiality, resolve difficulties and avoid disputes" (Hyland, p. 54). Adel (2006) and Hyland (2005) believe that metadiscourse is primarily functional and that it serves differing functions in different contexts.

For the purpose of this study, there are two important principles in Hyland's model (2005). The first is that metadiscourse is distinct from propositional aspects of discourse. Propositional material is essentially the content, while metadiscourse is how the content or message is expressed. Importantly, "Metadiscourse does not simply support propositional content: it is the means by which propositional content is made coherent, intelligible, and persuasive to a particular audience." (p. 39). "In sum, so-called 'textual' devices organize texts as propositions by relating statements about the world and as metadiscourse by relating statements to readers" (p. 43.).

The second principle is that metadiscourse expresses writer-reader interactions. Metadiscourse is interpersonal because it takes into account the

reader's existing knowledge, experiences and processing requirements, and it also provides the writer with the rhetorical appeals to achieve this (Hyland, 2004). Within metadiscourse, there are two kinds of resources: 1. Interactive, and 2. Interactional (Hyland, 2005). Interactive resources are used to arrange texts, based on the reader's potential knowledge. "This influences the 'reader-friendliness' of a text and primarily involves the management of information flow, addressing how writers guide readers by anticipating their likely reactions and needs" (p. 44). Interactional resources are essentially how the writer tries to involve the reader and shape their view of what is being written about. These two resources, Hyland's model, and how they pertain to oral presentations, are discussed further in Chapter 4. A modified version of the model serves as the primary tool for analyzing the persuasive discursive techniques used by the case study participants in Phase 2 of this study.

1.5 NECESSITY OF TWO PHASES

To more accurately document, explore, and analyze persuasive techniques in oral presentations, this study is comprised of two distinct phases. Phase 1 is a preliminary study, focusing solely on the audience's perspectives of oral presentations and persuasive techniques. Findings from Phase 1 helped lay the groundwork for the design of Phase 2 and led to reassessing and adjusting the final research questions used in this study. Phase 2 is a far more comprehensive study and while it focuses largely on the presenters, it also accounts for the audience's views, beliefs and reactions. By exploring the presenter's perspectives and the audience's perspective, and by incorporating a wide range of data collection tools (see Chapters 3 and 4), this study adheres to the view proposed by Kress (2000), Kaur and Ali (2018), and Morell (2015), that research on oral presentations needs to account for both verbal and non-verbal elements, and therefore requires a multimodal framework to explore the many aspects of oral presentations. The necessity of having two phases is to also address a potential issue regarding the objectivity of the research, given that the presenters in both phases were students of mine. By incorporating multiple perspectives and forms of data across two phases, it is hoped that the potentially problematic issue of subjectivity bias can be more adequately dealt with. The

two phases will be presented separately in this dissertation, and the findings are then integrated in one chapter (Chapter 6) for an overarching analysis, addressing the research questions of the study.

1.6 THESIS OUTLINE

A brief synopsis of each chapter in the thesis is provided in this section to give readers a clear overview of what to expect. Following this section, Chapter 2 (Literature review) documents related previous studies, as well as the views of experts, on persuasion, persuasive techniques, and oral presentations, before also briefly providing a description of the context of English education in Japan. Chapter 3 (Phase 1: Preliminary study) covers three focus group sessions held to help explore persuasive techniques in oral presentations from the perspective of the audience. This self-contained chapter includes the research approach, methodology, findings, and analysis for Phase 1 of this thesis.

Phase 2 of this thesis (exploring persuasive techniques in oral presentations from the presenter's perspective) is far more comprehensive than Phase 1 and has therefore been divided into two separate chapters. Chapter 4 (Phase 2: Qualitative multiple-case study) describes the data collection tools utilized in Phase 2, how the data was processed, and how it was coded. Chapter 5 (Phase 2: Findings) documents the four case studies comprising Phase 2, as well as a discussion on the findings for Phase 2.

Chapter 6 (Cross-analysis of Phase 1 and Phase 2 findings) triangulates the findings from both phases and addresses the research questions of this thesis. Finally, Chapter 7 (Conclusion) summarizes the different chapters and the overall findings of the thesis, before offering thoughts on the potential limitations of the study, as well as the significance and implications for future research.

CHAPTER TWO

LITERATURE REVIEW

> "There is no one way to give a great talk. The world of knowledge is far too big and the range of speakers and of audiences and of talk settings is far too varied for that. Any attempt to apply a single set formula is likely to backfire…Done right, a talk is more powerful than anything in written form. Writing gives us words. Speaking brings with it a whole new toolbox."
>
> (Anderson, 2017, p. x-xi)

2.1 INTRODUCTION

Speaking in front of an audience was once famously found to cause more fear for American citizens than death (Wallenchinsky, Wallace & Wallace, 1977). One reason for this is that so little is known about the academic features that comprise delivering an oral presentation (Zareva, 2009a). Only a limited number of evaluative studies have been conducted on oral presentation skills, and current instructional practices are seldom based on clear theoretical bases (De Grez, 2009). As the scope of this dissertation is very broad, a collection of representative studies drawn from a wide range of different academic fields will be discussed in this chapter. It should be noted that many of the studies, while not depicting Japanese university settings or Japanese university students presenting, are relevant and reveal important findings that are related to this study. These studies have been organized into different sections according to their focus and their findings. The chapter begins by examining relevant models of and research on persuasion and how this relates to oral presentations. Research on oral presentations is then explored. Finally, English education in Japan and research on presenting in Japanese is documented to help illustrate the context for this study.

2.2 PERSUASION

There is an extensive body of existing literature on persuasion process models and factors that contribute to persuasion. This research has frequently examined persuasion from psychological, political, and business perspectives.

Research from a linguistic perspective has typically produced only isolated cases and results that are hard to generalize beyond their specific contexts (Schmidt & Kess, 1985). This section provides a historical overview of the views on rhetoric and persuasion, an examination of several models that have been put forth to explain the persuasive process, and then details a collection of studies on persuasive factors.

2.2.1 BACKGROUND

According to Schmidt and Kess (1985), "Persuasion is ultimately a relationship which exists between the originator of persuasive language and his/her listener(s), and the linguistic devices" (p. 293). Stott et al. (2001, p. 40) further defines rhetoric as "the art of persuasion". Rhetorical strategies are defined as the way speakers intentionally manipulate and use language in order to achieve a certain desired effect, across different situations and texts (Suddaby & Greenwood, 2005).

Most historical accounts on persuasion date back to Aristotle, and his classification of the means of persuasion into three categories: ethos, pathos, and logos (Stott et al., 2001, p. 41), and his definition of 'persuade' as "influencing someone to act by appealing to reason" (Gallo, 2014, p. 48). For Aristotle, ethos is the credibility of the speaker and the trust that the audience bestows upon him/her. Pathos is the emotion conveyed by the speaker, and logos, the logic used by the speaker. Aristotle states that the stronger these three are, and the stronger they are intertwined, the more persuasive the speaker is (Cooper, 1960).

Quintillian (the Roman rhetorician) adjusted Aristotle's model to comprise 'invention' (arguments and evidence), 'disposition' (arrangement of such matters) and 'style' (language, words and verbal rhythms). Later rhetoricians further adjusted Quintillian's model and created the following three categories: deliberative (to persuade people to approve/disapprove of a point of view), forensic (condemnation or approval of a person's actions), and epideictic

(use of rhetoric to enlarge praiseworthiness of someone, in public) (Stott et al., 2001, p. 41).

The first of several recent persuasion process models put forward is Petty and Cacioppo's (1986) Elaboration Likelihood Model (ELM). The ELM model is based on the notion that people want to "hold correct attitudes but have neither the resources to process vigilantly every persuasive argument nor the luxury-or apparently the inclination-of being able to ignore them" (p. 1032). Cacioppo et al. (1986, p. 1032) further explain that people with a "high need for cognition, are more likely to think about and elaborate on issue relevant information". The key postulate of the ELM (Petty & Cacioppo, 1986) is that persuasion (or attitude change, as they label it) can occur through two different routes. The first is through a central or systematic route, relying on careful analysis and processing of the arguments by the person being persuaded. The second route is through a peripheral or heuristic route in which people briefly consider cues or heuristics to the message. Kruglanski and Thompson (1999) however, believe that persuasion occurs through a combination of these two routes, and proposed their own model, called the 'Unimodel', to encompass this very idea – which was rejected by Petty et al. (1999). This debate is representative of the fundamental disagreement over whether message (content) or delivery (language and non-verbal factors) is more important in persuading people. Finally, for this dissertation, conducted in a Japanese context, it is important to keep in mind that "The rhetorical traditions based on Confucian, Taoist, and Buddhist philosophical precepts operate within frameworks and paradigms recognizably different from those accepted in the Anglo-American writing tradition which is structured around Aristotelian notions of directness, justification and proof" (Hinkel, 1997, p. 382). A more in-depth comparison between the Western and Japanese views of persuasion – not just in oral presentations – is beyond the scope of this thesis, but is a potential avenue for other future research studies.

2.2.2 FACTORS INFLUENCING PERSUASION

Aside from studies offering persuasion models, research has also been conducted to identify specific factors that enhance or undermine the persuasive

impact of a message. Largely, these studies have either focused on linguistic or paralinguistic techniques in academic oral presentations and writing, or on advertising, business, and psychology fields.

Research on oral presentations has typically focused on structural patterns or on specific techniques used to enhance persuasion. Firstly, Joughin (2007, p. 330) explains, that the central theme of a persuasive presentation includes "A position to be argued…in which there is a strong focus on the audience as the object of change". Collins (2012) then prescribes the processes for persuading. The first way is by providing tight logical and well-reasoned arguments that lead the audience to an inevitable conclusion. The second way to persuade is through the use of rhetorical techniques to stir up passion, and the third way is a combination of the first two. In terms of specific rhetorical techniques, Reynolds (2011) claims that utilizing stories or anecdotes helps persuade people by igniting emotions, which can then compliment logic and reason. Dowis (2000, p. 116) lists an extensive range of discursive techniques to increase the persuasive impact of speeches, including the rule of three (tripling), anaphora, antithesis, similes, metaphors, and analogies. Makay (1992) also prescribes a list of discursive techniques to engage the audience and Atkinson (2004) details a similar list of such techniques (p. 178), including contrasts, problem-solution formats, and lists of three (tripling). He then further discusses the many non-linguistic elements that can comprise a speaker's presentation style (p. 339), such as appropriate attire, body language, voice pitch, and the use of visuals. Hill and Ross (1990) also provide a list of what they called 'stylistic devices', which include similes, metaphors, alliteration, hyperbole, personification, and antithesis. The use of rhetorical (discursive) techniques such as stories, metaphors and the use of rhythm can also help generate enthusiasm for the message (Conger, 1991). The crucial key to using these techniques is exhibited in a finding by Fennis and Stel (2011, p. 806): "when a verbal influence strategy is embedded in a nonverbal style that fits its orientation, this boosts the strategy's effectiveness, whereas a misfit attenuates its impact."

Linguistic researchers have investigated the use of language in argumentative writing (see Rottenberg, 1991), although as Kamimura and Oi (1998) point out, most of the research to date has focused on differences in form (organizational patterns), instead of a more balanced perspective, which would include also investigating content. An influential model for assessing argumentative writing is 'Toulmin's Argument Pattern'. According to Toulmin (1958) the structure of an effective argument starts with data, has a warrant, provides backing, or a claim and/or a rebuttal. This model has been used as a tool to analyze/assess a wide range of argumentative student writings, and the model has also even been occasionally applied to classroom-based verbal data analysis (Eduran et al., 2004). More recently, Hyland (1998, p. 438) detailed the pragmatics of metadiscourse, which he defines as the "aspects of the text which explicitly refer to the organisation of the discourse" used for persuasion in academic writing. Examples of textual metadiscourse include, logical connectives, frame markers, and code glosses. Interpersonal metadiscourse includes (but is certainly not limited to) hedges, emphatics, and attitude markers (Hyland, 1998, p. 442). The importance of metadiscourse is that it reveals both who the writer is and their communicative purpose (Hyland, 1998). In an interesting cultural comparison, Crismore et al. (1993) found that Finnish and American students both use more interpersonal than textual metadiscourse in persuasive writing. Gender differences are also noted in this study, with male students using metadiscourse more than their female counterparts.

Other researchers have sought to identify psychological and organizational factors in the persuasive process. Rowley-Jovilet & Carter-Thomas (2005a) developed the "Information Structure" principle – based on systematic functional linguistics (Halliday, 1985) – which stipulates that the order or structure of the argument being presented is the most important factor. As they explain: "This type of organization with *Given* information first and *New* information second, reinforced by the principle of end-weight and focal stress, is considered to be the unmarked option for organizing information" (p. 43). Related to this, Pierro et al. (2005) show that relative brevity and the ordinal position of the arguments, rather than the actual contents, explains the

differences in the persuasive impact of an argument. Factors such as the expertise (perceived or otherwise) of the speaker and the cognitive load for the audience to process are also important. The early revealing of key information proves to be persuasive as well. Conversely, audience members with low motivation and interest in an issue are more susceptible to persuasion later in the presentation of an argument. Haugtvedt and Wegener (1994) found that when subjects have to exert a lot of cognition on the first part of the message, this impacts greatly on persuasion (primacy effect), but when the cognitive effort is low throughout, the latter part of the message has a greater effect on final judgments and persuasion (recency effect). Personal relevance to the topic has the same effect. When it is high, a significant primacy effect is found, but when personal relevancy is low, a stronger recency effect is found (Haugtvedt & Wegener, 1994).

Content is also important for building a persuasive argument and Fabrigar et al. (1998) show that argument quality has a greater impact on persuasion when attitudes are high in accessibility than when they are low in accessibility. Accessibility in their study means the likelihood that an attitude will easily be retrieved from memory, or that the listener can readily relate to what they are hearing. The researchers also believe accessibility and elaboration can work to strengthen each other and the persuasive impact of a message. In another related finding Chaiken and Maheswaran (1994) demonstrate that source credibility, argument ambiguity, and task importance all affect judgments and susceptibility to persuasion.

Extensive research has been conducted on persuasion in the fields of advertising and business. Fuertes-Olivera et al. (2001) show how metadiscourse markers used in persuasive academic writing are also present in advertising slogans. Examples include personalization through pronouns, intertexuality, and softening through hedges. Schmidt and Kess (1985) reveal how advertisers usually make indirect claims to persuade and that these implicit claims can stimulate cognitive action in the audience, and lead to persuasion. Schmidt and Kess (1985) also detail a range of specific language techniques used for

persuading. Examples include the use of imperatives and adjectives to enhance the power of a message, and the construction of adjectives from other parts of speech (e.g. "Soul-stirring Bible preaching – Jimmy Swaggart). Finally, Lakoff (1982) documents how powerful the novelty of expression is for persuading in advertising. Conger (1991; 1998) reaffirms that all kinds of persuasive skills are more necessary now than ever. His study of top business leaders and their rhetoric and interpersonal skills led to the conclusion that effective and persuasive speakers typically follow four steps when presenting: 1. Establish credibility, 2. Frame goals that identify common ground with target audience, 3. Reinforce position using specific language techniques and evidence, and 4. Connect emotionally with the audience, by being aware of the their emotional state and adapting to it.

Lastly, Burgoon et al. (1978) examined how to prevent persuasion. They found that a threat to existing beliefs stimulates defenses against a persuasive move. Findings show that pre-training to recognize the persuasive intent in speakers can slightly increase people's resistance to persuasion. It is also easier to avoid being persuaded when criticism is focused on the speaker or delivery (as opposed to the content or underlying message).

The selection of studies presented in this section reveals an ongoing and unresolved debate about how the process of persuading an audience works and which factors are most relevant.

2.3 ORAL PRESENTATIONS

This section provides an overview of research on oral presentations. The research is grouped into several sub-sections, based on their focus and findings: the perceived importance of learning presentation skills; the different elements that comprise presentations; how to enhance presentation skills; assessing presentation skills; and differences between native and non-native speakers' presentations.

2.3.1 PERSPECTIVES ON THE IMPORTANCE OF PRESENTATION SKILLS

This section examines the perceived importance of oral presentation skills. As Anderson (2017, p. 10) succinctly puts it: "Presentation literacy [skills] isn't an optional extra for the few. It's a core skill for the twenty-first century." European policy makers recognize this and have stressed the need for students in higher education to be able to present information to an audience in the Joint Quality Initiative 2004 (De Grez, 2009). For most learners in higher education, learning presentation skills is necessary usually for two specific reasons. Firstly, as presentations are an integral academic requirement at most universities (Adams, 2004; Cooper, 2005; De Grez, et al., 2009b; Devito, 1992; Makay, 1992; Morreale et al., 2006), the ability to present well can be an important factor contributing to academic success. Secondly, presentation skills are considered a core competency in many professional fields, and are therefore, important for prospective job seekers (Brooks & Kubickas-Miller, 2006; Campbell et al., 2001; Dunbar et al., 2006; Fallows & Steven, 2000; Hill & Ross, 1990; Hinton & Kramer, 1998; Pittenger, et al., 2004; Smith & Sodano, 2011). Being able to present well facilitates a smoother transition from academia to a working life (Graham & McKenzie, 1995).

The perceived importance of presentation skills for learners in higher education can be seen across the full spectrum of academic disciplines. In particular, they are a prized skill for graduate students, and academics in the business field (Pittenger, et al., 2004), with presentation skills courses often a part of the curricula for business students (Harris, 1994; Sydow et al., 2001) and accounting students (Kerby & Romine, 2009). Luthy and Deck (2007, p. 67) state that teaching presentation skills "is no longer the exclusive purview of communication courses. Their central role in a variety of business courses, ranging from marketing, entrepreneurship, and management to accounting, finance and strategy mirrors their use by professionals in all fields." McEwen (1998, p. 360) simply advises that, "Management education programs should pay more attention to helping managers develop public speaking and listening skills".

Business students in higher education are seemingly aware of the importance of learning presentation skills. Hynes and Bhatia (1996) surveyed graduate school business students and found that they rated a course on learning to deliver presentations as the most important course in their studies. When asked about the perceived value of different course assignments, students ranked informative presentations first, and persuasive presentations second. Greenan et al. (1997) found a similar sentiment amongst postgraduate management students, and Pittenger et al. (2004) found that although some business students were not initially aware of the importance of learning presentation skills, with a good course and good instruction, they soon became more aware. Stowe et al. (2011) concludes that business courses frequently require students to make presentations and that faculty, practitioners, and students all consider presentation skills to be advantageous for job prospects.

Despite their apparent importance, Sazdovska (2007) points out that business presentations have not been systematically researched. In addition, Gray (2010) discovered employers and new employees in the accountancy field actually rated presentation skills as not very important, and that new hires were usually not competent at presenting. The explanation given is that new hires are rarely asked to give presentations. Ulinski and Callaghan (2002, p. 196) did find though that "presenting skills and the handling of client complaints were viewed as much more important by students with three-to-five years of experience (working) than by the less experienced students".

The importance of presentation skills has also been examined in the engineering field (Bhattacharrya et al., 2009), with engineering students in Japan perceiving them as important (Yamaguchi et al., 2007). In a separate study, Freeman (2003) showed that native and non-native speakers of English in an engineering department both desired oral presentation skills training, and Liow (2008) believes that engineering students need to learn presentation skills, but that they are seldom offered such courses in their field of study.

For scientists and future scientists, the importance of presentation skills is obvious, but creating a balance between learning these skills and studying scientific fundamentals, is also important (Feklyunina & Grebenyuk, 2004). Shimamura and Takeuchi (2011) believe that scientists need to master presenting skills, especially academic presenting styles, in order to effectively facilitate international scientific communication. To do this, "appropriate genre specific language and sentence structures need to be established" (p. 51) and mastered. Findings in their study show that an "open style " presentation (see Swales, 2004) – less formal and more interactive – is more intelligible than formal and "closed styles". Shimamura and Takeuchi's study (2011) also showed that training for academic presentations is not common in the scientific community and speakers usually do not differentiate between spoken and written work, in part because research articles often form the point of reference for giving a presentation.

Presentation skills are also an important component in other academic fields, such as law (e.g. Barker & Sparrow, 2016), and geography, where learning such skills has "immense potential benefits to students in terms of skill and career prospect enhancement" (Church & Bull, 1995, p. 196). This study concludes that better presentation skills' training courses also benefit learners in other classes and in seminars.

Joughin (2007, p. 323) provides a succinct overview of students' views on presentations in higher education:

> [T]he conception of the presentation as a position to be argued was associated with a particularly powerful student learning experience, with students describing the oral presentation as being more demanding than written assignments, more personal, requiring deeper understanding, and leading to better learning.

Joughin (2007) also found students believe oral presentations serve three purposes: 1. A transmission of ideas: 2. An opportunity to show an

understanding of what they are studying: and 3. An opportunity to argue a position.

Additional purposes for learning presentation skills include improving communication and language skills. Maes et al. (1997) found that oral communication skills are actually the most important skill competency for college graduates entering the workforce, across a range of industries and different sized companies. Students are also aware that prospective employers demand effective communication skills (Alshare & Hindi, 2004; Greenan et al., 1997). According to Alshare and Hindi (2004), students and educators both agree that delivering oral presentations helps improve communication skills and trains students to talk in front of an audience. Zeyrek (2004) adds that oral presentations are also important for increasing student-talking time, while Mennim (2003) documents how presentations can be used to help improve grammar, pronunciation, and the organization of the content being provided by the speaker. King (2002) further explains that presentations are important because they bridge the gap between the study and use of language, give students the opportunity to combine the four language skill sets, and can increase autonomous learning.

While many of these previously discussed studies depict university students in Western contexts, similarities exist when examining the literature for non-native English speakers. An increasing number of these students are enrolling in universities in English speaking countries and multiple written and spoken activities (including oral presentations) largely determine their academic success or even admittance to an overseas institution (Yang, 2010; Zappa-Hollman, 2007). This is especially true for ESL students studying in North American universities (Zareva, 2011), and these students usually report having difficulty with oral presentations (Ferris, 1998). The students in Ferris' study stated that formal speaking (presenting) was the most important skill they wanted to learn and receive further instruction on. This was particularly the case for arts/humanities or business majors because presenting is a more prevalent task for them. Worryingly, educators in this study, ranked learning how to

present relatively low, in terms of importance (Ferris, 1998). This could be because educators tend to believe that ESL students coming into higher education in language-based courses are already capable and experienced presenters (Alwi et al., 2013). Yet, many such students struggle and worry about imperfect language skills when delivering presentations (Jung & McCroskey, 2004) and desire further training (Kim, 2006).

Although learners in many western higher education contexts stress the necessity of learning presentation skills, Wardrope (2002) found there is a prevalent feeling amongst some faculty, that writing skills are more important. In one particular survey of faculty members in a university business department, it was found that oral presentation skills ranked only fourth out of six, in terms of important academic skills to be assessed (Plutsky, 1996). Ironically, it has been pointed out that presentation skills are also important for faculty members to develop, and in one unique study, faculty members were encouraged to continue developing their own presentation skills as part of their ongoing scholarly activities (Desbiens, 2008). Hood and Forey (2005, p. 291) provide a clear overview of the importance and purpose of oral presentations for faculty:

> One of the key means by which knowledge is disseminated in the academic discourse community is the spoken presentation of papers at an academic conference. In contrast to the written research article, the spoken presentation remains relatively under-researched from a linguistic perspective.

To summarize this section, the perception of many learners in higher education across a range of fields is that developing presentation skills is important for academic and vocational success.

2.3.2 ELEMENTS OF AN ORAL PRESENTATION

If developing oral presentation skill-sets is important for university students in many different settings, then it is necessary to know what elements comprise an effective oral presentation. Firstly, oral presentation competency has been defined as "the combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed

to speak in public in order to inform, self-express, to relate and to persuade" (De Grez, 2009, p. 5). Problematic for presenters are the potentially differing contexts, purposes and audiences that they must consider (Chan, 2011; De Grez, et al., 2009b). As of yet, research has not yet yielded anything close to a conclusive approach on how to construct or deliver a presentation (De Grez, et al., 2009a; van Ginkel et al., 2015) and what constitutes a good academic presentation has yet to be established (Shimamura & Takeuchi, 2011). This is likely "because of the dialogic nature of the oral presentation and difficulty in collecting, transcribing and analyzing large amounts of recorded data" (Kaur & Ali, 2018, p. 152). According to Sydow et al. (2001, p. 23), "there appears to be little agreement about which aspects of an oral presentation must be analyzed in order to help presenters improve future presentation quality." Although Kaur and Ali (2018) claim that multimodal analysis of oral presentations is limited, Morell (2015) has proposed a comprehensive multimodal framework for analyzing what determines an effective presentation. This framework divides presentation analysis into four modes: verbal modes (spoken and written) and non-verbal (visuals and body movements). While this dissertation does not adhere strictly to this specific multimodal framework, it subscribes to the basic premise that analyzing presentation skills requires taking into account a variety of elements to better understand the overall effect of the presentation. Therefore, the following sections deal with a range of studies on the specific elements within oral presentations. The studies have been organized into several thematic subsections, with the understanding that these categories are not exclusive. These five subsections are: rhetorical strategies (discursive techniques and language), delivery techniques, structure, content, and balance.

2.3.2.1 RHETORICAL STRATEGIES

Rhetorical strategies are important to consider when analyzing the language used by presenters. Rhetorical strategies are "the ways in which agents configure their language in an intentional manner, through the use of rhetorical devices which form patterns that persist over time and are consistently employed across different situations" (Suddably & Greenwood, 2005, p. 134). According to Kaur and Ali (2018), research on the specific rhetorical devices

(also known as discursive techniques) and language used in oral presentations is relatively limited. Nevertheless research has usually addressed one of three main focuses: comparing native and non-native English speakers; comparing oral presentations and academic writing; or investigating 'experts', politicians, and successful TED (Technology, Entertainment and Design) Talk speakers. The vast majority of these studies have analyzed 'what' speakers have said and 'how' this was perceived, with few studies exploring 'why' speakers opted for certain techniques or strategies. Unfortunately, "few studies have investigated linguistic features in AOP [academic oral presentations] among ESL learners" (Kaur & Ali, 2018, p. 157).

Zareva (2009a) laments that public speaking has not usually been analyzed from a linguistic perspective, but some studies have examined the rhetorical strategies used by professional speakers or in political speeches. In one such study, Heritage and Greatbatch (1986) studied political party speeches in the 1981 British election and concluded that there were eight types of rhetorical techniques responsible for 70% of the applause generated. These were: (1) external attacks, (2) approving their own party, (3) 1 and 2 combined, (4) internal attacks on opponents, (5) advocacy of policies, (6) 4 and 5 combined, (7) commendations, or (8) miscellaneous things. Examples of discursive techniques used by speakers included: contrasts, 3-part lists, puzzle-solution, headline-punch line, combination, position taking, and pursuit. The researchers concluded that messages packed with rhetorical techniques, such as emphasis and projection, were more likely to be applauded and that the verbal structuring of the speeches, delivery skills, and statements were also important. Heracleous and Klaering (2014) analyzed the rhetoric and language used by Apple founder Steve Jobs and showed that while he altered his rhetoric to suit his audiences, his core messages retained a sense of continuity about them, and his central themes were consistent. According to the researchers, the ability to customize the language of a speech while retaining core elements, messages and metaphors, is what constitutes a charismatic and competent speaker, such as Steve Jobs.

Researchers have also analyzed TED Talks. Reynolds (2011) noticed several trends relating to language use. Firstly, successful catchphrases are usually rhythmical and 'play' with language – frequently using the rule of three or 'tripling' (p. 79), which has been shown to have a strong persuasive effect (Gallo, 2014, p. 191). There is also a great deal of importance attached to the 'hook' or attention getter (p. 81) in the beginning of the presentation, to prevent audiences quickly losing interest. Anderson (2017, p. 156) listed several ways speakers do this: a surprising statement; an intriguing question; a short story; or, an incredible image. Gallo (2014) also elaborates on how discursive techniques can strengthen structural elements such as effective guidelines that are subtly worded instead of being stated explicitly, so that the audience needs to focus to decipher the speaker's message. Transitions (referred to as signposts later in this study) are also important. Reynolds (2011) explains how deductive arguments work best when the audience is led through a series of problems or questions, and then finally the answer is revealed. Reynolds (2011) also found effective TED speakers typically finish with a simply worded call to action that is immediate and easy to comprehend. When used effectively, linguistic devices and metaphors (also known as 'priming' can make the speaker seem more persuasive and a conclusion seem more plausible to a listener (Anderson, 2017).

From his research on TED Talks, Gallo (2014) concludes there are five keys to being more persuasive and delivering effective presentations: anecdotes/personal stories, analogies or metaphors, quotes, video, and photos (p. 162). Many of the most regarded TED talks begin with a story (p. 53) and these anecdotes are effective because our brains are active when we are listening to stories (p. 47). Anecdotes help build rapport with the audience, which then later facilitates 'true persuasion' (p. 76). Anecdotes can also make an emotional impact if presented in a situation that is comparable to the listener's (Conger, 1998), and help to humanize the speaker (Anderson, 2017).

Most of the research on discursive techniques and language used in university student presentations has compared native speakers (NSs) with non-native speakers (NNSs). In one such study (Zareva, 2009a) NSs used process

adverbials (e.g. manner adverbials, means adverbials, instrument adverbials, and agentive adverbials) in oral presentations far less than they did in written prose. Conversely, when presentations by NNSs were examined, little difference between oral and written prose was found, in terms of the frequency of process adverbials, indicating a failure on the part of these speakers to adapt their language according to mode. In a related study, Zareva (2009b) also noted how NSs ordered adverbial clauses to serve interactional purposes, which then produced a positive cumulative effect on the audience's overall impression. Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005a) found that NSs used subject pronouns far more in conference presentations than in articles and used less formal language (e.g. the passive tense). Shorter clauses and active verbs were also far more apparent in presentations to enhance processing on the audience's part and to promote more interaction between the speaker and the audience. In addition, Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005b) discovered that when NSs were constructing their arguments, there was far less reliance on literature reviews, and instead, more reliance on shared knowledge and local references. In a more recent study, Zareva (2013) comments that previous work on language choices made by students when presenting is still sparse, but that presenters often tend to use language similar to that found in academic papers, in order to project a more scholarly image. Li (2008) investigated NNS presentations and found grammatical mistakes, missing verbs, and overall accuracy negatively affect L2 speaking competency when presenting.

Finally, the presenter's use of language seems to have a particularly strong impact on audiences for whom English is a second language (Adger, et al., 2002). As Yu et al. (2009) explain, while homogenous audiences (e.g. audiences comprised of members for whom English is a native language) are obviously easier to speak to, speakers must adjust their language and delivery when presenting in ESL contexts. One way to do this, argue Yu et al., is to use frame markers (e.g. "in conclusion") and person markers (e.g. personal pronouns) to help prepare the audience for what is coming next.

2.3.2.2 DELIVERY

Delivery skills such as eye contact and voice projection are not typically a part of applied linguistics research but play an important role in oral presentations and in this study. Such non-verbal elements were once famously found to generate 93% of the impact of a message (Borg, 2004). Studies on delivery strategies have usually identified several key factors in a good delivery style: eye contact, voice projection and clarity, and appropriate body language and gestures.

Ideally speakers should make eye contact for three to five seconds when focusing on a specific person or section of the audience, before moving on. This technique is often referred to as 'sweeping' eye contact (Reynolds, 2011). However, Cakir (2008) found that only 15.5% of students were able to display a "no look-away behavior" (the ability to maintain eye contact with the audience without breaking that eye contact on a frequent basis). As a result, many speakers were simply "communicating at the audience instead of to them" (Cakir, 2008, p. 129). Presenters who do not look at the audience usually look at the screen, OHP, cue cards/manuscripts or whiteboard. The problem for speakers who rely on manuscripts is that they come across as reading to the audience instead of interacting with them, which undermines the effectiveness and persuasiveness of the presentation (Lucas, 2015), and makes them less expressive and interesting O'Hair et al. (2010).

The presenter's voice has been another area of study and discussion in the literature. Estrada et al. (2005) found that audience members rate clarity and pace as the most important delivery factors and that eye contact is relatively less important. Otoshi and Heffernen (2008) surveyed Japanese university students and found that clarity of speech and voice quality are the delivery factors they consider important. According to Gallo (2014), one hundred and fifty words per minute is an ideal pace and makes a presentation comprehensible, and is also the ideal pace for audio books (p. 82). Improving one's voice is notoriously difficult, but in one study Hancock et al. (2010) demonstrated that a course designed to

master vocal characteristics (pitch, volume, rate & quality) also actually succeeded in reducing the speakers' apprehension of public speaking.

Few studies on body language and gestures in oral presentations have been conducted, but Cakir (2008) found most speakers are usually best at using their hands in an effective way. The key to good body language and gestures, according to Gallo (2014), is that they must be congruent with the words being uttered (p. 82). Gestures should also be used sparingly and only at key moments, within the speaker's 'power sphere' (p. 98). An 'eager-nonverbal style' of gesturing is best and includes being animated, with broad open movements and use of the hands, with the presenter's body openly projected outwards (p. 100).

2.3.2.3 STRUCTURE

The organization or structure of oral presentations has also been a source of investigation for some researchers. Typical organizational patterns used by speakers are: chronological, spatial, topical, or problem solution (Hill & Ross, 1990). Researchers have also examined specific sections of the presentation, particularly the introduction section, but rarely the body section, as there are "no standardized fixed moves for this section" (Kaur & Ali, 2018, p. 155).

Hood and Forey (2002) researched the introduction section of academic conference presentations and found they all usually included a set-up stage, but that the presentations varied later on in terms of their structure. At the beginning of the presentations, there was often strong attitudinal orientation in an attempt to build up persuasiveness. As the researchers commented, "The resources of attitude function not only to make interpersonal connections with the audience, but sometimes overtly and sometimes to subtly and implicitly align the audience with the speaker's position" (p. 299). In a similar study, Rowley-Jolivet and Carter-Thomas (2005b) examined the introduction of scientific conference presentations and noted that unlike the research article, there is no "formal criteria to guide scientists unfamiliar with either the genre or the appropriate English usage" (p. 46). They found three elements are common for native-English speakers in the introduction section: 1. Setting up the framework;

2. Contextualizing the topic; and 3. Stating the research rationale. Andeweg et al. (1998) studied the effect different elements in the introduction had on the audience, and discovered that anecdotes, an ethical appeal, and a 'your problem' approach (also known as the problem-solution approach) are effective in getting the attention of the audience. In particular, openings with anecdotes increase the comprehensibility and interest of the presentation, and lead to greater retention of information later on.

2.3.2.4 CONTENT

Although Shimamura (2014, p. 48) found that "the ability to convey content and to be understood well by the audience seems to be the biggest key factor to a successful academic presentation", there have been few studies on the content of presentations. This is likely because presentations are almost always context dependent, meaning findings are impossible to generalize and are of little applicability to other researchers. One exception is Gallo's (2014) study of TED Talks. He advocates 18 minutes as the ideal length of a presentation, to prevent cognitive overload and losing the attention of the audience (p. 184). Eighteen minutes is the typical length of a TED talk as well as many famous speeches (e.g. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream" speech). Revealing new information in original or different ways also causes the release of dopamine, which then helps members in the audience to better recall what was said (p. 117). 'Jaw dropping moments' also lead to an emotionally charged event that sticks in people's memory (p. 136), much as sound bites are effective (p. 153). Finally, Gallo discovered that the best and most persuasive TED talks include a multitude of examples and supporting information, and rely on multisensory experiences, with vision the most important of all (p. 207).

Little research has been conducted on how students use technology to support content, or the effect technology has on the audience. However, one such study (Savoy et al., 2009) found that when lecturers use PowerPoint slides, students in the audience retain 15% less information than when they do not use slides. The caveat in this study is that the students preferred the lectures with PowerPoint slides. Wecker (2012) found similar results and calls it "speech

suppression effect", whereby students allocate their attention too heavily to the slides and not to what is being said. Worth noting is that most of the famous speeches in history and "at least a third of TED's most viewed talks make no use of slides whatsoever (Anderson, 2017, p. 113).

2.3.2.5 BALANCE

Determining an ideal balance between discursive techniques and language, delivery, structure, and content, has proven elusive for researchers. Alshare and Hindi (2004) found that educators rank content as the most important element, while students rank organization (structure) as the most important. Tuan and Neomy (2007) discovered that group planning for presentations usually focuses on content, and not on language, although, as Luthy and Deck (2007) note, "The acquiring of content knowledge is not at odds with the development of skills, including presentation skills" (p. 67). Smith and Sodano (2011, p. 151) recommend that "faculty focus on presentation skill delivery, in addition to presentation content, to assist students in developing presentation competencies". In a comprehensive overview of presentation research, Stowe et al. (2011) found that most university students present in groups, deliver informative presentations, and use PowerPoint for visuals. In this study, the content of the oral presentation (knowledge of topic) was ranked first in terms of importance by faculty and by practitioners, but only third by students. According to Soureshjani and Ghanbari (2012, p. 34), "body language, manner of presentation, the speaker's style of presentation, feedback, voice quality, transfer of the message, use of other resources when presenting, and details of the presentation are the most important aspects of giving successful oral presentations." For them, details of the presentation (content) outweigh voice quality and body language (delivery) in the final ranking (p. 40). In this study, both instructors and learners are in general agreement about what constitutes an effective oral presentation. Finally, in a cautionary note, Del Puerto and Adrian (2015) compared the training for oral presentations in CLIL and EFL classes and discovered that students in the CLIL classes did not perceive their language skills to have improved after training, unlike their EFL

counterparts. The researchers suggest better integration of content and language training at universities is necessary.

Finally, Yang (2010) points out that for ESL students studying abroad, it is also important to understand the culture and the context they are presenting in, as well as the language. For these students preparing to present in a second language, textbooks are an important resource (Sazdovska, 2007). Sazdovska's research illustrates how there has been a trend in recent years for textbooks to focus mostly on the technical elements within presentations, such as delivery and discursive techniques, at the expense of other elements (content, context, logic and supporting information.

To summarize Section 2.3.2, it can be said that multiple factors determine whether an oral presentation is effective or persuasive. The balance and interplay between these factors tends to differ according to context, and as such, there is no universal agreement amongst researchers as to which factors are more pervasive in the persuasive process.

2.3.3 ENHANCING PRESENTATION SKILLS

How to enhance presentation skills has been another common area of research. Many of the studies are essentially case studies focusing on one presentation skill, or a single technique, but rarely on persuasive discursive techniques. There has also been a strong tendency to focus on the presenter, with a subsequent lack of research into the audience's perspective (Shimamura & Takeuchi, 2011). One comprehensive study systematically synthesized 52 studies on improving presentation skills, and identified seven key characteristics for a successful oral presentation course design: the learning objectives are communicated explicitly, the learning task is relevant for students, opportunities to observe and model presentations are available, opportunities to practice presenting are given, the intensity and timing of feedback is suitable, peer assessment is done, and self-assessment is included (van Ginkel et al., 2015).

Firstly, the adage that 'practice, practice, practice' leads to a more effective presentation is supported by evidence that speech courses can help students perform at a higher level (Harris, 1994). Furthermore, regular impromptu presentations can help develop general presentation skills (Luthy & Deck, 2007; Thompson et al., 2012) and enhance student motivation (Nehls, 2013). The simple act of delivering presentations frequently and reflecting on them has also been shown to reduce apprehension amongst speakers (Thomas, 2011). Pre-task planning – for tasks such as delivering a presentation – can also improve overall language skills (Yuan & Ellis, 2003) and English public speaking courses can enhance and foster a more integrated overall English ability (Zhang & Shi, 2008). Practicing for a presentation also seems to have inadvertently helped improve students' writing scores in one study due to an increased focus on form, tighter structuring of an argument, and better use of particular rhetorical devices while presenting (Nakayama & Yoshimura, 2008). Practicing presentations can also be done through repeatedly delivering what is known as Pecha Kucha presentations, which has been shown to improve student confidence levels when speaking in public and to help develop their macro English skills (Mabuan, 2017).

Modeling presentations after viewing others present has also proven effective (Yang, 2010). Adams (2004) shows how watching peers deliver presentations in other seminars is specifically effective in increasing the confidence levels of presenters, although observing 'expert' presenters is not effective. However, Ivic and Green (2012) adopted a unique approach to modeling presentation skills by having students successfully mimic the persona (delivery style) of Steve Jobs.

Specific skills training also helps enhance presentation skills. In one example, Bruss (2012) demonstrates how students can be trained to write scripts 'for the ear', instead of 'for the eye', by taking a formal essay and rewriting it in a more suitable conversational style. Brigance (2004) also describes an innovative method to increase student awareness of the structural framework for a presentation, entitled tag team public speaking and Pineda

(1999) believes question-and-answer poster sessions should be taught to make presentations more interactive. Having a specific goal for a presentation also proves to be more effective than merely having general goals, by helping presenters focus more clearly on skills development (De Grez et al., 2006). De Grez et al. (2009a) also found that most presentation skills can be improved over time, with the notable exception of vocal delivery and eye contact. Another study by Seibold et al. (1993) also found that many presentation skills could be improved with the exception of vocal delivery (rate of delivery and volume of voice).

Finally, feedback also enhances presentation skill development. Presenters view feedback as important to help them improve, although they are often uncomfortable with both self- and peer assessment (Greenan, et al., 1997). Students report instructor feedback as being more useful than do faculty, who in turn consider peer feedback to be more useful (Stowe et al., 2011). The timing of the feedback is important and Smith and Sodano (2011) found that by using a real-time software called Lecture Capture and having students self-assess and analyze presentation skills live, students are more able to learn from their experiences and then apply what they have learned. In a much earlier study, Comte (1980) found there were benefits to using videotape and showing speakers/students their own presentations, so that they could self-reflect, and that students are generally very receptive to this skill development. Barker and Sparrow (2016) also demonstrated how the use of video with peer and tutor collaboration led to better learning, but that this learning was best fostered when speakers, peers and tutors all communicated with each other as part of the presenter's self-reflection process.

2.3.4 ASSESSMENT OF PRESENTATIONS

There is a great need for students to know how they will be assessed when presenting (Joughin, 2007; Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008). De Grez (2009) surmised that many presentation researchers (who are also instructors) construct an assessment instrument suited for their particular purposes, based on an analysis of their instruments, which revealed many differences between

individual instructors regarding the variables, and the weighting in their assessments. Regrettably, "In the literature only a limited number of studies have detailed a validated and reliable way to measure the quality of oral-presentation skills" (De Grez et al, 2009b, p. 298). Nevertheless, many instructors separate the assessment criteria into four multi-faceted categories: content, delivery, language, and visual aids (Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008). Faculty though, have traditionally focused more on content and not taken a skills-based approach to assessment (Cooper, 2005). Cakir (2008) surveyed a range of assessment related studies and produced a substantial list of criteria that are typically assessed: "pronunciation, stress, and intonation; fluency; coherence/cohesion; grammatical accuracy; grammatical range; lexical range; register; lexical accuracy; interactive ability; content; language functions; delivery (rate of speech, fluency of speech, volume, register); awareness of nonverbal communication, and body language" (p. 130). Because of the range of options available to instructors, assessing oral presentations is often difficult for teachers and students, particularly in ESL classes (Meloni & Thompson, 1980), as presentations are usually one-off events, for which little training is provided and minimal feedback given afterwards (Liow, 2008). Students though, particularly desire feedback on specific presentation techniques (Church & Bull, 1995).

Instructors are typically the main source of assessment for oral presentations and Liow (2008) found that instructors are more consistent and reliable in assessing presentations than peers (other students), but that overall, oral presentation scores given by instructors are higher than those given for written examinations. In addition, instructors are more likely to give a wider range of scores, whereas students tend to evaluate their peers within a narrower range of scores (Shimura, 2006). This clustering of student-assessed scores is known as 'range restriction' (Murphy and Cleveland, 1995). Feedback and assessment can also be more effective when delayed and not given immediately following or during a presentation (Wang et al., 2018)

While peer assessment has been studied in detail, for academic writing, far fewer studies have investigated peer assessment of oral presentations. The

studies that have been conducted typically compared peer assessment with instructor assessment (Liow, 2008). In one study, Topping (1998) found that peer assessment of oral presentations leads to improved confidence, along with better presenting skills and better self-appraisal skills for presenters, although another study found students assessed their peers significantly higher than instructors did (Sunol, et al., 2016). Although training can help students to evaluate their peers in much the same manner as teachers do, this correlation does not seem to apply to self-assessment (Patri, 2002; Sydow et al., 2001). The presenter's delivery characteristics (body language, voice quality, and eye contact) and command of the content and material seem to largely determine how peers assess them (Sydow et al., 2001). In an in-depth study, Shimura (2006) divided her students into three groups; advanced, upper intermediate, and lower intermediate (based on their English language ability). The upper-intermediate students' peer evaluation scores correlated most closely with the instructor's, while the advanced students' peer evaluation scores correlated the least. Both the advanced and lower groups gave their peers higher scores than the instructor. For all three groups, the students' evaluations of their peers' eye contact and gestures were the most similar to the instructor's evaluations. The advanced students differed from the other two groups with the comments they made, but not with the specific items they focused on. Lower-level students focused more on pronunciation and evaluated native-like pronunciation more highly, and both the upper and lower groups relied more on visuals when determining their assessments, in contrast to the advanced group. Finally, Baker and Thompson (2004) are of the opinion that teachers should inform students that the message (content) is the main focus of a presentation. The rationale behind this is that when students feel they have to evaluate the messenger, this heightens insecurities, causing them to focus on peripheral factors to determine their assessments.

Compared with peer assessment, there have been relatively fewer studies on self-assessment of oral presentations. Hisatsune (2014) carried out a longitudinal study in an English language reading class, comparing students at the middle of the academic year and at the end, finding that they assessed their

presentations higher at the end. This was particularly true for non-verbal items, such as eye contact and body language. Verbal areas were the second highest rated, in terms of having improved, while content was last (although it was still self-assessed as having improved). The students proved particularly adept at identifying problem areas in their presentations, such as volume of voice, body language, preparedness and eye contact. In addition, while in the first evaluation they had focused almost exclusively on their own performance, in the second evaluation, they showed more awareness of the audience and how it had reacted, revealing a progression and growing awareness of the range of presentation skills required. In another study, Sydow et al. (2001) found that when presenters self-assess their presentations, they tend to overestimate the impact their visuals have on the audience, and underestimate the impact of content and delivery (eye contact, gestures, and voice), compared to how their peers and instructors assess them. Alwi and Sidhu (2013) also found presenters typically overestimate their organization and delivery skills, and underestimate the content of their presentations, compared to instructors. Presenters are however, quite accurate at assessing their own language skills.

2.3.5 NATIVE AND NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

The majority of research investigating oral presentations and speeches typically deals with 'native speakers' of English. This is important to consider as the presenters in this dissertation are all Japanese for whom English is a second language. As Kaplan (1966) importantly states in his pioneering work, rhetoric is language and culture specific in terms of how ideas are organized in writing, and presumably, for presenting as well. Presenting in a second language is difficult largely because presenters lack confidence, experience, and training (Yang, 2010). Non-native speakers of English (NNSs) need to be sensitized to the shared and differing features on the speaking/writing continuum in another language, which will then enable them to be more effective speakers (Zareva, 2011). Much of the research to date on oral presentations by NNSs has tended to focus on the various challenges they face and on the distinctions between native speakers of English (NSs) and NNSs. Although many interesting findings have been

discovered, one criticism of this body of work as a whole is that it tends to portray the NS as the ideal presenter.

One area researchers have explored is the different guidance given to NSs and NNSS when preparing presentations. Boyle (1996) states that there is often little language guidance provided for NNSs as to how to shape their message. Sazdovska (2007) agrees and adds that second language learners are often not given much 'situational appropriateness' language guidance in textbooks, unlike NSs. Her research shows that the materials for NNSs are frequently only concerned with the methodology and the structure of oral presentations, with little advice on how to use language and discourse to show the speaker's intentions. She further laments the "insufficient applied linguistic research into the analysis and teaching of presentations in the fields of Business English and ESP" (p. 151). Anthony et al. (2006) compared textbooks in Japan on how to present in English (written in Japanese and in English) and found the books in Japanese always ignore question and answer session advice, and rarely deal with interaction techniques. For language advice, they largely focus on set phrases and sentences with limited 'real world' practicality. The English language textbooks for presentations ignore language features for L2 speakers almost entirely. In terms of similarities, both sets of textbooks emphasize practicing and knowing one's content.

Researchers have also explored distinctions in the language used by NNSs and NSs in oral presentations. Zareva (2011) found that both groups of speakers use linking adverbials with great similarity in oral presentations, although some NNSs tend to overuse them. While, the use of linking adverbials in academic presentations has not been researched to any great extent, they have been found to exert a strong impact on persuasion in research articles, particularly those in the marketing and applied linguistics fields (Hyland, 1998). Another study shows that NNS scientists exhibit less grammatical adaptability than their NS counterparts when presenting, and that this has a negative effect on the rhetorical appropriateness and persuasiveness of their presentations (Shimura & Takeuchi, 2011). Rowley-Jovilet and Carter-Thomas (2005a) found that NS

scientists successfully adapt their language when presenting, but NNS scientists often overuse grammatical structures that are more suitable for research articles. In addition, NNSs use longer clauses in both written and spoken texts than NSs do, and NNSs also use the passive tense more frequently than NSs, in both written and spoken modes. NSs used more personal pronouns in their clausal themes than NNSs, because the use of *I* and *you* seems to strengthen the interpersonal relationship between the audience and the speaker. NSs also utilize pseudo-clefts (e.g. 'what we found here was…' or 'what we are talking about is…') more frequently, which makes the information they are presenting more easily comprehended. It was also found that NNSs use extraposition (e.g. 'it should be noted that…' or 'it can be see that…') far less frequently than NSs do, which makes their points more difficult for the audience to follow. All of this evidence shows that even though NNSs may speak grammatically correct English when they are presenting, they still need guidance on rhetorically appropriate English when presenting (Rowley-Jovilet & Carter-Thomas, 2005a). The distinctions between NSs and NNSs mirror what has been found in studies on academic writing. For example, Hinkel (1997) discovered that Japanese students utilize rhetorical questions, disclaimers, ambiguity, repetition, hedges, ambiguous pronouns and the passive voice with greater frequency, than NSs do in their academic essays and Hyland (2002) found that L2 academic writers significantly underuse authorial references (e.g. I, we, me, and us) in academic writing.

Further research on the differences in language use between NSs and NNSs, comes from Zareva (2009a, p. 55), who surmises that,

> L1 presenters seemed to perceive the academic presentation as an opportunity not only to present information in an informal way, but also to interact with the audience and keep it involved in their presentations. By contrast, the L2 presenters seemed to be preoccupied with the informational content of their presentations, frequently to the exclusion of their peers from the process of information negotiation.

Zareva's study shows that NSs use a greater number of adverbials than NNSs when presenting, especially circumstantial adverbials (linking and stance), to better situate their information and include the audience in the presentation. In contrast, NNSs use contingency adverbials more often, inadvertently demonstrating that their presentations are more informative and formal. Zareva's study further shows the subtle, yet important linguistic differences between NNSs and NSs that have obvious, yet unexplored implications for determining the persuasiveness of oral presentations.

Zappa-Hollman (2007) explains that for NNS students, the purpose of delivering oral presentations is also a way to become 'enculturated' into the specific academic and professional world they are currently situated in. When investigating this process, she found that NNSs actually see the task of preparing a presentation in a group, as an opportunity to practice speaking English, and because of this, it takes them about 30% longer to prepare presentations. NNSs are understandably more nervous speaking in an L2 than when presenting in their L1 and fear appearing intellectually inferior. The most challenging part of the presentation for the students in her study was the unscripted question and answer period following the presentation.

There have been several important studies to note specifically examining differences between American and Japanese speakers. Elwood (2011) notes that Japanese students presenting in English use reservation (hedging) three times more than American students. Additionally, Japanese students rely on harmonization, inducement, empathetic construction and position more than their American counterparts, and attempt to build a process before delivering the main point at the end. On the other hand, American students make more rational appeals to support their arguments. Okabe (1983) explored distinctions between Japanese and English language rhetoric and concluded that Japanese rhetoric typically tends to favor 'recency' and saves the most important point for the end of the series – supporting Elwood's (2011) claim. "The Japanese, in this sense are more conscious about the form than about the content of communication" (Okabe, 1983, p. 35). Rhetoric in the West is typically more

concerned with persuasion in public forums, whereas "Japanese rhetoric functions as a means of disseminating information or of seeking consensus" (Okabe, 1983, p. 38). Kamimura and Oi (1998) also concluded that Japanese students tend to use reservation more than Americans and that this makes their argument look circular. Their study shows that Americans use rationale appeals more, whereas Japanese use affective appeals. An example of this is that Americans use "should" and superlatives more often to emphasize their points, but Japanese use "I think" and "maybe" to soften their message. Americans also rely more on cultural tokens, whereas Japanese try to evoke sympathy and emotion.

In terms of other specific groups of NNSs, McCarthy (1991, p. 164) believes that European learners of English are more easily able to transfer discourse patterns such as problem-solution, from L1 to L2, giving them an advantage over non-European presenters, when it comes to incorporating particular presentation skills. In one other study, Hincks (2010) compared identical presentations, delivered in English (L2) and in Swedish (L1) and found the English presentations were delivered 23% slower, and that this significantly reduced the content of the presentation when the speaking time for presenters was held constant.

Other studies investigating NNSs presenters have focused on the dynamics between the group members while preparing presentations. Kobayashi (2003) discovered that NNSs often use their L1 (when it is a shared language) while preparing presentations outside the classroom, and even sometimes in the classroom. Conversely, Chou (2011) found that preparing group presentations has a great effect on improving French university students' English speaking ability and also subsequently enhances their motivation. Morita (2000) illustrates the following complexities: socialization, negotiation and different forms of academic discourse – by native and non-native English speakers. Findings from her study indicate that NNSs and NSs both gradually learn how to present through a complex process of preparing, observing, performing, and reviewing presentations. Finally, Adams (2004) adds that while

ESL students are confident they can prepare and organize the relevant information, they are most worried about their pronunciation and grammar, and subsequently losing their audience.

One last study to be discussed here, examined the distinctions between the delivery of Japanese and Western speakers. Akechi et al. (2013) showed that Japanese exhibit less eye contact than Western Europeans or North Americans and suggest the reason for this may be that compared with Westerners, East Asians perceive faces as being angrier, more unapproachable, and more unpleasant when making eye contact.

In summary, the studies presented in Section 2.3.5 show subtle differences between the way NNSs and NSs prepare and deliver oral presentations. Many of the studies suggest that NSs successfully adjust their rhetoric and styles from written discourse to a more suitable form of discourse when presenting, but that NNSs struggle to do this.

2.4 JAPANESE CONTEXT

It is now important to briefly examine English education in Japan in order to more clearly situate this study. The following sections will therefore focus on two relevant issues: the history and current state of English education in Japan, and research on presenting in Japanese. This is intended as an overview for readers unfamiliar with the Japanese context.

2.4.1 ENGLISH EDUCATION IN JAPAN

This section examines English education in Japan. Seargeant (2009, p. 3) states, "one of the most frequently voiced opinions about English in Japan is that the high profile of, and immense interest in the language is not matched by an equally high level of communicative proficiency among the population". Historically, the Meiji Restoration, the American occupation following World War II, and the economic boom in the 1980s are often credited with being watershed moments in the history of English education in Japan, for first introducing English language education, and then for shifting it towards a more

communicative teaching approach (Ike, 1995; Seargeant, 2009). Following the Meiji Restoration in 1868, learning English served to modernize Japan by facilitating the importing of ideas and knowledge from the West (Nagatomo, 2012). Later, the focus shifted towards obtaining knowledge about English itself. English education in Japan was then influenced by business leaders who prioritized vocational skills (Okano & Tsuchiya, 1999), in response to political and economical demands, and to help internationalize and globalize Japan in the late 1980s (Yamada, 2015). This increased emphasis on English education became even more intensive in the 1990s (Kubota, 2002). Japanese students now receive three years of English education in junior high school and three years in high school. This education mostly deals with grammar and preparation for university entrance examinations, with less importance attached to oral communication. For those students who proceed to university or junior college, there are usually mandatory English classes in the first year, followed by English elective classes in the remaining years of university education. Those majoring in English language related studies typically receive English language education throughout their university studies and may even study abroad for a year.

In 2013 the Ministry of Education, Culture, Science, Sports, and Technology (MEXT), began to implement the new Course of Study Guidelines, emphasizing a more communicative approach for teaching English in secondary schools, (MEXT, 2013). More specifically, English classes are now supposed to be taught in English – a move that has generated significant debate (Sato, 2015). These new guidelines also call for English to be taught as a core subject in elementary schools (meaning English will be testable), a plan which will be phased in by 2020 and will eventually begin in grade four (when students are approximately nine years old). In order for this new education plan to be successful, a two-way approach (involving teachers and administrators) to the implementation and curriculum development has been advocated (Robertson, 2015), which would better reflect and take account of concerns by educators about the perceived lack of support from government institutions.

The English oral fluency level of Japanese high school graduates is often assessed as low, in comparison with many neighboring Asian or European countries, and has been declining in recent years (English Proficiency Index, 2017). A lack of previous opportunities to practice speaking skills is a serious concern for Japanese students studying abroad (Yanagi & Baker, 2016). Potential reasons and theories to explain this are numerous, and none are completely satisfactory. Nagatomo (2012) listed some possible reasons including, Japan's geographical isolation, previous over-reliance on grammar translation style teaching methods, a teacher-centered education style, and prioritization of written university entrance examinations over the development of spoken language proficiency. In addition to these, other possible explanations given include a large number of teachers who are experts on the English language, but who frequently cannot actually speak it, and, cultural explanations such as the inherent Japanese shyness and fear of being different, making a mistake, or losing face.

The fact that oral communication skills are seldom taught in Japanese secondary schools, and oral presentations even less so, means Japanese students have little experience speaking English, and few practical opportunities to do so (Yamada, 2015). In one study, which can be taken as reflective of the larger situation, King (2013) investigated the classroom behavior of 924 English language learners and found that students initiated less than 1% of talk in the classroom. Furthermore, in more than 20% of classroom time there was no oral participation by anyone. A needs-analysis by Webster (2002) at Nagoya University shows that students need to deliver presentations (in English) in the future and therefore need to learn how to deliver them during their education. However, as Li (2008) summarizes, Japanese monologic oral production of English has seldom been investigated.

Finally, Japanese learners of English must also overcome significant cultural differences. For example, Japanese argumentative writing is typically inductive and Japanese learners of English seldom receive any kind of instruction

on how to compose argumentative academic writing in English (Yasunaga, 2015).

2.4.2 PRESENTING IN ENGLISH

Logically, one might expect that for many Japanese university students, their knowledge and experience of presenting in Japanese would precede learning to present in English. However, to date there are no known studies about presenting in Japanese that have been published in English, with only a few studies published in Japanese. There are however, many studies regarding presenting in English, published in Japanese. This section provides a brief overview of these studies.

A common theme in almost all these studies is the prescriptive focus on improving the presenter's English presentation skills. Ideas suggested are learning from famous English speeches (Kuboyama, 2013), learning in high school English language classes (Makino, 2003), or through English presentation contests at the university level (Ishida et al., 2012). Novel studies show how to use real-time feedback tools such as "Presentation Teacher" (Kurihara et al., 2006) and how to draw the audience's attention away from the screen and to the presenter, by standing in front of the screen (Maede et al., 2011). Studies on the effective use of visuals are common in the Japanese literature (e.g. Kamewada & Nishimoto, 2007; Maede et al., 2011), and as Otsubo (2012) points out, this is important for prospective speakers to learn, as companies and universities both demand such skill sets. Many Japanese students rely on visuals and presenting without them is seen as particularly demanding (Yanagi & Baker, 2016). Finally, a study by Suzuki and Kato (2008) outlined three important steps to make a presentation interactive: 1. Know the audience's perspective, 2. Understand the society where the audience was drawn from, 3. Stimulate interaction with the audience. None of these studies ever mentions rhetorical or discursive techniques.

In conclusion, the studies discussed in this chapter reveal that persuading others through an oral presentation is dependent on multiple factors, and that

these factors vary in different contexts. The review of the literature has also shown that whilst persuasion has been widely researched across many disciplines, there are no known published studies in Japanese higher education settings, exploring the use of persuasive discursive techniques in English language oral presentations.

CHAPTER THREE

PHASE 1: PRELIMINARY STUDY

3.1 INTRODUCTION

Phase 1 is a preliminary study of the audience's perception of persuasive techniques in oral presentations and is designed to inform Phase 2 which is concerned with persuasive presentation production. It seeks to add to the existing body of literature on the audience's perception of persuasive presentations, and persuasive techniques, through three focus group sessions. In these sessions, the participants watched and rated the persuasiveness of four oral presentation videos and identified the different factors that influenced their ratings. Two focus groups were comprised of Japanese participants and one of non-Japanese participants, thereby adding a cultural dimension to the study. Specific details regarding the methods and procedures followed to collect the data, the procedures for analyzing the data, the findings, the analysis and the impact this had on the design of Phase 2, are discussed in the respective sections of this chapter.

3.2 RESEARCH APPROACH

My worldview is pragmatic in nature, meaning I am not bound by one single approach or method, and is open to "multiple methods, different worldviews, and different assumptions, as well as different forms of data collection and analysis" (Creswell, 2014, p. 11). Phase 1 follows an interpretive approach (Mason, 2002) and adopts a constructivist view (Crocker, 2009) that seeks to understand complex social practices by way of a thick description (Crocker, 2009; Geertz, 1973), with the necessary rich details, achieved through the use of multiple sources and multiple methods of data collection (Richards, 2003). Although the study bears similarities to action research, it differs in that there are no cycles of observation, interventions or evaluations. Phase 1 follows a traditional qualitative approach to data collection, with a cross-sectional approach to analysis (Mason, 2002). Qualitative methods were judged the more suitable for dealing with complicated and multifaceted phenomena, and can

provide a thick and rich array of descriptions along with answering the how and why questions (Brown, 2014) that are essential to this study.

The research design of Phase 1 was comprised of two steps. Firstly, videos of Japanese university students delivering persuasive oral presentations in English were collected. This was done – while strictly adhering to appropriate ethical procedures approved by Macquarie University (HS Ethics Final Approval 5201400566 and 5201200756) and Nanzan University – by utilizing student presentation videos from an English presentation course I taught. Selected videos were then chosen according to a set of criteria, (refer to Section 3.3.2) to be screened in three focus group sessions. The second step of the research design began with the recruitment of focus group participants. Three focus group sessions were audio-recorded, after which a verbatim transcription of the discussions was made. These transcriptions were then coded (refer to Section 3.3.5 and 3.3.6) and analyzed (refer to Section 3.4 and 3.5), leading to a preliminary discussion on persuasive techniques in oral presentations in this specific context.

3.2.1 CONTEXT

The context for Phase 1 (and Phase 2) was a private university in Japan. Being an instructor at this university made it simple to gain access to potential participants. An independent national academic ratings site ranks the university third in the region out of more than fifty universities (4th International Colleges & Universities, N.D.). It can therefore be said that the academic standard of the students (presenters and focus group participants) involved is relatively high. All of the students at this university are required to take English language courses in the first year of their studies. In several departments, second-year students are also required to take English language courses. These courses include various combinations of the four basic language skills typically taught in Japanese universities, such as oral communication, writing, reading, and listening. No specific oral presentation classes are offered, but many of the students are required to deliver oral presentations in some of their oral communication English classes. The guidelines for teachers teaching first-year English majors

states that, by the end of the academic year, students should be able to deliver a "4-minute presentation in English on a academic topic…with visual aids, emphasizing key words, making eye contact, and using gestures effectively" (Howrey, 2015, p. 1). There are similar excerpts in the teaching guidelines for all the departments at the university, varying in difficulty, according to the abilities of the students. The majority of students at this university do not take English classes after their first year of studies, but for those who are interested, there are a variety of English language elective classes to choose from, including several English presentation skills classes. It was from one such class that the presentation videos utilized in Phase 1 were drawn.

The university also has an international exchange program, whereby students from overseas universities study Japanese language, culture and history for a year. Some of these students later transfer and complete their degrees in Japan, instead of returning home. It is from this program that the non-Japanese national participants for the focus group sessions in Phase 1 were recruited.

3.2.2 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research questions for this thesis are: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation? For Phase 1, there was one more specific question: How are persuasive techniques in oral presentations perceived by the audience? These questions guide the research in Phase 1 and are used to organize the findings, the analysis, and the discussion.

3.3 METHODOLOGY

This section describes the methodology for Phase 1. Firstly, it provides an overview of focus groups as a research tool and the rationale behind choosing them for this study, before then detailing the pre-focus group session work. It then describes the participants, the focus group sessions, the transcription procedures, and finally, the coding methodology.

3.3.1 FOCUS GROUP RATIONALE

The instrument used for collecting data in Phase 1 was the focus group, so it is necessary to briefly examine how and for what purposes they have traditionally served. Focus groups were initially used as a tool to collect data in the 1940s on mass media and persuasive communications (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014; Stewart & Shamdasani, 2015). Since then, the use of focus groups in educational research has been steadily increasing (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014). They have been utilized across a wide range of research fields, but are considered to be "particularly relevant in gathering the viewpoints and opinions of participants who have traditionally not been well represented through the more conventional and common methods currently employed in ESL research studies" (Ho, 2006, p. 05.1). Focus groups typically serve an inquiry function for researchers (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014). As described by Moore (2013), a focus group is typically an open-ended discussion, involving selected participants, who are responding to a series of specific questions and prompts. Focus groups are usually comprised of five to twelve participants (Fowler, 1995; Krueger & Casey, 2000). Although the focus group can be seen as one unit, frequently, the "unit of analysis is still the individual" (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014, p. 315).

Focus groups were chosen as the data collection instrument in Phase 1 as they represented the best option for gathering data to address the research questions. In addition to offering the chance to collect numerical scores and other forms of descriptive data on the persuasiveness of each presentation, they offered an opportunity to dig deeper by soliciting and examining the rationale behind the opinions of the participants in the sessions. As stated by Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2014, p. 325), focus groups can "draw out complexities, nuances, and contradictions, with respect to whatever is being studied". In addition, the unstructured interaction between the participants in focus groups is often where more data is drawn from, and which can shed further light on a range of issues, not foreseen by the researcher (Cohen, Manion & Morrison, 2000), and can even mitigate the authority of the researcher in a positive manner (Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014). By hosting three separate focus group

sessions (Krueger (1994) advocates three or four as the optimal number for a simple research question) which all followed the same semi-structured discussion agenda, data could be compared afterwards. This standardized approach to using focus groups for data collection provides the opportunity to potentially draw more substantial conclusions about how persuasive techniques in oral presentations are perceived.

The use of focus groups has been criticized over the reliability and validity of the data gathered, and whether this data can be considered 'scientific' enough to be considered 'legitimate research' (Ho, 2006). Ho (2006) specifically outlines five criticisms, which are briefly addressed here. Two of these criticisms relate to the moderator's role in the discussions. Focus group sessions can feel very unnatural for participants, especially for those who have not taken part in one before. Secondly, this unfamiliarity with focus group protocol can also result in participants not being highly involved. The first criticism was dealt with in Phase 1 by providing an overview of focus groups, and explaining the moderator's position at the beginning of the sessions. The second criticism was not considered problematic, as most of the participants knew each other prior to the sessions. Many of them were also familiar with me (the moderator) – having previously attended my classes as a student – making it relatively easy for them to interject or voice countering responses and opinions when they felt the need to do so. Nevertheless, I made sure everyone received an opportunity to answer the questions in the sessions, and that all the participants were aware of the opportunity to speak whenever they desired to do so.

According to Ho (2006), the third criticism of focus groups is that they may not truly provide an in-depth discussion of the participant's experiences or opinions. Proponents of using focus groups would argue that they are dynamic, in the sense that they do offer the opportunity for participants to open up and voice their ideas and opinions and that these sessions actually allow researchers to capture data in greater depth than other instruments are capable of doing.

The last two criticisms outlined by Ho (2006) relate to focus groups not being 'scientific' enough, and being based on subjective opinions. This criticism perhaps misses the point though, as focus groups are a qualitative research tool that no qualitative researcher would ever claim is 'scientific'.

Other researchers have also highlighted potential issues with using focus groups in applied research. Liamputtong (2011) details the many practical and ethical considerations researchers need to be aware of, and Krueger and Casey (2014) outline several frequent questions regarding the use of focus groups, involving whether or not the findings are subjective, can the results be generalized, how validity is determined, and even if focus group research is actually 'scientific research'. Further criticisms leveled at focus groups are detailed by Krueger and Casey (2015), including claims such as participants tend to intellectualize or make up their responses, dominant individuals tend to skew results, and that focus groups tend to produce trivial results. To counter such criticisms, Cohen et al. (2000), Moore (2013), and Kamberelis and Dimitriadis (2014) all note that data from focus groups should be triangulated with, or complement other forms of data.

3.3.2 PRE-FOCUS GROUP SESSION WORK

Before the focus group sessions in Phase 1 were conducted, a selection of potential presentation video clips were prepared. These clips were drawn from an *Introduction to English Presentations* course, I taught. The course focused on a range of language skills, discursive techniques, delivery skills, and other techniques (e.g. creating slides, interacting with the audience, front-loading an argument, and structuring a presentation). Students from all the departments at the university who had successfully completed their first-year English courses had the opportunity to register for this elective course, up to a maximum of twenty students. In a typical year, there are twenty students registered, but usually two or three withdraw during the semester, for various reasons. The students are predominantly female, and from a wide range of departments. Due to the demanding nature of the course, only motivated students with a good command of English usually register.

As part of their regular coursework, the students are video-recorded by their classmates delivering individual persuasive oral presentations in English three times throughout the 15-week semester. The purpose for recording the presentations is so that the students can later view their video clip in private, reflect on it, and improve for subsequent presentations. These video-recordings and reflection tasks are carried out at approximately five-week intervals. For this dissertation, a class set of presentation videos were kept on a password protected external hard drive. At the end of the course, I explained the research project and how the videos clips would be used to the students, who were also informed orally that their consent (or lack of consent) would not affect their final grades. This sampling method can be described as open and voluntary (Crocker, 2014), as videos from any participant giving their consent, were initially accepted. For those who wished to give their consent, the only requirement was to sign the consent forms provided and to put them into a designated mailbox by the deadline (one week after the explanation session). Those who did not wish to give their consent could simply keep the forms and dispose of them. Their videos would also be deleted. As the presentations had already been delivered and videos recorded, and the course had concluded, simply giving consent for me to retain the video clips and to potentially later use them in a focus group session, satisfied all the requirements demanded of potential participants. All eighteen students in the class consented.

The process of selecting the videos to be screened in the focus group sessions represented the next step. Due to time constraints (the focus group sessions were each approximately 90 minutes in length), it was decided that four presentation videos would be optimal (each video was approximately five to eight minutes in length). This would allow the full screening of each video, and sufficient time for a discussion on each one. As there was a slight possibility that the focus group participants might recognize the presenters in the videos (they were all students at the same university), an additional three videos were selected as potential substitutes, bringing the total selected to seven videos. The remaining eleven videos were then immediately and permanently deleted from the external hard drive. The procedures followed for selecting the videos can be

described as a process of elimination. From the initial pool of eighteen final presentation videos, three were immediately discarded due to technical issues such as poor camera work or low audio levels. A variety of content was also preferable, meaning four more videos were eliminated after it was deemed there was content overlap with other videos. In these four cases, the video with the higher audio and video quality was selected. A further four videos were eliminated, as I suspected that a participant in one of the focus group sessions knew the presenter (due to being in the same department and year of studies, or from being in previous classes together). This left a total of seven video clips that could potentially be screened in the focus group sessions. From this pool, four were chosen as the primary videos after being deemed significantly distinct from each other, in terms of content and delivery style. In addition, to achieve a gender balance, two male presenters and two female presenters were selected. In one focus group, a participant did recognize a presenter, so a substitute video, with a presenter of the same gender, was used as a replacement. The other two substitute videos were never used.

3.3.3 PARTICIPANTS

The first participants recruited were the presenters in the videos. They were all Japanese nationals and university students, who had registered for an elective class on how to give English presentations that I taught. All the participants were over twenty years old, but no older than twenty-two. They came from varied faculties (English, Business, Humanities, Spanish, and Christian Studies departments) and their English fluency level varied. This group of participants consented to having their videos possibly used after actually delivering them for course requirements and there were no further additional tasks to be completed after consenting.

The second group of participants recruited was the three focus group session members. By conducting an open recruitment drive and accepting those willing to volunteer and available at certain times, convenience sampling (Crocker, 2014) was the main strategy for obtaining these participants. To recruit participants for the focus group sessions an Expression of Interest (EOI)

flyer was posted around the university campus where the research was situated and an announcement was made in several classes for junior and senior students. The EOI briefly described the research purposes, the task requirements for the participants, the necessary conditions for determining the suitability of candidates, the financial compensation being offered, and provided an email address for interested candidates to contact. Financial compensation was offered for the participants to encourage participation and commitment. Several candidates who had expressed an interest, later informed friends (students at the same university) about the opportunity to join the focus group sessions, representing a snowball sampling strategy (Crocker, 2014). Knowledge of persuasive presentations or experience delivering them was not used to determine the selection of the participants in order to avoid a homogenous group, who would have been less representative of the general university student population in Japan.

Krueger and Casey (2000) advocate six to eight participants as ideal for focus groups, but due to the spatial limitations of the private office where the sessions were conducted, it was initially decided that a maximum of six would suffice. The first focus group (henceforth known as FG1) was comprised of foreign university students studying in Japan (non-Japanese nationals). There were six candidates for the foreign nationals group originally, but one candidate was unable to attend the session on the designated date, so only five participants comprised this group. The initial plan had been to recruit five to six Japanese participants for the second focus group. A set of criteria was established to transparently select the final participants, with a diverse mix being optimum, representing a maximum variation sampling approach (Crocker, 2014). During the recruitment period, ten interested candidates expressed an interest, and it was subsequently decided that instead of selecting only six, it would be both useful and prudent to proceed with two separate Japanese focus groups (henceforth known as FG2 and FG3). The primary reason for proceeding with all ten candidates in two different groups was that by gathering an additional set of data the overall research would benefit.

Non-Japanese nationals

The five participants in FG1 all had different nationalities. There were four females and one male, and all were studying in different departments at the university where the research took place. Several of the participants had taken my classes previously. Only one participant came from a country where English is the official language, but the participants were all able to communicate in English at a very high level. A summary of their pertinent information can be found in Table 3.1. Each of the participant's names has been replaced with pseudonym initials in order to ensure anonymity.

Table 3.1.

FG1 Participants' Backgrounds

Participants	Gender	Age	Nationality	Department of studies
AP	F	24	Poland	English
LM	F	23	Mexico	Humanities
LC	F	20	China	English
RU	F	21	United States	French
TK	M	22	South Korea	Business

Japanese nationals

The ten participants comprising FG2 and FG3 were all Japanese nationals and had previously been enrolled in my courses. Most of the participants were also familiar with each other, which was considered conducive to a more relaxed atmosphere and to a more open discussion. In terms of specific background information, there was only one male (in FG3) and eight of the ten participants were from the English language department, making the two groups somewhat homogenous. According to Krueger (1994), homogenous groups can actually be more conducive to generating a more open and engaging discussion. Eight of the participants were in their third year at university, with one in their fourth year and one in their second year. The two participants who were not from the English language department were of a similar English speaking level to the other participants.

The participants were sent a selection of potential time slots. Based on their responses, two groups were formed, and scheduled on two different days. The two focus group discussions were held just over a week apart from each other, so there was a slight possibility of the participants in FG2 discussing their experience with the participants in FG3. To guard against this, the participants in FG2 were told explicitly not to discuss the contents of the session with potential participants in FG3. The pertinent information for the participants in FG2 and FG3 can be found in Tables 3.2 and 3.3.

Table 3.2.

FG2 Participants' Backgrounds

Participants	Gender	Age	Nationality	Department of studies
SO	F	21	Japan	English
YA	F	21	Japan	Humanities
NI	F	21	Japan	English
SE	F	21	Japan	English
NA	F	21	Japan	English

Table 3.3.

FG3 Participants' Backgrounds

Participants	Gender	Age	Nationality	Department of studies
YM	F	21	Japan	English
JE	M	22	Japan	English
KO	F	20	Japan	Humanities
YS	F	21	Japan	English
SK	F	21	Japan	English

3.3.4 FOCUS GROUP SESSIONS

The three focus group sessions were held on separate days, over the span of a month, in a private office. Ideas, strategies, advice and techniques on how to design and conduct a focus group session were gleaned from multiple sources

(see Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000; Heigham & Crocker, 2009; Ho, 2006; Kamberelis & Dimitriadis, 2014; Moore, 2013; Richards, 2003).

The sessions lasted approximately 90 minutes, with myself as the moderator, and five participants. Each session was semi-structured in that I followed the same agenda with each group. The participants sat in a semi-circle, with myself at the head, and with a computer screen for showing the videos mounted on a desk beside him. The focus group sessions were audio recorded. Table 3.4 contains a brief outline of the four stages in the focus group sessions.

Table 3.4.

Focus Group Session Stages

Stages	Description of tasks and activities
1	Payment to participants
(10-mins.)	Overview of the session
	Focus group protocol
	Self-introductions by participants
	Reasons for joining session
2	Defining 'persuasive'
(10-mins.)	"What makes a presentation persuasive?"
	What factors contribute to or undermine persuasiveness?
3	Video preparation – verifying anonymity of presenters
(60-mins.)	Overview of tasks required after viewing video clips
	Viewing of video clips
	Persuasiveness ratings
4	Most and least persuasive presenters
(10-mins.)	"What makes a presentation persuasive?"
	"Has your view of persuasiveness changed since the beginning of this discussion?"
	Participant questions and discussion

Each focus group session followed the same question development pattern, or questioning route, as defined by Krueger and Casey (2000). In Stage 1, the participants were paid ¥5,000 (approximately $50USD) and asked to sign a form stating that they had received payment. A short overview was then provided as to how the session would proceed (none of the participants had ever participated in a focus group session before). It was explained to the participants that the purpose of the moderator – as described by Krueger and Casey (2000) – was to create carefully predetermined interview questions and to guide the participants through the logical sequence of open-ended questions, and that each participant would be given an opportunity to answer each question. They would also be free to interject or ask questions themselves. It was also stressed that there were no correct or incorrect opinions, so the participants did not need to be concerned about whether they knew 'the correct answer' to each question. It was made explicit to them that if their responses or views differed from another participant, that this was perfectly acceptable. The participants were also informed that the sessions were not an English test of any kind, and that the content of their responses was the sole focus of the research. Although the participants were mostly familiar with each other, the next task in the focus group sessions was to have the participants briefly introduce themselves to the group. This was done to create a more relaxed atmosphere and also to warm up the participants' English speaking skills. The participants were also asked why they had volunteered to join the focus group discussions. Predominantly, their answers were one or more of the following: they were interested in the research; they wanted a chance to speak English in a more formal situation; their friends had invited them; or, they wanted to make some money.

In Stage 2, the participants were asked to define 'persuasive' in their own words. This was done to generate more awareness of what the term means and to demonstrate that there are differing definitions. As some of the participants had limited experience delivering English presentations, it was also to help distinguish what a persuasive presentation might be, and to contrast this with an informative presentation. Each participant defined the term orally, in front of the other members. Following this, I provided a working definition, which was as

follows, "that which makes people do something, believe something, or agree with or agree to something". This definition represents a simplified amalgamation of several dictionary definitions (Collins, Longman, and Oxford). I then verified that the participants understood this definition.

Next, "What makes a presentation persuasive?" was posed to the group. The participants were not provided with any specific directions on how to answer this question (e.g. defining 'persuasive' from a Western or Japanese perspective). In one session (FG2), a participant volunteered an opinion, and then other participants followed suit. For the other two sessions, there was a brief pause before I then selected one participant to answer. The other participants then responded. Next, the participants were asked what factors or combination of factors they thought made a presentation persuasive, and what they considered important overall for determining the persuasiveness of a presentation. Once this discussion had reached a natural conclusion, it was explained that the group was going to watch four videos, after which they would be asked to rate the persuasiveness of each presentation and then discuss the rationale behind their scores.

In Stage 3, the focus group participants were first shown a screen shot of each presenter and asked whether they knew him/her. Only in one case did a participant recognize the presenter, so the video was immediately replaced with a back-up video. Once assured the participants did not know the presenter, the presentation video was screened in its entirety (between 5-8 minutes) on a 27in iMac desktop computer. Following the video, each participant was initially asked orally to score the presentation holistically out of five (a Likert scale), in terms of persuasiveness. A specific set of criteria on which to base this score was initially not thought necessary as a holistic score was prioritized. However, in hindsight, it would have been preferable to provide criteria to enable better validity and reliability of the reported scores. The participants were given the following rubric (Table 3.5) as a form of training before they responded to the first presentation video. In a few cases, the rubric was repeated after subsequent

videos, when the participants requested it. A few participants also gave half points (e.g. 3.5).

Table 3.5.

Persuasiveness Holistic Rating Scale Rubric

Score	Definition
5	Very persuasive
4	Quite persuasive
3	Somewhat persuasive
2	Not very persuasive
1	Not persuasive

After watching each video, the participants rated the persuasiveness of the presentation, and some also provided a rationale. For those who did not volunteer any rationale, I then prompted them. When all the participants had had a chance to respond, they were then asked what they had noticed the speaker doing, or attempting to do, to make their presentation more persuasive, and whether or not they thought the presenter had succeeded. The participants were also then asked what they had noticed the speaker doing that had weakened the persuasiveness of their presentation (deliberate or not). This same question development pattern was repeated after each of the four videos in the session and across all three focus group sessions.

In Stage 4, each participant was asked which presentation had been the most persuasive and why. For FG2 and FG3, the participants were also asked which presentation had been the least persuasive and why (time restraints prevented this question being asked in FG1). The participants were then asked again, "What makes a presentation persuasive?" Finally, the participants were asked if they had changed their views or opinions during the session. Following this, the session was opened up to the participants, who were free to ask questions or discuss any matter in more detail. Once this discussion had

concluded, the participants were debriefed and the focus group sessions were officially concluded.

3.3.5 TRANSCRIPTION PROCEDURES

After the three focus group sessions had been conducted, I then transcribed the audio recordings into a text document. The transcription represented a verbatim record of everything said in the focus groups and by whom. In the transcript, the participants were given the focus group session number, and their own personal number from 1-5, reflecting their seating positions in the group. For example, the participant sitting directly to my left in FG1 is referred to as FG1-1.

The transcripts were glossed on a few limited occasions, which needs to be noted. For example, when a participant or I used the name of someone in the session – this was omitted from the final transcripts and replaced with "(name)". Also there were a few occasions when one of the participants spoke in Japanese. These utterances were transcribed in italics with a Romanized version of the words. In most cases, the participants were simply struggling to recall a particular word in English and it was quickly resolved with my help or by one of the other participants. In a few other instances, what the participant had said (usually just a few seconds) was not clearly audible, so this was transcribed as "(inaudible)".

As the primary focus of the transcription analysis was the content of the discussions – and not how the participants spoke, only a very limited number of transcription techniques were utilized to reflect the manner in which the participants and I had spoken. These transcript conventions were partially modeled on the Jeffersonian system (Jefferson, 2004) and served as a means of systematically transcribing the focus group sessions. Use of exclamation points for particularly stressed comments, or the use of "…" to indicate a fading comment or a long pause were examples of how punctuation was utilized to try and capture *how* the participant had voiced their comment. If a participant quoted something one of the presenters had said, this was indicated on the

transcripts by the use of quotation marks. Laughter from any of the participants or myself was simply indicated by "(laughter)", and was inserted where it occurred in the discussion, but was not indicative of who was laughing.

There were few instances of participants talking over one another, so transcribing simultaneous utterances was not an issue. When one participant did interrupt the other, the first speaker usually discontinued their comment. This was indicated by "…" at the end of the comment made by the interrupted speaker. The interrupter's comment then began on a new line, with "…" placed at the beginning of their turn.

3.3.6 CODING METHODOLOGY

There were four steps in the systematic coding process of the focus group session transcripts: Focused coding, Sub-coding, Hypothesis coding, and Values coding. These different coding procedures adhered to definitions provided by Saldaña (2013). The coding procedures were repeated three times to strengthen intra-rater reliability. The transcripts were coded in their raw form using a system of numbers to correlate with particular codes.

Attribute coding, as defined by Saldaña (2013, p. 261), was the first step in the framework for analysis. This involved a description of the participants involved in the three focus group sessions, and has already been documented in Section 3.3.3. Data were collected from informal discussions with the participants. Several months after the focus group sessions had concluded, the participants' personal information was sent to each participant for verification. Verbal consent was then obtained to use this information in the research.

The first procedure applied to the focus group transcripts was focused coding. As defined by Saldaña (2013, p. 264), focused coding is when coded data are categorized by thematic or conceptual similarity. This meant initially grouping and categorizing the respective answers and related comments for each question posed during the focus group sessions. Once collated together, the answers and comments for each particular question were further categorized

according to thematic similarity. For example, this involved categorizing the participants' comments on a presentation as either positive or negative.

The next cycle of coding constituted what Saldaña (2013, p. 267) defined as sub-coding. The primary objective of this stage of the coding process was to establish subcategories, which can provide further clarity and specification (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). A thematic approach was adopted for grouping the data and organizing them into subcategories and ultimately there was a certain degree of subjectivity regarding this process. Sub-coding involved categorizing the participants' responses as relating to a certain area of presentation skills, such as content, delivery, discursive techniques/language, structure, or miscellaneous (visuals etc.). These categories represented concepts that stood for a group of phenomena (Straus & Corbin, 1998) with one or more shared properties, and with general or specific characteristics or attributes (p. 117), following the principle of comparative analysis (p. 105). These categories, while certainly not completely original, were given these labels because I felt they best represented the tagged items within them. Within these subcategories, salient themes and frequently noted comments were then analyzed. This cycle also involved categorizing the negative and positive comments given, into thematically similar categories, to further identify potential factors that enhanced or undermined the persuasive impact of the presentations.

The next stage in the coding process was hypothesis coding. As defined by Saldaña (2013, p. 264), hypothesis coding involves frequency counts, descriptive statistics and speculation as to what the numbers and patterns might mean. The results of this stage constitute the findings and analysis sections (Sections 3.4 and 3.5).

The final coding process involved applying values coding or causation coding to the data, as defined by Saldaña (2013, p. 261). This was done to better clarify and represent the participants' beliefs and attitudes, regarding the research questions and other related issues. These coding procedures were steps towards developing grounded theory and selective coding (Strauss & Corbin,

1998), ultimately leading towards exploring and addressing the persuasive techniques that determine persuasiveness in oral presentations. A summary of the coding processes used in Phase 1, and an overview of the framework for analysis is set out in Table 3.6. The descriptions are based on summarized versions of the definitions outlined by Saldaña (2013).

Table 3.6.

Framework for Analysis – Phase 1

Type of coding	Description
1. Attribute coding	Participant demographics, characteristics, educational background.
2. Focused coding	Collating and thematically coding answers to particular key questions and prompts.
3. Sub-coding	Second cycle coding of the data from the Focused coding stage to establish subcategories.
4. Hypothesis coding	Frequency counts, descriptive statistics and speculation about what it means.
5. Values coding Causation coding	Coding to reflect the participant's beliefs, values and attitudes about the central research questions and issues.

3.4 FINDINGS

The findings from Phase 1 are detailed in this section and are a result of grounded theorization (Strauss & Corbin, 1998). These findings are drawn from the participants' comments during the four main tasks in the focus group sessions: defining 'persuasive'; rating the persuasiveness of each presentation; providing a rationale for these ratings; and discussing the persuasive techniques and factors that had either contributed to or that had undermined the persuasiveness of the presentations. The findings are organized into three subsections, which explore the definition of 'persuasive', the persuasiveness of the three presenters screened in all the focus group sessions, and the rationale provided by the focus group participants. Ultimately, the findings address the

specific research question of Phase 1: How are persuasive techniques in oral presentations perceived by the audience? They also address the two key research questions of the thesis: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation?

3.4.1 DEFINING PERSUASIVE

This section examines how the participants defined 'persuasive'. The question ("What does persuasive mean to you?") was posed to each focus group as a whole, and then the participants gave their definitions individually. All of the participants' responses are direct quotes from the transcript and are shown in Table 3.7. Convention typically dictates researchers add transcript numbers and line numbers to the in-text citations in order to strengthen the trustworthiness of the study (Saldaña, 2013). As the participant codes already include a number indicating which session they are from, the transcript number has been omitted and just the line of the respective transcript has been added (e.g. FG1-1, L13). The coding tags applied to the participant's responses have been included and an explanation of what they represent is discussed below Table 3.7.

Table 3.7.

Participants' Definitions of 'Persuasive'

Participant	Definition	Coding tags
FG1-1	Trying strongly to influence someone. To change his opinion…his or her opinion. (L25-27)	C1, C2
FG1-2	To try to speak your opinions and let the audience to agree with you…and sometimes they may, they may have disagree opinions with you before you speak but after your speech they may agree with you. (L34-36)	C1, C2
FG1-3	To try to change the people's mind (laughter) people's opinions…something like that. (L37-38)	C1, C2

FG1-4	Trying to convince somebody to do what you want him or her to do…I think…perception. (L28-31)	C1, C6
FG1-5	Uh, trying to get the audience, to nod to your opinions. (L32)	C1, C3
FG2-1	Persuasive…means that some…somebody talks to somebody and if this person…if this person talks and the other person can agree with it. Then, this person succeeded in persuading him or her. (L8-10)	C3
FG2-2	So persuasive means…yeah I think you try to convince a person that has a different opinion. Then, by using techniques or talking method or something. (L21-23)	C1, C2, C5
FG2-3	To make someone…ahh to make someone who doesn't agree with you agree to you. (L18-19)	C2
FG2-4	I think something…phrase that can change people's mind and can change people's opinion. (L15-16)	C2
FG2-5	I think that him or her have to convince people that they are right or they have the proper opinion about something. That is persuasive to me. (L12-13)	C3
FG3-1	When something is persuasive, it means that it attracts the audience. Um…yeah. (L15-16)	C3, C4
FG3-2	Um…if it's persuasive it means it's easy to believe…and trustable, and it has strong information. (L6-7)	C7
FG3-3	I also think if I can get an impact that has persuasive… persuade? And, also the big voice and the big something. Some gestures…related to the… (L9-11)	C4, C5
FG3-4	When something is persuasive someone…change mind. (L13)	C2
FG3-5	Persuasive presentation can make someone who have different opinion understand something. (L18-19)	C2

Twenty-four coding tags were applied to the fifteen responses, based on thematic coding procedures (Saldaña, 2013). Responses that included thematically similar content were grouped together under a numerical figure. Seven categories emerged through grounded theorization and reveals interesting insights into how the focus group participants defined persuasive. Eight of the participants included the concept of *changing someone's mind* (C2) as part of their definition. This appeared in the responses from participants across all three focus groups. Four participants stated that *getting agreement* (C3) from the audience (but not necessarily changing their mind) was what defined persuasive, while two other participants stated that just *attracting the audience* or *making an impact* represented being persuasive (C4). Two participants actually gave examples (C5) of how to be persuasive, in addition to defining it, and one defined persuasive as being trustworthy and having good supporting evidence (C7). Somewhat surprisingly, only one person thought *getting someone to take action* (C6) was part of being persuasive.

One other intriguing finding in this section involves the use of the word 'try' or a variation of it, in the responses (C1). This appeared in six of the definitions provided by the participants, and by all five of the non-Japanese nationals. A simple explanation for this could be that the participants in the non-Japanese session adopted the template of how to define persuasive from the first participant's response, and simply included 'try' as part of their definition too. Another explanation could be that the non-Japanese nationals placed an emphasis on the intent to persuade. In turn, it seems many of the Japanese participants' definition was based on whether or not the outcome of the presentation was successful (i.e. the speaker had succeeded in changing the audience's mind or had obtained agreement from them), and not simply on the intent of the speaker.

The two main findings in this section are that the participants had slightly different interpretations of the concept of persuasive, and that there were differences between how the Japanese and non-Japanese nationals defined persuasive, with the latter focusing more on the intent of the speaker, while the

former focused more on mutual agreement and consensus. Perhaps most importantly though, all the participants seemed to have a plausible understanding of the notion of 'persuasive', from my Western perspective.

3.4.2 PERSUASIVENESS OF EACH PRESENTER

This section examines the persuasiveness ratings given to each presentation. The rating was a numerical score out of five (see Section 3.3.4), with a score of five representing the most persuasive. After viewing all four presentations, the participants were also asked to choose the most persuasive and least persuasive presentation. Their responses are indicated by the use of "*" for most persuasive and "x" for least persuasive. It should be noted that there are instances where the scores and the choices for most/least persuasive do not correspond. An example of this can be seen in Table 3.8 where FG1-4 chose Presenter 1 as the most persuasive, even though they scored Presenter 2 higher. FG3-1 chose two presenters as the most persuasive (despite giving them different scores). Tables 3.8 to 3.10 illustrate the scores given by each participant, in each focus group session, for each of the four presentations they viewed. The average rating for each presenter's persuasiveness is listed in brackets following the presenter's number.

Table 3.8.

FG1 (Non-Japanese Nationals)

Presenters (ave. score)	FG1-1	FG1-2	FG1-3	FG1-4	FG1-5
1 (3.8)	4 *	4 *	4	3 *	4 *
2 (2.2)	3	1	1	4	2
3 (3.4)	3	4	4 *	3	3
4 (2.8)	3	2	3	3	3

Table 3.9.

FG2 (Japanese Nationals)

Presenters (ave. score)	FG2-1	FG2-2	FG2-3	FG2-4	FG2-5
1 (3.1)	3	3.5 *	3 *	3	3
2 (2.3)	2	2 x	3	2	2.5 x
3 (3.2)	4 *	3	2.5	3 *	3.5 *
4	-	-	-	-	-
5 (2.0)	1 x	3	2 x	2 x	2

Table 3.10.

FG3 (Japanese Nationals)

Presenters (ave. score)	FG3-1	FG3-2	FG3-3	FG3-4	FG3-5
1 (3.0)	3	3	3	3	3
2 (3.8)	4 *	3	4	4	4
3 (2.0)	2 x	1 x	3 x	2 x	2
4 (3.0)	3 *	3 *	4 *	2 *	3 *

The most significant finding that can be drawn from these tables is that there was no general consensus about which presenter was the most persuasive or the least persuasive. All of the three presentations screened across the three focus group sessions received at least one nomination for being the most persuasive and the least persuasive. Another potentially important finding is that none of the presenters received a score of five from any of the participants, indicating none of the presentation videos had been overly persuasive, or substantially more persuasive than the others.

There are a few other points worth noting. Firstly, Presenter 1 was rated as one of the two most persuasive presenters (tied for second in FG3) by all

three focus groups. Four of the five non-Japanese participants rated this presenter as the most persuasive, whereas only two of the ten Japanese participants did so. However, all fifteen participants gave this presenter a score of 3 or more.

Unlike Presenter 1, the perception of Presenter 2 varied considerably. FG3 all gave this presenter relatively high scores and the presenter's average rating of 3.8 was the highest in FG3, but, received only one vote for being the most persuasive. The score of 3.8 tied with Presenter 1's FG1 score, for the highest average rating in any of the focus groups, yet Presenter 2 was the lowest rated presenter in FG1 and the second lowest in FG2.

In another example of the fluctuating disparity between the groups, Presenter 3 received the lowest rating from FG3, with four out of five participants choosing it as the least persuasive presentation. In contrast, FG2 rated it the highest overall, and three out of five participants chose it as the most persuasive. Especially intriguing is that this disparity emerges from the two Japanese-national focus groups.

Presenter 4 also received mixed ratings. He was unanimously chosen as the most persuasive by FG3, but was ranked third in FG1, with nobody choosing him as the most persuasive. This presentation was not screened in FG2 as one of the participants recognized the speaker, so Presenter 5 was screened instead and received generally low scores. However, without the benefit of having another group rate this presentation, it is difficult to assess the overall persuasiveness of Presenter 5.

Perhaps the strongest conclusion to be drawn from these findings is that a persuasive presentation depends on a multitude of factors – not least of all, the audience. These factors and their impact will be explored further in the following sections. The focus group participants frequently had differing views and opinions of the presentations and this difference was apparent not only when

comparing the non-Japanese and the Japanese participant responses, but also when comparing the two Japanese focus groups.

3.4.3 PARTICIPANTS' RATIONALE

After soliciting persuasiveness scores from the focus group session participants for each presentation, I then explored the rationale behind these scores. This consisted of first prompting the participants as a group, and then individually, with a series of follow up questions. All the participants provided a rationale for the score they had given, and supported their rationale with specific examples and direct quotes from the presentations.

The participants' comments were sorted in three ways. With little related research available to serve as a template, the process was largely based on grounded theorization (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), common coding practices in qualitative research (Saldaña, 2014), and my previous experience teaching and researching oral presentations. Firstly, they were coded according to the presentation they referred to. Secondly, they were organized according to the principle of thematic coding (Saldaña, 2013). Those relating to similar areas of content or linguistic properties were grouped together and these groups were then analyzed for salient themes. This represents the sub-coding stage of the analysis. Through further grounded theorization (Strauss & Corbin, 1998), it became apparent that the data could be organized into the following subcategories: content, delivery, discursive techniques and language, structure, and miscellaneous. The following rubric was created and used to determine the placing of the coded items into the requisite categories. The discursive techniques category included many established rhetorical techniques. Prominent examples of these include tripling, rhetorical questions, knockdowns, and bookending. Overall language ability was also included in this category. Content was thematically defined by the mentioning of: examples, information, supporting information, opinions, objectives, and counter arguments. The delivery category included comments regarding the presenter's voice, interaction with the audience, pace of the presentation, pausing, eye contact, emphasis, stress, body language, gestures, and confidence. Structure covered

references to the opening and the conclusion sections of the presentation, the organization of points, and overall flow of ideas. Any other items that could not be coded into one of the above categories were categorized into the miscellaneous category. This included (but was not limited to) comments regarding motivating the audience to act, provoking reflection amongst the participants, personal opinions of the presenter, and references to visuals.

Each coded item was additionally given a positive or negative tag, reflecting whether the participant's comment indicated something had either enhanced or detracted from the overall persuasiveness of the presentation. There was some difficulty in deciding how to code the frequent suggestions that were provided by the participants, regarding what the presenter could have done – but did not actually do. In the end the decision was made to code these items as negative. The rationale was that by suggesting the speaker should have done something, the participants were indirectly implying that the presenter had not done something that would have strengthened the persuasive impact of their presentation. Or, conversely, the participants were suggesting the presenter should not have done something that had undermined the persuasive impact of the presentation.

A systematic analysis of the audience's perspective on each of the three presenters, whose presentations were screened across all three focus group sessions, is now provided. Reference to what the presenters actually said or did during their presentations is only made when noted by the focus group participants, as Phase 1 deals solely with the audience's perspective.

Presenter 1

The most frequent comments on Presenter 1's (P1) presentation related to his content and his delivery, with more positive than negative comments. Although less frequent, P1's use of persuasive discursive techniques also received largely favorable comments. Overall, there were 30 positive and 21 negative comments. This favorable balance reflects P1's relatively high persuasive scores.

Many focus group participants stated that P1's use of particular discursive techniques had assisted his persuasive push (FG1-1; FG1-4; FG2-1; FG2-2; FG3-5). P1's central message was for the audience to take action and "change the world", a phrase which he repeated several times throughout the presentation – a fact not lost on one participant (FG3-5). The use of a key phrase with three words is known as tripling and is a well-established rhetorical device in oratory history (Atkinson, 2004; Dowis, 200; Lucas, 2015). In another example of tripling, two participants felt his cheerful use of "Happy New Year" to start the presentation had been an effective and attractive icebreaker (FG2-2; FG3-1). Throughout his presentation, P1 also used a range of contrasts to help illustrate his points. Examples pointed out include: "not *my* chopsticks, but *your* chopsticks" as an attempt to personalize his point (FG1-4, L125), or "it's a small effort, but it makes a big change" (FG1-1, L190). A further example was the phrase "you, not everybody, but you", cited by FG1-1 (L178), which is an example of a discursive technique called bookending. P1 also used a focusing technique with the expressions "as you saw" and "as you know", which one participant felt was effective (FG3-4). FG1-1 (L95-97) thought P1's inclusive language was a strength as he was "using the words *you*, not only the government, *you* can change the world, *you* have the power". Conversely, FG1-4 (L122-123) stated that, "he was talking about *you* but I think it would have been more persuasive if he had said *we* ". Further negative comments dealt with P1's perceived overuse of the hedge "maybe", which betrayed a certain weakness to his argument (FG2-3), and the presenter's "so-so" (FG3-4, L59) English ability.

For delivery, several participants commented generally, such as "his way of speaking was good" (FG3-5, L74), "it is easy to listen to" (FG1-3, L102), and that "he was talking with confidence and his voice was very clear" (FG3-2, L49-50). One participant remarked on his good eye contact: "he didn't read the script" (FG3-4, L61-62). However, another participant thought he might have benefitted from memorizing: "I thought it was good that he wasn't really memorizing the script but…well…it's not always good to not memorize the script…" (FG3-1, L68-69). P1 was seen as interactive and having made a good opening, with comments such as "the speaker had a good contact with the

audience. He was very interactive" (FG1-1, L94-95), illustrating this point. FG2-4 (L67-68) noted how "he talks a story which is connected with the problem and us", as a further example. FG1-4 remembered that the presenter "was being persuasive at the beginning because he said this little joke and got people's attention" (L120-121). One participant (FG1-5) also thought P1 had achieved the right balance of hand gestures, although another stated the gestures P1 had used were distracting and made him look unsure (FG1-2).

There were two main areas of criticism, regarding P1's delivery: pausing too often and speaking with flat intonation. I had noted in my notes that P1 was frequently and deliberately pausing in the presentation, to increase the suspense of what was going to be said next and to help with the comprehension of a slightly complicated topic. However, some participants felt that, "the way of his talking, speaking, was not effective to persuade people because he paused so much" (FG2-5, L73-75), or "I understood what he was saying, but the words that he was saying didn't really come into me, because he was always pausing" (FG3-1, L66-67). On the other hand, FG3-4 (L60-62) seemed to regard the presenter's pausing as a positive attribute: "his way of speaking, presentation…he had pause…and he didn't read the script. So he is seeking and…so I felt what he really wanted to say." FG2-4 though, argued this pausing made P1 look unconfident. As FG2-1 (L92-95) summed up: "everyone said…the way he talked was not really that good. So, if he could improve that point…like how to…pause or how to emphasize and how to do things, then this was going to be very good." FG2-4 (L68-70) agreed: "I think his voice volume is always plain and there is no emphasis in his speech, so I think it is not so strong."

Content was the other category that featured prominently in the participant's comments. Several participants thought the examples he used as supporting information were easy to relate to. FG1-1 stated that, "He was using interesting examples, and some interesting information, people probably don't know" (L97-98). FG1-5 (L131-132) believed, "How he used examples was very effective". FG1-2 agreed and elaborated further (L111-116):

> The good point is that he gave the examples. The examples are all the things around us that are daily life like chopsticks…and the smartphones and I think one of the good points is that he didn't only say the things that he thinks is right but also think about the disagree opinions like "maybe you will think that using the own chopsticks effect is small but" and then he gave a stronger opinion. That's the good point I think.

FG2-1 (L86-91) stated that these examples made the presentation more persuasive as they were related to our lives:

> Especially I like the last part…iPhone, using the iPhone. It is strongly connected to ourselves. It is not a problem that somebody else is doing …it's just our problem. And, this kind of personal…personal problem…is very persuasive I think, because it is connected to you, not just somebody else.

FG2-2 (L54-57) agreed:

> Yeah, for me the last part, he was explaining the situation now, using the iPhone, right. Then, I think most everyone has iPhone and it connected our life to what is going on that we cannot see. So, it was persuasive for me.

Interestingly, while these participants seemed to agree that P1's supporting information and examples were interesting and easy to relate to, many participants criticized the presenter's overall message. The consensus amongst some participants was that it was too broad or too unrealistic. As FG3-4 (L59-60) summed up, "the content is big…and like a dreamer. So, it lacks of reality". FG3-3 (L55-56) concurred by stating, "his content was, like, he has really huge, big target". FG2-3 actually criticized P1's supporting information, "He has strong point of his view, but I think he has lack of expert opinion or evidence" (L62-63). FG3-2 (L50-51) added that, "in terms of the content, it doesn't include…enough information". Other participants (FG1-1; FG1-2; FG1-4) agreed and felt P1 had made strong arguments, but needed more statistical evidence and more examples to offset the apparent lack of information given (FG3-2). The topic

itself though, was seen as one that was of interest to the audience (FG3-3) and P1's telling of a personal anecdote impressed one participant (FG2-5).

Most of the comments regarding P1's structure were positive. FG1-4 noted how the use of an attention-getter made the opening persuasive, while FG2-1 (L86-87) commented that, "Especially I like the last part" – the concluding anecdote on iPhones. As one participant noted, the anecdote was a very persuasive and effective way to conclude the presentation (FG1-4), although another participant suggested this anecdote would have been a more effective attention getter at the beginning of the presentation (FG1-2). FG1-5 (L131-132) commented that, "he had a really organized presentation. I thought it was really easy to understand what he was trying to say." However, FG3-5 (L81-83) criticized the structure: "he has to choose one topic and say the situation and say the solution…and how it will work. So, the structure is not very good". Two participants thought the overall structure was poor (FG2-1; FG3-5), with one pointing out P1 had actually stated "in conclusion", but had then proceeded to add another point, before actually concluding (FG2-1).

In terms of miscellaneous items, FG1-4 noted that P1 didn't really succeed in persuading people to act (L127-128): "he didn't really give the good motivation for people to do that". FG1-1 though, thought, "he made people wonder about their effort, for the environment and the other people" (L98-99). There were also comments that P1 should have practiced more (FG2-1; FG3-4).

Overall, P1 delivered a subdued, but mostly persuasive presentation, with a largely effective array of persuasive discursive techniques, but with a somewhat grandiose objective/message.

Presenter 2

There are several salient findings relating to Presenter 2's (P2) presentation. Firstly, the content of the presentation generated the most comments from the focus group participants – almost all of which were negative. Comments on P2's delivery and use of discursive techniques were decidedly mixed. Some

participants felt an interactive and lively delivery punctuated with persistent questions for the audience was able to compensate for the poor content, but others disagreed and felt that the overly aggressive delivery style adopted by P2 ultimately undermined the persuasiveness of the presentation.

The focus group participants' discussion of P2's use of discursive techniques primarily dealt with the same technique: the presenter's frequent use of questions to engage the audience. These questions were largely rhetorical and quite often negative questions or tag questions (e.g. "you're not really happy with your life, are you?"). This discursive technique was polarizing for the participants, with some noting it was very attractive (FG2-1; FG3-1) and that it made the presentation more persuasive and interactive (FG1-1; FG3-5). On the other hand several participants stated that the frequent use of these questions was annoying and presumptive (FG1-2; FG1-3; FG2-4; FG2-5; FG3-1) with FG1-2 going so far as to suggest that this made "me want to punch her" (L216-217). In particular, the continual use of the word "die" in questions (e.g. "you don't want to die, do you?") was largely seen as counterproductive, and indeed inadvertently undermined the presenter's intent to persuade the audience to visit a particular country (FG1-1; FG1-2; FG2-1; FG2-4). Widely differing opinions were also evident regarding the presenter's attention-getter, with one participant describing it as annoying (FG1-2) while others viewed it as effective, but not related to the content (FG2-2; FG2-5; FG3-5). In other comments, one participant noted that the presenter's over reliance on jokes, only revealed a shallow content (FG3-2) that could not be covered up by good presentation skills (FG1-3). One participant felt that the presenter's use of negative questions at the beginning was actually a skilled use of a knockdown (FG2-3) and another noted the positive use of tripling (FG3-4). The only comment on the presenter's language ability was that it was simple and clear (FG3-3).

P2's delivery drew a distinctly mixed appraisal. A few participants commented that P2's 'way of speaking' was impressive, attractive or even amazing (FG3-1; FG3-3; FG3-4) and that this made the presentation persuasive (FG3-5). Several participants also felt P2 was very enthusiastic (FG1-1; FG1-4)

and that by raising her voice at times, she succeeded in getting the attention of the audience (FG1-1; FG1-4). Two participants remarked on how she used a noticeable amount of gestures, body language and facial expressions (FG3-1; FG3-5) and had good voice projection (FG1-2; FG2-1). Another commented on how well she emphasized her points (FG2-5), although this was also seen as talking too loudly throughout (FG3-1; FG3-5), which muddled her overall message (FG3-1). Her voice speed was noted favorably (FG1-4) and another participant pointed out how P2 had kept talking without needing to pause (FG3-2). However, P2's style of delivery didn't appeal to everyone, and criticisms ranged from P2's overtly "cheerful" delivery (FG2-5, L169) to her frequent smiling being distracting (FG2-1). P2 came across to some as being too pushy (FG2-2) and with the delivery style of "a kindergarten teacher" (FG3-4, L158). One participant (FG1-4) pointed out that while P2's aggressive delivery style might appeal to younger people, it could potentially be seen as too pushy for older people. P2 did get credit for being interactive though (FG1-1; FG2-3; FG3-5). Finally, two participants (FG2-4; FG2-5) commented negatively on P2's frequent reading and checking of the script, which was particularly noticeable at the beginning of the presentation.

The negative appraisal of the content in P2's presentation was almost unanimous and focused on three perceived weaknesses; the lack of supporting information (FG1-2, FG3-1; FG3-2); the counter arguments provided were inadvertently too strong (FG1-1; FG1-5; FG2-1; FG2-3; FG2-5); and the lack of clarity regarding the presenter's main message (FG1-3; FG2-2; FG2-4; FG3-1; FG3-2). The presentation was seen as not academic (FG2-4), a personal opinion with little to no substance (FG2-2; FG3-2; FG3-4) that had no real message (FG3-5), and was simply poor (FG1-2). Only one participant felt P2 had balanced the pros and cons of her argument well, and had succeeded in stressing the pros (FG1-1).

The structure of P2's presentation was criticized several times. One participant noted that the overall structure was simply "not good" (FG1-3, L226), while others stated that they were unable to perceive the main point of the

presentation until near the end (FG3-1; FG3-2) and that the order of her points was not clear (FG2-2). However, one participant (FG2-1) thought the introduction section of the presentation was quite persuasive.

There were only a couple of comments made by the focus group session participants that could not be thematically aligned with the above categories. These included general comments that the presentation was interesting (FG1-5) and clear (FG2-2). Other comments dealt with P2 being seen as too pushy (FG1-4; FG2-2), too strong (FG1-3), and as forcing others to agree with her opinion (FG2-3; FG3-3). One participant also added that they were unable to concentrate on the presentation (FG2-4), although no specific reason was given.

Overall, it can be said that despite the perception of a weak and muddled content and an abrasive delivery style, punctuated by the polarizing use of certain discursive techniques, P2 still succeeded in being persuasive to some members of the focus groups by using a strong and interactive delivery style.

Presenter 3

The majority of comments concerning Presenter 3's (P3) presentation also dealt with the delivery and content. While the comments on the content proved inconclusive as to whether or not it had been persuasive, the general consensus on the delivery was that it had been ineffective. P3 was however, evaluated highly on the use of discursive techniques.

The focus group participants noticed a range of discursive techniques that P3 had used. Most widely noted was his use of intensifiers (e.g. very, extremely, and amazing) for emphasis (FG1-1; FG2-3; FG3-4). However, the linguistic emphasis apparently did not equate with his flat delivery (FG2-3; FG3-3). Two other participants (FG2-1; FG2-2) favorably noted his use of intensifiers though, and in particular, the use of "considerably" as a means of amplifying the impact of the point being delivered. Three participants (FG1-1; FG1-2; FG2-5) highlighted his use of signposting, with one incorrectly adding that he was the only one of the three presenters to have utilized them (FG2-5). Two participants

(FG1-2; FG2-4) also responded favorably to P3's attempt at humor in the presentation. One participant (FG1-2) commended P3's use of bookending and another (FG1-1), his use of tripling. FG1-1 was impressed with the frequently used phrase, "you have to admit", and thought it added to the overall persuasiveness of the presentation. However, when P3 made attempts to use discursive techniques, in particular repetition or the stressing of certain words and contrasts, he often failed due to a lack of emotion in the delivery (FG2-2; FG3-2; FG3-3; FG3-5). One participant (FG2-3) suggested P3 should have asked more questions to be interactive, but another participant (FG2-4) then noted he had asked questions, but as his eye contact had been directed towards his computer and the slides on the screen, he had failed to generate any kind of interaction.

P3's delivery was perceived mostly in a negative manner and seems to have been the main factor undermining his persuasiveness. Primarily, P3's voice was widely criticized, for being too quiet (FG3-5), too boring (FG1-1; FG1-4), too monotonous (FG1-3; FG1-4; FG1-5), and unclear (FG1-1). The effect of this was that P3 came across as too serious (FG1-4) and lacking in confidence (FG-1-3; FG2-5; FG3-5). One participant felt that P3 became quieter than usual at certain key times and that his voice lacked any kind of variation (FG3-5). However, two participants remarked that while P3 had spoken slowly, this was not necessarily an issue for them (FG2-1; FG2-2). FG1-5 pointed out that P3's delivery was frequently plagued by "ums", as further proof of his uncertainty, while he also appeared to forget what he was saying in other instances (FG1-1; FG2-4; FG3-2). Even when P3 did attempt to inject some emphasis into the presentation by utilizing intensifiers such as "amazing", the flat delivery meant that the impact was lost and it came across as awkward or ineffective (FG2-3; FG3-3). Other participants commented on how nervous P3 appeared (FG1-1; FG1-4), and that this undermined attempts to be humorous (FG1-4) and interactive (FG1-1). P3 also exhibited almost no facial expressions (FG2-2). For eye contact, some participants noted that while P3 was not reading a script, he was often talking to the screen (FG2-5; FG3-2; FG3-3; FG3-4) and was guilty of relying on his PowerPoint slides (FG2-4). Finally, P3's gestures were seen as awkward and he

was frequently touching his face and fidgeting (FG2-4), while holding a stick in his hand for no apparent reason (FG2-4). As one participant (FG1-5) simply surmised, P3 "needs to improve his delivery to be more persuasive" (L295-297).

Responses concerning the content of the presentation appear to be inconclusive. Some participants commented that they thought the topic was good (FG1-2; FG2-5) and that this made it easy to understand the presentation (FG1-3). It was also stated that P3 had a clear objective or main point (FG2-1) and that this made the presentation more successful. Many participants (FG1-1; FG1-5; FG2-1; FG2-2; FG2-4; FG3-3) seemed to have been impressed with the supporting information, data and evidence provided. One participant stated that the specific evidence provided by P3 made it a more persuasive presentation than that of P2 (FG2-2). Conversely, there were also participants who thought the content was lacking statistical evidence (FG1-4; FG3-5) or needed more visual support (FG1-4). Several participants were also of the opinion that the argument was too one-sided (FG2-2) and the presenter would have been better off outlining a few countering points (FG1-3; FG2-3). One participant described the presentation as just informative and while the data presented was interesting, P3 could not sufficiently address the 'so what?' question – meaning it was not persuasive (FG3-1). FG3-4 felt the content and the message were obscured by a poor structure in which the information had not been connected well enough, while FG3-1 commented that the overall content appeared insufficient.

Opinions concerning the structure of the P3's presentation were also mixed. Comments made were that the presentation was well organized (FG1-1) and that the use of a guideline in the beginning meant that the overall structure was clear (FG2-2). On the other hand, the structure (FG3-2) and the message (FG3-4) were unclear for some. One further participant commented that the middle of the presentation was not good enough to keep that participant's attention (FG1-4).

There were a few other important comments categorized as miscellaneous. Primarily these were general comments about either the speaker or the presentation itself, such as "it was funny" (FG2-2, L244), the speaker was funny (FG2-1; FG3-3), the speaker looked like "a good guy" (FG3-3, L240), and the topic had been interesting (FG1-1). However, one participant was scathing and felt there were "no good points at all" (FG3-2, L253). A couple more participants said P3 looked unprepared (FG3-2) and should have practiced more (FG3-5). Finally, two participants (FG2-1; FG2-2) discussed how a combination of P2 and P3 would have been effective by combining the emotional and aggressive delivery of P2, with the more substantial content of P3.

P3's presentation appears to have been enhanced by relatively good content, and an interesting topic, that was supported by a range of data and evidence. However, it was undermined by a flat, unsure and slightly dull delivery, meaning his frequent use of discursive techniques ultimately proved ineffective.

3.5 ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

Phase 1 involved exploring how the focus group participants' defined 'persuasive', the persuasiveness ratings they gave to three oral presentations, and their rationale behind the scores. Through this we can address the research questions of this study and explore the audience's perspective on persuasive oral presentations and the persuasive techniques employed in them. The overall conclusion drawn from Phase 1 is that determining what contributes to or detracts from the persuasive impact of an oral presentation is a complicated matter, involving the intricate interplay of many variables. The most prominent example of this is the impact the presenter's delivery style had on the content and use of discursive techniques – something that will be explored in greater detail in Phase 2. Ultimately, a conclusive answer to what techniques determine the persuasiveness of an oral presentation from the audience's perspective has not emerged. However, through a process of grounded theorization, salient themes in the data have emerged that help address the research questions in this study. These themes were organized into three categories: general themes, specific themes, and absent themes, through a process of theoretical coding, also

known as creating a 'category of categories' (Saldaña, 2014). The general themes are overarching trends in the findings, with regard to the presentations in general and represent a step towards creating theory (Saldaña, 2014). The specific themes deal with findings on particular presentation aspects, such as discursive techniques, content or delivery. Finally, the absent themes are themes whose absence or infrequency in the focus group session discussions is equally as significant.

General themes

There are three general themes that emerged from Phase 1. General themes are defined as overall findings related to oral presentations and the key research questions in this study. The first general theme is that there was no unanimous agreement about the persuasiveness of the oral presentations or the techniques employed by the presenters. Each of the three presentations screened across the three focus group sessions received a vote for being the most persuasive, and the least persuasive. In addition, the focus group participants frequently disagreed over whether a particular persuasive technique or style had either enhanced or detracted from the overall persuasive impact of the presentation. A good example of this was the delivery style of P2. All the participants seemed to agree that the delivery had been aggressive and interactive, but while some viewed this as persuasive, others felt it had been too overbearing and had made the presenter less persuasive. A further example was P1's frequent use of the pausing technique, which was perceived as either being persuasive, or making the presenter look unsure.

The second general finding was that there were almost no significant distinctions between the Japanese participants (FG2 and FG3) and the non-Japanese participants (FG1). The only difference related to the definitions of 'persuasive' that the participants provided. The Japanese nationals placed more importance on garnering agreement from the audience, while the non-Japanese nationals focused more on the intent of the speaker, irrespective of the outcome. There were few discernable differences when it came to rating the

persuasiveness of the presentation videos, or when providing the rationale and discussing the particular techniques utilized by the presenters.

The third general finding was that the participants discussed the content and the delivery of each presentation more than the persuasive discursive techniques. For all three presentations, content generated the most comments and the most coded items in the focus group transcripts. For P1 and P3, delivery generated the second most comments and coded items. Discursive techniques were commented on slightly more than delivery only for P2's presentation.

Specific themes

There were specific themes that emerged from Phase 1 as well. Specific themes are defined as findings related to salient themes within the discursive techniques, content, and delivery categories. Firstly, while discursive techniques were noticed in all three presentations, their impact largely depended on the accompanying delivery and whether it suited the particular technique being utilized. Discursive techniques that were not delivered appropriately (e.g. the intensifiers used by P3 in a monotone voice) were frequently highlighted. In addition, comments regarding the discursive techniques tended to focus on the simpler techniques used, such as tripling, intensifiers, and inclusive language.

There were two specific themes related to the content category. Firstly, the comments about the presenters' content were usually holistic in nature, reflecting general observations about the overall content, and were often simply either positive or negative appraisals. Secondly, these appraisals were often based on how the presenters supported their message. In particular, the use of statistics and examples that participants found relevant to their lives, proved persuasive.

Finally, comments on the presenters' delivery styles seemed to reflect personal preferences for many participants. The prime example of this was P2's delivery. While the participants were all very much in agreement that P2's

delivery was enthusiastic, loud, and aggressive, they differed distinctly in whether they believed it had been persuasive or not.

Absent themes

There were several important findings in Phase 1, categorized as 'absent' themes, as their significance was due to their absence in the data. Firstly, discursive techniques were not nearly as prominent in the discussions as had been expected. My personal bias had led him to speculate that these techniques would feature significantly in the participants' responses. While the participants frequently highlighted the discursive techniques used by presenters, this usage did not always equate with the overall persuasiveness of the presentation.

A second absent theme was the presenter's language ability. Considering English was a second language for the presenters and for all but one of the fourteen focus group session participants, it is quite remarkable that out of the 256 coded items from the focus group sessions, only one dealt explicitly with language ability: FG3-4 (L59) stating that P1's "English level is…so-so". A few potential explanations can be offered for this finding. One is that the Japanese focus group participants' English was not of a high enough level to notice mistakes made by the presenters or to properly assess their English ability. This explanation is considered unlikely, as the focus group participants were almost all English majors and students who had studied abroad, and who spoke a higher level of English than most of the presenters in the videos. In addition, none of the non-Japanese participants commented on the English level of the presenters, despite also having substantially better English skills. Empathy could possibly explain the findings, as all the participants were either studying English or Japanese as a second language and were likely aware of their own shortcomings when required to deliver a presentation in a language other than their mother tongue. The other plausible explanation is that for the focus group participants in Phase 1, language ability simply did not affect the persuasiveness of the oral presentations.

The findings from Phase 1 provide partial answers to the research questions in this study (refer to Section 3.2.2). More specifically, the findings show that, firstly, there were divergent perspectives from members of the audience on persuasive oral presentations. While the participants provided similar definitions of 'persuasive', they provided differing scores regarding the persuasiveness of the presentations. When discussing their rationale and the techniques the presenters had used, the focus group session members seemed to view content and delivery as more important than persuasive discursive techniques for determining the persuasiveness of oral presentations. The participants were generally in agreement when assessing the presenter's content, persuaded more by strong supporting information, statistics and relevant examples, and by a clear message. Discursive techniques were frequently noticed, but they were only considered effective if the delivery style employed when verbalizing them had been suitable. Opinions and preferences for delivery styles differed amongst the participants. Finally, the presenters' language ability did not appear to be a factor in the persuasive process.

CHAPTER FOUR

PHASE 2: QUALITATIVE MULTIPLE-CASE STUDY

4.1 INTRODUCTION

Phase 1 of this study explored the audience's perception of persuasive techniques in oral presentations. The significant finding in Phase 1 was that the overall persuasive impact of each presentation was determined by a multitude of interrelated factors and persuasive techniques, with frequent disagreement amongst the focus group participants as to how these were perceived.

The objective for Phase 2 of this study was to explore the use of persuasive techniques in oral presentations from the perspective of the presenter. The focus was on examining how and why presenters utilized certain techniques. To accomplish this objective data were gathered from four participants (four case studies). Phase 2 explored each of the participants' preparations for two presentations, their presentations, and their reflections, on these presentations. In order to provide even richer findings and make the study more robust, data were also collected from members of the audience and from my notes. Due to the unique nature and objectives of Phase 2, and to a lack of a comparable existing study with an established framework of analysis to build from, a combination of appropriate qualitative tools were utilized in this phase and form the framework of analysis. This chapter details the methodology for Phase 2, while Chapter 5 presents the four case studies.

4.1.1 RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The key research questions for this study are: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation? In Phase 2, the focus is again on addressing these two questions and establishing the persuasive impact of the presentations (how persuasive the presentations are perceived to be), but this time, from the perspective of the presenter. In addition, there are sub-questions

that are organized into four stages with a core question for each stage. These questions deal with the participants' backgrounds and preparations for the presentations, the presentations, the perception of the presentations, and finally, changes that occurred in the participants' beliefs during the duration of the study. The sub-questions all ultimately assist in providing more robust answers to the two key research questions by addressing elements within them.

Research questions: Background and preparations

1. What impact does the participants' background have on their preparation for a persuasive oral presentation?

1.1a What have the presenters learnt previously about persuasive presentations?
1.1b How does this impact upon their choices and preparation for the two observed presentations?
1.2a How do presenters prepare for persuasive presentations?
1.2b What do they primarily focus on?
1.2c What time frames do they follow?
1.3a Which persuasive techniques do presenters choose when preparing a persuasive presentation?
1.3b What is their rationale for choosing these techniques?
1.4 Do presenters believe content, delivery, discursive techniques, or other areas are the most important for determining persuasiveness?

Research questions: The presentations

2. What persuasive techniques are intentionally drawn upon most by presenters when delivering a presentation?

2.1a What techniques are actually used by presenters?
2.1b When do they use these techniques in their presentations?
2.2 Does their delivery and usage of techniques correlate with their intent?
2.3 How do presenters deal with not being able to use visuals in the first presentation, and then being able to use them in the second presentation?

Research questions: Perception of the presentations

3. How are the participants' presentations perceived?

3.1 How do presenters perceive the effectiveness of the methods or techniques in their own presentations?

3.2a How persuasive was each presentation, and which presentations were more persuasive?

3.2b What is the audience's perception of the persuasive techniques that were used?

3.2c Are there differences between what the audience and the presenter noticed about the same presentation?

3.3 What techniques are seen as effective in making presentations more persuasive?

3.4 Are there general areas (content, delivery, discursive techniques, or others), which tend to be seen as more important for determining persuasiveness?

3.5 Is the presenter's English language ability a factor in enhancing or undermining the persuasive impact of a presentation?

Research questions: Reflection and change

4. Do the participants change their views of persuasive techniques in oral presentations over the duration of the study?

4.1a What changes or developments (if any) are there in the presenters' beliefs, regarding persuasive techniques, over the duration of preparing, delivering and reflecting on their two presentations?

4.1b What is the rationale behind these changes or developments?

These research questions are addressed in the description of each case study, by the six propositions shaping the analysis of each case study, and in the final overall analysis of this thesis.

4.1.2 CONTEXT

Contextualization (as defined by Duff, 2008) is important for all forms of qualitative research and researchers must endeavor to clearly establish the theoretical context of the research, the methodological context, and the actual situation in which the research is embedded (Duff, 2008). The theoretical, methodological, and situational contexts for Phase 2 are the same as in Phase 1. The participants in Phase 2 are different from those involved in Phase 1, but they were drawn from the same university English presentation course (a year after Phase 1 was conducted). I was once again also the instructor in the course from which the participants were drawn. The context can be described as a naturalistic observation setting (as defined by Bazeley, 2013) and as a natural context (as defined by Duff, 2008) in that the study was observing university oral presentations, delivered in a university setting, in which real university students were delivering real oral presentations – adding to the ecological validity (Duff, 2008) of the study.

4.1.3 POSITIONALITY AND REFLEXIVITY

Before detailing the methodology and exploring the case studies, it is necessary to demonstrate reflexivity by examining my own background, personal views, and potential biases – the 'positionality' of the researcher. According to Davies (1999, p. 4), 'reflexivity' can be defined as, "turning back on oneself, a process of self-reference. In the context of social research, reflexivity at its most immediately obvious level refers to the way in which the products of research are affected by the personnel doing research". Being aware of one's positionality and demonstrating reflexivity towards this positionality is particularly important in qualitative research (Trent & Cho, 2014) and is particularly poignant in Phase 2 of this study.

Simons (2009) explains that for case study participants, we "need to be clear how our values and judgments affect our portrayal of them. But we also need to examine how the specific context and topic of the research shapes the story we come to tell" (p. 81). Duff (2014) further notes, how the researcher is now often referred to as a research instrument. As such, it is important to be

aware and clear about the researcher's involvement in any study and to actively examine the relationship between the researcher and the data. According to Simons (2009, p. 81), the underlying rationale for reflecting on "the 'self' in case study research is that you are an inescapable part of the situation you are studying. You are the main instrument of data gathering; it is you who observes, interviews, interacts with people in the field". As such, it is now becoming more common in case study research to develop reciprocity with participants and to conduct research "with" participants, instead of "on" them, so that data are co-constructed (Duff, 2014). Pillow (2003, pp. 178) further elaborates on reflexivity and explains that it "is often understood as involving an ongoing self-awareness during the research process which aids in making visible the practice and construction of knowledge within research in order to produce more accurate analyses of our research." Pillow (2003) further adds that reflexivity is an integral part of interpretive qualitative research and serves to legitimize, validate and even question the practices and representations of researchers. To accomplish this, the researcher needs to be critically conscious of how their position, self-location and interests influence all the stages of the research (Pillow, 2003). Bignold and Su (2013, p. 403) also add, "It is not sufficient for the researcher to recognize his/her bias and identity; a credible researcher will remind readers of this and that the narrative account has been created by him/her and is not a direct observation, but a narration." The objective for researchers then, is to demonstrate rigorous reflexivity in order to produce better research, which is less distorted by the researcher (Hertz, 1997).

To clearly demonstrate reflexivity towards my own positionality, this study adopts strategies outlined by Simons (2009). The relevant strategies in her list have been modified to more accurately reflect the context of this study and are documented here and referred to throughout this dissertation. Simons (2009) believes that researchers should list the values that have influenced their choice of topic and then later compare these values with what has emerged from the study. In addition, this should be supplemented with notes about the emotional investment the researcher has with the topic and the study, along with a description of any particular incident that may have triggered an interest in the

subject or topic. Hypotheses that were formed before the research should be noted and compared with findings from the study. Finally, observations and reactions to/by people involved during the study should be accounted for in addition to also noting any unexpected occurrences during the course of the study that may have shaped it. A summary of my relevant background prior to commencement of the study is described in this section, and important events that occurred during the study are duly noted at the relevant time during description of the methodology, data gathering procedures, findings, and analysis. Finally, my position and affect on the study is discussed again during the final analysis, in order to better satisfy the claim of being reflexive research.

There are two important points to consider regarding my relevant background. Firstly, it can be said that I have a strong familiarity with Japanese culture, having taught at the university level in Japan for nine years prior to commencing the study. My Japanese language ability can be categorized as intermediate level (having passed the third of five levels in the Japanese language proficiency test – JLPT N3). This background experience and familiarity with Japan, Japanese culture, language and Japanese university students fostered a more emic perspective to better understand the participants' responses and contexts.

The second key point to consider is my previous experience teaching oral presentation skills classes. This involved eight years of developing, implementing and teaching oral presentation skills classes to Japanese university students. Of particular importance was an informal needs analysis I had carried out six years prior to this study, which indicated that learning about delivery skills and discursive techniques should supersede other demands/ focuses for the presentation skills course. The premise behind this conclusion was that students registering for the presentation skills course had already experienced delivering English oral presentations in various other courses throughout their first year of studies. The focus for the presentations in their first year of studies was invariably on using grammatically correct English (language), and on demonstrating an understanding of a particular topic (content). English language

majors (who were the participants in Phase 2 of this study) had seldom learnt about delivery skills or specific discursive techniques by the time they reached their third or fourth year of study. The exception was an 8-week (meeting once a week) workshop course I had taught to students in their second year of studies, which introduced various discursive techniques and delivery skills utilized by famous speakers throughout history. Therefore, the presentation skills course in which the participants for Phase 2 were drawn from was largely designed and developed to address a shortcoming in the students' learning experiences and to teach them about discursive techniques and delivery skills.

Simons (2009) recommends that to show reflexivity towards their positionality in a study, researchers list the values that influenced their choice of topic. It is fair to say that one of my values was the inclination to view delivery and discursive techniques as central factors in determining the persuasiveness of oral presentations. To overcome this potential bias, a range of research questions were prepared that involved examining factors not related to delivery skills or discursive techniques. The views of the participants and the audience were also emphasized in the research design to minimize the effects of my possible bias being the dominant voice. However, it is still possible that the participants recognized this potential bias and were influenced by it. Throughout this study, continued reference is made regarding this point to further demonstrate reflexivity, and to adhere to Simons (2009) recommended strategies for strengthening and producing better research.

4.2 METHODOLOGY – PHASE 2

The flexibility of a design that can explore the rationale, beliefs and actions of the presenters in a richer manner was the impetus for adopting case study methodology for the second phase of this study, following Hancock and Algozzine's (2017, p. 37) advice that "One's selection of a particular research design is determined by how well it allows full investigation of a specific research question". In addition, "Qualitative case study methodology provides tools for researchers to study complex phenomena within their contexts" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 544). Case study became widely used in the UK and USA in the

1960s to research education (Simons, 2009), but specific case study methodology was rarely discussed until the 1990s (Duff, 2008). Since then, case study has been referred to as a method, a strategy, and an approach (Simons, 2009). It has also been defined as a type of research, an analysis, a method, and an outcome (Duff, 2008). Hancock and Algozzine (2017, p. 91) define case study research as "a detailed analysis of a person or group" and Stake (1995, p. xi) defines case study as "the study of the particularity and complexity of a single case, coming to understand its activity within important circumstances." Richards (2003) explains that the term 'case study' means different things to different researchers and this flexibility and openness has allowed researchers from a wide range of fields in the humanities to explore a rich array of variables and phenomena. The primary purpose however, "for undertaking a case study is to explore the particularity, the uniqueness, of the single case" (Simons, 2009, p .1), although reference is always made to other cases. Yin (2014) adds that the primary reason for conducting case studies is to answer the "how" and "why" questions – a key focus of this study.

Case studies have played an important role in applied linguistics research, in particular in the SLA subfield, resulting in many of the prevailing models and hypotheses currently favored in SLA (Duff, 2008). Case studies have particularly been utilized in SLA studies to investigate the potential development of language skills, often in developmental research (Brown & Rogers, 2002). As Duff (2008, p. 35) succinctly summarizes, the 'case' in applied linguistics is usually "the individual language learner, teacher, speaker, or writer. The study of individuals and their attributes, knowledge, development, and performance has always been a very important component of applied linguistics research, particularly in SLA." Case studies also often include an element of developmental research within their parameters, in that they are looking at the potential development of language skills (Brown & Rodgers, 2002). According to Yin (2014), case studies can be exploratory, descriptive, and explanatory. Exploring, describing and explaining the experiences of the four participants is the first objective of Phase 2 to obtain a better understanding of how and why persuasive techniques were used in their oral presentations.

Phase 2 of this study follows what is known as a qualitative multiple-case study design and can be defined as case study research (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Duff, 2008; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Merriam, 1998; Stake, 1995; Yin, 2014). This is distinct from a holistic case study (Baxter & Jack, 2008) in that the participants' background and different presentations means that the context differs from case to case. The rationale for adopting this type of design instead of a single case-study design was that multiple-case study designs are generally regarded as more robust (Yin, 2014), despite also requiring more extensive resources and time commitments from the researcher. This study adopted Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014)'s definition of case, in that "case is a phenomenon of some sort occurring in a bounded context" (p. 28). In this study there are four individual participants representing four separate cases. These four different participants (cases) offer the opportunity to explore and detail a wider range of findings, to more richly address the research questions outlined in Section 4.1.1. Adhering to Yin's (2014) advice, this study also considers the four case studies as multiple experiments, following a replication design. The theoretical framework in this study is based on a combination of techniques, theories, and models in related research fields, which have been adapted to best address the research questions.

Following recent trends in case study research (Duff, 2014), the case studies in Phase 2 of this study focus more on the discursive and personal aspects of the participants' experiences and views, without delving extensively into a detailed linguistic description. This kind of research design allows the focus to be placed on exploring how and why presenters utilized certain persuasive techniques, dovetailing with Phase 1's focus on how these techniques were perceived by focus group members. Although Duff (2014) notes that most recent case study research has typically examined the participants' changing identities or has focused on communities of language learners, this study will focus more on the individual's experiences, beliefs, and potentially changing perceptions of persuasive presentations and persuasive techniques. The research is interpretive in nature and is social-constructivist (as defined by Duff, 2014), in that it employs the insights and perspectives of the case study subjects

(their emic perspective), along with their peers' perspectives and the instructor's perspective (the etic perspective), to help better understand the knowledge, thoughts and actions of the participants. The data were collected concurrently and later researched sequentially. The case studies will be presented in a descriptive and exploratory manner, followed by an explanatory analysis of the whole study.

4.2.1 SELECTION AND BOUNDING OF THE CASES

Establishing and laying out the selection procedures for the case studies is crucial for any study (Duff, 2008), and multiple-case studies need to be clear about the choices and rationale behind choosing the specific cases (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). This section provides a transparent explanation of the procedures and decisions made in selecting the four case study participants – a process often known as 'bounding the cases' (Yin, 2014).

The first step in the selection process was deciding that the participants would be drawn exclusively from a course I taught at a private university in Japan. The central objective of this course is to teach students presentation skills and it therefore represented a good opportunity to collect meaningful data. As the course is an elective course it can be assumed that most of the students registering for this course every year are interested in learning how to present, and are thereby more likely to be interested in this kind of a study. By drawing participants from this course, it meant that all the potential participants were university students, similarly aged, and Japanese. The recruitment process at this stage can be described as purposeful in nature (Duff, 2008) or stratified purposeful (Creswell, 2013), in that only students registered in the class – and actively engaged in delivering and watching presentations – were eligible to participate in the study. The number of students enrolled in the course for the semester in which the research was carried out was 23 and all of them were eligible to participate. As the class is restricted by the university to juniors and seniors, all the students were 20 years old or above and no minors were involved in the study. Female students greatly outnumbered males (16-7).

The second step in the selection process was to recruit interested candidates to participate in the study. This initially involved holding an explanation session at the end of a class early in the semester, for the 21 students who had attended class that day and who were interested in attending the session (all 21 did). The explanation session lasted approximately 10 minutes and provided an overview of the research being conducted and what would be required of potential participants. It was stressed that participation was completely voluntary and that any data collected would not be analyzed until after the semester had concluded, to prevent any conflict of interest with the grading process. As only candidates who were interested and willing to volunteer were accepted, this selection strategy represented a sampling approach (Duff, 2008; Farroki & Mahmoudi-Hamidabad, 2012).

A serendipitous approach was adopted for sampling and recruiting participants for case studies. Those who were interested in participating as case studies were given 24 hours to sign an Expression of Interest form and post it in my university mailbox. Interested candidates were then invited to a more detailed explanation session and given the opportunity to either consent or withdraw, by again posting consent forms in the designated mailbox. Eight candidates expressed an interest. It was anticipated that attrition would potentially eliminate one or two participants later on, so it was therefore thought prudent to have extra participants from which to draw upon in the final analysis. As a result, data from all eight participants were collected and analyzed. In fact though, none of the eight participants withdrew during the research period.

The third step in the selection process involved selecting four final case study participants. The guiding principle in this process was maximum diversity, representing maximum variation sampling (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Variables such as gender, English proficiency, prior experience in courses I had taught, persuasive ratings from peers, and beliefs about how to construct a persuasive oral presentation and whether or not these beliefs fluctuated over the duration of the study, were used to distinguish the selected four participants from the participants not included in the study. As such, the sampling procedures

can be described as purposive and strategic (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Data from the four excluded participants were then discarded. Set out below in Table 4.1, are the selected case study participants along with their pseudonyms and the key variables that were influential in the selection process.

Table 4.1.

Participants and Selection Factors

Participants (Pseudonym)	Gender	Factors
Daisuke	Male	-No previous experience in my classes -High ratings for persuasiveness -Significantly changed his stance on persuasiveness over the duration of the study, shifting priority from content to delivery and discursive techniques -Moderately high English proficiency
Maki	Female	-Had limited experience in my classes -Exhibited a sharp decline in persuasiveness ratings, in the second presentation -Consistently believed content was the key factor determining persuasiveness throughout the study -Relatively weak English proficiency
Rena	Female	-Had considerable experience in my classes -Consistently average persuasiveness ratings -Attempted to modify her presenting approach in the second presentation -Very fluent English speaker with experience living abroad
Shin	Male	-Had considerable experience in my classes -High ratings for persuasiveness

	-Consistently believed that delivery and discursive techniques determined persuasiveness -Very fluent English speaker with experience living abroad

These four participants include two males and two females. They also include two highly proficient speakers who were in the advanced English speaking class (Rena and Shin), while the other two participants (Daisuke and Maki) were not as proficient. Rena and Shin had also been instructed previously over several years in my classes, whereas Daisuke had never taken one of my courses, and Maki had only taken one. In addition, Maki and Shin both remained consistent throughout the study, in terms of their beliefs about the key factor for making a presentation persuasive, while Daisuke and Rena both altered their views. Furthermore, Daisuke and Shin were both rated as highly persuasive by their peers, in direct contrast to Maki and Rena. While not strictly a two-tail design, as defined by Yin (2014), these four participants represented moderate extremes, in terms of the variables above, and by focusing on these four participants, comparisons could be made, along the lines of a 2x2 research design.

4.2.2 DESCRIPTION OF THE DATA COLLECTION TOOLS

The research design of this study called for the collection of multiple sources of data from each participant, allowing for triangulation and a richer analysis of each case study (Baxter & Jack, 208; Yin, 2014). The data collection tools were: diaries, presentation videos, self-reflection reports, peer evaluation forms, and interviews. The data were all collected in English, so it is acknowledged that there is the possibility language proficiency may have limited the participants' responses. Nevertheless, English was the language the participants and I had conversed in prior to the study (orally and in written form), so it was felt this represented a better choice than Japanese, where I would be far more limited in my range of questions and comprehension of the participant responses. The participants' relatively high English proficiency level meant they were for the most part comfortable in English. This section describes

how these five data collection tools in Phase 2 were designed, embedded in each case study, and how they were utilized.

4.2.2.1 DIARIES

Diary studies can be first-person case study research (Bailey, 1991) and by themselves can represent a case study (Duff, 2008). However, they are also frequently employed as a data collection tool as part of a larger study. As Bailey (1991) explains, diaries are often the data, and when these data are analyzed, we can call it a diary study. The use of diaries for language teaching and learning studies is a relatively new concept dating back to 1983 (McKay, 2009), or even to the late 1970s (Duff, 2008). A few notable examples are Schumann and Schumann (1977) keeping diaries of language learning experiences, and Schmidt and Frota (1986) famously documenting an attempt to learn Portuguese. Diaries have also been utilized in narrative inquiry (Barkuizen, et al., 2014) and by action researchers (Burns, 2010). Duff (2008) and Ellis (2008) both provide additional accounts of the wide-ranging use of diaries in research. Initially, diaries were often written and analyzed by the same person – the researcher, in what Bailey (1991) called first person case studies. Recently however, there has been an increase in the study of diaries by 'an outside person' (McKay, 2009), or 'an independent researcher' (Bailey, 1991). According to McKay (2009) diaries offer researchers rare insight into the learning process and can help shed light on factors and issues not foreseen by the researcher. McKay (2009) also states that diaries are low-tech and very accessible, and that "when used with other sources of data diaries can provide a vehicle for data triangulation" (p. 230). As with any type of data collection tool, there are inherent problems with using diaries in research, as Bailey (1991) outlines, such as, sampling limitations, data collection issues (biases in self-reporting and retrospective writing time issues), the quality and breadth of entries, and data analysis concerns.

The diaries in this study (refer to Appendix B.1 and B.2 for a list of prompts and questions) followed a semi-structured approach, and in each of the ten days preceding the presentations the participants responded to approximately four questions or prompts. This form of a diary is also sometimes

known as a bound journal (Brown, 2014). As the diaries used an experimental design, yielded qualitative data, and were then analyzed interpretively, they can be said to be exploratory-interpretive (Grotjahn in Bailey, 1991). Aside from having to enter specific information early in the first diary, the participants were primarily asked to respond to open-ended questions and prompts. Questions for the first few days in the first diary sought to explore the participant's background in English language learning and what they had learnt previously, in terms of presentation skills. Later in the diary, the focus of the questions shifted towards the participant's view of persuasive oral presentations. In the last few days leading up to the presentation day, the questions examined the presentation preparations in greater detail, with a particular emphasis on exploring how the participants were planning to deliver a persuasive presentation. Data on the participant's persuasive intent were particularly important because it was later analyzed alongside the actual presentation data, the self-reflection reports, the peer evaluation forms, and the interview transcripts. The intent to persuade, the actual presentation, and the persuasive impact of the presentations are three central elements being examined in this research project.

All of the participants kept electronic diaries. Brown (2014) advises that having participants use electronic diaries is the most efficient and easiest way to gather data, and as McKay (2009, p. 231) also points out, electronic versions of diaries "make data analysis much easier" and save the researcher a great deal of time. Furthermore, handwritten diaries can sometimes be difficult to read. It was also felt that hard copies of the diaries, with limited space between question prompts, would mean the participants might either feel obligated to fill the space or to simply stop writing when the space had been filled. The electronic version offered participants the opportunity to write as much or as little as they desired, and it was therefore hoped their responses would more accurately reflect their experiences and opinions.

For both presentations, the diaries (a Microsoft word document) were emailed to the participants 13 days before the presentation day. As the choices

for the presentation topics were distributed two weeks in advance of the presentation date, this meant the participants received the diary the day after the topic choices, and possibly, before they had chosen a topic to present on. Each participant was asked to confirm they had received the diary, had been able to open the word document, and had read and understood the instructions contained within the diary.

Each participant emailed the completed diary to me, either the night before the presentation, or the morning of the presentation day (but always before presenting). There were no problems with computers or lost emails and a full set of data was successfully collected and stored for later use, for both sets of presentations.

4.2.2.2 PRESENTATION VIDEOS

The second data collection tool to be utilized was video. Despite being complicated to process and difficult to analyze, video recordings can provide a wealth of important data (Silverman, 2013) and are frequently used in qualitative inquiry (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), in a range of social science fields (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010). Although video recordings have certain limitations, they can be a very useful part of the greater analysis (Mason, 2002). According to Simons (2009, p. 61), video's "prime virtue is that it can take us beyond the spoken word and the researcher's observations of situations (which are open to attribution of motives and dominance of the researcher's constructs) to provide an 'objective' record." Ellis (2008) lists three advantages to using video recordings: data reflect rich consequential behavior; rich contextual information is available; and a detailed analysis of a full range of interactional facets of utterances in relation to their sequential context, is possible. Bazeley (2013) further notes how most recent qualitative software programs now allow for the parallel recording of transcriptions and non-verbal cues, further enriching the data. Brown and Rogers (2002), Simons (2009), and Richards (2003), note how video recordings are helpful for capturing many of the non-verbal cues of meaning.

There are several disadvantages to using video recordings to collect data though, as Ellis (2008) points out: large amounts of data may be needed; recording may interfere with the participants normal behavior; and it can be difficult to control for certain variables distinguishing participants from each other. In addition to this, Brown (2014) points out that transforming data from an audio-visual form into a form that can be more readily displayed and analyzed (text) is one of the most time-consuming activities in qualitative research. Mason (2002) also discusses how converting visual data into textual data can be fraught with issues, but Miles, Huberman and Saldaña (2014) state that the analysis and interpretation of visual data "is more of a holistic venture than a systematic one…and might rely on more traditional content-analytic methods such as counts and categories for nuanced analysis" (P. 98). The analysis section of this study will adhere more to a content-analytical approach when exploring data from the oral presentation video recordings.

As part of their course requirements, all the participants were videoed delivering individual oral presentations in English. The presentations were filmed from the front row of the audience, with one hand-held camera, by another classmate, following Silverman's (2013) recommendation to 'keep it simple' when filming video recordings. Instructions for the students filming were to focus on the speaker and any visuals they used. They were also instructed to be as unobtrusive as possible, to try and negate one of the biggest drawbacks of using video cameras for research purposes – the risk of influencing participants' behavior, due to what is known as the observer's paradox (Richards, 2003). However, as the participants were delivering oral presentations and were expecting to be observed by an audience, the observer's paradox is considered less of a problem in this study.

After the two sets of presentations had all been delivered, the video clips were stored on an external hard drive. Each clip was distributed to each individual student – in digital form - to reflect on privately (see the Self-reflection report description). These procedures were repeated for the second presentations. The video recordings allowed me to transcribe the oral

presentations at a later date and they also captured many of the visual elements that an audio recording could not. Combined with the more subjective interpretive data gathered from the other collection tools, the descriptive data generated from these video recordings allowed me to make stronger claims about what the presenters had actually done.

One further point to note is that the video recordings were supplemented with my field notes, as recommended by Mason (2002). These field notes encompassed my evaluation notes made while watching the presentations live. I used the same evaluation form that the presenters' peers used (see Appendix B.5 and B.6) to record notes during the presentation. Additional observations and ideas were noted in a small notebook while watching the videos subsequently in my private office. The notes were elaborations on evaluations made of the presentations, notes regarding something I felt was important to investigate further, or ideas about possible answers to the research questions in this study. These notes can be categorized as either descriptive notes or reflective notes, as described by Creswell (2013). Comments from these field notes are used to supplement and complement data and findings from the video recordings wherever appropriate.

4.2.2.3 SELF-REFLECTION REPORTS

The third data collection tool employed was the self-reflection report (henceforth known as SR). Refer to Appendix B.7 and B.8 for a list of questions and prompts used on both SRs. Although the terms 'self-reflection' and 'self-assessment' frequently overlap, 'self-reflection' report will be used in this study, to more accurately capture the essence of what the participants were required to do. Self-assessment is taken to mean evaluating and assigning a grade or score, while self-reflection encompasses these tasks, but also includes a wider degree of self-observations, in a more open and more holistic manner.

Holec (1985) lists the many advantages that self-assessment can offer learners, and Cram (1995) explains how self-assessment enables learners to take more control over the learning process. Self-assessment is important for building

autonomous learning skills, which Kessler (2009) notes is important for SLA, and for strengthening the learning process (Benson, 2001). Learning how to reflect on one's learning has been described as a skill in itself (Granville & Dison, 2005), necessitating the need for teachers to provide students with initial guidance (Knutson, 2003). The literature on self-assessment is primarily composed of studies on students' assessment of their academic writing and largely devoid of reference to studies on oral presentations. Studies that have investigated self-reflection and self-assessment tasks for oral presentations have predominantly focused on analyzing the correlation between the learners' views/scores and that of their peers or instructors (Campbell et al., 2001).

Critics of self-assessment and reflection tasks note that student scores can differ widely from teacher scores (Patri, 2002), and holistic scores can also differ significantly from itemized assessments (Guest, 2013). Even within a self-reflection task, Miles (2014) found that presenters' holistic comments and numerical scores often did not correspond. However, Campbell et al., (2001) surmises that despite problems with reliability, self-assessment and reflection still serves a valuable role and provides students with important insights into their own learning processes.

The SRs were distributed to each student (not only the participants) along with the presentation video clips. The students were instructed to fill out the SR while/after watching their videos at home. The SRs were part of the course homework requirements and were due the following class. Upon collection of these SRs in the next class, they were holistically assessed for effort, English accuracy and relevance to the course goals. Copies were made of the case study participants' SRs, before the original SRs were returned to the respective students in the following class. For the participants in this study, digital versions of the SRs were then created and stored electronically for analysis at a later date. The same process was repeated for the second presentation, but all the students had to submit the final SR to my mailbox within five days of delivering the second presentation as the second presentation was delivered in the final class.

The second SRs were not returned to students, unless they specifically requested them.

4.2.2.4 PEER EVALUATION FORMS

The fourth data collection tool to be utilized in Phase 2 was the peer evaluation form (henceforth referred to as PEF). For a list of questions and prompts, please refer to Appendix B.5 and B.6. The term 'evaluation' has been preferred to 'assessment' in this study because of its more encompassing definition (see discussion on SRs). Peer evaluation has been shown to be an important part of the learning process (Auster & Wylie, 2006), particularly in SLA and EFL contexts (Lundstrom & Baker, 2009), and predominantly in writing classes (Campbell et al., 2001; Lundstrom & Baker, 2009). As with research on self-assessment and self-reflection, the majority of research in the literature on peer evaluation has dealt with examining reliability and validity, typically by measuring the accuracy and the relationship between the scores assigned by students and instructors. Patri (2002) found that with proper training, peer assessment on oral presentations was more comparable to instructor assessment, unlike self-assessment. Another study by Shimura (2006) found that ratings for eye contact and gestures correlated most strongly between peers and instructors, whereas other presentation evaluation criteria differed more substantially, often depending on the English level of the peers.

Topping (2013) categorized peer assessment into two types: formative and summative (terms widely used in testing literature – see Black & Wiliam, 1998). Formative usually involves holistic assessments and evaluations and is often ongoing, with more general responses. Summative assessment or evaluation typically includes numerical or graded ratings, for either a list of items or for one complete assignment, and is often conducted at the end of a unit of instruction. The PEFs in this study were largely formative. Members of the audience were required to respond to open-ended prompts regarding factors or techniques they had noticed and whether or not these had either enhanced or detracted from the overall persuasiveness of the presentation. They were also required to comment on how the presenter could improve their presenting skills

for subsequent presentations. They were then required to assign a numerical score, regarding the overall level of persuasiveness of the presentation, representing summative assessment. This was done using a Likert-scale evaluation out of five, with the higher score representing a more persuasive presentation. An explanation as to what each numerical score represented was given to all the students prior to the presentations, and was modified from a 'degrees of persuasion' rating system used by Lucas (2015).

The PEFs used in this study serve to complement and triangulate the presenters' views (SRs) by providing a second perspective. The PEFs were distributed to the audience members at the beginning of the class, shortly before the first set of presentations were delivered. All of the questions on the form were then briefly explained. Following the conclusion of each presentation, the presenter sat at the opposite end of the classroom so that their proximity would not influence their peers. The PEFs were completed anonymously and then collected by a designated group leader and handed directly to me. Upon conclusion of the class all the comments on the PEFS for each presenter were collated together in digital form and were distributed to the respective presenters in the next class as a form of feedback, along with my feedback and a breakdown of their grade for the presentation. Only digital copies of the PEFs on each participant in this study were kept for research purposes.

The process for distributing, collecting and returning the PEFs was largely the same for the second presentation. However, instead of presenting in smaller groups in the same room, the students were randomly divided into two groups and presented in two adjacent rooms. Therefore, there was only one presenter in each room at a time. The presentations were delivered concurrently and all the participants in this study presented in the same room, where I viewed them live. After presenting, the speaker remained at the front of the room until everyone had finished the PEFs and had placed them face down on a collection desk at the side of the room. Once again, the responses were collated and a digital compilation created. Feedback was made available to those students who requested it by email.

4.2.2.5 INTERVIEWS

The final data collection tool to be utilized in Phase 2 of this study was the interview. 'Interview' has been defined as a specific conversation for the purpose of eliciting facts or statements from participants (Hancock & Algozzine, 2017), and is frequently used in applied linguistics (Talmy, 2011). Interviews have been used as a tool by qualitative researchers since the 1980s (Kvale, 2006), and help researchers capture and explore various qualities and attributes of phenomena (Nunan & Bailey, 2009). Interviews are used as a method in applied linguistics (Duff, 2008; Talmy & Richards, 2011) to explore a wide range of phenomena, and are frequently used in case studies (Duff, 2008), often as one of the most important sources of evidence (Yin, 2014). For applied linguistics, interviews are usually referred to as 'a research instrument', or as 'a social practice' (Talmy, 2011). For this study, they are simply seen as a research instrument. Duff (2014) documents how early case studies often used interviews to focus on actual linguistic or textual features of the discourse, in contrast to the more recent case studies, which often focus on content or thematic analysis. As Simons (2009, p. 43) explains, "interviews enable me to get to the core issues in the case more quickly and in greater depth, to probe motivations, to ask follow-up questions and to facilitate individuals telling their stories". Richards (2009, p. 183) describes interviews as "a data collection method that offers different ways of exploring people's experience and views" and Yin (2014, p. 239) defines an interview as, "the mode of data collection involving verbal information from a case study participant; the interview is usually conversational in nature and guided by the researcher's agenda".

Interviewing can be problematic for researchers though. It demands careful planning of the context, the relationship between the interviewer and interviewee, the sequence of questions, the potential avenues to further explore, and the experience to know when you are collecting data or generating data (Mason, 2002). According to Yin (2014), the key is for the researcher to follow his or her own line of inquiry, but to do so in an unbiased manner. Although an advocator of interviewing, Yin (2014) cautions that interviewees' responses can be biased, subject to poor recall or even poor articulation, necessitating

corroboration with other sources of data. To address these concerns, a careful interview design was created, and to the extent possible, the interview data are triangulated with other data.

Interviews with the participants in this study were conducted in the week following the delivery of the presentations. Because the questions posed during the interviews dealt with past and present learning experiences, they can be called 'concurrent interviews' (Barkhuizen et al., 2014). Each interview was conducted on a one-on-one basis, as is most common in applied linguistics and case studies (Duff, 2008), and in a private office. Each participant was interviewed twice. The interviews were scheduled for approximately 25 minutes, but in fact, ranged from 21-29 minutes. The interviews followed a semi-structured approach (as defined by Duff, 2008; Richards, 2003, 2009) and each participant was asked the same set of predetermined 'base questions' (often referred to as 'big questions' or central questions), in the same order. See Appendix B.3 and B.4 for a complete list of base questions. These base questions were drawn from what is traditionally known as either 'an interview guide' (Barkhuizen et al., 2014; Hancock & Algozzine, 2017; Kvale & Brinkmann, 2009), a 'research protocol' (Silvermann, 2013), or an 'interview schedule' (Brown & Rogers, 2002). Depending on the responses, these base questions were followed by what Simons (2009) calls 'simple probes', and follow-up questions, such as, 'why?', or 'can you give me an example?'. As Simons (2009, p. 48) states, "When you are aspiring to engage participants in analyzing their own practices… Your role is to facilitate reflection on their practice". Richards (2003, p. 64) concurs by noting that the aim of a good interview "is not merely to accumulate information, but to deepen understanding". The use of follow-up questions and simple probes helped to achieve these objectives.

All the interviews were recorded. Making audio recordings has a number of advantages (Simons, 2009), such as convenience, accuracy, and the ability to repeatedly analyze the complete set of data, especially if the recordings are digital (Duff, 2008). Yin (2014) believes that audio recordings make for a more accurate rendition of the interview than taking notes and allow the interviewer

to listen more carefully to the participants' responses instead of taking notes, which is important considering Richards (2009) calls 'the art of listening', the key to any successful interview. Each of the interviews was stored in digital form (mp3).

At the beginning of each interview, two audio recorders (one as backup) were placed on the table between the interviewee and myself, and then a brief explanation was given as to why this was being done. Once consent had been obtained, the recorders were switched on.

The interview then began in earnest, adhering to Simons (2009) recommendation, with a brief overview of the interview and the study (interview protocol), and an outline of the forthcoming questions. Simons (2009) advocates skipping over 'small talk' at the beginning of an interview, as it simply delays participation and can build more anxiety in the participants. This potential anxiety is important to consider, as for all of the participants in this study, these were the first research interviews they had ever taken part in. Kvale and Brinkmann (2009) also caution about a power asymmetry between the interviewer and the interviewee, which in this study involved a teacher-student distinction, and that this kind of relationship can lead to anxiety amongst the participants, making it problematic to collect the best data. However, as the participants knew me to at least some degree and had been to my office (the interview setting) on several occasions previously, building rapport through small talk at the beginning of an interview was deemed less necessary.

The questioning stages followed the same set of base questions, in the same order, for all the interviews, to facilitate subsequent comparisons between participants. The initial set of questions in the first interviews dealt with the participants' background, and the second set, with their preparations for the first presentation. The third set of questions focused on the participant's perception of their own presentation, before the final set of questions initiated a discussion on their peers' presentations. For the second interview, the same stages of questioning were followed, but with the background questions replaced by

questions examining any potential differences in the participant's attitude or approaches, for the second presentation. The probes and follow-up questions posed after the base questions, tended to be similar across the interviews, but varied from time-to-time, depending on the responses received. For particularly interesting responses, a digression from the script of questions was explored, to further examine potentially useful information, before returning to the set of base questions.

At the end of the interviews many of the participants remained in my office to discuss other academic matters unrelated to the study. The interview was officially concluded, and the recordings were stopped. At the end of the second interview, the participants were paid for their participation in the study and signed a form declaring they had been paid. This represented the end of the data collection period for each participant. No stimulated recall through playback of the presentation videos or use of written data (Diaries, PEFs, or SRs) was possible as the data were not processed or analyzed until after the second interviews had been completed.

Finally, to summarize, Table 4.2 provides a timeline overview of when the tools were utilized.

Table 4.2.

Data Collection Tool Timeline

Pre-presentation 1	Diaries				
Presentation 1		Videos	PEFS		
Post-presentation 1				SRs	Interviews
Pre-presentation 2	Diaries				
Presentation 2		Videos	PEFs		
Post-presentation 2				SRs	Interviews

4.2.3 PILOTING THE TOOLS AND PROCEDURES

Before the official data collection period began, there was an opportunity to pilot some of the procedures and data collection tools, in the initial course presentations (students presented three times during the semester and data were only collected on the final two presentations – hereafter referred to as the "first" and "second" presentations in this study). The interviews and the diaries were not part of this trial, but the other three tools (self-reflection reports, peer evaluation forms, and the presentation videos) were used as part of the regular coursework assignments. Piloting of these tools helped provide me with valuable insights and also served to familiarize the students and participants with the processes and the requirements they would have to fulfill in the subsequent presentations, both as presenters and as members of the audience. It was also a test of the equipment (video cameras), which can frequently be problematic for researchers (Richards, 2003). During these initial presentations and afterwards, observations and notes were compiled – inspired by Bazeley (2013)'s description of a reflective project journal – leading to four adjustments to the original research design. They are as follows:

1. A few students did not provide a persuasiveness score on the PEFs. This could have been due to forgetfulness, a lack of time, or a reluctance to quantify a classmates' persuasive impact. Due to the importance of this rating for the research, it was decided to restate the necessity of giving a score, for the subsequent presentations.
2. The number of questions that participants in the audience needed to answer on the original PEFs proved too time consuming, so questions not directly related to the research, were eliminated from the final version.
3. Some of the questions on the PEFs also proved confusing for some students, so a more detailed explanation was given before the next two presentations.
4. In previous years there had been a gradual attrition in the number of students attending classes – likely due to the demanding nature of the course – but this year only one student withdrew during the semester. The result of this was that the class needed to be divided into four

large groups, for the next presentation (first data collection period in this study) for concurrent presentations. Subsequent observations during these presentations revealed that this was also rather unsatisfactory, as there was still a great deal of background noise for the presenters, which was also apparent in the video clips. Therefore, the final presentations (second data collection period for this study) were held in two adjacent rooms.

As a result of these observations appropriate amendments were carried out and incorporated into the final research design.

4.2.4 DATA PROCESSING

Once the different forms of raw data had been collected, and processed into electronic text form, they were then coded. This began immediately after the conclusion of the course from which the participants were drawn. Although Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) and Hancock and Algozzine (2017) recommend collecting and analyzing data concurrently, it was not possible in this study due to a potential conflict of interest – the researcher also being the instructor.

The processing procedures applied to each form of data varied depending on the nature of the data. As the diaries had been collected electronically, they required no further treatment before starting the coding procedures. Hardcopies of the SRs were digitalized (typed word for word and saved as Word documents), as were the PEFs. All the PEFs relating to one participant were then collated into single textual documents. For the interview recordings, the processing involved transcribing the mp3s into textual form. For the presentation video recordings, the treatment applied involved using a software program called ELAN (see website https://tla.mpi.nl/tools/tla-tools/elan/) and a complex array of tiers and annotations to capture the various elements of the presentations. Descriptions of the procedures applied to the interview recordings and presentations videos are elaborated on in this section.

4.2.4.1 INTERVIEW TRANSCRIPTIONS

Qualitative research frequently involves the analysis of recorded oral data, necessitating the need for transcription (Duff, 2008). The transcription process of the interview recordings involved creating a verbatim record of what was said during the interviews. Transcription is typically time consuming, but is usually better carried out by the researcher (Simons, 2009), which was done in this study. However, as the transcriber exercises judgment on a number of issues, relating to the inclusion, exclusion, or glossing of particular aspects of utterances, "it is unrealistic to pretend that the data on the transcripts are anything but already interpreted data" (Cohen, Manion, & Morrison, 2000, p. 281). It is acknowledged here that the process of transcribing recordings into text is "fraught with slippage" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 71) and is dependent on the knowledge and skill of the transcriber.

In this study, the texts created from the transcription processes contain only words and utterances made by either the myself or the participant, and have been refined as little as possible, adopting a pragmatic approach to the process. Although this process seems mechanical in nature, it is an important first step in the data analysis (Duff, 2008). This approach to transcription is also indicative of the priority in this study, where the emphasis lies on examining the content of the participants' responses, and less with examining their responses, from a linguistic perspective. As Duff (2008, p. 155) states, "If one is interested in the gist of an utterance and less so in the linguistic detail, then an utterance-by-utterance or turn-by-turn translation will probably suffice."

The transcription process for the interview recordings followed methods and procedures prescribed by Richards (2003), covering turn-taking. Deciding when one speaker's turn ends and another one begins (turn-taking) is typically the most difficult challenge for transcribers (Richards, 2003). In actuality though, this was not a significant problem in this study. The interviewer made a conscious effort to wait until the participant had finished talking and the interviewees rarely if ever interrupted the interviewer. There were only rare occasions of simultaneous speaking and this typically ended after only a few

utterances. Following Richard's (2003) advice, the overlap in conversation was ignored and the first speaker's utterance was transcribed to completion, while the second speaker's utterance then began on a new line. With the focus on the content of the spoken acts and not on analyzing the intricacies of turn-taking (as in Discourse Analysis), this form of transcription was considered sufficient. Turn-taking was simply captured on the transcript with the letters R (researcher) and P (participant) used to show who was speaking.

Aspects of delivery (as described by Richards, 2003) such as stress and emphasis were largely omitted from the transcriptions, as this proved particularly subjective, difficult to capture, and was considered to be of minor importance for satisfying the objectives of this study. As a result, many of the symbols described by Richards (2003) and other researchers such as Jefferson (2004), were not utilized. In a few cases though, an exclamation mark was used, to indicate emphasis on a certain point being made. Pauses longer than three seconds were transcribed as "…" and pauses longer than six seconds were transcribed as "(long pause)". When the discussion was stopped by laughter from either the interviewer or interviewee, this was simply transcribed as "(laughter)".

During the transcription process, there were a few instances of glossing and refining. The participants were all Japanese, with English as their second language, meaning there were oddities and grammatical mistakes in some of their comments. However, these were usually left untouched on the transcript, to preserve the authenticity of the comment. In a few cases though, such as when one participant mistakenly kept referring to the "presentater" instead of "presenter", a gloss was applied to the transcript as it was felt there was no ambiguity in what the participant was trying to express. Japanese words and fillers were alphabetized if possible and transcribed in italics. Spoken English utterances such as "gonna" and "wanna" were not adjusted but were transcribed as uttered, to accurately reflect what the participant had said. In a few instances, 'fillers' from the interviewer and participant were omitted, as it was impossible

to alphabetize them. Personal names were initially transcribed, but later replaced with pseudonyms.

There were several other small adjustments also made during the transcription procedures that are important to note. Any direct quotes made by the participants, regarding what other presenters had said, were transcribed inside quotation marks. Also, numbers were generally transcribed in numerical form (instead of words), as this was more convenient for transcription purposes. Aside from these minor adjustments the transcripts are an accurate representation of everything that was said during the interviews.

4.2.4.2 PRESENTATION VIDEOS

Processing the video recordings of the presentations was more complex than processing the other four forms of data. Despite the difficulties, the video recordings serve a necessary and vital purpose in this study. As Simons (2009) explains, video recordings "can be used both to cross-corroborate interpretations from other sources and for subsequent analysis by the researcher" (p. 61). The use of video recordings to collect data in this study was to meet both of these purposes.

With no known comparable study from which a template or set of procedures could be adopted, a grounded theory approach (as defined by Charmaz, 2014; Strauss & Corbin, 1998) was used to process the video data. Initially though, a template for dividing the different elements of oral presentations developed by Estrada, Sangnya, Talente, and Kraemer (2005) was employed. This template involved dividing oral presentations into three domains: content (e.g. key concepts and relevance), slides (e.g. clarity, graphics, readability, and font size), and presentation style (e.g. pace, voice, engaging with the audience, addressing questions, and eye contact). Modifications to this template were then made. Three random oral presentation videos were initially observed from a previous course and memos (as defined by Strauss & Corbin, 1998) were compiled on a variety of elements that were deemed necessary to address the research questions in this study, and that were possible to account

for. They were compiled in a sequential manner, following Heath, Hindmarsh and Luff (2010)'s recommendation of accounting for visible and audio aspects of every interaction. Initial interpretation of these memos was done through a process known as clustering (as defined by Charmaz, 2014; Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014), which helps reveal how the topic fits together and can show the relationships between the different phenomena. As Charmaz (2014, p. 185) notes, clustering allows you to "create a pattern about, around, and through your category or categories." The technique of 'noting patterns' (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) was used to further examine the data. In this way, all of the memos were organized into related clusters, and finally grouped into seven categories, based on shared thematic properties. These seven categories were used to create seven distinct tiers in a software program in order to convert a range of audio and visual aspects into textual form. It should be noted here – as part of the process of being a reflexive researcher – that my prior experience teaching oral presentation courses possibly had an influence on shaping his view of what components of a persuasive oral presentation to look for in the video recordings. However, every effort was made to account for as many aspects as possible, and not just those related to discursive techniques and delivery styles.

The software program ELAN (ver. 4.7.3) was used to help capture, organize and analyze data generated from the presentation videos, in a structured and systematic way – all of which was done manually. ELAN software does not have in-built semantic or conceptual networks which many forms of software used for analyzing qualitative research do (Duff, 2008), but offers the researcher what is known as text management functions (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). For this study, ELAN can be viewed as the assistant researcher, with myself as the analyst (Yin, 2014).

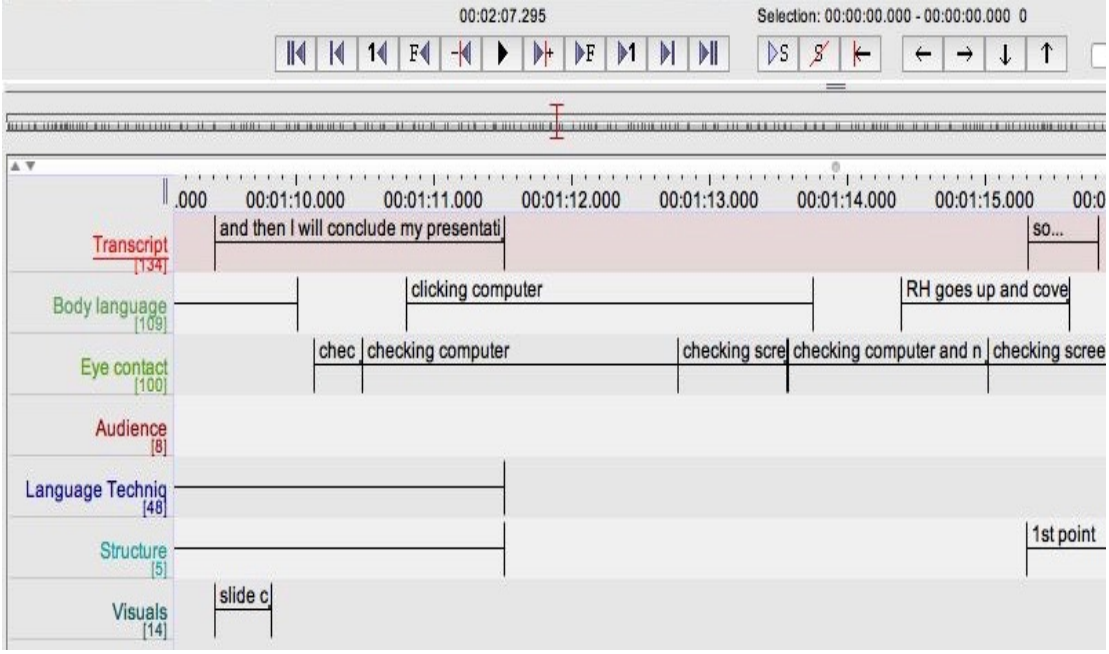
The first step in processing the presentation videos was to create annotations (digital memos) that described and captured as best as possible, all the different salient elements of the presentations. These annotations were organized and categorized into seven different tiers according to their thematic property. Organizing these annotations into tiers represents the most efficient

and comprehensive approach to documenting all the possible features of an oral presentation. The tiers to some extent reflect the presentation skills taught in the course the participants were enrolled in, and therefore, as noted above, may reveal certain biases in my approach. While the tiers are sufficiently distinct from each other, they are not mutually exclusive. The order of the tiers reflects a natural analytical progression from simple transcription of the presentations, to categorization of techniques and sections in the presentations, to the actual delivery elements. The only significant element of the presentations that remains unaccounted for by these seven tiers is the presenter's voice variations. Ultimately, tone, pitch, volume and stress were too complicated to systematically analyze within the scope of this study. The label for each tier reflects the thematic properties of the annotations within it:

1. Presentation transcript
2. Discursive techniques
3. Structure
4. Gestures
5. Eye contact
6. Audience
7. Visuals (*only for the second set of presentations)

In order for more accurate annotations to be created in each tier the presentation videos were slowed to 50% of their natural speed without distorting the speech (a feature provided by ELAN). The timing of the annotations was measured to 0.1 of a second. Anything less was deemed too insignificant, as well as too difficult to accurately account for. After categorizing the annotations into the seven tiers, the presentations were viewed once again to verify the accuracy of the annotations and categorizations (intra-rater reliability). An acknowledged weakness in this study is that inter-rater reliability was not carried out or established. To illustrate how these tiers were set out, a screen shot is provided below in Figure 4.1. The screenshot of the presenter has been edited out to protect their identity.

Figure 4.1. Screen Shot of Annotations and Tiers



The first tier to be processed was the 'transcript'. The transcription process for the presentation videos followed the same basic principle as the interview transcription process: transcribing verbatim what was said, as accurately as possible. Grammatical and lexical mistakes were transcribed. Fillers were written phonetically and word fragments were left as they were uttered. Elongated sounds such as "umm…" had three dots after them. Abbreviations were only used in the transcript if the presenter specifically uttered the letters of the abbreviation. Symbols were omitted and the actual word was used to indicate more accurately what was said (e.g., "dollars" instead of "$").

It was decided to transcribe what each presenter said in 'chunks' (complete phrases). This was chosen as the preferred unit of transcription because the speakers did not speak in full sentences – a successful tactic employed by most public speakers (Powell, 2011), and one taught to the participants in the course. Preparing to speak like this involves 'sound scripting' – a process in which the presenters write out their script in phrases or chunks of language instead of complete sentences (Powell, 2011). These chunks were distinguished by pauses (0.3 seconds or longer) before and after them, by

natural breaks in speech, or simply by the speaker pausing deliberately. The timeframe of 0.3 seconds was the smallest pause noticeable to me and so was chosen as a 'good gap' separating different chunks. Each chunk became a separate annotation (digital memo). Punctuation was deemed unnecessary because the presenters were not speaking in sentences. In complying with this principle, even when lists of items were given, no commas were used in the transcriptions. The annotations in the presentation transcript tier accurately document what was said, and also reflect the time span of the chunks, and the pauses between them.

After transcribing the oral presentations, the raw transcripts were then further processed in the 'Discursive techniques' tier (the second tier) to note when speakers were utilizing established rhetorical techniques and manipulating language to try and persuade the audience. "Words are the tools of a speaker's craft", according to Lucas (2015, p. 221) and can significantly alter how listeners view and react to the message the speaker is trying to put across. Scholars have "identified and codified features of language that might enhance its power over audiences" for almost 2500 years (Fahnestock, 2011, p. 6). Although early work on rhetoric was conducted in Greek and then Latin, Fahnestock (2011, p. 7) notes how the "stylistic constructs, categories, and devices first recorded in these works…are enduring and *trans*lingual". Despite considerable overlap, what separates studies on rhetoric from sociolinguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmatics, is the former's focus on the taxonomy of genres and rhetorical argumentation, instead of interactive discourse (Fahnestock, 2011).

Rhetoric is taken here to mean the art of persuasion as initially defined by the ancient Greeks (Stott, Young & Bryan, 2001). Rhetoric, of course, is constantly evolving, as is the manner in which it is viewed, and rhetorical conventions vary in different languages and across different cultures, and in different contexts (Stott et al., 2001). As such, rhetoric is now often referred to as 'rhetorics'. Despite shifts in how rhetoric is viewed, "the fading of traditional rhetorical practice does not mean that contemporary culture is 'unrhetorical'.

Forms of persuasion proliferate, and whilst their language may not be immediately identifiable as the kind of rhetoric described…they often use similar strategies" (Stott, Young & Bryan, 2001, p. 68).

In this study, discursive techniques fall under the umbrella of presentation skills and are seen as one potential skill for presenters to utilize. To align with the research objectives of this study, the discursive techniques that were annotated were limited to those that were employed either overtly or subtly, for rhetorical purposes (as opposed to cohesive or linguistic purposes, etc.). The tier covering discursive techniques was comprised of annotations for the discursive techniques covered in the course, in addition to other significant and well-known rhetorical devices utilized in the presentations, regardless of their correct usage or impact. Techniques covered in the course are set out in Table 4.3, and include signposting, inclusive language, rhetorical questions, contrasts, tripling, repetition, machine-gunning, knockdowns, intensifiers, attention getters, pausing, and softening. Examples of techniques not covered in the course but widely used by accomplished speakers include alliteration, anecdotes, metaphors, similes, imagery, personification, puns, parallelism, synaptic devices, amplification and diminution, climaxes, and irony – as defined by Fahnestock (2011). More subtle techniques, such as personalization (as defined by Dowis, 2000) and attempts at building credibility, using evidence, reasoning, and appealing to emotions – as defined by Lucas (2015) – were also annotated, but were rare. The definitions in Table 4.3 are the same as those provided to the participants in their coursework. The examples are either original, or taken from historical speeches.

Table 4.3.

Definitions and Examples of Discursive Techniques

Technique	Definition	Example(s)
Analogy	A comparison between something known and unknown for the purpose of clarifying and	"This new HDD is a filing cabinet for the digital generation."

	explaining	
Anecdote	A short but interesting story	"I'd like to tell you about what happened to me while coming here…"
Attention getter (hook)	Stating something to draw the audience's attention at the beginning of the speech/ presentation	e.g., anecdote, statistic, amazing fact, problem, analogy
Bookending	Repeating the same word(s) at the beginning and end of a phrase	"Nobody does it better than us, nobody."
Change and Development	Verbs and adjectives to increase the impact when describing the direction and speed of a trend	Verbs: to plunge, to decrease, to stabilize, to peak, Adjectives: rapid, substantial, steady
Chunking	To speak in complete phrases instead of complete sentences, with skillful use of pausing, word stress, and changes in intonation, in the appropriate places	"There's one more thing/ that'd I'd like to talk about/before finishing my speech."
Contrast	Using simple opposites to generate attention	"Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." – John F. Kennedy
Doubling	Repeating a word for emphasis	"This is a really, really good deal."
Framing the point	Rephrasing or restating your message	"What I am trying to say is…" or "Essentially what I would like to express is…"
Inclusive language	Pronouns that include the audience for rapport	e.g., 'we', 'us', 'our'

Intensifier	Word that helps emphasize your point	e.g., 'extremely', 'fully', 'absolutely'
Knockdown	Building up opposing points and then successfully refuting them	"Some people say this tablet is expensive, fragile, or has a small memory capacity. So, why is it the most popular tablet on the market? Let me tell you."
Machine-gunning	Making 6-8 points in a row to increase the overall impact of your message	"Our new car is cheaper, faster, safer, roomier, more stylish, more efficient, and better designed..."
Pausing	A deliberate break in the monologue to create anticipation or amplify the impact of what is being said	"And the total price for this package is… (pausing)… only $5!"
Repetition	Repeating words, phrases, or points	"So, once again, I'd like to say…"
Rhetorical question	A question posed without the expectation of an answer, and often to make a point, lead into a point, or to provoke consideration	"So, what's the solution to the problem? It's…"
Signposting	A phrase to signify transition to a new point	"To move on to…" "The second point I'd like to make is…" "To conclude…"
Softening	Reducing the impact of a point or making it less significant	"There is a *slight* problem with our new phones."
Tripling	The use of three similar words	"We shall fight…" – Sir

together, three points in a speech,	Winston Churchill
three words in a phrase, or a phrase three times – also known as 'the rule of three'	"This cake is light, delicious, and non-fattening." "I came, I saw, I conquered." – Julius Caesar

Annotating discursive techniques simply entailed identifying the technique in the transcript tier and creating a digital memo. At times, presenters used a combination of techniques simultaneously, so these single instances were given a double annotation. An example of this was the use of a knockdown that ended with a rhetorical question. Another example was the use of tripling, also sometimes known as 'the rule of three' (Atkinson, 2004; Donovan, 2014; Dowis, 2000, Gallo, 2014). While tripling can involve the use of three distinct points, phrases or words, it can also involve repeating something three times, whereby the usage can be annotated as tripling and repetition.

While pausing is not a discursive technique, it can function as one by adding dramatic emphasis and building suspense (Donovan, 2014), and was therefore included. Pauses that appeared to be deliberate were noted with an annotation. The decisive factor in this decision process was noting the placement of the pause and whether or not the presenter was scanning the audience (assessing their reaction) during the pause, or if they were fumbling with paper, checking notes, or looking up in an attempt to remember what they were going to say next.

Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (2005) was used as a tool in this study to further categorize and analyze the persuasive discursive techniques used in the oral presentations. While the study itself is 'grounded', Hyland's model helps guide the complicated process of categorizing and analyzing the persuasive discursive techniques component. Data analysis can be both grounded and use systematic coding procedures (Gleason, 2013). Hyland

intended the model for work with written forms of discourse, but it is still very much applicable for analyzing oral presentations and serves as a structural blueprint to approach the analysis. The model separates metadiscourse into two dimensions. Firstly, the interactive dimension concerns "the writer's awareness of a participating audience and the ways he or she seeks to accommodate its probable knowledge, interests, rhetorical expectations and processing abilities" (p. 49). Secondly, the interactional dimension deals with how "writers conduct interaction by intruding and commenting on their message. The writer's goal here is to make his or her views explicit and to involve readers by allowing them to respond to the unfolding text." (p. 49) and by "alerting them to the author's perspective towards both propositional information and readers themselves." (p. 52). Table 4.4 provides an explanation of the prominent forms of metadiscourse, according to Hyland's model, and examples.

Table 4.4.

An Interpersonal Model of Metadiscourse (Hyland, 2005, p. 49)

Category	Function	Examples
Interactive	Help to guide the reader through the text	
Transitions	Express relations between main clauses (additive, causal, contrastive)	In addition; but; thus; and
Frame markers	Refer to discourse acts, sequences and stages	Finally; to conclude; my purpose is
Endophoric markers	Refer to information in other parts of the text	Noted above; see figure; in section 2
Evidentials	Refer to information from other texts	According to X; Z states;
Code glosses	Elaborate propositional meaning	Namely; such as; in other words
Interactional	Involve the reader in the text	
Hedges	Withhold commitment and open dialogue	Might; perhaps; possible; about
Boosters	Emphasize certainty and close dialogue	Clearly; obviously
Attitude markers	Express writer's attitude to proposition	Unfortunately; I agree; surprisingly
Self-mentions	Explicit reference to authors	I; we; my; me; our

Engagement markers	Explicitly build relationship with reader	Consider; note; you can see that

Transition markers are also used in oral presentations, as are endophoric markers. Referencing visuals is one example. Evidentials were not overtly a part of the presentation skills involved in this study, but did feature in the oral presentations. Code glosses are essentially restating and reframing the point. Persuasive discursive techniques that parallel frame markers are: signposting, framing the point, reframing the point, and stating the main point. Hedges equate to the persuasive discursive technique of softening, while intensifiers are the equivalent persuasive discursive technique to boosters. Attitude markers were prevalent in the oral presentations as a natural manifestation of language and engagement markers were also utilized in oral presentations. Self-mention was actively discouraged in this oral presentation course and instead, inclusive language was frequently utilized by presenters.

For this dissertation, two limitations to Hyland's model are relevant. Firstly, while it distinguishes between the features of the message being expressed (propositional content and metadiscourse), it does not account for delivery features. Secondly, the model also only deals with "explicit devices, which can be clearly identified in the text" due to the "practical purposes of identification" and because "this explicitness represents the writer's conscious choice to indicate a presence in the discourse" (p. 58). In addition, "metadiscourse analysis is indicative rather than comprehensive" (p. 58) and "the imposition of discrete categories on the fluidity of actual language use invariably conceals its multifunctionality, blurring simultaneous meanings in an 'all-or-nothing' interpretation of how particular devices are used" (p. 59). These two limitations necessitated the collection of further forms of data and the triangulation of findings in order to be able to answer the research questions regarding the use of persuasive discursive techniques in a more robust manner.

The Structure tier (the third tier of seven tiers) served to divide the presentations into sub sections. The primary purpose was to analyze which

rhetorical style of organization the participants used. As Dowis (2000) explains, speakers usually follow one of several typical alignments; chronological order, priority based order, cause-and-effect form, or the problem-solution form, although adept speakers manipulate these structures and even utilize them in reverse order, to increase the novelty of the presentation. Lucas (2015) notes several additional organizational methods: comparative advantage, topical, and Monroe's motivated sequence. This last method involves five steps; gaining the attention of the audience, establishing a need for them to change, satisfying this need by providing a solution, intensifying the desire to change by having the audience visualize the benefits, and making a call to action. Also of interest – from a cultural perspective – was establishing whether the participants had 'front-loaded' their argument, along a more Western style of rhetorical alignment, instead of the more typical Japanese 'back-loaded' style (Okabe, 1983). According to Okabe (1983, p. 30), "Japanese communication predominantly favors 'recency' and climactic principles of rhetorical form, saving the most interesting points for the end of the series."

Structural patterns are frequently found in written and oral forms of persuasive discourse. The typical structure of most presentations and speeches (Atkinson, 2004) includes; the introduction, the conclusion, and the 2-4 supporting points in the main body of the presentation, similar to academic essays. In depth studies on rhetoric in Journalism has further demonstrated patterns of Initiating, Sequent, and Closing moves (Moore, 2006). The presenters usually signposted that they were moving from one sub section to another, so there was little ambiguity in annotating this tier. Two participants included a counter-argument in one of their presentations, so this was also duly noted with an annotation.

The fourth tier to be processed was Gestures. Interpreting facial expressions, gestures and other non-verbal signals is complex and very much culturally dependent (Lucas, 2015). Researchers have estimated that there are more than 20,000 distinct gestures in human behavior (Dowis, 2000). Nevertheless, accounting for gestures is important in this study as Japanese

culture "tends to view the verbal as only *a* means of communication, and that the nonverbal and the 'extraverbal' at times assume greater importance than the verbal dimension of communication" (Okabe, 1983, p. 38). The important factor for presenters is that nonverbal behavior must mirror verbal strategies, thereby making them more persuasive (Fennis & Stel, 2011). Dowis (2000) actually states that 55 percent of the impact of a presentation or speech is determined by the visual impact the speaker has on the audience. He clarifies that this does not mean visual elements are more important, but that if the non-verbal and verbal messages are giving the same message, the speaker will be more effective. Accounting for the visible conduct of the speaker is best done in 'fragments' (Heath, Hindmarsh, & Luff, 2010), which are essentially the non-verbal equivalent of a 'chunk' of language. Much of the literature on gestures in presentations tends to focus on what speakers should avoid (See Atkinson, 2004; Donovan, 2014; Reinhart, 2002; Stuart, 1992), such as stiff body posture, distracting gestures, and fidgeting. Reinhart (2002), Dowis (2000) and Lucas (2015) advise presenters to avoid practicing gestures ahead of time and instead to rely on gestures that come naturally to them during conversation, and that moderate use is the most effective strategy (Donovan, 2014; Gallo, 2014; Stott, Young & Bryan, 2001; Stuart, 1992). As Lucas (2015) states, "effective speakers do not need a vast repertoire of gestures. Some accomplished speakers gesture frequently, others hardly at all. The primary rule is this: Whatever gestures you make should not distract from your message. They should help clarify or reinforce your message" (p. 250). Dowis (2000, p. 214) concurs and adds, "keep body movement of any kind at a minimum." Reinhart (2002) lists five ways speakers can use gestures effectively; to mimic an action that was verbalized, to describing an object just mentioned, to point to a visual or person, to count, and to emphasize something in a rhythmical manner. Finally, Atkinson (2004) adds that the bigger the audience, the more demonstrative a speaker can afford to be.

The annotations in the Gesture tier covered movements of the presenter's hands, arms, head, or whole body. The guiding principle for annotating gestures was not to quantify every single movement, but to investigate for any distinct patterns or one-off movements that may have had an impact on the

persuasiveness of the presentation, whether they appeared intentional or not. The fourth tier was labeled as 'gestures' because the term covers movement of parts of the body and reflected the annotations, as opposed to the term 'body language', which can encompass all movements, posing, or even simply standing still.

The first step in annotating gestures was to identify the presenter's base position, which usually involves standing, with arms at sides, legs slightly apart, and in an evenly balanced position (Donovan, 2014; Dowis, 2000). Distinct movements away from this base position were noted with an annotation. In some cases presenters held a certain pose (base position) for a while and there were no particular gestures exhibited during this time period. In these situations, no annotation was created. The annotations in the Gestures tier were ultimately holistic, were difficult to annotate and by themselves are perhaps marginal to the study, but are included as non-verbal cues and patterns of movement, which can help the researcher to interpret other elements in the study (Simons, 2009).

The primary type of annotations in the Gestures tier covered hand movements and the use of fingers. This mirrored Donovan's (2014) point that effective body language should be limited to movement above the waist, and below the neck, and that arms and hands are the key. More specifically, Gallo (2014) believes that hands should be used in your 'power sphere' – above the navel. However, Lucas (2015, p. 250) warns that, "Few aspects of delivery cause students more anguish than deciding what to do with their hands." Stott, Young and Bryan (2001) summarized some expert opinions on hand gestures, and recommend three proactive gestures. Firstly, opening your palms out to the audience shows the audience that the speaker can be trusted. Circular movement with your arms can signify inclusiveness with the audience, and finally finger movements can be used to enumerate points. According to Stuart (1992), hand gestures should coincide with the verbal message. They should also be utilized in the key moments of a presentation (Gallo, 2014). As Donovan (2014, p. 150) surmises, hand gestures "should be noticeable neither for their presence nor for their absence."

To account for the various hand gestures used by the participants in this study, a simple system was devised. RH (right hand) and LH (left hand) – from the presenter's perspective – were used as abbreviations and indicated in the annotation which hand was being used in the gesture. Additional information that was typically documented included whether the hand was palm up/down, and what direction it was gesturing (left, right, or straight ahead). The length of the annotation reflected the duration of the gesture. Instances where the presenter used fingers (typically to illustrate a number) were noted by using an abbreviation for the respective hand in use, the number of fingers used in the gesture, and in which direction they were pointing. Other hand gestures that were annotated included "playing with hair", "hands on hips", "hands on face", "picking up prop", and "fidgeting with necklace".

Eye contact was the next aspect of the presentation videos to be accounted for and comprised the fifth tier. Along with hand gestures, eye contact represents an important part of the non-verbal skill set that presenters can utilize and is important in public speaking in most cultures (Lucas, 2015). As Stuart (1992) emphatically states, the audience will not pay attention to speakers who do not look at them. Speakers who read from manuscripts are less expressive because of the limited eye contact (O'Hair, Stewart, & Rubenstein, 2010), and are therefore seen as boring and less trustworthy (Lucas, 2015). Making eye contact with the audience forces the audience to look at the speaker and to be more attentive (Dowis, 2000). Although there would seem to be large-scale agreement that eye contact in oral presentations is important, there is relatively little specific research stating what constitutes 'good eye contact'. Collins (2012) advises speakers to position themselves in front of an audience so that even if they are not able to make eye contact with everyone, they at least appear to be doing so. The expression 'sweeping eye contact' is often used in presentation skill guidebooks, and according to Donovan (2014), this involves the presenter sweeping their eyes across the audience and pausing on one area/person for approximately three to five seconds. Dowis (2000) further elaborates that good speakers tend to follow a routine of looking at their notes

when beginning a point, before making sweeping eye contact throughout that point.

Due to the lack of any established or recognized procedures to account for eye contact in oral presentations, the following procedures were constructed to best match the purposes of the study, and to follow the principle of simplicity. As with the gesture tier, the purpose of the eye contact tier was to explore patterns of behavior, or uncover any specific one-off instances. To accomplish this, descriptive annotations were made detailing when the speaker was looking away from the audience, with the length of the annotation reflecting the duration of the speaker's gaze. The annotations represent breaks in eye contact and the tier reflects whether the presenter was making eye contact with the audience or not. This tier enabled me to determine how much time the presenter was making eye contact with the audience, when they were making eye contact, and where they were looking when not making eye contact.

Instances when the presenter's eyes broke away from the direction of the audience were annotated (henceforth known as 'moves'). For the first presentation, moves such as "reading notes" or "checking notes", were the most frequent annotations. While the two terms may appear similar – and share mutual qualities – for this research the two terms are considered different. "Reading notes" is defined as looking at cue cards and actively reading specific words, numbers or sentences from them. "Checking notes" is defined as looking at cue cards, without actually reading anything from them. Each of the presenter's cue cards was photographed to allow me to verify later whether or not the presenters were reading something from their card. In addition to these two types of annotations in the eye contact tier, instances of presenters "looking up" - while trying to remember lines were noted. Other examples of annotations that are self-evident include "looking left", "looking right" and "checking timers" (usually watches or iPhones).

In the second presentation, presenters were required to use PowerPoint slides for visuals, meaning all the presenters had a laptop computer in front of

them and a projector screen slightly behind them and to their right. For these presentations, "checking the screen" or "checking the computer" also represented types of eye contact moves, and therefore distinct types of annotations. The corresponding "reading the screen" or "reading the computer" were also noted, and verified by checking the slides (these were included in the videos) to see if the verbalizations matched what was on screen.

In the Audience tier (the sixth tier), there were very few annotations. As the audience was never visible in the recordings, only audio responses made to the presenter or about the presentation were noted. These annotations were given self-evident labels, such as "laughter", "responding to a question prompt", or "applause". Due to the low frequency of annotations in the audience tier, it might be considered surplus to the study. However, having so few annotations is considered an important finding in itself, justifying its inclusion in the final analysis.

A Visuals tier was added for the second set of presentations to account for the PowerPoint slides and props utilized by the presenters. Used properly, "People find a speaker's message more interesting, grasp it more easily, and retain it longer when it is presented visually as well as verbally" (Lucas, 2015, p. 266). Stott, Young and Bryan (2001) are of the opinion that visuals should merely complement the presentation, and Dowis (2000) cautions that speakers often rely on visuals too much and risk making them the focus of the presentation. Others actually advocate minimalizing the use of slides in oral presentations (Reynolds, 2011), or even avoiding them completely (Collins, 2012; Donovan, 2014). A personal bias (that visual aids should merely be supplementary) meant that visuals were not used until the second presentation. Visuals were made mandatory for the second presentation though, to allow students to experience using them.

The annotations in the Visuals tier typically indicated either that the slide was stationary and visible to the audience or that some form of change was happening. For the stationary slide annotations, additional information was also

added to reflect the content on the slide being shown: pictures, statistics, charts, quotes, and bullet points. This was important to note as research has shown that audiences prefer visual or pictorial slides over slides with text and numbers on them (Atkinson, 2004; Donovan, 2014). When presenters proceeded to the next slide, an annotation was added. A further type of annotation was added when something (a word, information or picture) appeared or disappeared from a slide on screen.

It is now important to demonstrate reflexivity towards the strengths and weaknesses of the previously described processing of data through ELAN software. The biggest strength of compiling data by the previously described methods is that the presentations can be described in a deeper and more robust way. Presentations are extremely complex to analyze, and while the data gathered here does not encompass a complete picture, it can account for what the presenters said, their gesture patterns, their eye contact moves, their use of visuals, the discursive techniques they employed, how the presentations were structured, and even the audience's reaction. Furthermore, this processing allowed the presentation video data to be converted to textual form and to be coded and triangulated alongside the other forms of data more easily.

There are however, several limitations that need to be mentioned. Firstly, there are a few aspects in the presentations that could not be covered by using ELAN due to logistical constraints, such as the stress, emphasis and variance in the presenter's voice. The second limitation is that determining exactly when an annotation ended and where another began proved extremely difficult. In the end, consistent approximations were made with the realization that greater detail was unnecessary for the purpose of the final analysis.

Despite these issues, processing the presentation videos through ELAN software allowed for a large collection of visual and audio data to be processed into textual form. This detailed database of what each presenter did in their presentations made it possible to cross-reference theories and ideas, with other forms of data that had been collected, and to begin to analyze the 'big picture' by

comparing what presenters intended to do, with what they actually did, and how it was perceived. The descriptive data also serves to provide the study with tangible evidence to support or refute comments made by the presenters and the audience, on peer evaluation forms, self-reflection reports, in the interviews, and in the diaries.

4.2.5 CODING PROCEDURES

This section documents the systematic coding procedures that were applied to the five forms of data collected in Phase 2 of this study. The coding procedures applied to the SRs, the PEFs, the diaries, and the interview transcripts were done manually and were relatively straightforward and less intricate than those procedures applied to the presentation videos and the interview audio recordings. Although the presentation videos were coded through the use of ELAN software, the coding was still done manually and without any software program assistance. Table 4.5 illustrates the framework for analysis of all five forms of data gathered in Phase 2 of this study, as well as that for the focus group transcripts gathered from Phase 1 and serves to provide an overview of how the data in this study were then analyzed. The specific types of coding are standard in the qualitative research field, and for the sake of consistency, all adhere to definitions provided by Saldaña (2013).

Figure 4.2. Framework for Analysis of Data

Focus group transcripts	**Interview transcripts**	**Diaries**	**Peer evaluation forms**	**Self-reflection reports**	**Presentation videos**

Attribute Coding demographics/participant characteristics/learning histories

Focused Coding What makes a	Focused Coding Collating and thematically coding answers to particular key questions and prompts	Descriptive Coding 3 randomly

presentation more persuasive and what detracts from it?		selected videos viewed – notes leading to creation of 7 tiers in ELAN

<u>Sub-coding</u> Second Cycle coding of the data from the Focused Coding. Establish subcategories.	<u>Sub-coding</u> Annotations for 7 tiers Transcription Thematic Coding leading to creation of domains and taxonomies

<u>Hypothesis Coding</u> Frequency counts and theorization about meaning. Use of descriptive statistics/figures.

<u>Values Coding & Causation Coding</u> Coding to reflect the participant's beliefs, values and attitudes about persuasiveness in oral presentations and why. *Thematic Coding	Supporting evidence or contradicting evidence from videos.

<u>Pattern Coding</u> First attempt at coding all the coded data at once to answer the central question about persuasiveness in oral presentations.

Holistic Coding Coding and organizing all the data into the four case studies with an emphasis on developing the particularly salient themes.

The first step in the coding process for Phase 2 data was Attribute coding. This involved the collection and coding of information, demographics, learning histories and other background related data on the participants. This information was primarily gathered from the diaries and interviews.

The second step in the coding process involved Focused coding for all the forms of data, with Descriptive coding additionally applied to three sample presentation videos. Focused coding involved collating responses and comments that related to each central research question. Descriptive coding involved compiling notes from three randomly selected presentation videos, through the use of ELAN. These notes were then thematically grouped, leading to the creation of seven tiers for investigating and detailing the presentations in a more structured and systemic manner (See Section 4.2.4.2).

The third step in the coding process was Sub-coding. This involved reorganizing and coding all the responses and comments grouped together through Focused coding, along thematic lines as they pertained to each central research question. This was achieved by first placing thematic tags on each coded item, and then by organizing them into subcategories with mutually shared properties and values. Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse was used as an analytical tool in this step to further sub-code and analyze the persuasive discursive techniques.

Following the first three coding procedure steps – which primarily involved collating and organizing the data – the fourth step of Hypothesis coding attempted to establish preliminary theories to address the research questions. Frequency counts, descriptive statistics/figures, and salient trends were the source of developing this stage of the analysis. The initial focus of this step featured the ELAN data combined with the other forms of more traditional

qualitative data, as qualitative research often features numerical scoring or scaling themes as one way of clarifying interpretative findings (Boyatzis, 1998).

Values coding and Causation coding comprised the fifth step in the coding procedures. This meant establishing rationale and finding supporting information for the participant's beliefs and opinions. This step also involved the merging of common threads, based on thematic and conceptual links, and where the five forms of data in Phase 2 were cross-referenced, ultimately leading to the construction of four case studies.

Once the case studies had been constructed and woven into separate narratives, the sixth step in the analysis framework was Pattern coding. This step comprised merging the data from the four case studies with the data from Phase 1, and once again investigating salient patterns and trends and examining how they related to the central research questions.

The seventh and final step in the analysis was Holistic coding, whereby the data were analyzed again after having being separated into three different time contexts. Once again the focus was on addressing and developing theories or answers to the central research questions, but this step allowed me to break down potential findings in three different categories (preparing for the presentation, delivering the presentation, perception of the presentation), in order to better understand changes during the process. Recursively coding and organizing the data led to a stronger triangulation process and subsequently, richer findings, and better intra-rater reliability.

4.3 CONCLUSION

Chapter four describes the methodology for Phase 2 of this study, which explores the use of persuasive techniques in oral presentations from the presenter's perspective. To examine how and why presenters utilized certain techniques, data were gathered from four case study participants. This involved using the following data collection tools: diaries, presentation videos, self-reflection reports, peer evaluation forms, and interviews. Phase 2 of this study

explores the participants' preparations for two presentations, their actual presentations, and their reflections, on these presentations. Data were also collected from members of the audience and from my notes. After collecting the five forms of data, they were processed and coded in a systematic manner. Chapter 5 is comprised of the four case studies.

CHAPTER FIVE

PHASE 2: FINDINGS

5. PHASE 2: FINDINGS

Qualitative case study analyses "depend heavily on the interpretative skills of the researcher. They are often personal and intuitive, reflect different experiences and differ widely from one researcher to another" (Simons, 2009, p. 117). The analysis of case study evidence is also a comparably underdeveloped area, with few established methods or formulas (Yin, 2014). For some qualitative researchers, the lack of established methods or formulas in case study analysis offers them the opportunity to employ a more flexible and context specific framework for analysis of complex data, ultimately yielding a rich, real and uniquely human documentation and analysis (Hood, 2009). As Richards (2003) explains, provided there are multiple sources of information and data, almost any form of qualitative method can be appropriate for case study analysis. However, Hancock and Algozzine (2017) stipulate that although each case study is unique, the analyses should all "have in common a basic process: repetitive, ongoing review of accumulated information in order to identify recurrent patterns, themes, or categories" (p. 67).

There are no known comparable case studies from which to draw analytical templates or frameworks for this study. Therefore, the processed data in Phase 2 of this study were analyzed by following a series of conventional case study strategies and techniques drawn from Yin (2014). By, recursively going through the raw data and then the processed data, I was able to select strategies and techniques that were considered the most appropriate for addressing the research questions in this study. This was done while being careful to balance the need to see patterns and also potentially important one-off instances (Stake, 1995), and to avoid the danger of being overly prescriptive and losing sight of the main research objectives (Richards, 2003). The analysis for Phase 2 of this study took a data-driven approach (Strauss & Corbin, 1998) in that all the forms of data were processed into text form and then analyzed in order to answer the research questions. In addition to the data-driven approach, Hyland's (2005)

interpersonal model of metadiscourse was used for the categorization and initial analysis, of the presenters' persuasive discursive techniques. Yin (2014) states that the analysis of a study begins with the creation of displays, memos, tables, diagrams, and the general processing of data, which then helps move researchers towards a general analytic strategy. The analysis of the four case studies in Phase 2 follows this process.

According to Yin (2014, p. 136), there are four basic strategies for analyzing case study evidence: relying on theoretical propositions; working your data from the ground up; developing a case description; and examining plausible rival explanations. The specific nature of the data and research questions that need answering help shape the choices each researcher makes. The first relevant strategy for this study was, "Developing a case description" (Yin, 2014). This strategy involves adhering to a descriptive framework when presenting the data. With a rich and varied pool of data to draw from in this study, it was decided that the most comprehensible method of organizing and describing the data was to follow a chronological structure (as defined by Yin, 2014). This descriptive framework allows for clearer explanations of *how* and *why* (causal sequences) participants' beliefs and actions pertaining to persuasive techniques in oral presentations were formulated, employed, and potentially altered over the duration of Phase 2 of the study. The chronological structure essentially covers three time-period contexts for each presentation: pre-study beliefs and preparations for the presentations, the presentations, post-presentation reflections and opinions. Within these time-period contexts certain 'life history epiphanies' (as defined by Richards, 2003) emerged that helped further shape the case studies. The descriptive objective in these case studies is not the main objective, but serves to help formulate explanations and draw out initial answers to the research questions (Yin, 2014).

This descriptive strategy is further shaped by Yin's (2014) first two strategies. The first strategy, "Relying on theoretical propositions", includes the notion that a study's original ideas and objectives help to shape the strategy employed in analyzing the data collected. Given that one of the objectives of this

phase of the study was to document, analyze, and explore the experiences, and potential progression and development of the participants over the duration of the study, the descriptive chronological structure chosen, suits the original objective. Phase 2 of the study also incorporated Yin's (2014) second strategy: "Working your data from the ground up", through constant reflection and verification of theoretical propositions, and an inductive approach based on grounded theory (as defined by Strauss & Corbin, 1998). Grounded theory is viewed as a constructivist process (Charmaz, 2014), in which theories are built by continuously re-examining the data. According to this view, researchers accept that knowledge is constructed rather than discovered (Baxter & Jack, 2008; Stake, 1995), a view that this study subscribes to. The analytical strategy of Phase 2 of this study can then best be described as following a descriptive framework, shaped by theoretical propositions originating prior to the commencement of the study. Recursively going through the data and adopting an inductive approach to address the research questions then led to further modifications of the analytical strategy.

Within Yin's four strategies, there are five specific techniques, which can more explicitly assist with data analysis. Yin's (2014) second technique, "Explanation Building" is the most suitable for Phase 2 of this study. Yin (2014, p. 149) outlines the operational steps in a series of iterations:

- Making an initial theoretical statement or initial explanatory proposition
- Comparing the findings of an initial case against such a statement or proposition
- Comparing other details of the case against revision
- Comparing the revision to the findings from a second, third, or more cases
- Repeating this process as many times as is needed

As Yin (2014, p. 150) summarizes: "The gradual building of an explanation is similar to the process of refining a set of ideas". To do this, each case study in

Phase 2 is documented and explored separately to make it more comprehensible. As with any good qualitative multiple case study analysis, the descriptive summation of each case study will dually serve to provide a thick stand-alone description as well as to lead toward an explanation (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) by triangulating multiple sources of data and multiple cases (also known as 'synthesizing the data' – Hancock & Algozzine, 2017). For Phase 2, triangulation is defined as the bringing together of multiple sources and forms of data for analytical purposes (Denzin, 1970; Stake, 1995). As Duff (2014, p. 241) explains: "triangulation involving multiple sources can add to the texture and multidimensionality of the study". Triangulation in Phase 2 – as in most qualitative research – does not seek to confirm truths, but rather to provide the deepest and broadest view of the issue being explored (Hood, 2009). Triangulation was applied in comparing what the participants intended to do; what they actually did; and how it was perceived. The different forms of data in a case study are "converged in an attempt to understand the overall case" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 555). By using different forms of data, from different time periods, and from four different participants, it is hoped that Phase 2 of this study can achieve data source triangulation (Denzin, 1984), "to increase credence in the interpretation, (and) to demonstrate commonality of an assertion" (Stake, 1995, p. 112).

Following a description and analysis of the four case studies, their respective findings are integrated and further triangulated in order to conduct a cross-case synthesis analysis (as defined by Yin, 2014), following a theory-building structured approach (as defined by Yin, 2014) to comprehensibly address the research questions in Phase 2 of this study. Finally, naturalistic generalizations (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) are proposed so that readers can learn from the cases and apply the findings to similar cases in future research. Although there has been much debate about the significance and the potential generalizability of case studies, many researchers believe some generalizability is necessary and possible (Duff, 2008).

Before presenting the first case study, it is necessary to explain the referencing of specific data in the case studies. When data and comments are referenced, an acronym is given in parenthesis to indicate from where the data, comment, or direct quote was obtained. The following guideline illustrates how this system works: Diaries (D), Presentation videos (P), Peer evaluation forms (PEF), Self-reflection reports (SR), and Interviews (I). In addition, a number will be added to the acronym to indicate whether the first or second set of data for each participant is being referred to. For example, a quote from Rena's second diary would be referenced with "(D-2)". Direct quotes from the interviews also include the transcription line numbers. In addition, a composite assemblage and display of the most relevant data is presented in what Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) call a partially ordered meta-matrix – tables with lists and examples of data in different categories, following the principle of inclusion. Data – particularly from the ELAN processing of the presentation videos – are also ordered in checklist matrices (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). In the analysis of the second presentation, data are presented in a role-ordered matrix (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014) to allow readers to more easily compare the two presentations side-by-side.

5.1 THE PROPOSITIONS

In line with the first step in Yin (2014)'s explanation building technique, six initial theoretical statements and explanatory propositions are offered – also referred to as "issues" (Stake, 1995) – to explore the use of persuasive techniques in oral presentations and to address the research questions of this study. Although Baxter and Jack (2008) caution that exploratory case studies frequently do not have propositions due to the lack of experience on the researchers' behalf, Phase 2 includes them, due to my considerable experience teaching and researching presentations. The propositions serve to "guide the data collection and discussion… [and] form the foundation for a conceptual structure/ framework" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 552) for the analysis of the case studies. In general, propositions are garnered from the "literature, personal/professional experiences, theories, and/or generalizations based on empirical data" (Baxter & Jack, 2008, p. 551). The propositions for the case

studies were drawn from findings in Phase 1 of this study and from my previous experience teaching oral presentation skills courses. As analysis should be ongoing in qualitative research (Richards, 2003), preliminary observations during the data collection in Phase 2 that lead to emerging themes, patterns and issues also helped to form the propositions. These propositions either directly address one or more of the core research questions, or address at least one sub question (refer to Chapter 4, Section 4.1.1). The propositions are as follows:

1. Previous experiences delivering presentations and instruction received prior to this study will shape initial beliefs and attitudes. (This addresses Research question 1. What impact does the participants' background have on their preparation for a persuasive oral presentation?)
2. Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact, particularly in the introduction and conclusion sections of the presentations. (This addresses Research question 2. What persuasive techniques are intentionally drawn upon most by presenters when delivering a presentation?)
3. Presenters will exhibit a selective bias and overestimate the importance of presenting skills that they are good at. (This addresses Research question 3. How are the participants' presentations perceived?
4. The importance of content, delivery styles, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for enhancing persuasiveness. (This addresses Research question 3.4 Are there general areas (content, delivery, discursive techniques, or others), which tend to be seen as more important for determining persuasiveness?)
5. Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs about persuasive oral presentations and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to

different topics. (This addresses Research question 4. Do the participants change their views of persuasive techniques in oral presentations over the duration of the study?)

6. English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness. (This addresses Research question 3.5. Is the presenter's English language ability a factor in enhancing or undermining the persuasive impact of a presentation?)

5.2 DAISUKE

"Daisuke" is the first case study to be presented. Along with following a case description approach and a chronological structure (Yin, 2014), the documentation of this case study will adhere to a 'chains of evidence' approach (Duff, 2008) whereby the research questions and the data are continually intertwined throughout. The case study takes a narrative form (Hood, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995), and is organized thematically around what Polkinghorne calls, 'a plot' (1995). The purpose of such analytic narratives is to "draw attention to the features of the displayed data and make sense of them, knitting them together and permitting the analyst to draw conclusions and add interpretations" (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014, p. 117). This is also known as narrative configuration (Polkinghorne, 1995) and draws happenings and events together into a temporarily organized whole, as a means of making sense of what happened and showing the significance of the outcome.

A description of Daisuke's case study begins with a brief overview of his relevant background information and pre-existing beliefs about persuasive oral presentations, largely drawn from his first diary and post-presentation interviews. Following this, attention is focused on Daisuke's preparations for the first presentation, with data again largely drawn from his diary and interview. Next, a description and analysis of the first presentation are offered, alongside data and findings from the PEFs and my notes. Finally, Daisuke's reflections on the presentation are explored through the post-presentation interview and the SR. A similar descriptive framework is followed for his second presentation. The six propositions outlined in Section 5.1 are revisited at the end of the case study.

5.2.1 PROFILE

Creating a profile of the participant is a useful way to begin a case study (Seidman, 2006). To address the first proposition (Section 5.1) it is also necessary to examine Daisuke's background information. At the time of the study, he was a 21-year-old student in his fourth year of university. He had never previously taken a class of mine, but had enrolled in the presentation skills course after friends recommended it, and then subsequently volunteered for the study as a means of reviewing what he had learnt in the course and to collect the participation fee (D-1). He had never lived abroad, but his overall English ability was relatively high as evident from a TOEIC score of 885 (out of a maximum of 990) acquired three years before this study commenced. His English language education background was typical of Japanese students and consisted of three years at junior high school, three years at senior high school, and then two years of intensive instruction at university, where he majored in English. Table 5.1 provides a brief overview of Daisuke's background information for reference.

Table 5.1.

Background Information – Daisuke

Age	21
Gender	Male
Year of study	Senior year (4th year)
Best TOEIC score	885 (2012)
Experience studying abroad	None
Experience presenting abroad	None
Reason for enrolling in course	The course was recommended by friends
Reason for volunteering to join study	To review the course and to collect the participation fee
Experience delivering English presentations	1st year University – Oral Communication in English course 2nd year University – Oral Communication in English course, and a presentation skills course

5.2.2 EXPERIENCES

Daisuke provided a detailed description of his presenting experiences and prior instruction in his diaries and interviews. In particular, Daisuke's experience in university and in a presentation contest (outside of university) seems to have had a significant impact on shaping his view of how to make a persuasive presentation. While he did not deliver any presentations in English during his junior or high school days (D-1), he did however, recall in great detail what he had learned from four different instructors over his first three years of university. For his two Oral Communication in English courses, he specifically remembered being told to "memorize the script" (D-1) and use "only 150 words for each PowerPoint slide at the most" in his first year, and then "to be text-independent and make eye contact" (D-1) in his second year. He defined text-independent as "not looking at the text…not looking at the script…not reading" (I-1, L57-58). To accomplish this, he used to make scripts of 500-700 words in length and memorize them (I-1). The emphasis on eye contact as a key presentation skill for enhancing the persuasive impact of a presentation features prominently throughout Daisuke's case study.

Daisuke exhibited a keen awareness of the audience throughout this study and the seeds for this seem to have been planted during his second year of university. He recalled being taught that persuasive speakers should make it clear to the audience what they want from them and then give them a reason to take action (D-1). Getting the audience's attention early in a presentation through personal anecdotes is one of the best ways to do this (D-1; I-1). This advice aligns with a study by Andeweg, de Jong, and Hoeken (1998) who found that presentations with anecdotes in the introduction get the audience's attention and lead to greater retention of information. Introductions have been identified in other studies as a key place to establish the speaker's credibility and knowledge (Gurak, 2000), and where the speaker can build solidarity with their audience (Hood & Forey, 2005). Daisuke's second year at university also

provided him with his first experience delivering a persuasive presentation (D-1). When asked to define a persuasive presentation, he responded (D-2): "Informative presentations just explain about the facts. On the other hand, persuasive presentations express opinions by using facts."

Daisuke's early experiences seemed to have spurred further interest in learning more about presentations, as he subsequently enrolled in two presentation skills courses (in his second and third year of university). He explained that learning to present was an important skill because it "would help me to send out my ideas and persuade others. I think I will have some opportunities to do presentations in my career." (D-2). From the first course he recalls learning more skills such as "listing important points on a small cue card, and memorizing the structure of the presentation" (D-1). He also notes that he frequently had to deliver impromptu presentations, which made him more text-independent. In his third-year presentation skills course he mostly learned how to utilize visuals effectively (D-1).

While documenting his presenting experiences, Daisuke never mentioned learning about persuasive discursive techniques, the importance of language ability, or anything related to the content of a presentation in any of his learning experiences. Daisuke also commented that he had only once previously delivered a presentation in Japanese (at university), and had received no instruction other than a simple description of the content that he was supposed to present on (I-1). To deal with this, he utilized his English presentation skills, although he added that, "I might have looked too confident to Japanese…because I didn't read and made eye contact." (I-1, L95-96).

5.2.3 BELIEFS

With his previous experiences mostly comprised of learning specific presentation skills, it seemed somewhat contradictory when Daisuke stated "content is the most important" (D-1) factor for determining persuasiveness in oral presentations, at the beginning of the study. However, he then explained his rationale:

> I joined a presentation contest last year. I practiced delivery and language and did it perfectly, but I could not go to the final. In comparison, the finalists made some mistakes and some of them were even reading the script, but they were evaluated for their content. Therefore, content is the most important (D-1).

While some scholars have stated that the message (content) is the crucial element students should focus on when crafting a presentation (Baker & Thompson, 2004), there still appears to be little agreement as to which aspects are more important in an oral presentation amongst the majority of scholars and experts (Campbell et al., 2001). Daisuke's experience in the presentation contest seems to have caused him to re-evaluate his experiences with oral presentations in university. In addition, Daisuke also wrote in his first diary (D-1) that he had been particularly impressed with a classmate's earlier presentation and stated that, "there was a presenter who researched background information well, so I am going to do that as well this time."

While Daisuke believed that strong content would make a presentation more persuasive at the start of the study, he also believed that poor delivery could undermine a presentation more than any other factor (D-1). In particular he pointed out (D-1) that, "If the presenter is not good at eye contact or gestures, the presentation gets less persuasive." He noted further (D-1) that "it is necessary to make the presentation attractive and get the audience involved in the presentation" through the use of language techniques and delivery skills. Daisuke's initial beliefs at the outset of the study are best summed up by his own analogy (D-1): "The content is the stem and the delivery is the branches. If the branches don't reach the audience's heart, the content will not reach their mind." This view of content, delivery and discursive techniques being intertwined in how they enhance or detract from persuasiveness supports the fourth proposition in this study (See Section 5.1).

5.2.4 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 1

The timeline for Daisuke's preparations followed the same process that most of the other participants followed. Firstly he searched online for suitable topics, carried out background reading, and gathered information to support his message. Following this, he spent the final few days leading up to the presentation day preparing specific discursive techniques to use, before practicing the presentation and the delivery the night before and during the day of the presentation (D-1). Although Daisuke had indicated that content was the key to making a presentation persuasive, and had spent a considerable amount of time preparing the content of the presentation, in his diary he wrote very little about the topic he had chosen for the presentation. Apart from noting the use of a certain statistic, there was also no mention in his diary about the supporting information he intended to use. Daisuke's chose to present on the necessity for the Japanese education system to be reformed. Table 5.2 provides a summarized version of his preparations listed for the ten days leading up to the presentation (10 represents the day before the presentation was delivered).

Table 5.2.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity
1	Reviewed presentation class
2	No preparations
3	Searched for topics online
4	Decided topic and printed three articles
5	Read an article
6	No preparations
7	No preparations
8	Started writing the script and preparing techniques
9	No preparations
10	Finished the script and practiced the presentation

Several days before presenting he listed a range of techniques he wanted to use to enhance the persuasive impact of his presentation: chunking, stress, pacing, intonation, emphasis, repetition, rhetorical questions, contrasts, and tripling (D-1). When deciding which particular techniques to employ, there were two underlying principles that seem to have guided Daisuke. Firstly, he relied on a combination of tried and tested techniques from previous experiences (D-1). Along with this, he also expressed the desire to implement newly learned techniques as a means of expanding his repertoire of presentation skills (D-1). Examples of these are seen in his decision to once again use a statistic in the introduction to attract the audience's attention (as he stated he had done in earlier presentations) and his use of a rhetorical question for the first time, in the conclusion (D-1).

In terms of his delivery, Daisuke felt (D-1) that he was already accomplished at using gestures, making eye contact, and being text-independent. Daisuke's confidence, experience, and preparation of specific discursive techniques, led him to self-rate his presentation 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness (D-1) the night before delivering it.

5.2.5 PRESENTATION 1

Daisuke's first presentation is now described and analyzed. The length of the presentation was 5:40 – within the 5:30-6:00 minute time frame allotted to speakers. Daisuke was rated 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, by all five members of the audience submitting PEFs. A caveat that needs to be mentioned here, is oral presentations are frequently scored higher by peers than other forms of discourse (Liow, 2008). However, this rating still clearly indicates that his presentation was considered highly persuasive. To help explain why it was considered so persuasive, processed data from his presentation video are explored and integrated with findings from the PEFs and my notes. Based on the descriptive data in the tiers in Table 5.3 below, it can be surmised that relative to other case study participants, Daisuke used gestures more frequently, exhibited far fewer breaks in eye contact, and frequently employed persuasive discursive

techniques. For a description of the tiers, what they mean, and what elements of the presentation they encompass, refer back to Section 4.2.4.2.

Table 5.3.

Annotation Frequency Figures for 1st Presentation

Transcript	Discursive techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience
92	31	7	142	6	4

Daisuke stated in his diary (D-1) that he intended to utilize a range of persuasive discursive techniques to enhance the content and to build upon what he considered to be an already accomplished delivery skill set. A closer analysis of the specific persuasive discursive techniques he employed reveals that two of the three techniques most frequently employed assisted with clarity and organization. He used signposting seven times (P-1), which helped identify each of the seven sections of his presentation (the structure tier). One audience member (PEF-1) praised him for using "signposting very well". The overall effect of using clear signposting was that (PEF-1) "It was very organized". Another member of the audience concurred and added: "good organization" (PEF-1). Daisuke also utilized the framing technique four times in his presentation to make the signposts even clearer. Furthermore, he used pausing six times, for an average of 1.4 seconds, after the signposts. These three techniques used in combination, all strengthened the clarity, organization and persuasive impact of his presentation.

Along with using persuasive discursive techniques to clarify the organizational structure, Daisuke also used them to magnify the impact of his message. The most successful usage seems to have been tripling, which he used three times (P-1) and which can strengthen the persuasive impact of a message (Atkinson, 2004; Dowis, 2000; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986; Reynolds, 2014). I wrote in my notes that Daisuke exhibited a "very good natural use of tripling", while another audience member concurred: he "used it (tripling) successfully"

(PEF-1). The most successful usage also involved the useful contrast technique (Atkinson, 2004; Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986) and helped to summarize how Daisuke felt Japanese education was ineffective and needed to be reformed. He stated about the Japanese Ministry of Education:

> They are seeking people with a variety of abilities but they are making students into people with average skills, they are seeking independent people but they are making people dependent on cram (school) education, they are seeking some inspiration but they are depriving children of their dreams (P-1).

He then added a further contrast: "they advocate an equal society but they are making this society unequal through education". Daisuke then paused for effect, before signposting that he was going to summarize his presentation and conclude. He explained in his diary that he had chosen to use these particular techniques (tripling and contrasts) because "they were easy to use and effective" (D-1). Members of the audience also felt they helped make his presentation more persuasive (PEFs-1).

Daisuke used an anecdote in the early stages of the presentation to get the audience's attention (D-1; P-1), which I noted had been effective. It involved a personal story about Daisuke's educational experiences in high school, and was designed to be relatable for the audience, who had also been through the Japanese education system (I-1). Several of his peers commented that they thought this had been an effective technique (PEFs-1). Vivid anecdotes can enhance the speaker's message (Cohen, 2011) and make speakers more persuasive (Conger, 1998) and the use of a personal anecdote early on in a presentation was something Daisuke had been taught before this course (D-1) – further evidence of how he drew upon his previous instruction and experiences, to create a persuasive presentation.

When Daisuke's 31 usages of persuasive discursive techniques are analyzed with Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (2005) we can see a largely even distribution between the Interactive and Interactional dimensions.

Table 5.4 shows how the techniques were categorized, which metadiscourse category they correspond with, and how often Daisuke used them.

Table 5.4.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Daisuke's First Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 13	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 12	Not a part of Hyland's model – 6
Signposting x 7 (frame marker)	Tripling x 3 (booster)	Pausing x 6
Framing point x 4 (frame marker)	Inclusive language x 2 (engagement marker)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Contrasts x 2 (booster)	
Framing main point (frame marker)	Self-introduction (self-mention)	
	Rhetorical question (engagement marker)	
	Attention getter (engagement marker)	
	Personal anecdote (self-mention)	
	Emphasis (boosters)	

This breakdown reveals Daisuke utilized a wide range of techniques and that many of the techniques that were used only once, and went uncommented on by his peers. The exception was the anecdote, which was obviously longer in duration than the other one-off techniques.

Along with using persuasive discursive techniques, Daisuke also firmly believed that a good delivery was a necessity for a persuasive presentation (D-1

& I-1). Previous instruction from his university English teachers had stressed to him the importance of making good eye contact and being text independent. Based on the evidence from the ELAN processing procedures and comments from both his peers and in my notes, it would seem Daisuke excelled in several important delivery areas: good eye contact, appropriate gestures, and a clear voice.

The descriptive data generated from the ELAN procedures illustrates Daisuke was able to deliver excellent eye contact throughout the entire presentation. Only on three brief occasions did he look at his notes. He also looked up three times. The duration of each break in eye contact ranged from approximately 1-2 seconds only. Apart from these six instances, he maintained eye contact with the audience for the rest of the presentation. Table 5.5 provides a summary of the different breakdown in eye contact moves.

Table 5.5.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
6	1	2	3	0

My own notes and the comments from the audience reveal an interesting finding. I evaluated Daisuke as having made "excellent eye contact", which parallels the data from the ELAN procedures. However, only one member of the audience note that Daisuke had made good eye contact, and that this good eye contact had contributed to making his presentation more persuasive (PEF-1). That particular audience member simply wrote (PEF-1): "his eye contact was great". None of the other audience members wrote anything related to eye contact on the PEFs. This finding contradicts what Shimura (2006) discovered: that peer and instructor assessment of eye contact correlates frequently. As conflicting as this finding may seem, it is consistent with what was found in Phase 1, when focus group

members rarely commented on good eye contact, but frequently commented on poor eye contact.

The other aspect of delivery that Daisuke had indicated he was comfortable with was gesturing. The total of 142 annotations in the Gestures column in Table 5.3 would seem to indicate that relative to other participants in this study, Daisuke made far more frequent gestures. When examining the specific gestures he made, they consisted almost exclusively of hand gestures. The predominant types were hands gesturing out to the audience with palms up, or hands gesturing up and down as a means of emphasis. These appeared to be natural and controlled gestures. My notes show that Participant D exhibited "very good body language and use of hands/fingers." Three members of the audience also commented favorably on his body language and frequent gesturing (PEFs-1).

Another significant factor contributing to Daisuke's strong persuasive rating was his ability to successfully use chunking. Daisuke had indicated earlier that he wanted to improve his voice (D-1), and while improving the way one uses their voice is very difficult, at least one study has shown it is possible (Hancock, Stone, Brundage, & Zeigler, 2010). The figures from the ELAN procedures show that Daisuke had fewer chunks of language in the transcript tier than other participants, but that these chunks were longer in average duration. Table 5.6 provides a brief overview of the transcript tier.

Table 5.6.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Chunking	Average Length	Longest
92	2.85 seconds	9.00 seconds

These figures reflect Daisuke's ability to speak fluently in front of the audience. Support for this claim can be found in comments about his delivery (PEFs-1),

which show the audience members felt "the pace was nice", and "his voice was clear". Overall, three audience members (in addition to myself) evaluated him favorably for his chunking (PEFs-1).

In terms of content, Daisuke deliberately chose a topic that all the audience members were familiar with (D-1). Although Daisuke only managed to elicit four minor audible reactions from the audience (Audience tier), this awareness of the audience and about which topic is more likely to attract and persuade them is a contributing factor in making Daisuke such a persuasive presenter and provides further support for the fifth proposition outlined at the beginning of this chapter (Section 5.1).

The second aspect relating to content is the supporting information used in the presentation. Although a finding by Conger (1998) shows that anecdotes and vivid analogies are far more powerful examples of content than statistics, Phase 1 of this study showed that statistics and specific real life examples were highly persuasive. Evidently Daisuke believed in the power of a statistic as well, and employed one as an attention-getter in the introduction section of his presentation, when he announced that, "Japanese students do the third most homework of any country in the world" (P-1). One audience member noted favorably that, "he had a lot of stats", while another felt "he used examples well" (PEFs-1). I also commented in my notes that there was "a lot of research behind his points". There were no negative comments regarding the overall content or any specific examples in Daisuke's presentation.

The only negative feedback of any kind relating to the presentation came from my notes, which stated that Daisuke's conclusion was "rushed". In total the conclusion section (structure tier) lasted only 19 seconds, which would seem to bear out my comment. Nevertheless, none of the audience members, nor Daisuke, commented about this, so it is fair to say a brief conclusion had little to no impact on the persuasiveness of the presentation.

Overall, it can be said that Daisuke had chosen a topic that the audience could easily relate to and understand, and he had delivered it well with almost constant eye contact, and frequent hand gestures. Daisuke also seems to have integrated a strong delivery, with the effective utilization of specific discursive techniques. This successful balancing of the different aspects of an oral presentation is consistent with Fennis and Stel's (2011, p. 806) finding that when, "a verbal influence strategy is embedded in a nonverbal style that fits its orientation, this boosts the strategy's effectiveness" for making a presenter more persuasive.

5.2.6 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 1

Daisuke's reflections on his first presentation and his thoughts on persuasiveness in presentations are now explored, through an analysis of his first SR and post-presentation interview. This serves two purposes; to integrate the reflections with observations and findings so far, and to compare and contrast Daisuke's views and opinions with those he stated at the beginning of the study.

Daisuke confirmed the first finding from the analysis of his presentation, when he stated that he also felt he had been persuasive in his first presentation (SR-1) although, he still rated the persuasiveness of his presentation at 4.00/5.00 (SR-1) – lower than the audience had rated it (5.00/5.00 – PEFs-1). He stated that factors enhancing his persuasiveness had been eye contact, persuasive discursive techniques, and that he had used his own words and experiences to express his message (SR-1). There were few comments regarding the content of his presentation, which is surprising given the stated importance he had placed on content (D-1). Daisuke followed up his SR assessment by again rating his presentation as 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness during the interview (I-1). When probed for the rationale behind this score, he stated (I-1, L168-169) that, "the content was well made", but the "delivery has some space to be improved" (L170-171). There was nothing in particular that he felt had not worked effectively, but he was of the opinion that his presentation might have been "difficult for some students" (I-1, L189).

In the interview Daisuke reiterated that he still believed content was the most important factor for determining persuasiveness, but now stressed content should be combined with effective delivery and language skills (I-1). He explained that he had chosen his topic for the first presentation because he already had an opinion on it and felt comfortable speaking about it (I-1). He also paid particular reference to personalizing his content (SR-1): "I used my personal story to make the presentation more persuasive". Personalizing a message through anecdotes or personal pronouns has been shown to be an effective strategy for advertisers seeking to persuade audiences (Fuertes-Olivera, Velasco-Sacristan, Arribas-Bano, & Samaneigo-fernandez, 2001). Daisuke then reiterated how he had decided to use an anecdote because a previous instructor had taught him it was one of the best ways to get the audience's attention early in a presentation (I-1). This again shows how prior experience played a large role in shaping the way Daisuke constructed his presentation. It also further reveals how Daisuke considered the audience's perspective and what would likely appeal to them, when preparing his presentation.

Daisuke reflected in great depth about the persuasive discursive techniques he had employed in his presentation. He was convinced that "tripling helped attract the audience" and that the "rhetorical question helped make the ending stronger", but speculated that rapport through inclusive language might have only been "unconsciously realized" by the audience (I-1, L178). He explained that he had deliberately tried to build rapport with the audience by using inclusive pronouns such as "we" and "us", although none of the audience members (nor I) had commented on this. Using inclusive language has been shown to be an effective strategy for conference speakers (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). When asked why he had chosen this technique, he replied simply that inclusive language was necessary as the audience were all students and had also experienced education in Japan – again revealing his consideration for the audience (I-1). The use of tripling was due to his view that it was "useful to mention problems in a very rhythmical way." (I-1, L139). He proudly commented that he had successfully utilized tripling and contrasts for the first

time in a presentation (I-1), and demonstrated his continued attempts to incorporate new techniques into his repertoire: "rhetorical question…I wanted to use that." (I-1, L140). The desire to try out new persuasive discursive techniques is a sentiment expressed by many participants in this study.

A "best fit" process determined when Daisuke employed each persuasive discursive technique (I-1). Examples given by Daisuke are; inclusive language was used throughout, tripling during the body, and the rhetorical question at the end to entice the audience to think about the issue in more depth (I-1).

Although Daisuke had stated that delivery is very important for making a presentation persuasive (D-1), he rarely discussed it in the interview and rarely mentioned it on his SR, other than to say he had been pleased with his eye contact throughout the presentation (SR-1). There was little mention of his gesturing or his voice (speed or chunking), which featured prominently in the PEF and video analysis. He did add that not being able to use visuals actually helped him to make more gestures and better eye contact (SR-1).

In terms of preparing for the second presentation, Daisuke had already formulated a few ideas – mostly related to content. "I need to do more research, along with finding statistics and numbers, and interesting examples" (I-1, L224-225). He also stated that he would watch TED talks to learn more about "the way to speak" (I-1, L226-227). These comments reveal Daisuke was actively considering how to intertwine content, delivery, and persuasive discursive techniques.

Finally, when asked about his peers' presentations (not just other participants in this study), Daisuke commented that many presenters appeared nervous and that their weak delivery had undermined their persuasive impact (I-1). He noted (I-1, L206-207) that, "they forgot the sentence or they were reading the script". He then listed a few specific classmates who had appeared too nervous or lacking in confidence and were therefore the least persuasive.

This focus on delivery shows how Daisuke was beginning to now see delivery as equally – if not more – important than content.

5.2.7 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 2

The next step in Daisuke's case study is to document and analyze the second set of data. This begins with an exploration of his preparations for the second presentation and includes a discussion on his beliefs about persuasion in oral presentations. The data are primarily drawn from the second diary and the second interview.

The first important finding was an intriguing change of stance on what Daisuke believed was the primary factor for making an oral presentation persuasive. He wrote in his second diary (D-2) he now believed "delivery is the most important because you have to persuade the audience whether the content is good or not." He then added (D-2): "no matter how good the content is, if the delivery is poor, you cannot persuade the audience." He then elaborated further (D-2) and explained: "during this course, I came to think again because we saw a lot of bad examples of presentations and I realized delivery is important to persuade the audience". As seen in the first set of data, Daisuke had previously demonstrated an ability to adapt and modify his stance after reflecting on the situation. According to these comments in his second diary, his new stance seems to be based on experiences observing other presenters in the class and concluding that in this situation, a good delivery separated the persuasive speakers from the less persuasive speakers.

Daisuke revealed his intention to incorporate more discursive techniques (D-2), along with a desire to "search a little bit more on the content" (D-2) when preparing for the second presentation. He also seems to have decided that his pausing was still weak and stated his plan to improve that by practicing more – further evidence of a continuing resolve to improve his presentation skill repertoire. Other examples of his intentions include deciding to ask the audience questions in the introduction to make his presentation more interactive (evidence again of his awareness and consideration for the audience's

perspective), and to employ tripling in the conclusion to make a more persuasive ending (D-2).

Daisuke's preparations for the second presentation closely mirrored those for his first, in that he initially researched a range of topics before choosing one, and then conducted further background reading. He followed this by crafting specific discursive techniques, then finally practicing his delivery and making small alterations (D-2). A key difference this time however, was that he changed his topic halfway through the preparation period. Finally, Daisuke chose to present a package holiday with a surprise twist. Table 5.7 provides a simplified overview of his preparation timeline.

Table 5.7.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity (Presentation 1)	Activity (Presentation 2)
1	Reviewed presentation class	No preparations
2	No preparations	No preparations
3	Searched for topics online	No preparations
4	Decided topic and printed three articles	Watched a related news program
5	Read an article	No preparations
6	No preparations	Read an article, changed his topic, started writing the script
7	No preparations	Worked on the script
8	Started writing the script and preparing techniques	Finished the script
9	No preparations	Made slides and practiced the presentation
10	Finished the script and practiced the presentation	Practiced and timed the presentation

For the second presentation, Daisuke originally decided to challenge himself by taking a stance on an issue, which he perceived to be the opposite of most of his classmates (D-2). He planned to "knock down their opinions by referring to sentences from the Japanese constitution as well as the United Nations Charter." (D-2). Once again, Daisuke was exhibiting an acute awareness of his intended audience and considering their position when preparing his presentation. However, this awareness also factored into his subsequent change of topic, as he finally determined that "it [the first topic] was a little bit difficult" and not so interesting for the audience (I-2, L19). His new topic was "more related to the lives of the audience"(D-2). His reason for changing the topic is important to note as it has been demonstrated that when the audience's attitude is more accessible (already at least in partial agreement or exhibiting strong familiarity with the position of the speaker), they are more susceptible to persuasion through argument quality (Fabrigar, Priester, Petty & Wegener, 1998). When constructing his new topic and message, he also decided to back-load his argument as a means of persuading the audience: "by letting the audience in on the secret gradually, I am going to keep them attracted to my presentation." (D-2). Back-loading, or the recency effect, is frequently employed in Japanese communication (Okabe, 1983; Sakurada, 2017). He also planned to "link the topic to the audience's major [English]" to draw their attention further (D-2).

Daisuke's constant willingness to experiment was evident with some of the new persuasive discursive techniques that he employed in his first presentation and again in his second presentation. For the second presentation he stated that he wanted to try a knockdown because he needed "to challenge common opinions" (D-2). Daisuke explained that he would mention the opposing points, but would employ softening while doing so, and that he would once again finish with a rhetorical question, which he felt had been "successful last time" (D-2). He added (I-2, L47) that his use of persuasive discursive techniques would be "mostly at the start, or the end". This mirrors findings from Phase 1 of this study, and from other participants in Phase 2, where persuasive discursive techniques are most frequently employed in the introduction and conclusion of presentations.

When asked to reflect on his perceived strengths and weaknesses, Daisuke stated (D-2): "Delivery is the strongest because I am good at talking, using gestures and making eye contact. Language is the weakest because I often make grammar mistakes and also my vocabulary is not sufficient." Although he had largely been satisfied with his delivery in the first presentation, Daisuke still believed he was relatively weak at "pacing, and chunking" (D-2) so he planned to focus on improving these aspects of his delivery. He also recalled feedback on a PEF (before this study) that had said he needed to pause more before key points (I-2). Interestingly though, pacing (and pausing) and chunking were skills he had actually been evaluated highly for (PEFs-1) on the first presentation. In addition, he mentioned feedback from before this study about his introduction having been perceived as slightly confusing. To counter this, he indicated he would (I-2, L88) "link the icebreaker to the audience" in attempting to make the introduction easier to understand. These plans once again show Daisuke's keen focus on the audience.

One different aspect in the second presentation was the necessity to use visuals. Daisuke estimated that he spent "less that 10%" of his preparation time making PowerPoint slides, but felt they would "help the audience to imagine my presentation" (D-2). His view of visual aids as being merely there to assist his presentation mirrors a finding by Estrada et al. (2005) who show audience members rarely rate visuals as important aspects of presentations. This did, however, contradict Campbell et al. (2001), who conclude that many presenters tend to overestimate the importance of their visuals and underestimate the importance of content and delivery (eye contact, body language, and voice quality). Daisuke downplayed his visuals and explained that, "it was only six slides, including the first empty slide. So, it was really simple." He concluded later that he probably spent 70% of his preparation time on the script, and 20% of his time practicing (I-2). He did however, later note (I-2, L62-66): "I think it (visual aids) helped my presentation…they (audience) totally imagined it's a real travel package."

Daisuke concluded his preparations by confidently estimating his presentation would rate 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, due to the strong content, and the unique structuring of his argument, in addition to the use of a range of discursive techniques: signposting, contrasts, tripling, a knockdown, and inclusive language (D-2). Daisuke – more than the other participants – appeared particularly goal oriented about his specific intentions, providing many specific examples of objectives he was attempting to reach, something which has been shown to lead to improved acquisition of oral presentation skills (De Grez, Valke, & Roozen, 2009).

5.2.8 PRESENTATION 2

Attention is now turned to analyzing Daisuke's second presentation. Data is drawn from the ELAN processing procedures (presentation videos), PEFs, and my notes. The length of his presentation was 5:29 and it was again perceived as highly persuasive and received a persuasiveness score of 5.00/5.00 from five members of the audience (PEFs-2). The presentation was only eleven seconds shorter than the first presentation, meaning a comparison of the annotation frequencies is simpler and relatively more meaningful than for other participants. An overview of the descriptive data from the seven tiers (created through the ELAN analysis) is presented in Table 5.8, with data from both presentations provided side-by-side for an easy comparison.

Table 5.8.

Annotation Frequency Figures

Presentation (Time)	Transcript	Discursive Techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience	Visuals
1 (5:40)	92	31	7	142	6	4	X
2 (5:29)	116	58	6	118	42	1	12

From Table 5.8 it can be seen that Daisuke exhibited more frequent breaks in eye contact and fewer gestures in the second presentation. There was also an increase in the chunks of language uttered (transcript tier), almost double the

number of discursive techniques utilized, but only one audible reaction from the audience.

Firstly, although Daisuke indicated before the second presentation that he now believed delivery was the key to a good persuasive presentation, the descriptive data suggests his overall delivery was not as good as it had been in the first presentation. The eye contact tier offers a possible explanation. Table 5.9 illustrates the breakdowns in eye contact for both Daisuke's presentations.

Table 5.9.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Presentation	Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
1	6	1	2	3	0
2	42	0	42	0	0

Daisuke did not read from his notes or the screen, but rather, was frequently checking the screen to his right and behind him. This might have been because of the frequent transitions of his slides (Visuals tier). As will be shown in the other case studies, this pattern of breaks in eye contact was evident in all the participants' second presentations.

Comments on Daisuke's second presentation (PEFs-2) do not align with the ELAN data and reveal that the audience members thought his delivery was very good. As one audience member simply said (PEF-2): "his eye contact and body language was all good". Another added: "Great eye contact – it was perfect". In fact, all five members who wrote the PEFs noted that his body language and eye contact were good. I noted at the time that: "Hands were used well and he had good body language." One potential explanation for this conflicting finding comes from a study by Wecker (2012) who found, what he called, the "speech suppression effect". In his study, members of the audience exhibited much lower retention of oral information when visual slides were presented – meaning they

were essentially distracted by the slides and did not pay as much attention to the speaker and their message. A similar study by Savoy, Proctor, and Salvendy (2009) found that students retained 15% less information delivered verbally when the information was accompanied by PowerPoint slides. While these findings do not pertain to eye contact, there is a parallel that can potentially serve to explain why members of the audience did not notice Daisuke's eye contact breakdowns – the audience were also looking at the screen and did not notice Daisuke was gesturing less and looking at the screen frequently.

In the other delivery related tier, there was an apparent decrease in the overall fluency of Daisuke's speech as he uttered more chunks of language, and for a shorter average duration. Table 5.10 provides an overview of the transcript tier figures for chunking.

Table 5.10.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Presentation	Chunking	Average Length	Longest
1	92	2.85 seconds	9.00 seconds
2	116	2.12 seconds	6.01 seconds

Despite the apparent decline in fluency, two peers commented favorably on his chunking (PEFs-2). Another plausible explanation for the discrepancy between Daisuke's perceived and actual delivery style is that the increased use of discursive techniques and the back-loading of his argument (setting him apart from other presenters) offset a relatively weaker delivery. Firstly, as evident in Table 5.8, Daisuke employed more discursive techniques in his second presentation, 58 vs. 31 in his first presentation.

Table 5.11 below illustrates the persuasive discursive techniques used by Daisuke in his second presentation and the corresponding categories they belonged to, in Hyland's (2005) metadiscourse model.

Table 5.11.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Daisuke's Second Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 8	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 35	Not a part of Hyland's model – 15
Signposting x 4 (frame marker)	Knockdown x 7 (booster)	Pausing x 15
Framing point x 3 (frame marker)	Tripling x 6 (booster)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Repetition x 5 (booster)	
	Intensifier x 5 (booster)	
	Rhetorical question x 3 (engagement marker)	
	Attention getter x 3 (engagement marker)	
	Machine-gunning x 2 (booster)	
	Inclusive language (engagement marker)	
	Doubling (booster)	
	Self-introduction (self-mention)	
	Softening (hedge)	

Similar to the first presentation, signposting and framing of the point were used as a way to clarify the structure and make the points more distinct (P-1; P-2). Daisuke stated (D-2) that he had wanted to improve his pausing skills to make his presentation clearer and to increase the impact of particular points, which

explains the higher frequency of pausing in his second presentation (P-2). He also used tripling and rhetorical questions again, as in the first presentation, although more frequently this time (P-2). Daisuke had also stated previously the desire to use knockdowns in his second presentation (D-2), which he used seven times (P-2).

As in Daisuke's first presentation, an examination of how he used the discursive techniques shows Daisuke effectively combined their usage throughout his presentation to maximize the persuasive impact. He used a rhetorical question right at the beginning of his presentation when he asked the audience: "do you have any plans for summer?" (P-2) before pausing. He then used tripling to speculate and generalize about what they might do (P-2): "some of you might go to the sea, some of you might go to see fireworks, and some of you might go overseas" (P-2). He further speculated that most would prefer to go overseas and talked about some of the positive aspects of going overseas, before using a knockdown and stating that "travel fees are so expensive for us" (P-2). This led directly into his main pitch, which was a travel package he was promoting, and which he described as "satisfying, reliable, and cheap" (P-2). This last example of tripling also served as his presentation outline, and he then proceeded to elaborate on the details of his package tour, without giving away the secret to his message. This well-constructed introduction seems to have been very effective in drawing the interest of his audience (PEFs-2).

Daisuke continued to use a combination of discursive techniques throughout his presentation, which were duly noted by members of the audience (PEFs-2). Another example of a knockdown came when he stated (P-2): "there are so many countries to choose from…which one do you want to go to? It's sometimes difficult to choose." This set up the introduction of his travel package, which included 11 countries. He then used repetition of a key phrase "11 countries" each time he began a new point to magnify and emphasis the grand scale of his package tour, which was noted favorably by members of the audience (PEFs-2). He also listed the countries: "The United States, Britain, Spain, China, Indonesia, Germany, France, Russia, Portugal, Ukraine, and The Philippines" (P-

2), through a technique known as machine-gunning, which was widely praised (PEFs-2). Following this, he explained that his package allowed people to go to "Asia, South East Asia, Europe, Russia, The Middle East, North America, and South America" in another example of machine-gunning. This double use of machine-gunning served to drive home the grandeur of the tour he was pitching and was also effective in enhancing his persuasive impact (PEFs-2).

He continued to use these techniques and others for each individual point in his presentation. For his second point, he used signposting, repetition, and framing of the point to start: "to move to the next point, this package is really reliable for going to 11 foreign countries" (P-2). He then employed another knockdown: "You might worry about your language", before pausing, and then stating: "however in this travel package assistants for each foreign country will accompany you" (P-2). His supporting information was delivered in the form of tripling: "they will help you to make friends with people, they will invite you to local events, and also they will help you acquire the local language" (P-2).

After explaining all the benefits the tour included, he began his final point – the price of the tour – with another knockdown: "usually a package to travel abroad costs 200,000 yen to one million yen ($2,000 - $10,000 USD), so you might worry about the expense" (P-2). He then proceeded to recap all the benefits again, while building suspense over the price, and repeating the "11 countries" phrase twice, before pausing, and allowing a slide with "¥0" to slowly and dramatically appear on screen. He then asked the audience a rhetorical question: "Are you surprised?" (P-2) and unveiled a further surprise ending by stating: "I don't even need to sell you a ticket, because you've already got one. That is (pausing) a ticket to go to (pausing) the World Plaza!" (P-2). The World Plaza is a conversation lounge in the university where Daisuke worked, which provides free language and cultural lessons from a range of different countries, to undergraduate students, and to which, he was encouraging his peers to visit.

Hyland's metadiscourse model helps reveal several patterns in Daisuke's usage of persuasive discursive techniques. Firstly, he used interactional

techniques far more frequently than in his first presentation. Mostly this was achieved through multiple usages of the techniques. Boosters (i.e. repetition, intensifiers, and tripling) were prominent amongst the techniques he used on multiple occasions and were frequently factors in increasing his persuasiveness (PEFs-2).

Comments on the PEFs indicated that although his presentation had a similar number of sections to his first presentation (Structure tier), his back-loading of the message, had had a very strong affect on the audience. Three audience members commented on how persuasive this had been. One said (PEF-2): "He didn't explain what his topic was until the end. I think it can be effective for making people surprised" while another audience member noted (PEF-2) how "he had a strong impact when he announced "¥0" and showed the World Plaza. Well prepared!"

The only negative comment about the presentation came from my notes who wondered in his notes if the delivery had been "slightly too subdued". Apart from that, the audience members and I were in agreement that Daisuke's presentation had been very persuasive and a large reason for this was the employment of a range of discursive techniques, in combination with a unique and well-structured message.

5.2.9 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 2

An analysis of the data from Daisuke's second SR and post-presentation interview supports the findings from the analysis of his presentation. Daisuke self-rated his presentation 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness (SR-2), which was higher than the 4.00/5.00 he had self-rated his first presentation. He attributed the higher rating to a combination of factors he had pre-identified as being integral: "the structure was tricky… My structure attracted the audience until the end and persuaded them well. I used language techniques well. I perfectly memorized the content and did the presentation without reading the script, and I made eye contact and used gestures" (SR-2). Daisuke also broke down the respective areas of presenting and overall gave himself an "A+ because the

structure was 98%, the language was 95%, and the delivery 94%." (SR-2). He reiterated that (SR-2), "I tried to make the presentation persuasive by making the audience think what I was talking about … because it attracted the audience until the end and I gave it a twisted ending, which made the audience realize what a wonderful place I was promoting." He even took into account the audience's reaction, by noting that (I-2, L126-128), "when I was telling the content, they looked like they really wanted to get the travel package. They were nodding and like…wow, so at least they realized the goodness of the World Plaza." Daisuke was the only participant to actually name a member of the audience and describe what he noticed them doing during his presentation: "N had a face like…(gestured) and she was nodding and saying oh that's good" (I-2, L56-56). He finally added (I-2, L89-92): "I always remember all the contents, so sometimes I tend to speak a little fast. I need to talk *with* the audience." His emphasis of 'with' in this last comment is very telling and further reveals a presenter constantly taking the audience into consideration.

Daisuke provided further evidence for his awareness of the audience by explaining how watching his presentation videos helped him improve his delivery. He explained that he could (I-2, L113-115) "imagine how the audience is watching me. So, I changed my gestures, eye contact, and speed…or even the way I talk." This comment illustrates his constant reflection and the evolution of his presenting style. Even after the second presentation Daisuke still seemed dissatisfied with his pausing, which he attributed to being nervous from presenting, and excited about slowly revealing the "really tricky content." (I-2, L142). He vowed to continue working on this technique even after the course had finished (I-2).

When asked how the audience might have rated him, Daisuke speculated they might have scored him at 4.50/5.00 because "maybe they were a little disappointed at the end" (I-2, L148). He suggested that a few members of the audience might have been expecting a 'real' travel package and their disappointment when he revealed the secret might have led them to assess him with a lower score. His fears were evidently misplaced.

Although the back-loaded format of his presentation was a key reason for his high persuasiveness ratings, it was not the only reason. The persuasive discursive techniques employed by Daisuke were well-crafted, well-positioned, and well-received, which he himself noted (I-2). He felt that his knockdowns had been particularly effective because of the manner in which they were delivered (SR-2). These had been combined with the effective use of techniques that he had already used in previous presentations: "repetition, contrasts, tripling, and inclusive language" (SR-2 & I-2). He was particularly satisfied with his use of tripling (I-2, L134-135), as it made it "really easy for them (audience) to catch the sales point."

In terms of reflecting on his classmates' presentations, Daisuke identified two that he thought were particularly persuasive. One was Maki (Case study 2) who was actually collectively rated as relatively less persuasive than other classmates. When pressed for a reason, he stated that (I-2, L189-190), "I think it was the topic…she always chooses interesting topics. I didn't know about Palau. I didn't know it was a kind of 'brother' to Japan." He also felt another classmate's presentation (not part of this study) was particularly persuasive because of her unique utilization of a hand-held prop (distinguishing her from other presenters). Both of these presenters seemed to have done or talked about something unique that had caught Daisuke's attention, making them more persuasive than other presenters. Daisuke then clarified that although these unique approaches had worked well, he still felt that presenters who had prepared and practiced well were generally more persuasive. As he surmised (I-2, L202-203): "presenters who practiced well, their techniques worked well."

At the end of the study, Daisuke was of the opinion that, "persuasiveness comes from a combination of delivery, content and persuasive discursive techniques. But, if I were to choose one, I would choose delivery." (I-2, L216-217). His explanation revealed an acute sense of context playing a significant role in determining his answer, based on his experiences watching the second presentations from his classmates. He stated (I-2, L220-221): "all the content was good, I think. But…I was persuaded because of their delivery. Some

deliveries were well practiced and confident looking but some presentations weren't". When asked about what constituted a good delivery, he explained that, "the most important thing is…memorize…and tripling or other language techniques, or gestures or eye contact, were just like the branches again. The stem is just remember and make them your story, your words…that's the stem I think." (I-2, L225-228). Later, when explaining his shift in opinion back towards delivery being the most important factor, he restated that (I-2, L248-249), "I saw some presenters who were bad at delivery in this course, and it was not persuasive, or informative, so I changed my mind and I realized again that delivery was the most important for presentations…any kind of presentation."

Daisuke concluded by stating that he preferred the challenge of delivering and watching persuasive presentations to informative presentations (I-2). According to Daisuke, in informative presentations all he had to do was search for information (content), but in persuasive presentations he had to consider strategies to make it persuasive (I-2, L155-156) – thereby making it more difficult: "Informative is…just information. It was like as if I was watching the news (laughs). But, persuasive, we try to attract the audience because we had to persuade the audience. And I learned some techniques…it was more interesting".

5.2.10 PROPOSITIONS REVISITED

The six propositions outlined in Section 5.1 are now reassessed, based on the findings and the analysis of Daisuke's case study. Many of the propositions have at least partially been supported.

The first proposition (*Previous presenting experiences and prior instruction will shape initial beliefs and attitudes*) proved especially relevant throughout this case study, in terms of the techniques Daisuke employed in his presentations, and in how he viewed the factors that determined the persuasive impact of presentations. He clearly remembered being instructed on key delivery aspects (eye contact and being text independent), as well as important ways to get the audience's attention early in a presentation (using anecdotes or personalizing the material and message). According to Daisuke, these early

experiences shaped his original view that delivery was the key for enhancing persuasiveness, until an experience in a presentation contest altered his beliefs. Seeing presenters succeed in the contest by focusing more on content, prompted a shift in Daisuke's beliefs, and he approached the first presentation in this study believing strong content would make him persuasive. The first set of presentations then led him to conclude that delivery was actually the most important element of a persuasive presentation. This was based on his observation that all the presenters in his class had content of similar quality, but that the ability to deliver the message effectively separated the persuasive speakers from the less persuasive speakers.

Persuasive discursive techniques were prevalent in both Daisuke's presentations, providing partial support for the second proposition (*Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact*). Although his first presentation constituted a balanced mixture of interactive and interactional techniques (according to Hyland's model of metadiscourse), his second presentation featured significantly more interactional techniques (range of techniques and frequency of usage) than interactive. Daisuke explicitly stated a desire to implement familiar techniques and new techniques and frequently described when he wanted to use them, and then later, how effective he thought they had been, and why – indicating that for him, they were an integral part of a persuasive presentation. Daisuke also successfully combined the usage of persuasive discursive techniques for greater impact on multiple occasions. The techniques used by Daisuke that were noticed by his peers and considered factors in enhancing the persuasiveness of his presentations, were boosters, attitude markers, and frame markers. Finally, being able to utilize a suitable delivery style effectively while verbalizing the techniques also set him apart from other less persuasive speakers and meant that even when the techniques were not noticed or commented on, they did not detract from the persuasive impact he was seeking.

The third proposition is the notion that *Presenters will exhibit a selective bias in terms of overestimating the importance of presenting skills, which they are*

good at, and was not as well supported in Daisuke's case study. Daisuke was adept at pinpointing different elements of presentations that served others well (in the contest he attended and in class presentations) and incorporating these elements into his own presentation or improving his own perceived shortcomings, thereby disproving the idea of a selection bias in terms of overestimating the importance of skills he was good at. In fact, the opposite was frequently true, in that Daisuke noticed weaknesses in his presentations and attempted to rectify them, in an effort to become more persuasive.

Daisuke also demonstrated an acute understanding that a persuasive presentation was not determined by one factor alone, but rather a combination of factors, as outlined in proposition four: *The importance of content, delivery skills, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for persuasiveness.* An interesting analogy that he mentioned twice, whereby the content is the stem of a tree, and the delivery and language (discursive) techniques are the branches reaching out to the audience, articulates his belief vividly. Daisuke's preparations and post-presentation reflections always featured comments on the content, delivery and discursive techniques of his presentations and of his peers' presentations.

Daisuke's continued reflection on his experiences and modification of his views supports the fifth proposition of this study: *Successful presenters will modify and adjust these beliefs and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting*. Findings from his diaries, presentation videos, SRs, and interviews, all show how Daisuke carefully considered the audience when preparing and delivering his presentation. This meant he selected topics they could relate to, he attempted to gain their attention early in the presentation with an anecdote, and he used inclusive language throughout the presentations. Such strong consideration for the audience is not found in the other case study participants' preparations, comments, or presentations, and sets Daisuke apart from them.

Finally, regarding the sixth proposition (*English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness*), there was no mention of Daisuke's English ability by either the presenter or members of the audience in this study. One can only conclude that it did not detract from or enhance the overall persuasiveness of Daisuke's two presentations.

One further idea that Daisuke's case study has brought forth is the notion that uniqueness or the 'novelty factor' seems to be especially effective for enhancing persuasiveness. This was evident in Daisuke's unique (for this study) back-loading of the argument in his second presentation, and in his noting of several other presenters who had done something different. The ability to somehow differentiate your presentation from others' might be conducive to making it more persuasive; it certainly makes such presentations more memorable.

In conclusion, Daisuke was able to continually adapt and evolve his presentation style to match the context and requirements he perceived, and to take into account the needs and reactions of the audience, thereby making him extremely persuasive in both presentations. His use of persuasive discursive techniques was adept and certainly played a part in making his presentations persuasive, but was by no means, the only factor.

5.3 MAKI

"Maki" is the second case study to be explored in Phase 2. As with Daisuke's case study, Maki's follows a case descriptive framework approach with a chronological structure (Yin, 2014), a 'chains of evidence' approach (Duff, 2008), and is presented in a narrative form (Hood, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995). The same six theoretical propositions used to structure the analysis of Daisuke's case study are also employed for Maki's case study, which help "to organize the entire analysis, pointing to relevant contextual conditions to be described as well as explanations to be described (Yin, 2014, p. 136).

5.3.1 PROFILE

Maki's case study begins with a description of her relevant background information, as recommended by Seidman (2006). The data compiled were obtained from the participant's diaries and interviews. At the time of the study Maki was a 21-year-old female in her third year of university, who had never lived abroad (D-1). Her highest TOEIC score of 705 (D-1) was obtained the year before this study and is the lowest score amongst the four participants in Phase 2. She never delivered an English oral presentation in junior high school or in high school (D-1; I-1) so her prior experience learning about and delivering oral presentations in English was limited to her first two years of university. Table 5.12 provides an overview of Maki's background.

Table 5.12.

Background Information – Maki

Age	21
Gender	Female
Year of study	Junior year (3rd year)
Best TOEIC score	705 (2014)
Experience studying abroad	None
Experience presenting abroad	None
Reason for enrolling in course	Wanted more opportunities to speak English and liked the instructor
Reason for volunteering to join study	It looked easy
Experience delivering English presentations	1st year University – Oral Communication in English course 2nd year University – Oral Communication in English course

5.3.2 EXPERIENCES

Maki's experience learning about and delivering oral presentations came during her first two years at university (D-1). Both of these courses (Oral

Communication in English) were general English communication classes, but contained oral presentations as part of the course requirements. Maki recalled specific instruction regarding presentation skills in her first year Oral Communication in English class, but believed that the instruction had been detrimental for her (D-1). Primarily, she recalled being instructed to write a complete script and memorize it, which she found difficult to do, and which subsequently caused her to panic when presenting (I-1). She recalled that she had not been allowed to use PowerPoint for visual aids, but instead had had to make posters by hand, to which she added: "I don't like it… It takes longer and my handwriting is not good" (I-1, L28-32). Finally, she concluded by stating that the teacher had not provided any instruction on presentation skills (delivery techniques or persuasive discursive techniques), and had only "focused on the main point very much." (I-1, L34-35). Maki further recalled that, "We had to ask her, is it (the topic) okay?...many times…and sometimes she decided the topic for us!" (I-1, L35-37).

In her second year of university, I was her instructor for Oral Communication in English. She pointed out that, "I learned I don't have to memorize! And, how to use PowerPoint…the opposite of first year" (I-1, L47-49). She recalled (D-1; I-1) learning several specific points; how to organize a presentation; how to use visuals; how to construct effective introductions and conclusions; and how to utilize specific vocabulary (change and development verbs, and signposting). She further stated that she began delivering persuasive oral presentations in this second-year course and that this required composing three reasons or points, based on reliable information, to persuade the audience (D-1; I-1). According to Maki the difference between informative and persuasive presentations was: "Informative presentations: only telling information. Persuasive presentations: changing mind, idea, or perspective of the audience." (D-2). Aside from these two classes, Maki had had no further instruction or experience delivering oral presentations.

Maki pointed out that at the time of her first interview, she had never presented in Japanese at university, but that she was going to deliver a Japanese

presentation in another class a week later (I-1). When asked about the perceived differences between presenting in English and in Japanese, she replied: "Japanese one is of course easier for me…to say…but the content is more difficult. In the Japanese presentation I don't have to care about the skills of a presentation. Just speak."(I-1, L91-95). When asked in the second interview about this presentation, she merely replied it had been okay, and indicated she had had no feedback from the instructor of that course (I-2).

5.3.3 BELIEFS

At the outset of this study, Maki believed that content was the most important factor for making a presentation persuasive. As she stated in her first diary (D-1): "I think content is the most important because the delivery and language are used to make the contents better, deeper, and easier to understand. I think they just support content." There is a certain amount of irony in her statement as she used the persuasive discursive technique tripling ("better, deeper, and easier") to express her belief, but Maki would remain consistent in her conviction, unlike Daisuke, who continually readjusted his beliefs throughout the study. In the first interview, she reiterated the same sentiment; "I think the most important thing is content. Other skills are also important because if we use them, the presentation will be better. By using the other skills we can get the audience's attention." (I-1, L103-106). It can be said then, that Maki and Daisuke shared a similar belief before the first presentation, that content was the determining factor in a persuasive presentation, and that delivery and persuasive discursive techniques served to enhance the content.

5.3.4 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 1

A description of Maki's preparations for her first presentation is now given, drawn from her diary and first interview. Maki frequently just listed points in response to diary prompts or questions and did not elaborate extensively (possibly due to a relatively weaker English level). This means that her preparations and reflections are shorter and less robust than that of the other participants. Maki's preparations followed a similar pattern to Daisuke's – beginning with a search for a topic and relevant information online, then by

writing a script, and finally by practicing the presentation (D-1; I-1). As with Daisuke, there were several days when there were no preparations conducted. Table 5.13 provides a summarized version of her preparations listed for the ten days leading up to the presentation (10 represents the day before the presentation was delivered).

Table 5.13.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity
1	No preparations
2	Gathered information
3	No preparations
4	Decided the structure and three supporting points
5	Made the introduction
6	Completed three supporting points
7	Planned conclusion and rearranged supporting points
8	No preparations
9	Practiced, timed presentation, and prepared cue card
10	Practiced and timed presentation

Maki chose to present on how Japan is a safe country to live in. She appeared to focus almost exclusively on the content and structure of her presentation when preparing, which would support her previously stated belief that content is the key factor for making a presentation persuasive. This is not entirely unusual, as research has shown that (group) planning for presentations typically focuses primarily on content (Tuan & Neomy, 2007). In terms of the specific topic, she explained that she had chosen it because it "was the most familiar to me" (D-1), and that she planned to "use information that surprises people" by starting with a fact the audience was unlikely to know (D-1) as her attention getter. The structure of her presentation was organized according to the principle of priority, as she was of the opinion that "the most strong point should be first" (D-1). This style of front-loading her argument was different from the traditional

Japanese rhetoric style, of back-loading the argument (Okabe, 1983; Sakurada, 2017), but typical of all the presenters in this class (aside from Daisuke's second presentation). She did additionally comment that she had wanted to use visuals, as some supporting statistics would have been more effectively presented in a graph or chart (I-1).

Despite her focus on the content while preparing, Maki stressed that persuasive discursive techniques are also important, as they "get the audience's attention and make the points stronger" (D-1). She admitted though that she had only ever used repetition and signposting, but intended to use machine-gunning, softening, an intensifier, and repetition in the first presentation (D-1). She also planned to use several rhetorical questions to make her presentation more interactive (D-1), something L2 speakers find very difficult to do (Yang, 2010; Zareva, 2009a). In particular, she planned to finish emphatically by using machine-gunning and a rhetorical question (I-1). As with Daisuke, Maki indicated that her choice of techniques had largely been determined by their ease of use (D-2) and that they were employed following a 'best fit" principle – primarily in the introduction and conclusion.

Unlike Daisuke, who stressed eye contact as the key delivery skill, Maki focused more on her voice (D-1). She believed her chunking was good (D-1) because several peers had complimented her on it previously, but still believed her voice needed improving as it was "flat and doesn't change" (D-1) and that she "couldn't do it well on the last presentation" (D-1).

Finally, Maki ended her diary by rating her presentation at 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, because of good content and because she would employ some of the persuasive discursive techniques she had learned in the course. She also felt she had practiced a lot, but that nerves would likely somewhat undermine her performance (D-1).

5.3.5 PRESENTATION 1

This section now describes and analyzes Maki's first presentation. Her presentation time was only 4:38, almost a minute under the 5:30-6:00 time frame stipulated by the instructions. Nevertheless, the presentation seems to have been well regarded and was rated overall at 4.80/5.00 for persuasiveness by her peers. To explain why it was considered persuasive and to better explore the persuasive techniques she employed, data from the presentation video are integrated with findings from the PEFs and my notes. Table 5.14 provides an overview of the annotation frequency figures for Maki's first presentation.

Table 5.14.

Annotation Frequency Figures for 1st Presentation

Transcript	Discursive techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience
77	21	5	8	98	4

Maki's first presentation was shorter than Daisuke's, so it is not surprising that there were fewer chunks of language (transcript tier), fewer points in the presentation (Structure tier), and fewer persuasive discursive techniques employed. There were however, far more breaks in eye contact and far fewer gestures. As with the other participants' presentations, there were few audible reactions from the audience.

Maki stated in her diary that she would utilize persuasive discursive techniques (D-1). However, an analysis of her presentation reveals she only used them 21 times in her first presentation. Table 5.15 shows which techniques she used, how often they were used, and to which dimension of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse they corresponded.

Table 5.15.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Maki's First Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 10	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 8	Not a part of Hyland's model – 3
Signposting x 4 (frame marker)	Rhetorical question x 5 (engagement marker)	Pausing x 3
Framing point x 4 (frame marker)	Attention getter (engagement marker)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Bookending (booster)	
Framing main point (frame marker)	Self-introduction (self-mention)	

Of particular interest was Maki's sparse use of interactional techniques. Aside from the rhetorical questions, there were few other attempts to involve the audience in her presentation. An analysis of her presentation reveals that rhetorical questions were used five times (more than other persuasive discursive techniques) and three of her peers commented that this had enhanced the persuasiveness of her presentation (PEFs-1). The first usage was in the introduction when she explained that people in Honduras can "possess 5 rifles and 2 pistols legally" and then asked the audience: "Can you believe this?" (P-1). Following this rhetorical question Maki paused for almost two seconds and surveyed the audience for their reaction (P-1). She then used rhetorical questions to set up her first two supporting points. First, she asked the audience: "can you go home late at night alone, after your part-time job or club activities?" (P-1) and then explained that as most people answered 'yes', this was evidence Japan is a safe country (P-1). For her second point, she followed up the signposting with a rhetorical question set: "Have you ever lost your wallet in another country? Was it returned to you? I guess the answer is no" (P-1). She then gave statistical evidence showing that people who had lost their wallet in

Japan were likely to have it returned to them. For her third point, she did not utilize a rhetorical question, but did attempt one when concluding her presentation in combination with machine-gunning: "Japan is safe, protected, more orderly, and peaceful country. What more can I say?" (P-1). The grammatical mistakes undoubtedly undermined what had been a successful combination of points and may explain why none of the peers in the audience wrote this combination of techniques had enhanced her presentation (PEFs-1).

The other two frequently utilized techniques in Maki's first presentation were signposting (four times) and pausing (three times at an average of just 0.89 seconds) (P-1). Three of her peers noted that her use of signposting had enhanced the persuasive impact of the presentation by making her points clearer and more distinct (PEFs-1). She also utilized intensifiers and repetition twice, and bookending once (P-1), although none of her peers commented on these techniques in the PEFs. Bookending was used in the introduction section of her presentation and came right after her attention getter: "no city is more dangerous than San Pedro Sula…none at all" (P-1). She then explained that there had been 1000 murders in the city in 2011, which was then contrasted with the murder rate in Japan (not with a Japanese city): "the murder rate is 400 times higher than in Japan" (P-1). I wrote in my notes that this comparison was confusing.

The overall content of Maki's presentation and the use of specific examples to support her points were praised by two of her peers (PEFs-1). As one peer summarized: "She had good research, clear points and a good structure" (PEF-1). In her preparations Maki had written that she would show a 'surprising fact' in the beginning of her presentation to get the audience's attention and to support her main message, which turned out to be the murder rate in Honduras that was contrasted with the significantly lower murder rate in Japan. This 'surprising fact' seems to have met with a mixed reaction. While two members of the audience thought it had been persuasive, one other member commented that it had been confusing and that they were initially not sure whether Maki was going to talk about Honduras or Japan (PEF-1).

Maki's presentation was undermined by a weak delivery, characterized by poor eye contact and a weak voice/chunking. The frequency figures reveal a presenter who broke eye contact with her audience 98 times in a presentation that spanned only about four and a half minutes (P-1). To put this in perspective, Daisuke did so on only six occasions during a presentation that was a minute longer. Also important to note was that for almost half of these breaks in eye contact, Maki was actually reading words, numbers, phrases, or even sentences, from her cue cards. Table 5.16 provides an overview of the breakdown in eye contact moves in Maki's first presentation.

Table 5.16.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
98	44	53	0	1

I rated Maki's overall eye contact "average" as she seemed to be constantly checking and reading her notes, likely due to being nervous. Another member of the audience also noted that she appeared to be frequently "reading her script" (PEF-1) and that this detracted from the persuasive impact of her presentation. However, the other peers did not comment on her eye contact or body language. As in some of the other presentations in this study, there was a decline in the frequency of gestures that accompanied weaker eye contact. In fact there were only eight instances of gestures in Maki's first presentation, illustrating that she exhibited static body language for the vast majority of her presentation. When compared to the frequency figure for Daisuke (142 annotations in his first presentation), it is easy to envision a distinct difference in the delivery styles.

Maki had indicated before the presentation that her voice was her primary delivery skill concern. When compared to Daisuke, the figures in the transcript tier are not overtly dissimilar – indicating Maki had also delivered a fairly fluent presentation. The number of chunks of language was fewer than in

Daisuke's, but that is to be expected with a shorter presentation. The average duration of each chunk (2.54 seconds) though, was only marginally shorter than Daisuke's, and the longest chunk (6.91 seconds) was also only marginally shorter than Daisuke's longest chunk (P-1).

I wrote in my notes that Maki had done quite well varying her voice. I also added that while her chunking had been quite good, it was still not at a high level. There were however, few comments about her voice on the PEFs other than from one member who was of the opinion that Maki had "spoken a little fast" (PEF-1) and from another who thought Maki could have "waited for the audience's reaction a little longer" (PEF-1) when pausing.

From the data it can be deduced that Maki delivered a very persuasive presentation, primarily due to good content, and noticeable and effective persuasive discursive techniques, but that her presentation was somewhat undermined by a relatively weak delivery, characterized by poor eye contact and a lack of gestures.

5.3.6 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 1

Maki's reflections on her first presentation are now explored. The data are drawn from her first self-reflection report and from her first interview.

Maki declined to provide a persuasive score in the interview for her presentation, or to estimate what the audience had rated her presentation (I-1), but she rated it 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness on the self-reflection report (SR-1). Her rationale for the score was that "I used the result of a survey, some examples, and statistics to make my presentation more persuasive." (SR-1). She also remembered noticing members of the audience nodding during periods of her presentation, and reiterated how she had used a lot of information, and was hopeful the audience had been persuaded by it (I-1). She gave herself an "A" grade for the presentation "because I could use some language skills and organized it well…on the first presentation (before this study) I included few language skills. Therefore this time I tried to use some skills which I learned in

this class." (SR-1). This comment indicates that Maki viewed the use of persuasive discursive techniques as having enhanced the persuasiveness of her presentation. This positive self-reflection also contrasts with a reflection given in the interview, where she stated that "Actually this presentation was no good. Because I was very nervous and I…forgot many points, and I skipped it then. So, it was very short. So, it was not very good, but I tried to use many skills. I used more skills than last time. Maybe it was more persuasive than last time." (I-1, L-149-154).

When asked to give specific examples of techniques she had used well, Maki explained that she had improved her chunking (I-1) and the pace of her presentation: "usually I speak fast in front of people, so I cared about speaking slowly with chunking and taking a pause." (SR-1). "When I practiced the presentation I tried to pause. So, maybe I could do it." (I-1, L159-160). She then added, "I used more language skills than last presentation such as intensifiers, repetition, (and) machine-gunning…I think these skills gave a big impression on the audience" (SR-1). She did note that machine-gunning had not worked well as "it was difficult to speak many words quickly" (SR-1).

Maki also agreed with one of the primary findings from the analysis of her presentation: her delivery had been the weakest element of her presentation (I-1). When asked what she needed to improve for the next presentation to make it more persuasive, she replied: "I was very nervous that I forgot some important points! I have to be more confident! I will try to make eye contact more." (SR-1). She also discussed her voice, which she felt was a significant weakness: "Last time, I couldn't vary my voice, therefore I tried this time. But, I couldn't do it well. I thought I could change my voice, but I found that my voice was very flat when I watched my presentation (video)." (SR-1). In the interview she discussed this again: "Varying my voice didn't work, because my voice is very flat." (I-1, L165). She later wrote again in her second diary that being unable to vary her voice was the weakest point of her first presentation (D-2).

Finally, Maki reflected on her classmates' presentations and immediately declared "everyone was good" (I-1, L177). When probed further, she responded that Daisuke and Rena had been especially persuasive. The reasons given indicate she had been particularly persuaded by things they had done, which she considered to be weaknesses in her own presentation skill set. She commented that Daisuke "asked a lot of questions, for us, and he was very good at varying his voice and chunking", while adding that Rena (case study 3) "is very confident and she always makes eye contact with us. When she wanted to insist the most, her voice was strong, so that was good." (I-1, L180-184). In terms of the less persuasive speakers, Maki hesitated to pinpoint anyone, but stated that one presenter "read the script, and checked it many times…but I checked it many times…but I thought it was not good." (I-1, L189-191). At the end of the first interview, Maki once again stated that she wanted to "vary my voice more in the next presentation, because I couldn't do it well." (I-1, L197-198). She further added that "my classmates could speak with enough pausing last time, so I will try to do so (next time)" (D-1). Although she was clearly unsatisfied with her delivery, there was no mention of needing to improve the content of her presentation or of needing more persuasive discursive techniques.

5.3.7 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 2

A description and analysis of the second set of data now begins by exploring changes in Maki's views and then her preparations for the second presentation. The data are drawn from her second diary and second interview. Firstly, Maki reiterated that she still believed content was the key factor to make a persuasive presentation: "I think content is the most important. If I use delivery and language skills, but have boring content, the presentation will be bad. Delivery and language skills are just for helping content." (D-2). She then seemed to support a potential selection bias (proposition three) by further explaining, "Content is my strongest (aspect), because I take much time to search information and organize it. Delivery is weak, because I cannot do it well when I am nervous in front of people." (D-2). She did potentially contradict this by later explaining that she had been pleasantly surprised by her persuasiveness score in the first presentation, and then attributed this high rating to using "many skills,

which I had learned in this course." However, she remained steadfast in her belief and stated in her second diary that she had not changed her opinion: "the foundation (for my beliefs) was learned last year (her second year at university)" (D-2). This comment indicates Maki's beliefs were shaped before this course (proposition one).

Maki chose to present a package tour to Palau, and her preparation timeline for the second presentation resembled that of her first presentation. Firstly, she decided her topic after researching online, then gathered more information and organized the structure, before finally practicing the presentation in the final two days. Within this time frame, there was also one day when she evidently did not prepare or work on the presentation. Table 5.17 provides a summarized version of her diary entries (D-2), with a day-by-day summary from her first presentation included for a comparison.

Table 5.17.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity (Presentation 1)	Activity (Presentation 2)
1	No preparations	No preparations
2	Gathered information	Decided topic
3	No preparations	Gathered information
4	Decided topic the structure and three supporting points	Gathered information
5	Made the introduction	Gathered information
6	Completed three supporting points	Organized information, made introduction and conclusion
7	Planned conclusion and rearranged supporting points	Made body and conclusion
8	No preparations	Made slides
9	Practiced, timed presentation, and prepared cue card	Practiced and timed presentation

10	Practiced and timed presentation	Practiced and timed presentation

From this timetable we can draw several important findings. Firstly, Maki seems to have consistently prepared for the second preparation, based on the fact she prepared every day for the nine days leading up to the presentation. Another finding worth noting is that Maki stated she had intended to practice more for this presentation, and practiced in the two days preceding her presentation (D-2). This mirrors Daisuke who also only practiced the day before for his first presentation, but practiced for two days preceding the second presentation. Finally, Maki – as Daisuke did – prepared the slides near the end of the preparation period and appeared to spend less time on them, in comparison to other elements of the presentation (D-2).

Maki explained the reason she had chosen her particular topic (persuading her classmates to choose Palau as their next holiday destination), was simply due to her interest in it, and the likelihood that none of her classmates had been there – making it unique for them (D-2). Her structure began with the historical background, before showcasing the many attractive features of Palau (D-2). Once again she decided to use a statistic to try and attract the audience's attention during the introduction (D-2).

Maki indicated she planned to use a range of persuasive discursive techniques and once again felt they would enhance the impact of her presentation (D-2), although she did not elaborate further on which specific techniques she would utilize or how she would deliver them effectively. The only example she provided was bookending, which she intended to use because she had been unable to use it properly in the first presentation (D-2).

Regarding her delivery, Maki once again commented on how she struggled to vary her voice, but now felt confident about her chunking ability (D-2). There was no mention of making eye contact with the audience.

For visuals, Maki created PowerPoint slides two days before the presentation day and estimated it consumed about 20% of her total preparation time (D-2). Although she was of the opinion that visuals help presenters, she was also aware that they sometimes distract presenters and that presenters "tend to rely on visuals too much." (D-2).

There are two further interesting notes from Maki's second diary. The first is that she had no plans to be interactive with the audience (D-2). The other potentially important finding was that Maki mentioned writing a script for her presentation and how she had practiced memorizing it (D-2). She had earlier bemoaned having to write out a script in her first year of university and subsequently being unable to memorize it. Yet, she still persisted with the same approach to preparing her presentation, indicating she was either not able to modify her approach, or did not see the need to do so. Finally, Maki confidently estimated that her presentation would be rated 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, as she "practiced harder and will use more skills this time." (D-2).

5.3.8 PRESENTATION 2

A description and analysis of Maki's second presentation is now provided, drawing upon data from the ELAN processing procedures (presentation videos), PEFs, her SR, and my notes. The presentation was 6:59 – longer than her first presentation, and longer than the 6:00 to 6:30 minutes allotted for each speaker.

The most significant finding comes from the persuasiveness rating assigned by her peers. While Maki's first presentation had received an overall persuasiveness score of 4.80/5.00 (PEFs-1), her score was only 3.50/5.00 in the second presentation (PEFs-2). This score was substantially lower than the other participants in the study, and the sixth lowest score in the class (21 students). Initially though, Maki believed that her presentation had been successful and wrote, "I could use more skills than the last two presentations, and I could organize better than last time." (SR-2). She further added that, "I searched much more and practiced harder than last time, and I think I could use PowerPoint well", before adding that she assessed her presentation as "A", with a persuasive

rating of 4.00/5.00 (SR-2). When trying to differentiate her second presentation from the previous presentations she had done, she explained that, "How to explain is the same as last two times, but I used more skills and practiced harder" (SR-2); a statement which backs up the findings from her diary in which she placed more emphasis on practicing and also demonstrated her belief that presentation skills could enhance the content of her presentation. Table 5.18 provides an overview of the data from Maki's second presentation, alongside the data from her first presentation for comparison.

Table 5.18.

Annotation Frequency Figures

Presentation (Time)	Transcript	Discursive Techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience	Visuals
1 (4:38)	77	21	5	8	98	4	X
2 (6:59)	139	27	5	16	144	2	14

From Table 5.18, a few points need to be noted. Firstly, as the second presentation was much longer than the first presentation (6:59 compared to 4:38), it is not surprising to see that the number of annotations in the transcript (chunks of language) and eye contact tiers increased. What is potentially more important is that the number of persuasive discursive techniques used, only increased slightly. Also of interest is that gestures were again rare in Maki's second presentation and there was almost no reaction from the audience during the presentation. She did however, have the same amount of sections in both her presentation (Structure tier). A general assumption one might draw from glancing at these figures, is that while the presentation was longer and contained more chunks of language, more information, and use of visuals, Maki had delivered her second presentation in a similar manner to her first one, with a limited amount of persuasive discursive techniques, almost no interaction with the audience, few gestures, and frequent breaks in eye contact.

Firstly, there are some interesting observations that can be drawn from the transcript tier figures. Table 5.19 below provides a breakdown of these figures with a comparison to Maki's first presentation.

Table 5.19.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Presentation	Chunking	Average Length	Longest
1	77	2.54 seconds	6.91 seconds
2	139	2.00 seconds	6.49 seconds

An initial finding is that there were almost twice as many chunks of language in Maki's second presentation, although it bears repeating that her second presentation was approximately 50% longer than her first presentation. Another finding is that the average length of the chunks also decreased by approximately half a second. This could indicate a less fluent speech.

Table 5.20 provides an overview of the persuasive discursive techniques utilized by Maki in both her presentations, which have been categorized according to Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse. Despite a substantially longer presentation, Maki only employed persuasive discursive techniques 27 times in her second presentation, as compared with 21 in her first presentation.

Table 5.20.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Maki's Second Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 13	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 10	Not a part of Hyland's model – 4
Signposting x 7	Intensifier x 3	Pausing x 4

(frame marker)	(booster)
Framing point x 3	Rhetorical question x 2
(frame marker)	(engagement marker)
Guideline	Attention getter x 2
(frame marker)	(engagement marker)
Reframing point	Bookending
(frame marker)	(booster
Referencing	Doubling
(evidentials)	(booster)
	Tripling
	(booster)

As in her first presentation, Maki used more interactive than interactional techniques, which served to strengthen the structure of her presentation and add clarity. This can be seen in her use of signposting (seven times), and framing the main point (three times). Signposting was done at the beginning of each point, as well as in the introduction and conclusion (P-2). Framing of the main point directly followed signposting for each of her three main supporting points (P-2). She also utilized pausing four times and intensifiers three times as a way to enhance the impact of her message (P-2). However, once again, the pausing was very short (1.01 seconds average length).

A description of the other persuasive discursive techniques Maki employed is now given. As with most presenters in Phase 2, these techniques were utilized frequently in the introduction of the presentation, which traditionally helps for building credibility, drawing the interest of the audience, and building solidarity (Gurak, 2000; Hood & Forey, 2005; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). Indeed her introduction garnered praise from her peers, with comments such as “good opening”, “clear opening”, and “interesting opening” (PEFs-2). Maki actually began her presentation rather abruptly with an attention getter (a scenic picture of a beach) and by telling the audience to “please look at this picture” (P-2), before pausing for 1.2 seconds. She then proceeded to ask a rhetorical question: “Don’t you think the flag of Palau is

similar to Japan?" (P-2) before pausing for 1.4 seconds. I noted that this attention getter had been "somewhat effective" although it wasn't immediately clear how the beach and flag were related. She then explained that Japan has a "very very deep relationship with Palau" (P-2), using doubling to enhance the impact of what she was saying. After signposting her first point, framing the main point again, and referencing a source, Maki explained the content related to her first point, without using a discursive technique for slightly over a minute.

The next usage of a persuasive discursive technique was when Maki signposted and then framed her second point (P-2). She also used bookending to try and make the point more persuasive; "no country is more pro-Japanese than Palau, none at all" (P-2). Unfortunately, she then seemed to lose focus, and spent several seconds shuffling her notes, while only uttering "umm…" (P-2). She later lamented this: "Bookending (did not work well), because I couldn't say bookend part soon" (SR-2). This is another example of how a persuasive discursive technique, did not result in enhancing the persuasiveness of the presentation, due to a poor delivery. Following the delay, she then posed a rhetorical question: "Why Palau is so close to Japan?" (P-2), but once again lost her train of thought, and spent four seconds looking at her notes, before proceeding to explain the historical connection between the two countries.

Maki relied primarily on her content to persuade the audience with her second point and talked for almost a minute before employing a grammatically incorrect intensifier: "The Japanese government educated the people in Palau extremely hardly" (P-2). At the end of her second point, she paraphrased her main message again, and then used signposting to signal she had begun her third point (P-2). Almost a minute elapsed without any techniques being employed, before she again used signposting and then reframed the main point to signal her next point (P-2). Her next usage of a persuasive technique was almost thirty seconds later and was again an intensifier: "you can enjoy a wonderful view" (P-2). She followed this about a minute later with another intensifier: "you can spend a lot of time in such a fantastic place like this" (P-2). Only one peer commented favorably on her use of this intensifier (PEF-2).

Maki used signposting once more to indicate she was commencing her conclusion, but stuttered during the delivery of it: "and to conclude…oh…to conclude…" (P-2) because she suddenly realized she had not clicked on the last slide and the visuals did not match what she was saying. This small error drew a smatter of good-natured chuckles from the audience. This may have contributed to making Maki more nervous, as she then botched the delivery of her tripling: "this small country has an abundant beautiful and precious coun…eh…precious nature" (P-2). She then concluded with a rhetorical question: "Do you want to go to Palau during your summer vacation", before pausing for only one second, and then thanking the audience for listening (P-2). Although she had not delivered the prepared usage of tripling smoothly, three peers noticed her usage and were all of the opinion that it had worked well (PEFs-2). As one put it: "tripling in the conclusion was effective" (PEF-2).

Maki's delivery appears to have been the underlying reason for the relatively low persuasive score. In particular, three aspects undermined her presentation: poor eye contact, a flat and stumbling voice, and a lack of gestures. From these, poor eye contact was the most commented on. Table 5.21 provides an overview of the breakdown in eye contact moves identified through the ELAN processing procedures.

Table 5.21.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Presentation	Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
1	98	44	53	0	1
2	144	7	137	0	0

Two important findings can be highlighted from the above data. Firstly, there was an increase in the amount of eye contact breakdowns, although this increase parallels the longer duration of the second presentation. The other finding of note seems to have been a shift from an almost even split between reading and

checking notes in the first presentation, to almost exclusively checking notes (and the screen) in the second presentation. The reason for the shift is that she seems to have been drawn to the screen on a frequent basis – something, which was noticed by her peers. As one peer surmised: "she talked to the screen half the time" (PEF-2). Another peer speculated that a "lack of memorization meant less eye contact" (PEF-2), while another stated that Maki "checked the screen too much" (PEF-2), and yet another simply wrote that she "read the script" (PEF-2). Every peer who wrote a peer evaluation form, commented that her poor eye contact had undermined the persuasive impact of her presentation. I agreed and stated that she "read from the slides too much" in my comments and assessment. Ironically, Maki later stated that, "I tried not to rely on PowerPoint. What I said was the most important" (SR-2).

Besides poor eye contact, another aspect of Maki's delivery that seems to have undermined her presentation was her voice. The presenters' voice in oral presentations is difficult to assess, but factors enhancing it can be the volume, variation of the voice at key moments, marked changes in pacing, and the use of pitch or stress for emphasis (Heritage & Greatbatch, 1986). In her reflections Maki frequently referred to her voice as flat and to the fact that she had been constantly unable to vary it during the presentations throughout the course (I-2). A peer concurred and stated that her voice was flat and that she could have improved her presentation by "varying her voice" (PEF-2). I agreed with this assertion and when evaluating her voice noted that she did not vary her voice enough, that she sometimes did not adequately chunk her language, and that she only sometimes used enough stress or emphasis. In contrast to these comments, one of her peers felt, "she had a clear voice" (PEF-2).

The last area of criticism centered on her lack of gestures or body language. As one peer put it simply: "more hand gestures would have been good" (PEF-2). As we can see from the annotation frequency statistics table, there were only 16 instances of gesturing (P-2) in her second presentation. Compare this with Daisuke who exhibited over a hundred instances of gesturing in both his presentations and it is easy to see that Maki was not particularly expressive.

There are two potential explanations for the lack of body language. One could be that she did not see the need for gesturing. Maki had stated in her diary (D-2) that she had no plan to be interactive, and gesturing is one means of interacting with the audience. The other explanation is that she was too nervous and while trying to remain calm, became rigid. Maki did state that she had been very nervous in her first presentation and again explained how nerves had inhibited her in the second presentation (SR-2).

Finally, Maki's use of pictures on her slides (typically involving beautiful scenes of nature, such as beaches and wildlife), were effective in enhancing the persuasive impact of her speech, according to two peers (PEFs-2) and proved to be a useful way to showcase Palau. One peer who had been impressed with the visual aids further stated that, "Palau and Japan have a strong relationship, that I didn't know before, so it's new and interesting to learn and listen to" (PEF-2).

The only other comment of note regarding Maki's second presentation came from my notes, which highlighted weak grammar, especially relating to countable and uncountable nouns.

5.3.9 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 2

"This course has been very hard for me, but it was a good opportunity to speak English." (SR-2). This comment best sums up Maki's reflections. I also noticed during the second interview that Maki seemed discouraged and slightly reticent, and her responses were sometimes short compared to her first interview and to the other participants. Her reflections are now described, drawing primarily on data from the second interview and her second SR.

Maki evaluated her persuasiveness for the second presentation as 4.00/5.00 (I-2). When asked about the audience's view of her presentation, she was pessimistic and explained that everyone had delivered very good presentations except her (I-2). She once again hesitated and ultimately avoided attributing a numerical score or even to hazard a guess as to how the audience might have rated her (I-2).

After being questioned as to why she had self-assessed at 4.00/5.00, Maki explained that, "the content is good, but I was very nervous so speaking fast or not clear" (I-2, L89-90). She did however, feel that, "chunking and the language skills I used, worked well" (I-2, L93-94). When probed further, she simply explained that, "I had practiced them, so I could use them" (I-2, L96). This last comment revealed a sense that merely using persuasive discursive techniques extrapolated to being persuasive. This misunderstanding might show a weakness in Maki's approach and her inability to read the impact of what she was doing, on the audience. She did note that her use of bookending had not worked well, due to an ill-timed pause in the middle, and she attributed this pause to being nervous and forgetting the exact wording of the technique (I-2).

Maki indicated her choice of topic had been determined largely by the ease of the topic (I-2) and that she had originally intended to persuade the audience to go to Australia, but she had later changed the topic to Palau, as she knew many of her peers in the audience had already been to Australia. Had she opted for Australia, she would have likely found what Fabrigar et el. (1998) described as a 'higher attitude accessibility', which could have led to the audience being more easily persuaded (based on the notion that they are already in at least partial agreement due to previous priming). She instead opted for the 'novelty factor' and chose Palau, as it was likely a place that none of her peers had visited (I-2).

When asked about using visuals for the first time in this course, Maki had a telling response: "usually when I use PowerPoint, I rely on it and check it many times" (I-2, L53-54). She did add though, that visuals were "helpful because I used a map and pictures…and it is difficult to say how beautiful the sea is" (I-2, L62-63). She then explained how she had practiced many times and had tried hard to manage her time properly (I-2) – which seems at odds with her presentation being well over the time limit (P-2) and with her admission that she had omitted several points due to nerves and forgetting them (SR-2).

Maki restated that she had tried to use many persuasive discursive techniques in her presentation, and then listed them: "repetition, tripling, bookending…rhetorical question…and signposting" (I-2, L40-41). When asked further, she indicated there was no specific rationale behind using them, other than she felt obliged to use "as many as possible" (I-2, L43). This perceived obligation might have derived from a sense that using the skills would help her obtain a better grade, and that the instructor would be looking for them in her presentation.

Maki responded that she remembered several things from the feedback she had received from her peers and I, regarding the previous two presentations she had delivered in this course and that this had influenced her preparations. She noted that her previous presentation had been too short, and that she vividly remembered several peers had written on the PEFs that she needed to look more confident (I-2). This last comment by Maki aligns with a finding by Baker and Thompson (2004), who found that negative feedback on a presenter's delivery was most frequently recalled by presenters and that this actually makes the presenter more insecure and more focused on their delivery problems. Maki frequently commented on her "flat voice" and the origins of her belief seem to have been planted by comments from her peers after the first presentation (not in this study) (I-2). Finally, Maki explained again how her voice, and the lack of variance, had been noticeable to her in the previous presentation videos she had watched of herself, and that she had tried hard to change this, but ultimately "it doesn't change…it was too difficult" (I-2, L80-82).

When Maki was asked about her views of persuasive and informative presentations, she provided similar responses to the other participants in this study: persuasive presentations were more interesting to watch and deliver, but were also more difficult because they were not merely "just giving information" (I-2, L128). She further elaborated on this last point and explained that, "just saying information…it doesn't have any skills, so just saying…If I just read the script, I can tell the information easily" (I-2, L128-129).

Maki was also asked about her classmates' presentations, and immediately responded that Daisuke had been the most persuasive, due to the organization of his presentation (I-2). She noted how he had tricked the audience by back-loading his argument, and that he "could vary his voice very well, so it was very persuasive" (I-2, L144-145). Then she noted another presenter (outside this study) who had used visuals well, and who had exhibited impressive eye contact by not looking at the slides at all: "She always made eye contact with us, so it was very good" (I-2, L152). She also noted that many students had used rhetorical questions, but few had been able to use other techniques such as machine-gunning or bookending effectively (I-2).

As with the other participants, Maki was reluctant to single out any other presenters as having been not very persuasive, but she did comment that some presenters had "relied too much on the visuals" and that this was not persuasive (I-2, L159).

Lastly, Maki restated that she still believed content was the key element for making a presentation persuasive, and that persuasive discursive techniques, delivery styles and other factors served merely to support the content (I-2). Maki concluded her SR by expressing her dislike of presenting, but seemed cognizant of its importance in her future: "In fact, I don't want to do more presentations, but I think I will have a chance in the future. If I can present well, I can tell something well. Presentation skills can be useful for other things." (SR-2).

In summary, Maki's second presentation had content that was new and persuasive for some peers, but a poor delivery (lack of gestures, lack of variance in her voice, and frequent reading from or checking of the screen and her notes) undermined the overall persuasive impact of her presentation. The persuasive discursive techniques she employed were noticed but their impact seems to have been muted, due to this weak delivery and to grammatical errors.

5.3.10 PROPOSITIONS REVISITED

The six theoretical propositions offered in Section 5.1 are now revisited. Some of the propositions have been supported by the data in Maki's case study.

The first proposition stated: *Previous experiences delivering presentations and instruction received prior to this study will shape initial beliefs and attitudes.* Conclusive evidence to support or dispute this proposition is difficult to ascertain. Maki's initial learning experiences had stressed that the content was the main component of an oral presentation, and Maki iterated throughout this study that this was her conviction – a conviction which appears to support this first proposition. However, Maki had actually stated at the beginning of the case study that her experiences learning to present in her first year had been detrimental for her development as a presenter – suggesting that these experiences had not shaped her beliefs and attitudes. Although she did state that she learned about persuasive presentations in her second year, there was no elaboration to support this claim. Maki also appears not to have been influenced by the course focus on persuasive discursive techniques. Although she exhibited a heightened awareness of the necessity to include them in her second presentation, she appears to have believed that merely including them was sufficient, and that ultimately, these techniques served just to support the content. Based on the case study evidence gathered on Maki, it cannot be argued with great conviction that her previous experiences learning to present shaped her beliefs and attitudes.

The second proposition (*Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact, particularly in the introduction and conclusion sections of the presentations)* received mixed support from the findings in Maki's case study. Certainly Maki utilized persuasive discursive techniques, but far less frequently than the other participants. Although Maki's peers noticed and commented on her use of several persuasive discursive techniques (PEFs-1; PEFs-2), the effect these techniques had in enhancing the persuasiveness of her presentation appears negligible (PEFs-1; PEFs-2). This can in part be attributed to a weak delivery (poor eye contact and

broken utterances of persuasive discursive techniques). Maki stated many times (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2; SR-1; SR-2) that she believed content was far more important for enhancing the persuasive impact of her presentation. Her statements about simply incorporating persuasive discursive techniques in her presentation (without ever discussing practicing their delivery or considering their impact on the audience) belied her view of their lesser relevance. Also, potentially important is the lack of interactional techniques in her second presentation. While the other three participants all used far more interactional techniques (e.g. boosters, engagement markers, and attitude markers) than in their second presentations, Maki was the only one to use more interactive techniques. This stronger focus on content and structure meant she was less persuasive when rated against other speakers who relied on more overtly expressive interactional techniques to boost and enhance their persuasive impact.

In an important related study, Atkinson (2004) proposed that a restricted set of rhetorical devices were particularly effective for generating positive reactions and acceptance of messages in political speeches. Crucially, he later elaborates that the manner in which the message is delivered can either complement or weaken the message. The evidence from Maki's case study suggests support for Atkinson's proposal that the actual delivery of rhetorical techniques determines their effectiveness, not the techniques themselves. Some of the techniques Maki tried to use were unsuccessful due to their delivery (e.g. bookending in the second presentation). On the other hand, her use of tripling in the second presentation was well received by her peers, who mostly thought it enhanced the persuasiveness of her presentation. Overall, it can be claimed from the findings in Maki's case study that support for this proposition was not very strong, but that this lack of support for the proposition actually serves to explain one of the reasons why Maki was not rated as very persuasive for her second presentation. Had she placed more emphasis on these techniques, and delivered them in a more convincing manner, it may have lead to a more persuasive presentation.

The third proposition states that: *Presenters will exhibit a selective bias and overestimate the importance of presenting skills that they are good at.* This proposition also received mixed support from the case study of Maki. In both presentations her content was assessed more favorably than her delivery or use of persuasive discursive techniques. Maki also stated that content was the most important element of a presentation for enhancing persuasiveness throughout the study (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2; SR-1; SR-2). However, Maki revealed a contradictory belief when reflecting on her classmates' second presentations by commenting how Daisuke and Rena had varied their voice and made eye contact in an impressive manner, directly contributing to a more persuasive presentation. These were the two self-perceived weak points of Maki, who frequently lamented her flat voice and poor eye contact throughout the study (D-1; D-2; SR-1; SR-2). Taken together, these points suggest that Maki may have stressed that content was the determining factor for making a presentation persuasive, but that she may not have truly believed this statement and was persuaded by presenters who exhibited skills she could not.

Proposition four (*The importance of content, delivery styles, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for enhancing persuasiveness)* was supported by the findings from Maki's case study. Although she was adamant that content was the key factor, she always added that delivery styles (particularly voice variance and eye contact) and persuasive discursive techniques were important to support the content and make it more persuasive (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2; SR-1). For Maki, a key difference between an informative and a persuasive presentation was the ability to use these skills to make the information being presented persuasive (D-1; D-2).

Proposition five states that: *Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs about persuasive oral presentations and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to different topics.* The case study of Maki provides strong support for this proposition in that Maki did not adjust her beliefs or exhibit a keen awareness of her audience, and consequently

her second presentation was not so successful. Compared with Daisuke, she exhibited far less awareness of the audience, while preparing and presenting. She did recall once that members of the audience were nodding in agreement and seemed to take comfort from that, but the audience seems to have had no impact on how she constructed her presentations or on how she intended to prepare for the next presentation. Maki also did not exhibit any evidence of modeling or learning from her peers' presentations, as Daisuke had – something that has been shown to be effective in enhancing the confidence and skills of presenters (Adams, 2004). In part, because of all this, she obtained a relatively low persuasive score in the second presentation.

Once again, the sixth proposition (*English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness*) was supported by Maki's case study. Although I had made a few observations relating to grammatical errors in her persuasive discursive techniques, this was the only instance of her English ability being mentioned. As with the case study of Daisuke, there was no mention of her English ability by either the participant or her peers. This is significant because Maki had the weakest English ability of the four participants in this study, but it does not appear to have been a factor in her second presentation being rated as the least persuasive of the four participants' eight presentations.

In conclusion, it can be stated that Maki made a persuasive first presentation in this study, but that her second presentation was not nearly as persuasive. The main contributing factor for this decline was primarily a poor delivery, which undermined good content and the use (albeit limited) of persuasive discursive techniques. It is thought that this poor delivery arose in part from nerves, which inhibited eye contact and the ability to gesture appropriately, and an inability to vary her voice when presenting. While Maki also stated that she believed content was the key for being persuasive, and that delivery and persuasive discursive techniques were subsidiary elements, it is possible that this was due in part to her own realization that her delivery skills were weak. It is also likely that as Maki did not adapt to the situation and context in which she was presenting, she was perceived as being less persuasive in the

second presentation. Whereas Daisuke realized that this course was based on persuasive discursive techniques and delivery skills, and subsequently focused more on them than content – which he had previously believed to be the key element – Maki steadfastly believed (or at least stated that she believed) content was the key, and subsequently delivered her presentation in a relatively weak manner. Her employment of persuasive discursive techniques was less than the other participants, and was used in a standard manner, without much apparent consideration to the delivery of these techniques. Combined with grammatical problems, these techniques failed to enhance the persuasive impact of a presentation that was founded on reasonably strong content.

5.4 RENA

"Rena" is the third case study to be explored. As with Daisuke and Maki's case studies, Rena's follows a case description approach and a chronological structure (Yin, 2014), a 'chains of evidence' approach (Duff, 2008), and is presented in a narrative form (Hood, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995). The same set of six theoretical propositions that structured the analysis of Daisuke and Maki's case studies are also employed for Rena's case study, serving "to organize the entire analysis, pointing to relevant contextual conditions to be described as well as explanations to be described" (Yin, 2014, p. 136).

5.4.1 PROFILE

Rena's case study begins with an exploration of her relevant background information, a necessary way to begin a case study (Seidman, 2006). The data compiled are drawn from her diaries and interviews. At the time of the study, Rena was a 20-year-old female in her third year of study at university. She had lived in the United States for four years, between the ages of six and ten due to her father's work (D-1). After returning to Japan, Rena had managed to maintain her high English level and was placed in the advanced class for English language courses in her first two years at university. Her high level of English ability is evident by her score of 920 on the TOEIC test, in the year preceding this study (D-1). It was the second highest score of the participants in this study (Shin

scored 960). Table 5.22 provides a brief overview of Rena's background information for reference.

Table 5.22.

Background Information – Rena

Age	20
Gender	Female
Year of study	Junior year (3rd year)
Best TOEIC score	920 (2013)
Experience studying abroad	4 years in the USA (Age 6-10)
Experience presenting abroad	Delivered various presentations on science projects and biographies of famous people
Reason for enrolling in course	Familiar with and liked the instructor
Reason for volunteering to join study	Interested in the research
Experience delivering English presentations	1st year University – Oral Communication in English course 2nd year University – Oral Communication in English course, Reading in English, Workshop in English 3rd year university – Special Topics in English

In her first year Oral Communication in English course, I was her instructor. Having a 90-minute class, three times a week, led Rena and I to become quite familiar with each other. In addition, during her second year of studies, Rena took a workshop course I had taught, which focused on famous speeches in the last 100 years, and in particular, on persuasive discursive techniques. It was in part because of her familiarity with my classes, that she enrolled in the presentation course (D-1; D-2). As for her rationale behind joining the study, she stated in her second diary that, "Even though I am not so good at doing presentations, I don't dislike doing them and when I heard about the project, I

was quite interested in it" (D-2). Rena was not sure about which sort of work she would be doing in the future, but expected that "I think I will have to make some presentations in the future for maybe both work and future classes. I think at many of the workplaces, especially when we plan something or create something, being able to present will be quite important." (D-2).

5.4.2 EXPERIENCES

Unlike the other participants in this study, Rena had presented outside of Japan. During her time in the United States she recalled delivering short presentations on various science projects at school – a presentation on dewdrops in grade three (I-1). She also presented about important people in history and particularly remembered speaking about Helen Keller (D-1). These were informative elementary school style presentations, involving the use of hand-held visual props and pictures (I-1). However, after returning to Japan she never made a presentation in English in junior high school or in high school (D-1; I-1).

Rena first learned how to deliver persuasive presentations in her first-year Oral Communication in English course (I-1). From this course she recalled learning about "attention getters, knockdowns, and signposting" and "using techniques like knockdowns and emphasizing" (D-1). She particularly remembered becoming comfortable constructing and delivering the introduction sections (I-1), which are crucial for demonstrating credibility and building rapport (Gurak, 2000; Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). Although it is likely that she had to present in other English classes in her first year, she could not remember doing so (I-1).

In Rena's second-year Oral Communication in English class she presented in groups of three and recalled receiving minimal instruction: "the teacher just said not to see the notes and didn't give us so many comments on the presentations" (I-1, L73-74). "I didn't learn so many presenting skills in the second year of university. My teachers just said not to read the script and make good eye contact" (D-1). Rena did present in her Reading in English class in her

second year at university, where the focus was on the content of the presentation: it was "not really about how to make good presentations. (The instructor) just told us how to search for information and not to look at the notes so much. Also, have lots of good facts to make the presentation good." (I-1, L77-79). In addition to these courses, Rena took a short workshop class (seven 90-minute classes) of mine that examined famous speeches from recent history and analyzed the persuasive discursive techniques that the speakers had utilized. Despite the obvious relevance this workshop course had for the current presentation skills course Rena was enrolled in, she never mentioned it in any of the diaries or interviews.

Finally, in her third year of university, Rena enrolled in a Special Topics in English class, where she also delivered presentations in English. In this course, she recalled learning how to focus on the content of the presentation, and watching videos of good presentations from previous students, which she was encouraged to model. There was also detailed instruction on how to make handouts (I-1). For this course, she participated in a group presentation about teaching English in Japan, but noted she only really helped prepare slides and "did informative things like an explanation… I just gave examples and that's all I did" (I-2, L40-43). She remembered that for this presentation, content was the key and the only thing the instructor provided feedback on (I-2).

As with the other participants, Rena had little experience presenting in Japanese. In fact, she could only recall presenting in Japanese twice in university (I-1). She explained that during these presentations "everyone was just reading their notes", and that the Japanese presentations were much longer than the typical English presentations she had delivered (I-1, L99-100). Rena believed that presenting in Japanese was more difficult because of the perceived singular focus on content. She had trouble remembering all the details of the content and admitted resorting to reading large portions of her presentations (I-1).

5.4.3 BELIEFS

Rena stated in her first diary that she believed persuasive discursive techniques were the key factor in making a presentation persuasive (D-1). As she stated: "to make a presentation persuasive, we should use techniques like intensifiers, repeating, and tripling to make our points stronger and persuasive." (D-1). This placed her in a contrasting position to Daisuke and Maki, who both initially believed content was the key element in a persuasive presentation. As part of the ongoing process of demonstrating reflexivity and acknowledging the investigator bias (Yin, 2014), it should be stated that it is possible Rena was aware of my potential bias and was merely telling him what she believed he wanted to hear.

Rena critiqued her classmates' earlier presentations (delivered before this study) for "not enough stressing and emphasizing, which will make one's presentation flat and boring" (D-1). This comment was similar to comments made by Daisuke when he also noted that a poor delivery had undermined the persuasiveness of classmates' presentations. Rena further added: "people who had good eye contact and didn't look so much at their notes made their presentation more interesting and therefore more persuasive. Eye contact is my weak point, so I would like to try and do my best in my next presentation." (D-1). She added that in her last presentation (before this study), she had "used many facts and statistics to make my points stronger. I think I was quite successful with this, because this made my presentation clear, easier to understand and persuasive" (D-1). These comments indicate Rena also believed content and delivery skills were significant factors in making presentations persuasive.

5.4.4 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 1

A description of Rena's preparations is now offered, drawing data from her first diary and interview. Rena's preparation timetable was not substantially distinct from the other participants and entailed first reading online and researching potential topics before making a final choice. Supporting information was gathered next. Rena then indicated she spent time preparing certain persuasive discursive techniques, before subsequently conducting more

research, organizing her information, and finally, practicing her presentation the night before (D-1). Table 5.23 provides a summarized outline of her preparations for the first presentation (10 represents the day before the presentation was delivered).

Table 5.23.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity
1	Thought about topics
2	Narrowed topic choice to two
3	Thought about choices for topic
4	Decided topic
5	Brainstormed supporting points
6	Chose four supporting points
7	Cut one supporting point, made attention getter
8	Researched online
9	Organized information
10	Reviewed notes and practiced several times

The first observation to note from this timetable is that there were no days when Rena was not actively involved in preparing for the presentation – unlike Daisuke and Maki. In addition, Rena did not decide her topic until the fourth day of preparations – later than Daisuke and Maki – and she estimated that choosing the topic consumed the greatest amount of preparation time (I-1). On the first day of preparations, she merely indicated she had not decided her topic, and then clarified on the second day that she had narrowed her choice down to two options (D-1). On the third day, she continued to ponder over which topic to choose, before finally making a decision on the fourth day (D-1). Following her choice, she proceeded to brainstorm multiple points to support her argument that more foreigners should be allowed to live and work in Japan (D-1). She also provided a rationale for her choice: "I myself want to use English when I work,

and since we live in a global society, I really agree that Japan should have more foreigners here." (D-1).

On day six, she reduced her supporting points to four, but "to make my presentation clearer and more persuasive I want to narrow it down to three points, so I started looking for information first about all four points and then I'll think about which three points to choose." (D-1). Finally she settled on her three supporting points on the seventh day, and then started to construct persuasive discursive techniques (D-1). Interestingly, she consulted with her father at this time about which of her supporting points were the strongest as he "knew a lot about economics" (I-1, L134-135). Similarly to Maki, Rena organized her points by priority: "I thought I should put the more persuasive points in the front" (D-1). This strategy is known as front-loading the argument (Okabe, 1983; Sakurada, 2017).

Finally, she practiced her presentation several times the night before delivering it (D-1). While students were advised not to write out a full script, Rena wrote out notes, but explained that it was "not a script" (I-1, L143). She then practiced delivering the content, and checking the timing of the presentation, before finally adding intensifiers and other persuasive discursive techniques (I-1). On a final note, Rena added she had practiced by herself, and not with her father, even though he could speak English very well (I-1).

Rena went into great detail about the persuasive discursive techniques she was planning to use. The first technique she worked on was the attention getter (D-1), which was time consuming to decide on (I-1). This attention getter involved presenting a statistic about several world economies and then posing a question to the audience (D-1). She elaborated further: "I often try to be interactive when doing the attention getter, but this time I am not planning to be interactive." (D-1). Rena also explained that she already knew such techniques as attention getters, knockdowns, stressing, pausing, and signposting before this course, so she therefore had a strong desire to implement newly learned techniques such as tripling, machine-gunning, intensifiers, and softening. The

simple reason given, "This is because I would like to get used to using these new techniques and improve my presentation skills" (D-1), revealed Rena was motivated to improve her presentation skill repertoire. As with the other participants, Rena indicated she would primarily use the techniques in the introduction section of her presentation (attention getter, softening, knockdown, and emphasizing), and in her conclusion (machine-gunning), but would use intensifiers throughout the presentation. She also added that she used techniques, which were "easier to use" (I-1, L175), similar to sentiments expressed by Daisuke and Maki.

When asked about delivery skills, Rena commented that they were also important, but that she struggled to make eye contact with the audience (D-1). She did however, feel comfortable interacting with the audience – something L2 speakers find challenging (Yang, 2010; Zareva, 2009a) – and getting their attention, which made her comment about not using the attention getter to interact with the audience this time, rather surprising (D-1). In her diary, Rena did not mention anything about her voice or gesturing, other than, "for the voice, I think it is hard to (practice) because it should just come naturally" (I-1, L162-163).

Lastly, Rena rated her presentation 4.50/5.00 for persuasiveness (D-1). She speculated that the audience would likely have strong opinions about this topic (it is currently a contentious issue being discussed by the Japanese Government), but thought she could persuade them by focusing on economics issues and incorporating some of the new persuasive discursive techniques she had recently learnt, such as "machine-gunning, intensifiers, and softening." (D-1).

5.4.5 PRESENTATION 1

Rena's first presentation is now described and analyzed. The length of her presentation was 6:22, slightly over the 5:30-6:00 minute time frame allotted to speakers. All the peer members submitting the PEFs rated Rena 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, indicating Rena was less persuasive than Daisuke and Maki. This is important to note, as peers often score oral presentations relatively high,

compared with other forms of discourse (Liow, 2008), making this relatively low score potentially significant. Data regarding her presentation is drawn from the ELAN analysis of her presentation video, the PEFs and my notes. Table 5.24 below provides the annotation frequency figures for her first presentation.

Table 5.24.

Annotation Frequency Figures for 1st Presentation

Transcript	Discursive techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience
127	38	6	66	104	2

Rena abided by the standard presentation structure (introduction, three supporting points, a counter argument, and then a conclusion) totaling six annotations. There was little to no interaction with the audience, but the data shows that she uttered more chunks of language than Daisuke or Maki (transcript tier), which is to be expected, given the longer speaking time. She utilized more persuasive discursive techniques than either Daisuke or Maki, but the frequency of her gestures was not as great as Daisuke, although she was more demonstrative than Maki. Finally, the total frequency of breaks in eye contact was similar to Maki.

The first tier to be analyzed is the persuasive discursive techniques. Table 5.25 provides a list of the most frequently used techniques. They have been categorized according to Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Table 5.25.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Rena's First Presentation

Interactive	Interactional	Not a part of
Helps guide the reader through the text – 11	Involves the reader in the text – 25	Hyland's model – 2

Signposting x 7 (frame marker)	Inclusive language x 7 (engagement marker)	Pausing x 2
Guideline x 2 (frame marker)	Repetition x 7 (booster)	
Framing the main point (frame marker)	Intensifier x 4 (booster)	
Framing point (frame marker)	Doubling x 2 (booster)	
	Rhetorical question x 2 (engagement marker)	
	Self-introduction (self-mention)	
	Knockdown (attitude marker)	
	Machine-gunning (booster)	

As with the other participants in this study, Rena frequently used signposting and reframing the main point in order to enhance the clarity of her message. Signposting consisted mostly of numbering the reasons supporting her argument (P-1). Three of the four peers commented that her signposting had made the presentation easier to follow and therefore more persuasive (PEFs-1). Two of them also noted her use of a clear guideline in the introduction had a similar effect (PEFs-1) as did I, although one peer felt the guideline was too long (PEF-1).

One factor setting her apart from some of the other participants in the first presentation was her frequent use of interactional techniques such as inclusive language. The use of inclusive language (e.g. personal pronouns) is frequently employed by experienced conference speakers to aid in processing information and building rapport (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005). She maximized the opportunities to address the audience as 'Japanese' and stated that "we" need to think about the problems, "we" need to act together, and that

"we" will benefit from this idea being implemented (P-1). However, the use of this technique went uncommented on by the peers in the audience.

Rena also used intensifiers on four separate occasions to try and enhance the persuasive impact of her presentation (P-1). However, only one peer thought that this had positively affected her persuasive impact (PEF-1). As with her use of many persuasive discursive techniques, the actual delivery of the technique seems to have undermined it. An example of this is when she noted on one occasion that the "number of young people supporting the elderly in Japan (pause) is decreasing progressively (pause)". When she paused, she checked her notes on both occasions (P-1). Later in her presentation she repeated this mistake when stating there would be "a pretty big decrease in the GDP", but immediately checking her notes for several seconds after the chunk, weakening the impact of her statement (P-1). In yet another example, she was in the midst of explaining a particular foreigner's impact on the development of Japan and stated that, "they had made a great impact on the (pause) various IT (pause) work places". Once again, a potentially important statement had been undermined by two ill-timed pauses, where she checked her notes instead of maintaining eye contact (P-1).

Rena used the doubling technique twice in her presentation, but this went uncommented on in my notes or by any of her peers. She stated that the situation in Japan was becoming "very, very serious" and later that, "the importance of cross-cultural understanding is becoming bigger and bigger" (P-1). One peer wrote that her use of tripling had been persuasive (PEF-1), but Rena did not actually use tripling in her presentation. It is likely that the peer misheard the doubling technique and assumed it had been tripling.

There were uses of persuasive discursive techniques that were noted by the peers. Rena started her presentation with a knockdown by stating that Japan's economy was the third biggest in the world and that this would appear to be a positive thing. She then refuted this statement by explaining that actually the Japanese economy had been shrinking for almost two decades. Two peers

commented that this attention getter at the beginning of the presentation had been effective (PEF-1). Unfortunately, her delivery of this knockdown was marred with several stutters and a few awkward pauses when she stumbled over the wording and had to check her notes (P-1). As a result, I rated it as only "a little effective". After the knockdown, she then used a rhetorical question: "So, what will improve the economic growth of Japan? The answer to the question is having more foreigners living here" (P-1). Once again, this rhetorical question, which served to set up the main thrust of her presentation, was marred by a weak delivery. As soon as she had asked the question, she checked her notes for several seconds, implying to the audience that she was not interested in their response and that she was also not really sure of what she was going to say next.

After stating her main point in the introduction, she then rephrased it to make sure it was clear (P-1). Next, she gave a guideline for her presentation (for 20 seconds), also to provide clarity, which one peer felt was effective, but another felt was too long (PEF-1). Immediately afterwards, she rephrased the guideline and essentially said the same thing again, for a further 15 seconds (P-1). At this point, Rena was 1:53 into her presentation, and had yet to begin her first point (P-1).

When concluding her presentation, Rena used the machine-gunning technique (P-1), but, once again, a botched delivery weakened the impact of the technique. She said: "There is absolutely, definitely, much more big and (pause) good effects brought about (pause) from allowing foreigners to live and work here" (P-1). During the delivery of this technique she checked her notes twice (during the pauses) and then actually read the last part ("from allowing foreigners to live and work here") (P-1). Following this technique, Rena ended her presentation with a rhetorical question: "so why not have more foreigners live in Japan?" (P-1).

From the data, it can be said that Rena used a range of interactional persuasive discursive techniques in her presentation, as Daisuke had done. The distinction between the presenters is that unlike Daisuke, Rena's weaker

delivery skills meant that these techniques had not had the desired effect. The most significant weakness in her delivery was the frequent breaks in eye contact and their accompanying pauses. Table 5.26 provides a more detailed summary of the range of different moves that constituted breaks in eye contact for Rena's first presentation.

Table 5.26.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
104	5	95	1	3

The obvious finding to note is the large number of breaks in eye contact. Compared with Daisuke, who made only six, Rena's total of 104 breaks in eye contact is indicative of just how relatively poor her eye contact was throughout the presentation. The second finding from this table is that the vast majority of the breaks in eye contact were due to Rena checking her notes. Many of her peers remarked: "She was constantly checking her notes"; "She was reading the script too much"; and "better eye contact would have made it more persuasive" (PEFs-1). I rated her eye contact as "average".

Gesturing was the other aspect of delivery that featured in the PEFs. Her gesturing had not been as frequent as Daisuke, but she had been more expressive than Maki (P-1). However, only I commented favorably on her gesturing by noting how she had used her fingers well to help illustrate the number of the point she was making. In contrast, her peers felt: "She made only small gestures" and did "not (exhibit) enough body language" (PEFs-1).

There were few comments concerning Rena's voice. I commented in my notes that she had varied her voice and had been able to emphasize in key places during her presentation. One peer actually felt that Rena's pacing had been very effective and had made her presentation more intelligible (PEF-1). The analysis

of Rena's chunking yielded conflicting results though. The transcript tier figures are represented in Table 5.27.

Table 5.27.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Chunking	Average Length	Longest
127	2.25 seconds	6.19 seconds

There were more chunks than in Daisuke and Maki's presentations, but these were shorter on average length (P-1). While it is true that short chunks of language can facilitate information processing (Rowley-Jolivet & Carter-Thomas, 2005), Rena exhibited many breakdowns in the chunking of her language, as demonstrated by the delivery of her persuasive discursive techniques. However, despite the apparent poor chunking, none of her peers mentioned it on the PEFs (PEF-1).

There was no mention of her topic or message amongst the peers. There was however, agreement, that her use of specific examples for supporting information had been a strong factor in enhancing her persuasiveness, from two of her peers and myself (PEFs-1).

5.4.6 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 1

Attention is now turned to describing and analyzing Rena's self-reflections, drawing data mostly from her SR and interview. Rena began her reflection by mentioning that this was the "fifth or sixth time for me to watch my presentation (video clip) so I didn't feel uncomfortable watching it" (SR-1). When asked to grade herself, she wrote, "Maybe between A and B. This time, I tried my best to use a lot of techniques I have learned in this course. However, I couldn't do well enough with eye contact and voice." (SR-1). She then added, "I felt strongly that I need to improve on making good eye contact after I watched my presentation. I also thought I need to vary my voice because I wasn't

stressing so much and my voice was a little flat." (SR-1). She did indicate that she had employed many persuasive discursive techniques, and had strong content, due to having researched more this time (I-1). This overall assessment largely mirrors the description of her first presentation in Section 5.4.5.

Rena rated her actual presentation only 3.50/5.00 for persuasiveness (SR-1). Her explanation was insightful and again mirrored the overall findings of her case study to date: "I had clear points for my topic and was using more techniques than the last presentation. However, after watching the video, I felt that my presentation didn't sound effective enough." (SR-1). In the interview, she upgraded her self-assessment and rated her presentation "either 4.00/5.00 or 4.50/5.00", as she felt her presentation had been "better than the last one (prior to this study)" (I-1, L193-194). She also speculated that her peers had rated her "4.00 or 3.50" as "there were other students in my group that were much better" (I-1, L216).

Rena believed that using discursive techniques would make her presentation persuasive. She explained that, "I used more intensifiers and I also used techniques I didn't use last time, for example, softening, knockdown, machine-gunning, rhetorical questions and repeating." (SR-1). She added, "I also used machine-gunning and rhetorical questions to make my conclusion stronger." (SR-1). As for the intensifiers, Rena thought that they had especially made her presentation more persuasive by increasing the impact of what she had been saying (I-1; SR-1). She also seemed satisfied with having used a statistic as her attention getter and felt it had made her presentation clearer and easier to understand (SR-1). Overall, she thought that the techniques she had employed had all worked well (I-1).

When assessing her own delivery, Rena's reflections were short, but she believed her chunking had been weak (I-1; SR-1). She further noted that she had tried to put "stress in certain words and phrases, but I couldn't use it so much." (SR-1).

In terms of her content, Rena believed that because she had used a lot of information, her presentation had been very persuasive (SR-1). This reflection matched that of the other participants who all seemed to feel their content had been strong, largely due to having what they perceived as good supporting information, often in the form of statistics. The view that statistics serve as strong supporting information was also found in Phase 1 of this study.

One very important finding in this stage was that Rena now believed content was the key factor in making a presentation persuasive (I-1). As she stated: "If there are not many facts, not enough facts, it's not persuasive" (I-1, L120-121). However, she remained not completely convinced of her stance and added that, "I think it's all important, because if they (presenters) don't vary their voice, it gets boring. It should be clear and easy to understand too." (I-1, L121-123). She then concluded by deciding that content was slightly more important than the other areas (I-1).

When asked about not being able to use visuals in her presentation, Rena explained that she had focused more efforts on making "the points clear, because I can't put it up on the screen" (I-1, L186-187). In what seemed somewhat counterintuitive, she also stated that she "used more statistics for this presentation to make it more persuasive" and to compensate for the lack of visuals (I-1, L183-184). Typically students avoid statistics if they are not able to put them on the slides as they have trouble saying large numbers and the audience can struggle to register long or complicated statistics.

When asked which presenter had been the most persuasive, Rena quickly commented that, "everyone in our group will say Daisuke…because he didn't see his notes, and didn't stop. It was smooth. And, he was using a lot of techniques naturally." (I-1, L226-230). She also seemed to think Maki's presentation had been persuasive and noted that she had used a lot of techniques, but had spoken too quickly (I-1). In particular, she recalled Maki using machine-gunning, and frequent intensifiers, and that, "her content was quite persuasive too". (I-1, L240-241). As for the less persuasive speakers, she noted a presenter (not part

of this study) who had looked at her notes frequently and had appeared to forget what she wanted to say on several occasions. Rena added that she had actually spoken with that presenter afterwards, who had admitted forgetting her lines in several places due to nerves and a lack of confidence (I-1).

Finally, Rena stated that for the next presentation she wanted to construct a better conclusion, improve her eye contact, vary her voice more, and use machine-gunning and repetition more naturally (I-1; SR-1). She admitted that she tended to use the same signposts every presentation and therefore, wanted to try and vary them more in the next presentation (I-1).

5.4.7 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 2

Rena's preparations for her second presentation are now described and analyzed. The data are primarily drawn from her second diary and interview. Rena was again asked about her views on the important factors determining the persuasiveness of a presentation and stated that her opinion had not changed since the first interview, despite "learning many new useful presentation techniques" (D-2). She then further explained that, "In my case, as I said in the last interview, although all of them (content, delivery, and persuasive discursive techniques) are very important, I think the content might be the most important for persuasive presentations. This is because I believe that persuasive presentations require clear statements for the main topic and lots of persuasive examples and evidence." (D-2). She added that she had used a lot of facts in her two previous presentations for this course, specifically to make them more persuasive and believed that content was her strongest area as she had "spent a lot of time searching for good information and working on the structure of my presentation. My weakest (area) might be delivery. I just simply don't have the confidence for it." (D-2). She further explained that, "I am really bad at making good eye contact. I think I will take more time on practicing the presentation to not get so nervous (next time)" (D-2).

Rena began her preparations by first choosing the topic, then later refining the presentation, and finally by practicing it. Rena chose to present on a

tour to Hawaii. A summarized version of the diary entries (D-2) related to her preparations is set out in Table 5.28, alongside her preparation timetable for the first presentation.

Table 5.28.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity (Presentation 1)	Activity (Presentation 2)
1	Thought about topics	Contemplated topics
2	Narrowed topic choice to two	Chose one topic
3	Thought about choices for topic	Made attention getter, brainstormed supporting points
4	Decided topic	No preparations
5	Brainstormed supporting points	Researched information for points
6	Chose four supporting points	Organized order of points
7	Cut one supporting point, made attention getter	Made a brief script
8	Researched online	Started making slides
9	Organized information	Finished preparations, made slides, and practiced
10	Reviewed notes and practiced several times	Practiced several times

Several findings are worth highlighting in the diary entries. Firstly, it would appear that Rena spent more time practicing for this presentation than she had for the first presentation. This is not entirely unexpected as the second presentation was the 'final presentation' for the course and was therefore more heavily weighted for assessment towards her final grade. Both Daisuke and Maki also practiced more for their second presentation. Rena confirmed this finding in the second interview when she spoke about how she had not changed the way she had prepared, but had "used more time practicing, because every time I kind

of search a lot and make slides, or…research for a long time and don't have much time to practice." (I-2, L58-60). She estimated that she had practiced for 15-30 minutes in each of the last two days before the presentation and then the morning of the presentation day (I-2).

On the first day of preparations, Rena narrowed her choice of topics to just two (D-2). She then finalized her topic choice on the second day of her diary (D-2) and decided to promote Hawaii as a place to visit, because "this is the place I like the most in the world. I really love it and want everyone to know how wonderful it is" (D-2). She did note that, "everyone probably thinks that Hawaii is a wonderful place, so I will try to use many presentation techniques and lots of interesting information about Hawaii to make everyone more interested in Hawaii." (D-2). In other words, Rena believed the audience would have a higher 'attitude accessibility' (Fabrigar et el., 1998), and in theory would be easier to persuade with this topic. She then quickly planned out her three supporting points on the third day of writing in the diary, and arranged them starting from the most persuasive point first (front-loading), and also managed to create the attention getter; a question for the audience (D-2). This was slightly unusual as persuasive discursive techniques were often prepared in the last two or three days of preparations by the participants – after the content had been established. Later she stated that she was also going to include a knockdown, softening and intensifiers in her introduction to make a strong early impression (D-2), and then use a rhetorical question and machine-gunning to make her conclusion more persuasive (D-2).

After a day off for other commitments, Rena continued her preparations on the fifth day of the diary by gathering supporting information (D-2). With the content seemingly complete, the next day was spent writing out a script, which she finished the following day (D-2). On day eight of the diary, Rena turned her focus to preparing the PowerPoint slides (D-2) and estimated that she spent 25-30% of her preparation time creating them (D-2; I-2). She thought that visuals would help because "it makes it easier for the audience to understand the explanation." (D-2; I-2, L112). As she stated: "it (visuals) kind of gives me

confidence that the audience is actually understanding what I am saying" (I-2, L113-114). On the ninth day she wrote that, "I finished all the preparations including the slides for my presentation and started practicing it." (D-2). The day before the presentation was to be delivered Rena practiced her presentation "several times" (D-2).

Persuasive discursive techniques featured prominently in Rena's preparations again (D-2). As she explained: "I think language techniques are important in making a persuasive presentation…and also makes one's presentation interesting too." (D-2). She recalled using many techniques in her two previous presentations, and specifically pointed to "repetition, rhetorical questions, and machine-gunning…because they were not too difficult to use." (D-2). She added that in her coming presentation she would like to "use these techniques more naturally" (D-2), and in particular she wanted to use change and development words (I-2). Rena recalled her attention getter not being effective and receiving feedback regarding this for her previous presentation (I-2), which made her determined to craft a strong one for the second presentation (I-2). She also explained how she had made a list of all the techniques covered in the course to date, and had gone through this list and checked which techniques she could utilize in her second presentation (I-2).

Rena was also aware of the importance of delivery skills and specifically remembered delivery skills being highlighted as her weak point in feedback from the first presentation (I-2). This supports a finding by Baker and Thompson (2004) in which presenters typically remember negative feedback about their delivery more than other forms of feedback. Rena seems to have been determined to overcome these delivery problems and believed that, "If we don't use effective delivery skills, the presentation will be boring." (D-2). As for her own skill set, she was quite sure that, "I can already use chunking, stressing and pausing naturally. However, I am very bad at making eye contact and body language." (D-2), specifically recalling feedback from the previous presentation that had stated her body language was rigid (I-2). She once again reiterated her intent to improve this: "I am going to try hard not to read my memo and make

effective, good eye contact, because this is what I am really having a hard time on since my first year of university." (D-2).

Finally, Rena anticipated that her presentation would be rated 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, and wrote that, "This time I think I tried my best for preparing for the presentation and I also had time to practice it" (D-2). Overall, in her preparations, Rena – as Daisuke did – demonstrated a goal-oriented approach, which typically leads to a higher acquisition of oral presentation skills (De Grez, Valke, & Roozen, 2009).

5.4.8 PRESENTATION 2

Rena's second presentation is now described and analyzed. Firstly, the length of her presentation was exactly the same as her first presentation (6:22), and within the time frame allotted to speakers. All the peer members submitting the PEFs rated Rena 4.25/5.00 for persuasiveness. This rating indicates Rena was once again less persuasive than Daisuke but this time more persuasive than Maki. The score also indicates a slight increase from her first presentation (4.00/5.00). Data from the presentation video are integrated with findings from the PEFs and my notes to explore Rena's second presentation in more detail. Table 5.29 below provides an overview of the annotation frequency figures for her second presentation, alongside those from her first presentation.

Table 5.29.

Annotation Frequency Figures

Presentation (Time)	Transcript	Discursive Techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience	Visuals
1 (6:22)	127	38	6	66	104	2	X
2 (6:22)	134	46	5	109	100	8	14

With the length of the presentations being identical, the annotation frequency figures permit meaningful comparisons. Based on these figures it can be said that Rena increased the use of persuasive discursive techniques and gestures in her

second presentation, and that there were more responses from the audience. The frequency of breaks in eye contact and the chunks of language in the transcript tier were similar to her first presentation, and there was only one less section in her presentation (Structure tier). There was a relatively high amount of annotations in the visuals tier, but this was largely due to problems with the slides. Rena had inadvertently set her PowerPoint slides on autotimer, meaning they automatically changed at certain time intervals, and not when she had intended them to. This resulted in several breaks in the presentation (for a few seconds) to switch the slides back. Inevitably there was some banter and laughter from the audience (leading to more annotations being added for the audience tier).

The analysis of Rena's second presentation begins with an examination of the transcript tier. The figures indicate remarkable consistency in Rena's chunking. The average length of each chunk of language was exactly the same (as in her first presentation), and there were only a few more chunks in the second presentation (pauses were not included in the analysis, which is why despite there being more chunks in the exact same length presentation, the average length of each chunk was still the same). Table 5.30 provides an overview of the transcript tier figures for chunking.

Table 5.30.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Presentation	Chunking	Average Length	Longest
1	127	2.25 seconds	6.19 seconds
2	134	2.25 seconds	5.81 seconds

Comments in my notes reveal Rena chunked her language "very well" and additionally, succeeded in varying her voice more than in previous presentations. She also stressed key words and points more successfully. One peer concurred and commented that, "she spoke fluently. Her speaking speed

was good." (PEF-2). Another peer wrote that, "her voice is clear and easy to listen to" (PEF-2), while another noted that Rena had a "nice big voice" (PEF-2). However, one peer felt that, "her flat voice" had undermined the persuasive impact she was seeking to make, and that if she had "spoken in a more varied voice, her presentation would have been more persuasive" (PEF-2). Based on the above evidence it would seem that Rena had at least partially succeeded in varying her voice more.

Attention is now focused on analyzing the persuasive discursive techniques Rena used in her second presentation. Table 5.31 provides a list of the utilized techniques, their categorization according to Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse, and their frequency of use.

Table 5.31.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Rena's Second Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 14	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 26	Not a part of Hyland's model – 6
Signposting x 5 (frame marker)	Intensifier x 4 (booster)	Change and development x 4
Referencing visuals x 4 (endorphic markers)	Question for audience x 4 (engagement marker)	Pausing x 2
Framing point x 2 (frame marker)	Doubling x 2 (booster)	
Reframing the main point (frame marker)	Rhetorical question x 2 (engagement marker)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Repetition x 2 (booster)	
Referencing (evidentials)	Self-introduction (self-mention)	
	Emphasis (booster)	

Attention getter
(engagement marker)
Bookending
(booster)
Contrast
(booster)
Inclusive language
(engagement marker)
Knockdown
(booster)
Machine-gunning
(booster)
Problem-solution
(self-mention)
Self-introduction
(self-mention)
Softening
(hedge)
Tripling
(booster)

Once again, Rena used more interactional techniques than interactive. Signposting and intensifiers featured frequently in her presentation (P-2). This is not surprising as these techniques are more suited to frequent usage than other techniques, which were frequently employed in one-off situations. Two new techniques (change and development verbs, and referencing visuals) featured prominently as well though (P-2). The first technique had only recently been learnt in class and Rena appeared keen to use it to describe the climate in Hawaii (D-2). For the latter, Rena correctly referenced her visuals on four occasions throughout her second presentation (P-2).

A description of how and when Rena employed particular discursive techniques in her presentation is now offered. She began by introducing herself

and then stated, "Today is July 21st…it means one more week until summer vacation" as a means of getting the audience's attention (icebreaker). One member of the audience laughed out loud. She then began her attention getter by pointing to members of the audience and asking: "Have you all decided where to go?" (P-2). Three members responded they had not decided yet, and a fourth member said she was going to the United States. This seemed to catch Rena a little off guard, as she just laughed and said "Oh, that's nice", which then drew several bursts of laughter from the audience, and from Rena (P-2). This moment was somewhat surprising given Rena's earlier comments (D-2), where she indicated she felt uncomfortable interacting with the audience. However, it seems to have been successful as several peers commented favorably on the PEFs about it. One stated that her "first question was very effective to get attention from the audience" (PEF-2), while another emphatically stated: "The first question was good!!" (PEF-2). A third wrote that, "The first question was very important to get attention from the audience. The question was connected to the audience." (PEF-2).

After this exchange, Rena used a brief knockdown to introduce her topic: "Many of you may have already decided where you are going, but I would like to recommend you go to Hawaii, if not for the summer, then for winter vacation" (P-2). She then proceeded with another knockdown and used softening and doubling in conjunction to minimize the negative aspect of her point and to emphasize a positive point: "I suppose there is a slight possibility that some of you might think something like I have already been to Hawaii and I'm already tired of it…however, there are many many repeaters from Japan, in Hawaii" (P-2). After this, she gave a guideline detailing the three supporting points she would focus on to support her main point.

Following the introduction section of her presentation, Rena signposted her first point, and reframed the point using an intensifier: "The climate of Hawaii is extremely nice". Once again, her use of an intensifier does not appear to have had a great effect as none of the peers in the audience commented on it, or on other later usages. In fact, one peer actually wrote that she should have

"used intensifiers to make her point stronger", (PEF-2) revealing they had not even been aware of her usages. Other examples of her use of intensifiers are: "Hawaii is much smaller than Japan"; "It's very comfortable to stay in Hawaii"; "there is a lot of amazing shopping centers", and finally "there is lots of (pause) things to (pause) a lot of fantastic things to do" (P-2). The stuttering delivery of this last example signified a continuance of the delivery problems that plagued her use of persuasive discursive techniques in her first presentation.

While explaining her first point (the climate of Hawaii) Rena used a new technique called change and development. This technique involves employing a range of specific verbs to more accurately explain the information on a graph (other than simply stating "up" or "down"). Given that she was the only presenter in the study (and in the class) to employ this technique and to use it properly, it is not surprising that some of her peers responded favorably. I felt she had used it naturally, as did several peers, with one writing that she had "made great use of change and development words" (PEF-2). This section of her presentation did draw some negative feedback though with both myself and another peer stating they felt the graph and statistical overload had been too complicated (PEF-2). A few examples of her use of change and development words were: "remains steady at 24 degrees", "the average temperature bottoms out at about 4.8 degrees", "in January the temperature increases steadily", and "peaks at 29.1 degrees" (P-2). In almost all of these utterances, Rena was looking at the graph on the screen. One other technique that was noticed was Rena's use of tripling in her second point: "You probably have a strong image of the blue beautiful big ocean in Hawaii" (P-2). The awkward order of adjectives might have contributed to the rather muted effect, but one peer commented that it had enhanced the persuasive impact of her presentation (PEF-2).

Rena did use a range of other techniques throughout her points that were not commented on by her peers. Examples include the use of a contrast: "it's not too hot or too cold throughout the year", the use of a rhetorical question: "Did you know you can climb a mountain called Diamond Head in Hawaii?" and the use of bookending: "Everyone will be impressed with the view from the top of

the mountain…everyone", (P-2). Later she reused the doubling technique: "Many many Japanese people visit Hawaii" (P-2) to introduce a further point (an explanation of why Hawaii is so popular. She also reused the knockdown technique to introduce her third point: "Many Japanese people don't have the confidence in speaking English and feel worried when they go to foreign countries, but in Hawaii there is no need to worry" (P-2). Finally, in her conclusion she used inclusive language and a contrast to give one final persuasive push to her presentation: "I recommend all of us, those who have already been to Hawaii, and those who have never been to Hawaii, to go to Hawaii" (P-2). Unfortunately, her next statement was subsequently undermined by about ten seconds of stuttering and a couple of false starts, as she attempted to use machine-gunning to finish the presentation: "Hawaii is (pause) umm (pause) the (pause) exciting (pause) warm, popular and beautiful island" (P-2). The use of these techniques may not have been commented on by the peers in the audience, but I noticed them and noted she had delivered them, although not always effectively.

As in her first presentation, Rena's delivery was her weakest area. In particular, making eye contact with the audience once again proved a daunting task. She exhibited 100 breaks in eye contact – almost the same number as in her first presentation. Table 5.32 provides an overview of the frequency and types of breaks in eye contact for both presentations delivered by Rena.

Table 5.32.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Presentation	Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
1	104	5	95	1	3
2	100	2	98	0	0

Despite these seemingly high figures, none of her peers commented that eye contact had been a problem or had undermined the persuasiveness of her

presentation (PEFs-2), unlike in her first presentation. As in Daisuke and Maki's presentations, the audience might have been distracted by the visuals and had not noticed the frequent breaks in eye contact, as is typical in presentations featuring visual aids (Savoy et al., 2009; Wecker, 2012). In fact, two peers wrote that Rena had exhibited good eye contact and that it had helped her be more persuasive (PEFs-2).

For visuals, Rena utilized PowerPoint slides. Unfortunately, her slide show had been inadvertently set on autotimer, meaning the slides automatically transitioned every 30 seconds. This left Rena looking startled and confused on several occasions, and the audience appeared unsure as to why her slides were moving at the wrong time. One peer noted that "some slides were moving automatically" (PEF-2) and that this had detracted from her presentation. Another felt she "should have checked her slides before the presentation" (PEF-2), while a third peer wondered why Rena "failed to show her slides (the correct ones) at times" (PEF-2). The sudden transitions startled Rena and she briefly made a few comments in Japanese, which one peer felt additionally undermined her presentation (PEF-2). In terms of the slide content, Rena had used a graph that was "a bit too complicated" (PEF-2) according to one peer, but others felt her slides "made the presentation better", easier to understand, and clearer (PEFs-2).

As for the content in Rena's presentation, one peer simply stated, her "main point was clear" and that her guideline had helped make the presentation clearer (PEF-2). I noted that she had "used logical explanations well to make it persuasive in a subtle way". There were no negative comments regarding the content or the structure of Rena's presentation.

5.4.9 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 2

This section draws on data from Rena's second SR and interview. Her overriding reflection was that the presentation had been successful and persuasive. She gave herself an A+ when evaluating the presentation (SR-2) and rationalized by stating: "I prepared and practiced a lot, and so I used a lot of the

presentation skills and techniques I learned in this class. Also, I tried my best on improving my weak point, which was making good eye contact." (SR-2). She then gave the presentation a rating of 4.50/5.00 for persuasiveness (I-2; SR-2) and stated similarly that: "I used a lot of techniques to make my presentation persuasive and tried making good eye contact. Also, I think I had clear points for my topic" (SR-2). She further explained that she had felt more confident during this presentation, compared to the previous two presentations delivered in this course (I-2; SR-2), but had still "panicked a little bit when the slides moved on automatically" (SR-2). She estimated that the audience would have rated her presentation 4.00/5.00 for persuasiveness (I-2). When pressed as to why the score was lower than her own self-evaluation, she bemoaned that fact that she had had to present after Daisuke who "obviously loves doing presentations and has confidence" (I-2, L214).

Rena had no trouble in identifying specific skills or techniques she had successfully utilized in her second presentation. On the SR, she wrote that, "I think I used a good attention getter, softening, change and development words, intensifiers, repetition, and knockdowns." (SR-2). She added later that she thought these techniques had "made my presentation more persuasive and the points stronger" (SR-2). In the interview she stated that she felt comfortable using signposting, attention getters, intensifiers and emphasizing her points and admitted choosing one of the points for the presentation (climate) especially because it lent itself towards the use of change and development words (I-2). She also felt that she had "improved on making eye contact and not looking much at my notes." (SR-2) although she admitted that she had frequently "wanted to turn back and see the slides" (I-2, L149). As for the attention getter, she said that "I am used to this and I involved the audience" when explaining why she felt it had been successful (SR-2). These detailed comments show Rena's belief that persuasive discursive techniques enhance the content of presentations and make them more persuasive.

When reflecting on what had not been successful or persuasive in her presentation, Rena mentioned her voice. As she explained: "I couldn't use enough

techniques that had to do with voice. It was not effective." (SR-2). She further added: "I think I need to improve on varying my voice for my future presentations. I think I can use chunking quite naturally already. However, I think my voice is still quite flat and there was not enough stress" (SR-2), due to memorizing the presentation (I-2). She also noted that when she used machine-gunning and knockdowns, "it didn't sound natural" (I-2, L190). Rena was also not satisfied with her conclusion and admitted that she always struggled to finish emphatically and that she "usually just summarized my points" (I-2, L183-184).

When asked about her final thoughts on informative and persuasive presentations, Rena commented that in her first year of university she had preferred informative presentations because they were easier to deliver and she only needed to concentrate on gathering information and preparing slides (I-2). However, she explained that since then, her view had shifted and she now believed that persuasive presentations are more interesting (although also more difficult) to deliver and to watch due to the potential use of a range of techniques (I-2). She also speculated that she would likely use persuasive presentations in the future for her career (I-2).

Rena had been impressed with all her classmates' presentations, and especially their eye contact (one of her own weaknesses): "I thought everyone's presentation was good…because everyone was not using memos" (I-2, L247-248). Rena singled out two presenters who were not part of this study, but who used their own handheld props to further support their slides – distinguishing them from other presenters. This 'uniqueness' factor was apparent in the interviews with all the participants and suggests that presenters, who can successfully differentiate themselves in someway from other presenters, are likely to be seen as potentially more persuasive.

As with many of the participants in this study, Rena was reluctant to single out presenters who were less persuasive, but did note that, "two boys (not in this study) were memorizing a lot. When they couldn't remember what they

wanted to say, they stopped, read, and then spoke too fast…and it made it difficult to understand what they wanted to say" (I-2, L258-262).

Rena concluded her reflections by acknowledging that she had again shifted her view on how persuasiveness is determined in presentations: "I used to think content was the most important but now I think all of them are really important. If we can use the language techniques, it is more interesting to hear, and easier to understand the important parts. I think all three [content, delivery, and discursive techniques] are equally important" (I-2, L270-274). She further lamented: "I used to concentrate too much on the content and it makes it too long. Long, with difficult words, but I think I was making it more unpersuasive, more difficult to understand, and I think the points were not clear enough." (I-2, L281-284).

5.4.10 PROPOSITIONS REVISITED

Following the description and analysis of Rena's second presentation, the six propositions outlined in Section 5.1 are revisited. As with Daisuke and Maki's respective case studies, many of the propositions have been supported, at least to a certain degree.

The first proposition states that: *Previous presenting experiences and prior instruction will shape initial beliefs and attitudes.* By virtue of changing her stance on how persuasiveness is determined in oral presentations throughout this study, it can be said that the previous experience and instruction in Rena's life had a minimal impact on shaping her beliefs and attitudes. She constantly readjusted her views, based on her latest self-reflections and feedback she received, along with observing other successful presenters in her class (I-1; I-2).

Proposition two (*Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact*) is partially supported by Rena's case study. She employed a substantial range of persuasive discursive techniques throughout her presentations but they frequently went uncommented on. She also utilized the interactional techniques (e.g. boosters, engagement markers,

and attitude markers) far more than the interactive techniques – as the more persuasive presenters Daisuke and Shin had done. However, the effect appears to have been negligible. As with Maki's case study, Rena's demonstrates the crucial factor of an effective delivery when utilizing persuasive discursive techniques, as emphasized by Atkinson (2004). Her stumbling over the wording and poor eye contact (P-1; P-2) seems to have minimized the effectiveness her use of persuasive discursive techniques might have had (PEFs-1; PEFs-2). One possible explanation is that unlike Daisuke, who spent time considering when and how to use each technique, and Shin (case study 4), who practiced them extensively or improvised the techniques naturally, Rena did not explicitly focus on the delivery of these techniques during her preparations and seemed content with just implementing the techniques (similar to Maki). The lack of impact these techniques had is one contributing factor for Rena's relatively low persuasive rating.

Proposition three (*Presenters will exhibit a selective bias in terms of overestimating the importance of presenting skills which they are good at*) was initially supported by Rena's case study. Rena was clear that delivery was her weakest presenting skill (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2), and constantly pointed out other speakers in her class who had been particularly persuasive due to good eye contact, varied voices, and confident deliveries (I-1; I-2). This mirrors findings from Maki's case study and could suggest that presenters exhibiting skills, which members of the audience are not particularly adept at, can be seen as persuasive. Although she initially stated that content, and then persuasive discursive techniques were the most important factors – and that she was confident in her abilities in these areas – she eventually conceded that delivery was equally important by the end of her case study (I-2; SR-2).

The fourth proposition (*The importance of content, delivery skills, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for persuasiveness*) was strongly supported at the end of Rena's case study as she explicitly stated that she now believed content, delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques were all equally important for

building a persuasive presentation (I-2; SR-2). In addition, although her preparation timetable revealed a significant focus on content, she was also explicit about specific persuasive discursive techniques she intended to implement and which delivery skills she intended to improve on (D-1; D-2).

The fifth proposition (*Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to different topics*) was only partially supported. Although Rena modified and frequently changed her beliefs on the key factor for determining persuasiveness in an oral presentation, this does not appear to have been influenced by the specific context she was presenting in and had more to do with her ongoing self-reflection regarding her own strengths and weaknesses. As with Maki, Rena did not exhibit a strong sense of how the audience might react or how they did react to her presentation (SR-1; I-1), but she did exhibit an awareness of the situation and how others were presenting. This awareness led her to change her beliefs and modify her stance on persuasion in oral presentations. Despite initially focusing more on persuasive discursive techniques, she noted how the most persuasive speakers in her class included strong content and an effective delivery skill-set. This led her to conclude that a combination of content, delivery and persuasive discursive techniques were necessary for a persuasive oral presentation (I-2; SR-2). In addition, she did mention taking the audience's position on a certain topic into account on several occasions during her preparations (D-1; D-2).

Proposition six (*English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness*) was supported by the data in this case study. Not once did I, any of the peers in the audience, or the presenter, ever mention her English ability for either of the presentations.

In conclusion, Rena delivered two presentations that were less persuasive than either of Daisuke's of Shin's. Despite frequently utilizing persuasive discursive techniques, her persuasive attempts were often weakened by a

delivery plagued by breaks in eye contact and that did not support her usages of boosters and other interactional techniques.

5.5 SHIN

"Shin" is the fourth case study to be presented. As with the other participants, it follows a case description approach and a chronological structure (Yin, 2014), a 'chains of evidence' approach (Duff, 2008), and is presented in a narrative form (Hood, 2009; Polkinghorne, 1995). The same set of six theoretical propositions helps structure the analysis and again serve "to organize the entire analysis, pointing to relevant contextual conditions to be described as well as explanations to be described" (Yin, 2014, p. 136).

5.5.1 PROFILE

Shin's case study begins with the necessary exploration of relevant background information (Seidman, 2006). The data compiled were obtained from his diaries and interviews. At the time of the study, Shin was a 20-year-old male in his third year of university. He had studied abroad in the United Kingdom for one year, during his second year. Shin's TOEIC score of 960, obtained before studying abroad (the highest of the participants), demonstrates his high English ability. Table 5.33 provides a brief overview of Shin's background information for reference.

Table 5.33.

Background Information – Shin

Age	20
Gender	Male
Year of study	Junior year (3rd year)
Best TOEIC score	960 (2012)
Experience studying abroad	A year in the United Kingdom (Second year of university)
Experience presenting abroad	None

Reason for enrolling in course	A good chance to review previously learnt skills
Reason for volunteering to join study	Interested in making money
Experience delivering English presentations	1st year University – Oral Communication in English course 2nd year University – Oral Communication in English course, Reading in English, Workshop in English

As with Rena, Shin also studied with me in his first year of university, in an Oral Communication in English course. This three-times-a-week class allowed the participant and I to become familiar with one another. As with Maki and Rena, Shin also took a Workshop in English course I taught in his second year of studies, focusing on famous speeches from the previous 100 years and the techniques employed by the speakers. Shin simply stated that he had volunteered for the study because it offered him a good chance to "make some pocket money" (D-2). He also exuded a high degree of confidence in his presenting ability early on when he explained that he had enrolled in the presentation skills course "because I thought I would get a good grade and I liked to practice presentation skills" (D-2). Shin was not as sure as Rena that he would present in the future but still felt improving presentation skills would make him "look very competent and reliable" (D-2).

5.5.2 EXPERIENCES

Shin had no experience presenting outside of Japan (D-1). Despite having studied at an English language school for a year in the United Kingdom in his second year of university, he did not present in any classes (D-1). Therefore, his presenting experiences were limited to two years at university in Japan. He did later recall that he had presented in English in high school once, but that he had simply just "memorized the script" (I-1, L24). He further explained that it had been a persuasive presentation in which he had attempted to persuade his classmates about the dangers of smoking (I-1). When prompted, he recalled that

he had written a script based solely on his opinions and had had to submit multiple drafts of the script to his teacher, who checked his grammar. The only instruction given by the teacher was to make eye contact and not look at the script (I-1).

Shin was clear about his experiences learning to present in university and stated: "I haven't been taught about presenting by anyone but (my name)" (D-1). When asked to specify what he had learned, he replied: "varied voice, good opening, bookending, tripling, and knockdown, etc." (D-1). He then further explained that, "I am not completely sure about every technique I have learnt. The one technique I surely remember was bookending." (D-1). As he later elaborated: "Bookending was a cool way to finish my presentations. It's applicable to any kind of presentation I do so I remember it vividly." (I-1, L79-81). His comments indicate that he specifically remembered persuasive discursive techniques more than other factors, which is not surprising given my tendency to focus on these techniques when instructing. Shin did also recall being advised by his second-year English reading teacher: "It's got to be based on some reliable sources. He cared more about the content or source." (I-1, L101-102). Similar to other participants, Shin struggled to recall ever presenting in Japanese other than an elementary school 'show and tell' type of presentation about "the life of frogs" (I-1, L108).

Shin discussed several presentations he had to deliver in other university courses and revealed a level of confidence that the other participants in this study did not. An example of this was a presentation for an English speaking class: "since it's a group presentation, and I have only two minutes or so to speak, I think I'm just going to improvise, so probably I will just be careful of my voice" (D-2). Later, he explained that he had not "put a lot of effort into that presentation. Basically I just improvised. It was a group presentation and just informative" (I-2, L17). Shin noted that the instructor had not commented on the techniques used in the presentation and had just provided some general feedback about the content being interesting (I-2).

When delivering a presentation in his English reading class just prior to this study, Shin actually seems to have angered his instructor who commented that Shin's presentation had sounded more like a debate, and not a presentation (I-2). Shin seemed somewhat puzzled by this, as he had asked the teacher prior to presenting if he could deliver a persuasive presentation, and had been assured that it was okay. The teacher had only stressed to him the need for accurate sources and time management (I-2).

5.5.3 BELIEFS

Shin's beliefs about oral presentations and persuasiveness are documented in this section, drawing upon data from his two diaries and two interviews. Firstly, Shin was clear about the differences between informative and persuasive presentations: "Informative ones don't need my opinion so it's just giving information and is much easier. As for persuasive ones, I must persuade the audience so I have to use lots of skills, so it is more difficult." (D-2). Shin also admitted that he found informative presentations boring and rarely listened to them, and that even if he disagreed with the content of the persuasive presentations, he was more likely to listen to them (I-2). As with the other participants in this study, he felt creating a persuasive presentation was more challenging (I-2).

Shin was consistent in his belief that persuasive discursive techniques and delivery skills were more important in determining the persuasiveness of an oral presentation than content (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). As he explicitly stated in the first diary: "I think delivery and language techniques are the most important simply because, whatever the content is, you must make the audience interested or attracted. Otherwise, the audience won't listen to you and it can't be persuasive." (D-1). He further elaborated by explaining that persuasive discursive techniques "make you sound more professional. If you sound more professional, you sound more persuasive." (D-1).

Shin was also certain about what detracts from the persuasiveness of a presentation: "I think stammering and no eye contact are the worst things. Also,

people who sound too flat and who read scripts come over as much less persuasive." (D-1). He then surmised: "I would go so far as to say it's the most important skill. Even though your content is rubbish, you might be able to sound persuasive enough if your delivery is good." (D-1). He reiterated this statement later on: "I think delivery or perhaps language techniques are the most important because how I say it, not what I say, is often more effective to persuade the audience." (D-2). Shin also exhibited a potential selection bias when he further noted that, "I think delivery is my strongest skill because I'm used to it thanks to debates I usually do. Content is my weakest because I don't usually do lots of research." (D-2). Part of the reason for his belief that delivery was the central factor can be attributed to his self-professed laziness when it comes to researching (I-1). Even by the end of the study, Shin was still confident in his convictions: "All of my presentations I do even outside this class are based on what you taught." (D-2). From these comments, it can be concluded that Shin was firmly of the belief that delivery skills, followed by persuasive discursive techniques, were the main factors for enhancing persuasiveness, and that his prior experience being taught in my classes had strongly shaped this belief.

5.5.4 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 1

A description of Shin's preparations for his first presentation is now offered, drawing data from his first diary and interview. Table 5.34 provides a summarized outline of Shin's preparations (10 represents the day before the presentation was delivered).

Table 5.34.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity
1	Chose topic
2	No preparations
3	Structured presentation and researched data for supporting information
4	No preparations
5	No preparations

6	No preparations
7	Organized structure, practiced presentation and videoed it
8	No preparations
9	Practiced in front of mother, restructured presentation, practiced again several times
10	Practiced in front of friends

The first salient finding from this timetable is that Shin only prepared on five of the ten days – far fewer than any of the other participants (I-1). This could be because of Shin's self-proclaimed lack of interest in researching, and belief in his ability to successfully implement persuasive discursive techniques and combine them with a quality delivery skill-set without preparing extensively (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). Also distinct from some of the other participants was the time frame for choosing a topic. Shin decided on the very first day and never wavered from his choice (D-1). The other salient finding is that Shin appears to have practiced more extensively than the other participants.

An exploration of the timeline for Shin's preparations reveals that, although he chose his topic on the first day of preparations, there was no other form of preparation on that day (D-1). Shin chose to present on how stopping gender discrimination would help Japan's future. On the second day he did not prepare, but on the third day he "looked up some data to reinforce my arguments…and finished the structure of the presentation, and the order of my points" (D-1). Shin then did not work on his presentation for the next three days, before resuming preparations on the seventh day of his diary (D-1). On this day, he merely structured his points and video-recorded himself delivering the presentation. This trial run was earlier than for other participants who typically started rehearsing the day before the presentation. Videoing himself and then reflecting on the presentation also set him apart from other presenters. Although he did not prepare on the eighth day of the diary, he again practiced several times in front of his mother on the ninth day. During these rehearsals he realized the presentation was too long and proceeded to reduce the content before rehearsing again (D-1). He explained that although his mother could not

understand English, this form of practice helped him "get a sense of time and pressure" (I-1, L170). The extensive practicing continued on the final day of the diary as he actually practiced "with friends at a pub and with a friend on Skype" (D-1).

Despite Shin's stated belief that persuasive discursive techniques were important for enhancing the persuasiveness of an oral presentation, there was no mention of him preparing specific techniques in his diary. In his first interview, Shin explained that although he had not written about it in his diary, he had written out particular discursive techniques and practiced them and decided where they would fit appropriately, after watching his presentation video (I-1). He explained that he never really "plans to use specific techniques in the presentation, like some people do…because that would be uncool. I just wanted to be spontaneous." (I-1, L189-196). Video-recording himself allows him to develop and incorporate specific techniques into his presentation (I-1). Unlike the other participants, he also noted that he tended to use these techniques evenly throughout his presentation, "and in particular in the body section" (I-1, L208-209) because that's when "I tend to improvise a lot" (I-1, L212-213). In contrast, he stated that he usually tried to interact with the audience in the opening and that the conclusion was typically more structured so he did not have the freedom to suddenly include persuasive discursive techniques (I-1).

As with many of the other participants, Shin found it easier presenting without visuals, as he could "focus on what to say instead of thinking about paying attention to the visuals." (I-1, L217-218). Finally, Shin anticipated his presentation would rate 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness "unless I mess up accidentally because the content is fine, and I'm confident I would be able to use different kinds of delivery skills spontaneously" (D-1).

5.5.5 PRESENTATION 1

Shin's first presentation is described and analyzed in this section. The length of his presentation was 5:44, within the 5:30-6:00 time frame allotted for speakers. The presentation was rated 4.80/5.00, for persuasiveness by his peers

(PEFs-1) indicating it was highly persuasive. Data from the presentation video are integrated with findings from the PEFs and my notes to explore Shin's first presentation. Table 5.35 below provides the ELAN annotation frequency figures for his first presentation.

Table 5.35.

Annotation Frequency figures for 1st Presentation

Transcript	Discursive techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience
145	56	4	118	9	0

Shin used a simple structure, with an introduction, two points in the body of his presentation, and a conclusion. The figures from Shin's first presentation reveal a speaker who used gestures, chunking (transcript tier), and persuasive discursive techniques frequently, and who rarely broke eye contact with the audience.

The first tier to be analyzed is the persuasive discursive techniques tier. Shin employed these techniques more frequently than the other participants, by some considerable margin (P-1). This is perhaps not surprising given his stated belief that these techniques (in combination with delivery skills) were important factors for enhancing the persuasiveness of an oral presentation. Table 5.36 provides a list of the persuasive discursive techniques he used, which dimension of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse they belong to, and how often the techniques were utilized.

Table 5.36.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Shin's First Presentation

Interactive	Interactional	Not a part of
Helps guide the reader through the text – 11	Involves the reader in the text – 35	Hyland's model – 10

Signposting x 5 (frame marker)	Inclusive language x 7 (engagement marker)	Pausing x 10
Framing point x 2 (frame marker)	Doubling x 6 (booster)	
Referencing x 2 (evidentials)	Intensifier x 6 (booster)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Rhetorical question x 6 (booster)	
Framing main point (Frame marker)	Contrast x 2 (engagement marker)	
	Question for the audience x 2 (engagement marker)	
	Repetition x 2 (booster)	
	Attention getter (engagement marker)	
	Knockdown (attitude marker)	
	Softening (hedge)	
	Tripling (booster)	

Shin utilized interactional techniques more frequently than the other participants. Not only did he use a range of techniques, he used many of them on multiple occasions.

Shin had indicated before the presentation that he intended to utilize persuasive discursive techniques throughout his presentation, whenever he felt he could improvise and successfully implement them (D-1). He began however, with a pre-scripted attention-getter, by asking the audience to

> Please imagine you are working as an employee at a company, and you are doing a hard job. You are doing well. Probably you are doing the same or even better job than your colleagues, but your colleagues, they get promoted very quickly, and you don't. How would you feel? I bet you'll feel upset and very angry, because it isn't fair, is it? (P-1).

Shin then unveiled his main point, which was that Japanese companies discriminate against female employees, and that this is not beneficial for the companies, the society, or the workers. Shin was astute enough to realize that although he was male, his audience would be comprised mostly of females and that they were in either their third or fourth year of studies and were actively involved in seeking employment for their future careers. After stating his main point he then provided a guideline for the points he would cover (P-1). Two members of the audience wrote in their PEFs that they felt the attention-getter had worked well (PEFs-1) and I assessed it as having been "very effective".

Shin frequently used signposting throughout his presentation to introduce his points in a clear manner (P-1). An example of this was how he began his first point: "let me move on to my first point, which is as I said, are the potential causes and the solution to this problem" (P-1). Despite frequent uses of signposting, none of his peers commented on it. After setting up his first point, Shin then effectively combined several techniques to engage the audience (rhetorical question, pausing, and a knockdown): "What do you think is the actual cause (of this problem)? I know some people might put it down to the legal framework, like Japanese women are not fully supported by the government" (P-1). Shin then refuted this notion and explained the actual cause of the problem (traditional Japanese culture and values), from his perspective. He then continued to use techniques to add emphasis to his message: "the biggest fundamental cause" (intensifier) and "men expect women to be a good wife and a good mother" (doubling) (P-1). As with other techniques he used, these also largely went uncommented on (PEFs-1).

One other frequently used technique was pausing. While other participants used this technique, the span of their pauses was typically very

short and arguably, ineffective. Shin not only used pausing frequently, but in several key instances, he was able to hold the pauses for several seconds at a time, maximizing the impact of his pause: "they (husbands) want you ladies to quit your job, and more importantly (pauses for 2.3 seconds) many women as well think this way." (P-1). Despite these apparently successful pauses, none of his peers commented on them (PEFs-1).

Shin used rhetorical questions throughout his presentation in what appeared to be an attempt to engage the audience. Examples of this in his first point are: "it's serious, do you not think?" and "women will quit their jobs soon, so it's no use investing in them, is it?" (P-1). This last example was an attempt to provoke a reaction from the audience by showing the sexism exhibited by companies. Once again, though, his peers did not mention these techniques in the PEFs.

Shin concluded his first point, with a string of doubling examples:

> My point is it's not our law…it's not our system, but it's our notions, it's our notions about gender, that must be changed, that must be readdressed. Unless we readdress our notions, unless we adapt this notion to the modern society, we can't accomplish true equality between men and women (P-1).

Shin began his second point (the benefits of gender equality in the work place) as he had done for the first point, by signposting it and then framing it: "Let me move on to my second point…the actual benefits we can get from reducing inequality" (P-1). He then elaborated on his point and used pausing to increase the impact of what he was saying: "this can solve one age-old issue (pausing) which is the economy" (P-1). As with his earlier point, he paused for approximately 2.3 seconds, which was longer than other presenters had paused for (P-1). After giving a statistic, Shin used tripling to further emphasize his point:

> So you don't have to invent something amazing or something new, you don't have to try to work hard, and you don't have to think of any very complicated economic plans to carry out. All you need to do is make women equal. (P-1).

I noted in my observations that his use of tripling had been very effective in laying out the crucial message in his point, but again, none of his peers commented on it (PEFs-1).

Following this point, Shin signposted that he was going to conclude his presentation, and immediately used contrasting: "unlike other countries, Japanese women have way fewer career opportunities, compared to Japanese men." (P-1). Unfortunately, the next twenty seconds were consumed by Shin stumbling over the exact wording of his conclusion, before regaining his composure and using an example of doubling: "by successfully changing this culture, by successfully establishing the real equality between men and women" (P-1). He then paused for approximately two seconds, and stated, "then we can bring about lots of benefits, especially economic ones" (P-1). Once again, he then used the doubling technique to try and make a final persuasive push: "only by changing our idea, only by changing our notions about this culture, can we ever hope to establish true equality between men and women" (P-1). His final comment was an attempt to be interactive and place the onus for change on the audience (a 'call to arms'): "It's up to you, especially ladies, girls, it's time to act because Japanese future solely depends on you" (P-1). I wrote this final barrage of persuasive discursive techniques had been quite persuasive and one peer felt his use of "ladies, girls" made the point more poignant for the audience (PEF-1).

Despite using more persuasive discursive techniques than the other participants, there was little in the PEFs to indicate these techniques had been particularly persuasive, from the peers' perspective. In fact, two of the peers actually stated that he should have used more techniques to enhance his persuasive impact (PEFs-1).

In terms of his content, the power of a statistic was demonstrated again. Shin noted early in his presentation that, "research has shown that 1 out of 3 high school girls want to be a housewife" (P-1). For his second point he referenced a study that claimed narrowing the gender gap could increase the Japanese GDP by 12.5%. He then repeated the statistic and followed it with a rhetorical question and an intensifier to make sure the point was clear to the audience: "12.5%, it's amazing isn't it?" (P-1). Several peers noted on the PEFs that his use of statistics had enhanced his persuasiveness (PEFs-1), and I wrote the same in my notes. These were the only references to Shin's content.

The reason for Shin's strong persuasive impact seems to lie less in his frequent use of multiple persuasive discursive techniques and statistics, but more in his strong delivery. This includes his voice, his frequent use of stress, and his excellent eye contact (PEFs-1). These skill-sets are examined here. Firstly, Table 5.37 provides a detailed summary of the range of different moves that constituted breaks in eye contact for Shin's first presentation.

Table 5.37.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
9	0	1	1	7

From Table 5.37, it can be ascertained that Shin made almost continuous eye contact with the audience. There were only nine instances of broken eye contact in the entire presentation, totaling only 8.35 seconds. The majority of these 'moves' came when he checked a hand-held timer. I rated Shin's eye contact as "great", while three peers also wrote positively about his eye contact (PEFs-1). One such peer noted that Shin "not relying on cue cards made him look confident".

Another strong aspect of Shin's delivery was his voice. Table 5.38 provides a brief statistical breakdown of the transcript tier.

Table 5.38.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Chunking	Average Length	Longest
145	1.85 seconds	7.81 seconds

A simple observation of these figures reveals that Shin had slightly more chunks of language than the other presenters, but that on average, they were shorter. According to my notes, Shin utilized chunking very well, and a peer concurred (PEF-1). Another peer also added that Shin's "loud voice made the audience feel more persuaded" (PEF-1). Three peers commented that he had used stress very effectively, along with repetition of key words, with one stating he had used this stress to make his presentation "very dramatic" (PEFs-1). There was only one negative note regarding his voice, and that peer felt Shin had spoken too quickly (PEF-1).

The overall picture obtained from the presentation analysis and PEFs is that Shin's first presentation featured a strong delivery, with frequent stress and lots of language chunks, punctuated with multiple persuasive discursive techniques (especially interactional techniques) and the use of statistics for supporting evidence. I did note in my final comments to him that the presentation might have been a little difficult for some in the audience as the language used was quite sophisticated (for a class in which English was the second language).

5.5.6 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTION ON PRESENTATION 1

Shin's self-reflections are now analyzed, drawing data from his first self-reflection report and interview. As has been noted before, Shin frequently exhibited a great deal of self-confidence, but surprisingly, his reflections on the

first presentation began with a different tone: "This time I felt much worse than previous times because I could pick up on quite a few mistakes (after watching the video)" (SR-1). Despite this initial statement, Shin then evaluated his presentation as "probably, lower A+" because "There were quite a few grammatical or pronunciation mistakes, but generally I think I sounded persuasive" (SR-1). He also assessed himself 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness, as "I sounded very persuasive mainly because of my delivery skills. I also used some statistics so it might have made it more persuasive" (SR-1). This self-assessment parallels findings in the previous section. When asked if there was anything that had detracted from his persuasive impact, he replied simply: "I don't think so." (SR-1).

Shin thought that "tripling, chunking and varied voice" had contributed the most to making his presentation persuasive (SR-1). As he then further explained, "Tripling. It's not really "improved" but I used it for the first time in presentations. Varied voice and chunking was as good as the last time. As for all the skills I used, I think they are already good enough" (SR-1). He explained that he had consciously tried to vary his voice as much as possible (I-1). He then further noted that "It sounded persuasive and above all I could see how my audience was listening carefully to my presentation when I was speaking." (SR-1). Further related to his position that delivery was the key element for building persuasiveness, he added, "I practiced a lot of times so that I can speak naturally without any notes. I think that played a very important role to make it persuasive." (SR-1). More specifically, he felt

> I have no problems with the opening and the body. It went well, I think in terms of the delivery skills. But, as for the conclusion, before I moved onto the conclusion, I checked my time, and it said something like 4:30. So, I didn't want to finish it, because I already said I moved on to the conclusion, I tried to drag my conclusion as long as possible. I could finish successfully in the right time, but it might have had some effect on the persuasiveness. So, I didn't like my conclusion (I-1, L226-238).

This statement likely accounts for the stuttering and confusion that Shin exhibited at the beginning of his conclusion, detailed in the previous section. This statement also suggests support for the notion that Shin had spoken rather quickly (as one peer had stated) because he had practiced and timed out his presentation before, yet had finished early in the actual presentation.

Interestingly, Shin mentioned he had not been satisfied with the content of his presentation, as he had focused too much on one aspect of the issue, "and had not shown the whole issue" (I-1, L241-242). He did admit that most of the audience had likely been persuaded before he even began as "it's a typical topic and everybody already believed it. What I did was try to give them some merits for addressing the inequality" (I-1, L261-264).

When asked about his views on the presentations delivered by his peers, Shin was more forthcoming than the other participants. He quickly identified two presenters (not in this study) who had been persuasive, because of two contrasting reasons. For one of them "her skills were the best among other students. But, I wasn't really persuaded by the content…" (I-1, L281-282). For the other presenter, he explained, "even though she sounded all too flat, the content was very interesting and persuasive" (I-1, L284-285). He explained further that her second point had been "very unique. Not the typical point. So, in that sense, it was very persuasive, because it gave me a new perspective." (I-1, L294-295). Once again we can see the theme of 'novelty' being especially poignant for enhancing the persuasiveness of a presentation. In his second diary he would provide further support for this point when asked what had been persuasive in his peers' presentations: "To be honest, I don't remember anything apart from a very unique point that I didn't expect" (D-2).

Consistent with his perspective on the importance of delivery superseding other skill-sets, Shin was clear about which presenters had not been persuasive, and that it was largely due to a poor delivery: "He (another presenter) was like, almost reading the script. He was constantly shaking, so he came over as not very confident" (I-1, L300-303). He also remembered one

presenter had been so nervous that his pronunciation had been affected, meaning he was very unclear (I-1). Shin concluded by bemoaning that many presenters "had been dependent on the script, so I find it, not persuasive at all" (I-1, L307-308).

In terms of his next presentation, Shin was already anticipating using "techniques that I didn't use at all, such as machine-gunning" (SR-1). He also noted that he intended to "focus more on the content. I want it to be more well-structured, and to focus more on a range of views, but this requires more planning" (I-1, L313-316).

One final note from Shin's reflections shows that he was in agreement with the other participants in that having to use visuals is a distraction and takes away from his focus on speaking, so he had "preferred not using visuals" (SR-1).

5.5.7 PREPARATIONS FOR PRESENTATION 2

Shin's preparations for his second presentation are now described and analyzed. The data are drawn from his second diary and interview. Firstly, a summarized version of the diary entries related to his preparations can be found in Table 5.39, alongside the preparation timetable for his first presentation.

Table 5.39.

Preparation Timetable

Day	Activity (Presentation 1)	Activity (Presentation 2)
1	Chose topic	No preparations
2	No preparations	No preparations
3	Structured presentation and researched data for supporting information	Contemplated structure and made some slides
4	No preparations	No preparations
5	No preparations	No preparations
6	No preparations	No preparations
7	Organized structure, practiced	No preparations

	presentation and videoed it	
8	No preparations	Practiced in front of mother
9	Practiced in front of mother, restructured presentation, practiced again several times	Shortened conclusion and practiced again
10	Practiced in front of friends	Practiced alone a few times

Setting Shin apart from the other participants again, is the amount of days when he did not prepare at all (six), far more than the maximum of two days for other participants. This is not necessarily indicative of Shin being unprepared for his second presentation, but shows that he either spent far less time preparing than the other participants, or that when he did prepare, it was more intensive.

Shin did not begin preparing until the third day of the diary when he "thought about the structure and made a simple PowerPoint slide show" (D-1). He also decided the topic, and to argue that Japan should revise Article 9 of its constitution (D-2). He later admitted that he had debated the topic in debate club so he already understood the issues and even the structure of the argument (I-2). Shin also constructed his visuals on day three of the diary – something all the other participants had done at the end of the preparation time period. He estimated that he spent 20% of his total preparation time preparing slides (D-2), which is in line with the other participants.

Following his preparations on day three, Shin did not prepare again for five days (D-2). On the eighth day, he simply wrote, "I practiced in front of my family" (D-2). Once again, he was the only participant who explicitly stated that they had practiced in front of an audience. Unfortunately, there were no comments about the reaction. The following day, he shortened the conclusion and then practiced again several times (D-2). The day before his presentation, he simply noted, "I practiced a few times on my own" (D-2) and checked the timing after discovering a function in PowerPoint that allowed him to record his voice and time alongside the slides (I-2). His preparation can be summed up by a

comment in the last interview: "I was really busy and I was confident I could do most of them (skills and tasks) without any preparation" (I-2, L115-117).

While his responses to general questions in the diary were brief, Shin elucidated in greater detail when prompted with specific questions. To strengthen his presentation, he wanted to use tripling but needed to plan how and when he would use it to make it more effective (D-2). He did reiterate that he usually did not plan to use persuasive discursive techniques but instead utilized them through improvisation, when he felt intuitively that they were necessary and could make his presentations "sound more professional" (D-2). He did admit though, that he tried out the tripling technique when practicing and felt it had worked, so he used the same wording again in practice runs and in the actual presentation (I-2).

When asked about his beliefs, Shin was adamant that nothing had changed. He still believed a strong delivery skill-set and effective use of persuasive discursive techniques outweighed the importance of content to build a persuasive presentation (D-2). As he explained: "looking back I think I focused solely on my voice and they (two previous presentations) were successful because if my voice sounded persuasive enough, I think contents don't really matter" (D-2). He was still confident in his delivery skill-set and ability to implement persuasive discursive techniques, especially "varying my voice, chunking, slowing down, basically skills about my voice and probably eye contact" (D-2). He also planned to use emphasis and "a catchy phrase" to conclude in a strong manner, while spending most of the presentation "talking to the audience if I can", to make it more persuasive (D-2).

When asked about his first presentation, Shin reiterated what he had said in the first interview: "my points were not strong enough compared to the way I presented. I think I could make it better (this time) since the topic is what I'm relatively familiar with" (D-2). He also speculated that the audience would all have opinions about the topic, but that they would probably be "weak ones that are not supported by any evidence or logic. So I think I can persuade them by a

logical presentation that sounds powerful enough" (D-2). His structure was set up so that he could refute questions early on, thereby creating a more persuasive impression (D-2). This constituted a knockdown, which he would also employ in the introduction to draw the audience's attention (D-2). Finally, Shin concluded a discussion of his preparations by stating he again expected his second presentation to be rated 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness (D-2).

5.5.8 PRESENTATION 2

Shin's second presentation is now described and analyzed. Data from the presentation video processed through ELAN software are integrated with data from the PEFs and my notes to explore the presentation in more detail. The time of the presentation was 6:24, within the allotted time frame. Having scored 4.80/5.00 for persuasiveness from his peers on the first presentation, Shin was rated more persuasive this time and scored 5.00/5.00. Table 5.40 below provides an overview of the annotation frequency figures for his second presentation, alongside those from his first presentation.

Table 5.40.

Annotation Frequency Figures

Presentation (Time)	Transcript	Discursive Techniques	Structure	Gestures	Eye Contact	Audience	Visuals
1 (5:44)	145	56	4	118	9	0	X
2 (6:24)	143	66	5	90	63	5	6

The descriptive statistics in Table 5.40 show that Shin delivered a presentation similar to his first presentation. Shin used even more persuasive discursive techniques in his second presentation – once again more than the other participants. The structure again included four points, and there were an almost identical number of chunks of language in the transcript tier. There was a very substantial seven-fold increase in breaks in eye contact and a slight decrease in the amount of gestures. Shin's use of visuals was far more limited that the other participants.

An analysis of the transcript tier reveals that although there was an almost identical amount of chunks of language. These chunks were marginally longer in duration in the second presentation. However, compared to the other participants, the average length of each chunk was slightly shorter in duration. This is likely due to his more precise wording. Table 5.41 provides an overview of the transcript tier figures for both of Shin's presentations.

Table 5.41.

Transcript Tier Figures for Chunking

Presentation	Chunking	Average Length	Longest
1	145	1.85 seconds	7.81 seconds
2	143	2.13 seconds	5.95 seconds

My comments mirror those for Shin's first presentation: the chunking was very good although he occasionally spoke too quickly, something two peers also noted (PEFs-2). He was also able to vary his voice successfully – which he had previously indicated he felt comfortable doing. Many of his peers commented favorably as well, with comments such as "good speaking speed and pauses made it persuasive", "good pace and a clear voice", and "good chunking" (PEFs-2). One referred directly to his voice variation: "The way he used his voice was like a professional speaker. I learned how varying the voice is important for a persuasive presentation." (PEF-2).

Shin utilized persuasive discursive techniques frequently in his presentation and Table 5.42 provides a list of the persuasive discursive techniques utilized in his second presentation, which dimension of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse they belong to, and how often they were used.

Table 5.42.

Persuasive Discursive Techniques in Shin's Second Presentation

Interactive Helps guide the reader through the text – 11	Interactional Involves the reader in the text – 43	Not a part of Hyland's model – 12
Signposting x 6 (frame marker)	Intensifier x 17 (booster)	Pausing x 12
Referencing visuals x 2 (endorphic marker)	Inclusive language x 6 (engagement marker)	
Framing point (frame marker)	Doubling x 3 (booster)	
Guideline (frame marker)	Contrast x 3 (booster)	
Framing main point (Frame marker)	Rhetorical question x 3 (engagement marker)	
	Tripling x 2 (booster)	
	Machine-gunning x 2 (booster)	
	Attention getter (engagement marker)	
	Self-introduction (self-mention)	
	Knockdown (attitude marker)	
	Question for the audience (engagement marker)	
	Repetition (booster)	
	Softening (hedge)	
	Anecdote	

Indicative of the strong persuasive push in Shin's presentation was the fact he used 43 interactional techniques, featuring intensifiers 17 times, with several inappropriate uses of "bloody" (P-2). One peer specifically wrote the intensifiers had made his points stronger (PEF-2). Shin also used pausing and inclusive language frequently. Signposting was another frequently used technique, appearing six times, and was commented on favorably by a peer (PEF-2).

Shin began his presentation with a simple greeting and then asked the audience to "think about our current situation in East Asia, especially around Japan" (P-2). This beginning included the use of inclusive language (our), a common feature of both his presentations. He then proceeded to describe several recent events in East Asia, which one peer felt was effective for enhancing the persuasive impact of his main point (PEF-2). He stated: "the situation in East Asia is the most chaotic since the last war (WWII)" (P-2). After presenting the problem, he outlined his solution for the audience: "Ladies and gentlemen, don't worry about it, because I can offer you a solution, which is the revision of Article 9 of our constitution." (P-2). By utilizing inclusive language, he made his main point clear to the audience and that they held a stake in this situation. He then proceeded to give an outline of his presentation, which concluded his introduction.

Shin began the body of his presentation by signposting the first point and then providing information about current diplomatic problems in East Asia (P-2). This included several slides with an abundance of statistics related to Chinese and North Korean military spending and weapons stockpiles, for which he used the technique of referencing his visuals (P-2). To emphasize the relative weakness of Japan, he used two intensifiers (one of which was inappropriate for an academic presentation): "Japan is in bloody sixth place. So that is a significant gap between Japan and those two countries (China and North Korea)" (P-2). He then attempted to increase the emphasis of this contrast by using machine-gunning: "Even North Korea, that tiny, little, miserable, poor country" (P-2) to

point out the embarrassing discrepancy for Japan, in the arms difference. This use of machine-gunning drew a small smattering of laughter from the audience (P-2). After providing more information on the current situation, he then attempted to press home the point in emphatic style by explaining: "on top of that (pausing) don't forget (pausing) all of those countries except for Japan (pausing) have got nuclear weapons" (P-2). The three examples of pausing in this statement were well timed and proved effective in combination with several intensifiers.

Shin then continued to detail a range of statistics: "Japan…our country…has got 237,000 soldiers, which is merely 0.8% of the GDP. And of course we've got no missiles and no bombs" (P-2). In this statement he utilized inclusive language twice ('our' and 'we'), in addition to an intensifier (merely), a statistic, and doubling (we've got no missiles and no bombs). He then used a similar template to contrast Japan's position with China: "They've got 2.8 million soldiers, which occupies the best part of 4.3% of GDP. They've got millions of missiles and millions of bombs" (P-2). These last statistics are an exaggeration, but served to reinforce the image and contrast he was attempting to make – none of his peers commented or questioned his accuracy. He concluded his point with another combination of techniques: "These figures clearly suggest that China is very well prepared (pausing) for attack, military conflict, invasion, or even war. So we are in dire need of protecting our country" (P-2).

To begin his second point, Shin utilized a knockdown: "When I talk of these points, I know there will be so many people who will argue that, we've got the US. They will protect us." (P-2). Two peers and I wrote favorably about his use of this technique (PEFs-2). He then signposted he was beginning his second point and posed a rhetorical question: "Right, let me now talk about this point. Does the US really protect us?" (P-2). Softening was then used to admit that the US had protected Japan in the past, before refuting that this was indicative of their ability and interest for protecting Japan in the future. For this he utilized contrasting along with pausing, and inclusive language: "Those were facts. However in this day and age, I would say this treaty would never (pausing) work

at all (pausing) for Japan, for our country" (P-2). He then stated there were two reasons for his opinion and proceeded to elaborate on these, while incorporating further discursive techniques such as tripling: "The US and China are now one of the most greatest superpowers in the world" (P-2). Even Shin, with his strong command of English, stumbled over the wording of this technique – as other participants had. This stumble could explain why only one peer noted it favorably (PEF-2). Shin then concluded his point with another series of techniques, featuring tripling, a rhetorical question, doubling and pausing: "Do you really think the United States government would risk their own people, they would sacrifice their own cities like San Francisco, New York, and Washington? They won't (pausing)." (P-2). This last example of pausing was one of many throughout his presentation that seemed to be well timed and were rated as effective in enhancing his persuasive impact by his peers (PEFs-2).

Following this point, Shin next spent almost a minute explaining the financial reasons behind the US not supporting or protecting Japan in a future war, while employing periodic intensifiers to enhance his point (P-2). After describing the US debt at nearly 20 trillion dollars, he jokingly asked the audience if they could even understand what such a high number meant, prompting a smattering of laughter (P-2).

After this point Shin once again employed signposting: "let me conclude my presentation"(P-2). He then proceeded to use several different techniques to enhance his conclusion: "We are totally and completely dependent on the US" (doubling/intensifiers), "the Japanese military is very weak and there is no guarantee at all, that the US will help us out" (intensifier and inclusive language), "we can obtain a very strong Japanese military" (intensifier), "for of course deterrence" (pausing), "and protection" (pausing and contrasting), before finishing with another inappropriate intensifier and several contrasts: "Don't forget it's not the bloody constitution, but our own people that the government must protect . So, we should not care about the constitution, but we should care about the people. That's why Article 9 must be revised immediately" (P-2).

Although he had stumbled in a couple of instances while delivering the persuasive discursive techniques, none of the peers commented about it. Unlike Maki and Rena, Shin's delivery of persuasive discursive techniques seems to have not detracted from their persuasive impact. In fact, it would seem that his high English skills had made him more persuasive: "Amazing English skills" and "He spoke fluently and his English was natural, so he looked confident" (PEFs-2).

There were few comments regarding the content of Shin's presentation, as had been the case with the other participants' presentations. Once again though, several peers noted his use of statistics had worked well (PEFs-2). However, one peer felt the "topic was a bit difficult for students", and another noted that there had been "a lot of information" and that it had detracted from his persuasive impact (PEF-2). There were no comments regarding his slides other than that they were "simple" and effective (PEFs-2). My overall summary of Shin's content was that he had explained the points in a logical manner but that his arguments had been mostly based on personal opinions, which were often unsubstantiated and at times, overstated.

There were surprisingly few comments about Shin's delivery and none of the peers wrote anything about his eye contact. This was a somewhat unexpected finding given that Shin exhibited a large increase in breaks in eye contact, compared to his first presentation. Table 5.43 provides an overview of the frequency and types of breaks in eye contact for both presentations delivered by Shin.

Table 5.43.

Breakdown of Eye Contact 'Moves'

Presentation	Total	Reading Notes	Checking Notes	Looking Up	Other
1	9	0	1	1	7
2	63	6	53	0	4

As with the other participants, the conclusion drawn from this analysis is that breaks in eye contact accompanying the use of visuals, are frequently unnoticed by members of the audience because the slides he was checking, served to distract the audience from looking at Shin and evaluating his eye contact.

In two other delivery-related comments, one peer wrote that Shin had constantly used his hands and fingers to help illustrate points and add emphasis to what he was saying (PEF-2), while I noted Shin had a nervous habit of constantly clearing his throat, which had distracted me, but apparently none of the peers.

In summary, it can be said that Shin delivered a strongly worded presentation, punctuated with frequent use of persuasive discursive techniques, and supported by a strong confident delivery and a good command of English. All of these factors lead his peers to rate the presentation as very persuasive.

5.5.9 PRESENTER'S SELF-REFLECTIONS ON PRESENTATION 2

This section draws on data from Shin's SR and second interview. Shin was once again confident that his presentation had been successful and persuasive, graded it an A+, and rated it 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness (I-2; SR-2). His rationale was similar to that which he had given in the first SR: "My attitude was good since I made good eye contact and didn't bring in any notes. The contents were persuasive enough. The delivery skills were as good as my previous ones." (SR-2). When asked further about his persuasiveness he responded: "The content and delivery were both clear and persuasive". (SR-2). He then added, "I was very relaxed since I already got used to this kind of presentation and I was confident I could get a good grade." (SR-2). He also noted that he felt confident in his rating because of the "reaction from the audience. I remember that I saw more than half of them nodding and listening to me." (I-2, L214-215). This awareness of the audience and their reaction to him in real time echoed comments made by Daisuke – the other highly persuasive speaker in this study. Later, Shin speculated that the audience had all been persuaded by his

presentation, but he declined to guess as to how highly they had rated him on the PEFs (I-2).

When asked to describe the specific things he felt had enhanced his persuasiveness, Shin responded, "To be honest, I'm not sure if I improved any of the skills but I definitely felt more relaxed as I went through the presentations. So, I would say that feeling could help me conduct my presentations more naturally." (SR-2). Upon reflection, he felt that he had used persuasive discursive techniques primarily in the introduction and the conclusion sections of his presentation and had used the techniques "that don't belong there, in the body section" (I-2, L149-150). In particular he felt he had been successful with his "varied voice or chunking. I could also use tripling well occasionally" (SR-2), and that he had also used a knockdown effectively in the opening (I-2). He speculated that his voice had helped him "get the full attention of the audience even though the topic was not something always interesting for them" (SR-2). "I tried to intentionally do some pausing, varied voice, and emphasis" and that this had "helped me get attention from them (the audience)" (I-2, L217-220). He did, however, note that when watching his previous presentations again while preparing for this final presentation, his voice had sounded, "high, so I tried to make my voice a little lower this time. I think in English if you sound a bit high, you sound less persuasive" because people with high voices "sound like non-English speakers" (I-2, L204-205)

Asked if there were any weaknesses in his presentation, Shin again confidently replied, "I don't think so." (SR-2) and that "I don't remember each technique that I used but I didn't feel like I lost the attention from the audience and I didn't feel like I made myself less persuasive" (I-2, L224-226). He did later add that he could have used skills that needed preparation, such as the more complicated persuasive discursive techniques, because, "I usually don't bother to plan any complicated techniques before the presentation" (SR-2). He explained that planning techniques led to caring too much about them, and that because "I didn't plan anything, I could for example, change my voice when I thought I

should." (SR-2). He did speculate though, that he may have "spoken too quickly at times" (I-2, L227-228).

Shin did not comment on his content at all, other than to say that he had used visuals simply to show numbers or charts, which are "difficult to follow by simply listening" (SR-2). As he explained: "The visuals with numbers or statistics were helpful for the audience to follow, not for me, because I remember" (I-2, L155-156).

Finally, Shin was asked about his classmates' presentations. He explained that a female presenter (not in this study) had been particularly persuasive because of her strong content (I-2). Although she had actually presented a view about the death penalty that he disagreed with, she had successfully persuaded him with strong statistics, and a strong introduction that caught his attention (I-2). He did however, still feel she had not varied her voice enough and that doing so would have made her more persuasive (I-2).

In terms of less persuasive classmates, Shin was quick to identify a male speaker (not in this study) who had spoken too long and that he (and other speakers) had constantly checked his notes (I-2). This particular speaker "seemed really nervous. His voice was kind of shaking, and some of his jokes did not work well." (I-2, L319-320). Once again, the primary reasons identified for a speaker being classified as not persuasive, were poor delivery skills.

Shin concluded his reflections by again stating delivery and then language skills determined the persuasiveness of an oral presentation, because "university students are not really interested in the content of a presentation and will only listen if they are interested in the way something is presented" (I-2, L327-331).

5.5.10 PROPOSITIONS REVISITED

The six propositions outlined in Section 5.1 are now revisited. Once again, an "emphasis is placed on retaining the holistic nature of the data through intuitive and hermeneutic processes" (Simmons, 2009, p. 117) when interpreting

the findings. The findings from Shin's case study partially confirm several of the propositions.

The first proposition (*Previous presenting experiences and prior instruction will shape initial beliefs and attitudes*) is strongly supported by the findings in Participant S's case study. Shin confirmed throughout the case study, that he had been heavily influenced by his instruction in the first year of university, in classes I had taught him. Shin may have merely been stating what he expected I wanted to hear, but he certainly used his previous experiences to help shape both the presentations he delivered in this study. A lack of contradicting instruction from other teachers had apparently further strengthened his resolve to present persuasively by focusing mostly on delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques.

Proposition two (*Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact*) is partially confirmed by Shin's case study. Certainly the high frequency with which he used the techniques was shown in the analysis of his presentation videos, and was alluded to by the presenter in his interviews and diaries. In particular, Shin utilized a range of different interactional techniques such as boosters and engagement markers and on multiple occasions (P-1; P-2). However, the impact of these techniques seems muted at best and was only sometimes referenced by his peers in their assessment of his presentations (PEFs-1; PEFs-2). While the weak deliveries of Maki and Rena undermined their use of persuasive discursive techniques, the same cannot be said for Shin, who utilized a strong delivery in both presentations (P-1; P-2; PEFs-1; PEFs-2). It is unknown as to why the use of such techniques seems to have had minimal impact on enhancing the persuasiveness of Shin's presentation.

Proposition three (*Presenters will exhibit a selective bias in terms of overestimating the importance of presenting skills which they are good at*) remains unconfirmed at this stage. It is true that Shin certainly selected delivery skills as the key factor for enhancing persuasiveness, followed by the use of

persuasive discursive techniques, and felt that content only played a minimal role (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). He also assessed his own skill hierarchy in this order (D-1; D-2). However, given that Shin was rated as highly persuasive in both his presentations (PEFs-1; PEFs-2), it is hard to know whether he was exhibiting a selection bias, or if he had accurately assessed what the situation required.

The fourth proposition (*The importance of content, delivery skills, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for persuasiveness*) is partially confirmed in this case study. Shin believed strongly that delivery was the key factor, and feedback from his peers on the PEFs supports the fact that he was rated highly persuasive, mostly because of his strong delivery skill-set. However, he also believed that it was necessary to use persuasive discursive techniques to enhance the persuasive impact of his message, and did so far more frequently than the other participants. While he stated repeatedly that he believed content was far less important, he still chose complicated topics that needed a certain degree of background knowledge and research to support his convictions. His content was not mentioned by any of his peers, other than that his use of statistics contributed to making the presentation persuasive (PEFs-1; PEFs-2).

The fifth proposition (*Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to different topics*) is completely disproven by Shin's case study. He was consistently adamant about his beliefs and practices and never modified them, yet was successful with both his presentations. However, he did indicate that he was aware of the context he was presenting in and thought that his convictions were suitable and likely to maximize his persuasiveness (I-1; I-2). He also specifically mentioned (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2; SR-1; SR-2) that he considered the audience's position on the issue he was presenting about, and believed focusing on delivery and persuasive discursive techniques to be the most suitable for the audience in this context.

Proposition six (*English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness*) is largely proven in that there were no comments or any reference made to Shin's English ability regarding the first presentation, and only a couple of brief comments on the PEFs (PEFs-2) – both positive – regarding his second presentation. Only Shin noted that he had made a few grammatical errors in his presentation and wanted to eradicate these kinds of errors in future presentations (D-1). Although Shin had the highest English level of the four participants in this study, it is likely that this either had no impact on enhancing the persuasiveness of his presentation or that the peers in the audience were all familiar with his English ability (as they were with Rena's) so there was nothing new for them to notice or comment on.

5.6 DISCUSSION

A cross-case synthesis analysis (as defined by Yin, 2014) of the four case studies is presented in this section as a brief summary for Phase 2 of this study. According to Miles et al. (2014), cross-case analysis typically serves two purposes: "to enhance generalizability or transferability to other cases" and "to deepen understanding and explanation" (p. 101). A case-oriented approach is adopted here (see Miles et al., 2014), entailing considering "the case as a whole entity – looking at configurations, associations, causes, and effects within the case" (p. 102) and then comparing it with the other cases. Three time-based contexts are used as a framework to guide this analysis. Firstly, the participants' respective backgrounds and preparations before the study are compared, then their two presentations, and lastly, their final comments and reflections.

Following this cross-case synthesis analysis, naturalistic generalizations (see Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) are proposed pertaining to how the case studies' findings specifically address the research objectives and questions of this study. The objective of Phase 2 was to explore the different persuasive techniques used in English oral presentations delivered by Japanese university students, from an applied linguist's view, and from the presenter's perspective, with a particular emphasis on exploring the prominence and pervasiveness of persuasive discursive techniques. The specific key research questions being

addressed in Phase2 and in this study are: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations; and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation? The generalizations are deliberately brief in nature in order not to overlap with the more specific findings from the overall study (comprising Phase 1 and Phase 2) addressed in Chapter 6.

5.6.1 THE PARTICIPANTS' BACKGROUNDS

This section compares the four case study participants' experiences learning about oral presentations, the beliefs they held about persuasive techniques prior to the study commencing, and how this affected their preparations for the presentations, which addresses research question 1, and the related sub-questions (refer to Section 4.1.1).

Daisuke's prior experiences seem to have strongly shaped his approach to delivering the two presentations in this study. He had never studied abroad or in my classes prior to the study, but provided vivid details regarding the previous university courses he had taken in which presentation skills had been taught, in addition to a speech contest, which had helped to shape his views (see Section 5.2.2 – 5.2.3). Much of this earlier instruction had focused on delivery skills (e.g. being text independent and utilizing good eye contact). The importance of content in oral presentations had then become apparent to Daisuke at a speech contest, when speakers with inferior delivery skills to him prevailed due to their perceived superior content. Persuasive discursive techniques did not seem to have been prevalent in Daisuke's presentation skill instruction before this study. Consequently, his view at the start of the study was that strong content is the crucial element for making a persuasive presentation, but that effective delivery skills are necessary to support this content (D-1).

In contrast with Daisuke, the other three participants had all taken classes with me prior to this study. Furthermore, Rena and Shin had both lived abroad, although Maki had not. As with Daisuke, all three seem to have been largely influenced by prior instruction at university on how to present. Rena appears to

have been strongly influenced by her early experiences in university, in my classes, and as a result, believed persuasive discursive techniques and delivery skills were the important factors in a persuasive presentation at the beginning of the study (D-1). Shin's beliefs were also shaped by my instruction in his first year of studies, leading him to also view delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques as the primary factors for enhancing the persuasiveness of oral presentations (D-1; I-1). Maki declared she had been influenced by my previous instruction as well, in her second year, but was still adamant that content is more integral for being a persuasive speaker than delivery skills or persuasive discursive techniques, actually reflecting the instruction she received in her first year (D-1; I-2).

Although prior instruction appears to have strongly influenced the participants' initial beliefs about persuasive techniques in oral presentations, it seems to have had only a moderate effect on the process for preparing both presentations. Generally, the participants followed a logical approach and first conducted research online and then decided their topic and point of view, while gathering appropriate supporting information (Ds-1; Ds-2). Then they crafted certain persuasive discursive techniques to implement, before finally practicing the presentation and making final adjustments (and preparing visuals for the second presentation). The participants' stated beliefs prior to the study did not seem to determine which aspects they prepared first, or which aspects they spent more time preparing. In terms of the specific techniques they prepared, the participants frequently opted for techniques that best fit the content of their presentations, supporting a finding by Kaur and Ali (2018), and relied on simpler techniques they had used successfully before. In addition, the participants appeared to be aware of the need to add several new techniques from the course, to either bolster their own repertoire or perhaps from a feeling that it would help them obtain a better grade (Ds-1; Ds-2; Is-1; Is-2).

5.6.2 PRESENTATION 1

This section discusses and compares the first presentations delivered by the participants in Phase 2 and the ratings they received from the audience,

which addresses research questions 2 and 3, along with the related sub-questions (refer to Section 4.1.1). Firstly, the participants' ratings are compared and then factors potentially playing a role in determining these ratings are discussed.

Daisuke was rated 5.00 out of 5.00 for persuasiveness (PEFs-1), which indicates he had been very persuasive. Both Maki and Shin were also rated as having been persuasive and scored 4.80 (PEFs-1). Rena was the least persuasive but was still rated 4.00 out of 5.00 (PEFs-1). Table 5.44 provides an overview of some of the important frequencies drawn from the ELAN analysis of the presentations (Ps-1) that can serve to explain the differences in the ratings.

Table 5.44.

Presentation 1 Overview

	Daisuke	Maki	Rena	Shin
Rating (/5.00)	5.00	4.80	4.00	4.80
Time	5:40	4:38	6:22	5:44
Chunking	92	77	127	145
Discursive techniques	31	21	38	56
Gestures	142	8	66	118
Eye contact breaks	6	98	104	9

From Table 5.44 several important observations can be noted. Both Daisuke and Shin exhibited excellent delivery skills (frequent gestures and rare breaks in eye contact) and both managed their time efficiently. Daisuke actually used relatively few persuasive discursive techniques compared to Shin though. Both Rena and Maki exhibited much weaker delivery skills, with far more breaks in eye contact and far fewer gestures than Daisuke and Shin. Rena and Maki also did not manage their time adequately with Rena going over the allotted time for presenters and Maki finishing under it. Finally, Rena utilized persuasive

discursive techniques more frequently than Maki and Daisuke, yet was still rated as less persuasive.

The persuasive discursive techniques used by the participants in the first presentations were categorized according to Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse and yielded many interesting findings. The relatively high English fluency level of the participants meant that the range of techniques that could be explored was much larger than in many other previous studies (e.g. Kibler et al., 2014; Yu & Cadman, 2009). The two categories in Hyland's model are: 'Interactive' techniques, which serve to guide the audience through the content (e.g. signposting, framing the point, referencing visuals (second presentation), and guidelines), and 'Interactional' techniques, which involve and draw the audience into the presentation (e.g. intensifiers, repetition, tripling, doubling, attention getters, emphasizing, bookending, contrasts, rhetorical questions, inclusive language, machine gunning). Hyland (2005) notes – as subsequent researchers have noted – that these two categories are not exclusive and can frequently overlap. An additional category not included in Hyland's model, but used in this study was simply called 'Other' techniques, and mostly involved the use of the 'pausing' technique. Table 5.45 provides an overview of the persuasive discursive techniques used by the presenters in their first presentations.

Table 5.45.

Presentation 1: Persuasive Discursive Techniques

	Interactive	Interactional	Others
Daisuke	13	12	6
Maki	10	8	3
Rena	11	25	2
Shin	11	35	10

From this data we can see that all the participants used a similar amount of interactive techniques, which were mostly signposts of the respective points in their presentations. Such techniques "prepare the audience to follow the speech organization" (Yu & Cadman, 2009, p. 12) and help presentations "be perceived as sufficiently academic and worthy of high evaluations" (Kibler, et al, 2014, p. 226). Stark differences exist when comparing the interactional techniques though. Both Rena and Shin used a far greater number of these techniques than Daisuke and Maki did. Rena and Shin both also utilized far more interactional techniques than interactive techniques, different from a finding by Hyland (2005), which showed a more even distribution between the categories in academic writing. This is perhaps not unexpected as both Rena and Shin had taken several courses of mine prior to this study and were far more familiar with using these kinds of techniques. In addition, Both Daisuke and Maki believed content was the more important factor at this stage of the study. Rena used inclusive language (x7), repetition (x7), and intensifiers (x4) the most frequently (P-1), whereas Shin used inclusive language (x7), doubling (x6), intensifiers (x6) and rhetorical questions (x6) the most frequently (P-1). Hyland (2005) highlights that in most studies of metadiscourse markers used by expert writers, boosters and hedges emerge as the most frequently employed, but Kibler et al. (2014) showed that context and individual variations could influence which techniques the presenters use. Intensifiers were both used frequently by Shin and Rena, and are similar to boosters (as are doubling and repetition), which are more common in non-Anglo-American rhetorical traditions (Hinkel, 2002), and in particular, in Japanese (as summarized by Hinkel, 2005). The softening technique (similar to hedging) was rarely used by the presenters, differing from a finding by Hinkel (2005) in which L2 students commonly employed hedges (although only in a limited range of forms) in their essays. The reason is likely that for persuasive oral presentations, hedging can detract from the overall impact of the message being presented, and as such, is likely less appropriate than it would be in academic writing, where a more balanced approach to presenting an argument is typically considered more virtuous. The other finding related to persuasive discursive techniques that spanned all four case study participants is that the more subtle techniques such as softening and inclusive

language were less commented on as a reason for a presentation being perceived as persuasive by members of the audience (PEFs-1). More overt techniques such as intensifiers were more frequently commented on (positively and negatively).

The obvious conclusion drawn from this set of data is that frequently using persuasive discursive techniques alone is not sufficient in making a presenter persuasive. Otherwise, Rena would have been rated far more persuasive than she ultimately was. This is where we can see the importance of also examining other aspects of oral presentations such as delivery skills. It also reinforces the benefits of examining multimodal aspects of oral presentations, as recommended by Morell (2015). As put succinctly by Kress (2000, p. 337): "it is no longer possible to understand language and its uses without understanding the effect of all modes of communication that are co-present". This comment appears to be particularly poignant for studies on oral presentations.

5.6.3 PRESENTATION 2

This section discusses and compares the second presentations delivered by the participants and the ratings given by the audience, once again addressing research questions 2 and 3, and their related sub-questions (refer to Section 4.1.1).

Daisuke was once again rated 5.00 out of 5.00 (PEFs-2), for persuasiveness by his peers. Shin was also rated as very persuasive with a score of 5.00, which was slightly better than his previous 4.80 in the first presentation (PEFs-2). Rena also improved slightly from her first presentation (a rating of 4.00) and was rated 4.25 this time (PEFs-2), but Maki was only rated 3.50 (PEFs-2), indicating that she alone among the four participants had declined in persuasiveness from her first presentation (a rating of 4.80) and was the least persuasive of the four case study participants. Table 5.46 provides an overview of some of the important frequencies drawn from the ELAN analysis of the presentations (Ps-2).

Table 5.46.

Presentation 2 Overview

	Daisuke	Maki	Rena	Shin
Rating (/5.00)	5.00	3.50	4.25	5.00
Time	5:29	6:59	6:22	6:24
Chunking	116	139	134	143
Discursive techniques	58	27	46	66
Gestures	118	16	109	90
Eye contact breaks	42	144	100	63

From this data, one conclusion can be easily highlighted. Firstly, the frequencies reveal clearly that Maki's presentation was the weakest in many areas. Her presentation was longer than the other presentations, yet she utilized far fewer persuasive discursive techniques, exhibited far fewer gestures, and had far more breaks in eye contact. Aside from these last two features Rena was similar to Daisuke and Shin in frequently using persuasive discursive techniques and managing her time accurately. Despite having the shortest presentation, Daisuke gestured more frequently than the other participants and used almost as many persuasive discursive techniques as Shin.

Table 5.47 provides an overview of the categories of persuasive discursive techniques used by the participants in their second presentations (Ps-2), once again based on Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse.

Table 5.47.

Presentation 2: Persuasive Discursive Techniques

	Interactive	Interactional	Others
Daisuke	8	35	15
Maki	13	10	4
Rena	14	26	6

Shin	11	43	12

From this data, it can be seen that Maki utilized fewer interactional techniques than the other participants. This, combined with a weaker delivery, meant that Maki's presentation was far less likely to have an impact on the audience or to be rated as persuasive. Interestingly, both Daisuke and Shin not only used interactional techniques more frequently, they also used pausing more frequently (Others), than Maki and Rena (the less persuasive speakers). When examining which techniques Daisuke and Shin used, we can see several interesting points. While Daisuke once again used simpler techniques (P-2) on multiple occasions (e.g. tripling x6, repetition x5, and intensifiers x5), he also made effective use of a far more difficult technique: the knockdown (x7). He only used the more subtle techniques of softening and inclusive language, on one occasion each. Daisuke also back-loaded his presentation, which made him distinct amongst his classmates and seems to have been very effective in making him more persuasive (PEFs-2). Shin utilized a wider range of techniques (P-2), but relied heavily on intensifiers (x17) in combination with inclusive language (x6), along with doubling (x3), contrasts (x3) and rhetorical questions (x3). Shin also only used softening once in his presentation. By combining more frequent usage of persuasive discursive techniques with relatively better delivery skills, it is not surprising to see that Daisuke and Shin were rated as more persuasive than Maki or Rena. That Shin utilized persuasive discursive techniques (especially interactional techniques) so frequently is no surprise given his stated belief that they – in combination with delivery skills – were the essential factors for making a presentation persuasive. What is interesting to see is that Daisuke utilized far more interactional techniques in his second presentation, likely reflecting his new position (see data from Daisuke's second diary and interview) that delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques were more central in determining the persuasiveness of oral presentations. Finally, Daisuke and Shin frequently combined the use of several techniques at once, something which Rena and Maki did not do in either presentation.

While Rena used more interactional techniques than Maki, her delivery seems to have been weak and serves to explain her lower persuasiveness rating (than Daisuke and Shin). An intriguing question though is why Maki rarely employed persuasive discursive techniques. A previous study by Yu and Cadman (2009) shows that with experience and instruction, presenters often increase the amount of techniques they use (in their study it was the use of frame markers). One obvious answer is that Maki simply did not believe persuasive discursive techniques were as important as a strong content (which she stated many times in her diaries and interviews). Another possibility is that she lacked the confidence necessary to successfully implement them in an effective manner. In addition, her English ability was weaker than the other three participants, so implementing such techniques was likely more difficult for her. She did state at the end of the study that the course had been very difficult for her and that she disliked presenting (I-2).

5.6.4 THE PARTICIPANTS' REFLECTIONS

This section addresses research question 4 and the related sub-questions (refer to Section 4.1.1). The case study participants' initial beliefs about persuasive presentations and techniques, before the study, largely reflected their prior instruction and experiences (see Section 5.6.1). For Daisuke and Rena, this presentation skills course (the study period) was taken as an opportunity to improve their presentation skills' repertoire by incorporating more/new persuasive discursive techniques and delivery skills (Is-2) and to modify their views. However, for Maki and Shin, it was seen as more of an opportunity to consolidate their existing beliefs (Is-2). Daisuke, Shin and Rena (to a lesser extent) all inherently recognized the need to implement more persuasive discursive techniques in their second presentations to enhance the persuasive impact they were seeking to make, although a weaker delivery seems to have ultimately undermined Rena's impact. After the second presentation, Maki still did not seem to believe that persuasive discursive techniques were as important as content, and was likely far less persuasive in her second presentation due to their absence and/or a weaker delivery. Despite differences in beliefs amongst the participants about which aspects and techniques were more important for

enhancing a persuasive presentation, all the participants seemed cognizant of the idea that there was no single determining factor, but that an effective persuasive presentation required a multitude of techniques (Is-2). Ultimately, Daisuke, Rena and Shin appeared to be more cognizant that in this particular context (a university presentation skills course), persuasive discursive techniques and good delivery skills were more central in determining a persuasive presentation. While Daisuke and Shin were able to successfully implement such skills and techniques, Rena was proved unable to improve her delivery skills and therefore was seen as less persuasive.

SECTION 5.6.5 NATURALISTIC OBSERVATIONS

From the four case studies presented in Chapter 5, several simple naturalistic observations (see Creswell, 2013; Stake, 1995) can be drawn and are offered here. Firstly, strong content and the effective use of persuasive discursive techniques seem to have contributed to making the presentations in this study more persuasive. Secondly, and conversely, weaker content or less frequent use of persuasive discursive techniques appears to have had a negligible effect on the persuasive impact of the presentations. Thirdly, delivery skills seem to have had a more polarizing effect: either reinforcing the persuasive impact of the content and persuasive discursive techniques, or clearly undermining the persuasiveness of the presentations, if not congruent with the content and discursive techniques being implemented. These observations and how they pertain to the six propositions guiding the case studies and the research questions for the whole study will be addressed in a more encompassing discussion in Chapter 6.

One additional observation that needs addressing is the gender of the presenters. It could just be a coincidence that the two most persuasive speakers in phase 2 were male and the two less persuasive speakers were female, but gender could also have been a factor in determining whether the participants were perceived as persuasive or not. Crismore et al. (1993) found that males tended to use metadiscourse more than females, something that was shown to be the case in Phase 2 of this study as well. While not the sole factor contributing to their greater persuasiveness, this higher use of persuasive discursive

techniques was one contributing factor making the two male participants more persuasive. It is worth bearing in mind too that the majority of the audience members rating the case study participants were female. There was nothing in the data collected in this study to even hint at gender being a factor, but with Japan being known as a more paternalistic country, it is considered likely that gender may have played at least some role in influencing perceptions and the persuasive impact the participants had or did not have.

5.6.6 FINAL COMMENTS

Phase 2 of this dissertation explored the presenters' perspective on the use of persuasive techniques in oral presentations, through four case studies. The case studies ultimately reveal a complex interplay between the many different techniques used by the participants (e.g. persuasive discursive techniques, delivery skills, and structural techniques such as back-loading) in their attempts to be more persuasive, and further support the research plan for collecting a variety of forms of data. Phase 2 also shows that Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (2005) can be applied to the analysis of oral presentations, as Yu and Cadman (2009) and Kibler et al. (2014) have previously shown in more limited studies, and as proposed by Hyland (2010) and Adel (2010). This is important, as metadiscourse can help audiences comprehend language in 'real time' (Mauranen, 2010) but has been significantly under-researched in oral presentations (Kaur & Ali, 2018). Hyland's model further helped make distinctions between the different types of persuasive discursive techniques that the participants employed. The more persuasive presenters in Phase 2 not only utilized interactional techniques more frequently than interactive techniques, but they were able to combine these techniques with effective delivery skill-sets, which then enhanced the persuasive discursive techniques. As Morell (2015, p. 137) states: "effective speakers tend to use a variety of modes that often overlap but work together to convey specific meanings", which is why Crawford (2004) states that oral presentations require competencies in addition to those needed in written assignments. Bunch (2009) and Chanock (2005) both explain that oral presentations are more complex than written assignments, because they go beyond the use of lexical and grammatical

features and are not simply just oral versions of written material. The findings from Phase 2 of this study support many of the findings noted previously in the literature review (Chapter 2) and will be discussed in greater detail in Chapter 6, as part of the overall findings of this dissertation. In particular, the findings from Phase 2 support the idea of using a pedagogical and assessment framework, which encompasses a variety of verbal and non-verbal modes (see Kaur & Ali, 2018; Morell, 2015).

CHAPTER SIX

CROSS-ANALYSIS OF PHASE 1 AND PHASE 2 FINDINGS

6. CROSS-ANALYSIS OF PHASE1 AND PHASE 2 FINDINGS

To analyze is to "observe and discern patterns within data and to construct meanings that seem to capture their essences and essentials" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 584). Many qualitative researchers view analysis and interpretation as being intertwined, yet Trent and Cho (2014) agree with those who see analysis as being more aligned with summarizing the data, and interpretation as making sense or finding meaning in the data. The two phases of research and a wide range of data collection tools yielded a multitude of data and findings in this study. Thus, a coherent analytical approach that triangulates the data and covers the perspectives of the presenters as well as the audience is necessary. This chapter analyzes and interprets by describing the strategies involved in the overarching analysis, as well as the key findings that emerged while addressing the key research questions in this study: What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation?

Trent and Cho (2014) use the metaphor of a journey to describe the framework for analysis and interpretation of data. The six propositions used to initially structure the analysis of the case studies also serve to assist the final analysis. The framework for analysis is based on a set of analysis strategies, with an analysis strategy defined here as "a carefully considered plan or method to achieve a particular goal" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 581). The strategies employed in the final analysis and interpretation, are: To Reason; To Interrelate; To Assert; and To Verify (as defined by Saldaña, 2014, p. 588-604). Table 6.1 provides an overview of each strategy and a simplified definition adapted from Miles et al. (2014) and Saldaña (2014).

Table 6.1.

Final Analysis Strategies

Strategy	Definition
To reason	To think of the causal probabilities, summative findings, and evaluative conclusions
To interrelate	To propose connections within, between and among the analyzed data
To Assert	To put forward statements that summarize the analytical observations
To Verify	To administer an audit of "quality control" to the analysis

The analysis begins by combining the first two strategies (to reason and to interrelate) in Section 6.1, before addressing the next strategy (to assert) in Section 6.2, and then the last strategy (to verify) in Section 6.3.

6.1 REASONING AND INTERELATING THE FINDINGS

Summarizing findings related to the six propositions and exploring the interrelationships between the findings is the objective of this section. The first step is exploring what persuasive techniques Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations and how prominent these techniques are in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation. The analysis draws on findings from both phases of the study. The six propositions are presented again in Table 6.2.

Table 6.2.

The Six Propositions

Proposition	
1	Previous experiences delivering presentations and instruction received prior to this study will shape initial beliefs and attitudes.

2	Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact, particularly in the introduction and conclusion sections of the presentations.
3	Presenters will exhibit a selective bias and overestimate the importance of presenting skills that they are good at.
4	The importance of content, delivery styles, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for enhancing persuasiveness.
5	Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs about persuasive oral presentations and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to different topics.
6	English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness.

Proposition one is strongly supported by evidence in the case studies. The strongest support comes from the case study of Shin (Section 5.5), who stated explicitly that everything he had learned about presenting had come from my class he took two years prior to this study (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). While it is hard to know whether Shin was merely stating what he thought I wanted to hear, in his preparations and presentations Shin did emphasize delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques more than content when preparing and presenting (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2; P-1; P-2). Rena (Section 5.4) and Daisuke (Section 5.2) discussed in-depth about what they had learnt in a range of previous courses (Is-1; Is-2) but were constantly readjusting their beliefs throughout this study, after each new experience (Is-1; Is-2). Only Maki's (Section 5.3) case study evidence is inconclusive with regard to proposition one. While her instruction in the first year of university focused largely on the content of presentations, she was adamant that this experience had been detrimental for her and that she viewed her instruction in her second year – in my class – as having been more influential (I-1). Nevertheless, she stated throughout the study that content was the key factor for a persuasive presentation (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). These conflicting statements from Maki mean conclusions regarding the influence of her prior

instruction cannot be drawn with any great conviction. However, previous experiences and instruction on presenting seems to have played an integral role in shaping the beliefs of the other three participants, with two of them constantly updating their views.

Conclusions relating to proposition two should be tempered with the realization that the case study participants were all aware that the course they were currently enrolled in was primarily focused on persuasive discursive techniques and delivery skills. While I had explained that this was solely due to a gap in the students' previous learning experiences, it is probable that the participants still logically concluded that focusing on these techniques would be advantageous in obtaining a better grade. With that being said, the findings from the case studies and focus group sessions suggest mixed support for proposition two. Persuasive discursive techniques were used frequently by the presenters and were noticed (albeit, not as often as they were used) by members of the audience, but their persuasive impact is less clear. Of particular importance seems to be the delivery of the persuasive discursive techniques, a finding that supports previous research (Fennis & Stel, 2011; Gallo, 2014). In the focus group sessions and in Maki and Rena's case studies, a weak delivery featuring awkward wording, grammatical errors, weak eye contact and/or flat voices, meant the persuasive discursive techniques that were noticed failed to enhance the persuasive point they were designed to make. In fact, a poor delivery of a noticeable technique actually seems to have undermined the persuasive impact of the presenter in many cases. This point was made numerous times by focus group session members (e.g. regarding P3), by the case study participants (regarding other class members' presentations), and by audience members writing the PEFs (on Maki and Rena).

The type of persuasive techniques the case study participants used and when they used them also appears to be potentially significant. The two most persuasive speakers in Phase 2 (Daisuke and Shin) both used persuasive discursive techniques throughout their presentations (Ps-1; Ps-2), whereas Rena and Maki primarily used them in the introduction and conclusion sections of

their presentations (Ps-1; Ps-2). Furthermore, Daisuke and Shin intertwined different techniques to increase the impact of what they were saying (Ps-1; Ps-2). Shin and Daisuke also both used persuasive discursive techniques, and in particular, interactional techniques such as intensifiers (boosters) on a far greater scale than Maki (P-1; P-2). Intensifiers have been shown to be persuasive (Schmidt & Kess, 1985), to stir up passion (Collins, 2012), and are used more frequently by western speakers (Kamimura & Oi, 1998). What is interesting is that Rena used persuasive discursive techniques frequently throughout her presentations (P-1; P-2), in a statistically similar manner to Shin and Daisuke (P-1; P-2). The key difference seems to be that her delivery was much weaker (P-1; P-2; PEFs-1; PEFs-2). Additionally, although she used interactional techniques, she often only used them once, meaning they were far less likely to be noticed. A plethora of researchers have detailed the many persuasive discursive techniques than can enhance a persuasive oral presentation (see Anderson, 2017; Atkinson 2004; Conger, 1991; Dowis, 2000; Gallo, 2014; Hill & Ross, 1990; Makay, 1992; Reynolds, 2011), but the findings in this study suggests that the impact of such persuasive discursive techniques depends on using a range of different techniques, using the techniques on multiple occasions, and using them in combination with other techniques. This contradicts a finding by Schmidt and Kess (1985) that subtle and more indirect claims can be more persuasive. Most importantly though, Phase 1 and Phase 2 confirmed previous research findings that persuasive discursive techniques need to be delivered in an effective manner (see Fennis & Stel, 2011), that is congruent with what is being uttered (see Gallo, 2014), and that features delivery skills such as sweeping eye contact (see Cakir, 2008; Lucas, 2015; O'Hair et al., 2010; Reynolds, 2011) – particularly difficult for Japanese speakers (see Akechi et al., 2013) – and clear voices (see Otoshi & Heffernen, 2008) that are well-paced (see Gallo, 2014).

The evidence in this study relating to proposition three is largely contradictory. In fact, it seems many of the case study participants were frequently persuaded by presenters exhibiting skills that mirrored the participants' own weaknesses. For example, Daisuke was always looking for ways to improve and noted techniques other presenters had done that had been

persuasive and that he wanted to incorporate in his next presentations (D-1; D-2; I-1). While Maki was adamant that content was the key factor in a presentation and her strongest attribute (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2), she believed that Rena and Daisuke had been the most persuasive speakers in the class as they had exhibited great delivery skills (I-1; I-2), such as eye contact and voice variation – her self-perceived weakness. Rena followed a similar pattern by noting delivery skills were her weakest area, but that speakers with good delivery skill-sets were the most persuasive in her opinion (I-1; I-2). Although Shin firmly believed content was far less important than delivery skills, he noted another classmate as being the most persuasive speaker because of her strong content, despite her weak delivery and flat voice (I-2). Interestingly, Daisuke, Shin and Rena both noted presenters in their class who had done something unique, as examples of a persuasive presentation. 'Novelty factors' have been shown to be persuasive (Lakoff, 1982) and can also account for the successful and unique – to this study – back-loading (see Elwood, 2011; Okabe, 1983; Sakurada, 2018) of the argument by Daisuke in his second presentation (P-2) that proved especially persuasive to other participants (PEFs-2). Based on the evidence in the case studies, it can be concluded that the participants were more likely to be persuaded by speakers exhibiting effective skill-sets and utilizing techniques that they themselves were not as adept at utilizing, or by presenters who had done something different.

Proposition four is largely supported by the findings in both phases of this study, suggesting multiple factors play a role in making a speaker persuasive – a view held by Aristotle (Stott et al., 2001, p. 41) and since supported by other researchers (see Alshare & Hindi, 2004; Conger, 1991; Luthy & Deck, 2001; Smith & Sodano, 2011; Soureshjani & Ghanbari, 2012; Yang, 2010). In Phase 1, the focus group participants frequently commented on the presenters' delivery skills, use of persuasive discursive techniques, and the content of the presentations. Their comments revealed that all three areas played a role in building or undermining the persuasiveness of the presentation. The most pertinent example of this is the presenters' use of persuasive discursive techniques and the accompanying delivery style discussed above.

In Phase 2 all four case study participants discussed the content, delivery and the persuasive discursive techniques in their presentations and seemed aware of their varying degrees of importance. However, this can be attributed to me asking questions directly about each specific area in the diaries, and in the interviews. Nevertheless, all the participants were clear that even when they believed one was more important, the others were still necessary to build a persuasive presentation. Daisuke's analogy (D-1; I-2), that the content of the presentation is the stem of a tree and the delivery and persuasive discursive techniques are the branches that reach out to the audience, best describes his view of this interrelationship. Maki had a similar view, and believed content was the essential core of a presentation but that delivery skills and persuasive discursive techniques are important because their usage differentiates a persuasive presentation from an informative one (D-1; I-1). Rena stated explicitly at the end of the study that she believed all three areas were equally important (I-2). While Shin strongly believed that delivery skills were the most important, he also explained that persuasive discursive techniques enhance the impact of the presentation (I-1; I-2). Although he did state several times in the study that content is almost irrelevant (D-1; I-1), the fact that he used plenty of statistics and supporting information in his presentations (P-1; P-2), suggests that it still has a role to play for him. Based on the evidence from their four case studies and from the focus group sessions, it can be concluded that the key presentation areas (content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques) explored by this study are all important and establishing which among them is the key area, could not be determined.

The evidence is inconclusive regarding proposition five. On one hand, Daisuke constantly adjusted his focus and beliefs – before and during the study – in a successful attempt to be a more persuasive speaker (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). His case study strongly supports proposition five. Despite being influenced by a presentation contest before this study, where he had perceived content as more important than delivery or persuasive discursive techniques, he deduced after the first presentation in this study that discursive techniques and delivery skills were now the key factors (D-2). His change in belief seems to have derived from

a keen sense of awareness of the audience, and the context he was presenting in (I-1). He frequently referenced the audience in his diaries, SRs, and interviews, and the audience seems to have had a strong influence on how he constructed and then delivered his presentations. This is one of the key factors leading to Daisuke's rating of 5.00/5.00 for persuasiveness on both presentations (PEFs-1; PEFs-2).

On the other hand, the evidence from the other three case study participants, somewhat contradicts proposition five. Shin was arguably the second most persuasive speaker (scoring 4.80 and 5.00 respectively – PEFs-1; PEFs-2), but was adamant in not changing his beliefs throughout the study (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). Maki was also consistent in her belief (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). While her first presentation was rated as persuasive, her second presentation scored much lower than the first, and indeed, lower than the other participants' presentations (PEFs-2). Rena changed her beliefs frequently and finally concluded that content, delivery and persuasive discursive techniques were all equally important (I-2). Yet, despite her frequent adjustments, her persuasiveness ratings remained similar across the two presentations (PEFs-1; PEFs-2).

Dealing with the audience is problematic for most presenters (Chan, 2011; De Grez, et al., 2009b), and particularly for L2 presenters (Zappa-Hollman, 2007; Zareva, 2009a). With little research conducted on taking the audience into account (Shimamura & Takeuchi, 2011), presenters who can take into consideration the audience's perspective, are usually more persuasive (Heracleous & Klaering, 2014). Only Daisuke exhibited a keen sense of awareness about what would appeal to the audience when preparing and reflecting on his presentations (D-1; D-2; I-1) – the second component of proposition five. He frequently reflected on what other presenters had done – the highly successful tactic of modeling (see Adams, 2004) – and incorporated new elements in his future presentations (D-1; D-2; I-1; I-2). Shin merely took note of the audience's reaction and seemed to take confidence in their apparent agreement with him after the second presentation (I-2), but both Maki and Rena

explicitly stated they would not engage the audience, and never mentioned noticing or taking into account reaction from the audience (Ds-1; Ds-2).

Proposition six is supported by the absence of data from Phase 1 and from the case studies. Only one participant made a comment regarding the presenter's (P1) 'average' English ability detracting from their persuasive impact in Phase 1. In Phase 2, all the case study participants had obtained relatively good English proficiency test scores (Ds-1) prior to this study, but they all made grammatical errors when presenting (Ps-1; Ps-2). Nevertheless, their peers in the audience rarely, if ever, commented on this (PEFs-1; PEFs-2). For Daisuke there was no data at all relating to English ability. For Rena, only I had commented that her English speaking ability had been very fluent, although she had made a few mistakes when uttering persuasive discursive techniques. Maki – who had the weakest English ability of the case study participants – made frequent errors when utilizing persuasive discursive techniques (P-1; P-2), but only I had commented that these errors had weakened her persuasive impact. Shin, who had scored the highest of the participants on a pre-study English proficiency test, noticed his own mistakes in the first presentation, but did not feel they had undermined his persuasive impact (SR-1). In the second presentation, he stumbled over the wording of the tripling technique (P-2), but several peers actually commented on his excellent English skills, and that it made him appear confident and persuasive (PEFs-2). While language problems are underrepresented in presentation 'how to' guidebooks (Anthony et al., 2006; Boyle, 1996; Rowley-Jovilet & Carter-Thomas, 2005a; Sazdovska, 2007), and have been shown to negatively affect presentations (Li, 2008), the lack of evidence from the focus group sessions and the case studies, indicates that the presenter's English ability played only a minor part, if any at all, in either enhancing or undermining the persuasive impact of the presentations in this study, which should be welcome news to many ESL students who frequently worry about imperfect language skills when presenting (Jung & McCroskey, 2004).

6.2 ASSERTING THE FINDINGS

This section presents four assertions drawn from the analysis of the findings documented in Section 6.1. The objective of the assertions is to more comprehensively address the key research questions in this study: 1. What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations? and 2. How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation? Assertions are defined as "composite statements that credibly summarize and interpret participant actions and meanings" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 601), and as "declarative statement(s) of summative synthesis, supported by confirming evidence from the data" (Miles et al., 2014). This is line with the construction of an interpretive argument (see Gleason, 2013), in which inferences and assumptions are drawn from detailed descriptions of the data. Some of the assertions are confirmations of the propositions discussed in Section 6.1. Other assertions are based on the establishment of interrelationships between the propositions, or from the propositions being disproven. The four assertions have been instantiated in the previous section and chapters and "supported by concrete instances of action or particular testimony, whose patterns lead to a more general description outside the specific field site" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 600) and are listed in Table 6.3. They can be described as 'low-level inferences', because they "address and summarize what is happening within the particulars of the case or field site – the micro" Saldaña (2014, p. 600).

Table 6.3.

Final Assertions

Assertions	
1	Persuasive discursive techniques appear to have been prominent in building a persuasive argument in an oral presentation for this study, although the evidence suggests they were not the sole factor. In addition, persuasive speakers used more interactional techniques than interactive techniques to amplify their message.

2	Persuasive discursive techniques only enhanced the persuasive impact of the oral presentations in this study, when verbal and non-verbal styles were congruent. Otherwise, persuasive discursive techniques at times actually appear to have detracted from the persuasive impact of the presentation.
3	Persuasive discursive techniques were more commonly used in the introduction and conclusion sections of presentations, but the more persuasive speakers in this study employed them (in combination) throughout the body sections of their presentations as well.
4	A complex interplay between content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques, leads to a more persuasive presentation, as does a heightened awareness of the audience and context presenters are presenting in.

The first assertion is that persuasive discursive techniques were prominent in the presentations in Phase 1 and 2, but do not appear to be the key factor in making a presentation persuasive. The use of Hyland's interpersonal model of metadiscourse (2005) as an analytical tool in Phase 2 further helped specifically highlight, which types of techniques the presenters used, which techniques were noticed, and which techniques were considered persuasive.

Simple interactional techniques that can be used repeatedly throughout a presentation proved noticeable and effective for the speakers in this study. Tripling is one such widely cited technique (see Atkinson, 2004; Dowis, 2000 Gallo, 2014; Reynolds, 2011), which proved to be one of the more noticeable and persuasive techniques in both phases of this study. Contrasts have also been shown to be an effective technique (Atkinson, 2004) and proved to be so in both phases of this study as well.

Another simple interactional technique that was usually only employed once in a presentation, was the anecdote. Anecdotes proved to be both

noticeable and persuasive in both phases, supporting claims by Anderson (2017), Conger (1991), Gallo (2014), and Reynolds (2011).

When categorizing the persuasive discursive techniques used by the presenters in Phase 2, according to Hyland's (2005) model of interpersonal metadiscourse, we can see several interesting findings. Firstly, the high use of interactional techniques (e.g. attitude markers, boosters and engagement markers) indicates presenters (e.g. Daisuke, Rena, and Shin) were aiming to amplify the impact of their message. All three used substantially more interactional techniques than interactive techniques (e.g. frame markers). The fact Maki did not employ interactional techniques on a level that the other presenters did, partly accounts for her lower persuasiveness ranking in the second presentation. The most common interactional techniques employed by Daisuke, Rena, and Shin (e.g. attitude markers, boosters, and engagement markers) lend themselves to being used on multiple occasions and because of their simpler nature, also seem to have been easier to use and more noticeable to the members of the audience.

Also of particular interest, was that all the case study presenters used a similar amount of interactive techniques to structure and clarify their presentation. Structural techniques such as signposting and guidelines are widely recommended to enhance the clarity of presentations and speeches (Gallo, 2014), in particular for audiences whose mother tongue is not English (Yu et al., 2009). These interactive techniques were used in all the presentations covered in this study, were noted as effective in many of them, and never seen as undermining the persuasive impact.

In a final structuring note, while Japanese presenters and writers typically back-load their argument in Japanese (Elwood, 2011; Okabe, 1983), all the participants in both phases front-loaded their arguments explicitly, with the exception of Daisuke, in his second presentation. His unique structuring, in comparison to other presenters, partly served to make him more persuasive. As

Gallo (2014) explains, the revealing of new or key information in original ways helps audience members remember what was said.

While many persuasive discursive techniques were noted in the presentations of this study, a crucial factor determined whether they made a persuasive impact or not: the accompanying delivery of the technique. This is the second assertion of this dissertation. Fennis and Stel (2011) state that the verbal and non-verbal strategies need to be aligned, for a speaker to be effective. In particular, one specific delivery skill was frequently highlighted as a factor undermining the perceived confidence, and therefore persuasiveness, of the speakers in both phases: weak eye contact. Eye contact has been shown to be a crucial factor in enhancing the effectiveness of speakers (Cakir, 2008; Lucas 2015; O'Hair et al., 2010). In the case studies, both Rena and Maki were noted for their weak delivery (in particular weak eye contact) and this seems to have undermined the effectiveness of the techniques they were using and the overall persuasive impact they were seeking to make. In Phase 1, a similar pattern was noted by the focus group participant discussions on P3.

The third assertion of this dissertation derives from the notion that along with the delivery of the persuasive discursive techniques being important, their placement within the presentation is also important. Previous researchers (see Andeweg et al., 1998; Hood & Forey, 2002; Jovilet & Carter-Thomas, 2005b) have identified the introduction section of a presentation as crucial and the findings in this study support this claim. The case study participants seemed to recognize the importance of the introduction and often utilized a wide range of persuasive discursive techniques to strengthen the clarity and impact of what they were saying in the introduction section of their presentations.

More research is needed on the academic features that comprise delivering an effective oral presentation (Sydow et al., 2001; Zareva, 2009a) or on what specific what factors constitute a 'good academic presentation' (Shimamura & Takeuchi; 2011). Assertion four is based on an array of findings in this study, which suggest a complex interplay of skills is necessary to make

someone a persuasive speaker – a notion evident in the research literature (Conger, 1991; 1998). The ideal balance between content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques remains largely unclear (Alshare & Hindi, 2004), with a host of studies yielding different results (see Luthy & Deck, 2007; Shimamura, 2014; Smith & Sodano, 2011; Soureshjani & Ghanbari, 2012; Stowe et al., 2011; Tuan & Neomy, 2007). In Phase 1, the presenters' persuasiveness seems to have been more determined by their delivery and content (similar to a finding by Sydow et al., 2001), than by their use of discursive techniques, but the findings from Phase 2 are less clear.

Along with the previously discussed importance of persuasive discursive techniques (assertions 1-3), delivery skills (assertion 2), and structural factors (assertion 1), content and supporting information also seems to have played a role in determining the persuasive impact of the presentations in Phase 1 and 2 of this study, despite my potential bias to view persuasive discursive techniques as more integral to a persuasive presentation when the study began. Gallo (2014) explains that supporting information and a rich collection of examples can have a dramatic impact on the persuasiveness of a presentation, and Shimamura (2014) states that being able to convey the content of a presentation clearly was the key factor in the scientific presentations she examined. The participants in both phases frequently commented on the content of the presentations, and in particular on the examples provided by presenters, statistics they used, and personal anecdotes given. Conversely, presenters such as P2 (Phase 1) were criticized for not having enough supporting information or for providing contradictory information.

Finally, the importance of the audience (and their prior stance or motivation towards being persuaded) has long been seen as important in the persuasive process (See Cacioppo et al., 1986; Petty & Cacioppo, 1986; Petty et al., 1999; Kruglanski & Thompson, 1999). Dealing with the audience is problematic for presenters (Chan, 2011; De Grez et al., 2009b), and is also a substantially under-researched area (Shimamura & Takeuchi, 2011). However, speakers who can successfully adjust and modify their rhetoric to suit the

context they are presenting in are considered more effective speakers (Heracleous & Klaering, 2014). Not surprisingly then, this study shows that the presenter who actively took into account the audience (Daisuke) when preparing and presenting was the most persuasive speaker in Phase 2.

Taken together, the four assertions presented above reveal two important points, or 'high-level inferences', which "transcend the case to the macro level" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 600). Firstly, the use of persuasive discursive techniques in oral presentations was not the key element for delivering a persuasive presentation, as I had initially anticipated. Secondly, building a persuasive oral presentation requires the effective implementation of a complex array of skills, techniques and content, and is not strictly dependent on one single factor.

The first high-level inference to be drawn from this study is: persuasive discursive techniques play a role in building a persuasive argument in an oral presentation but it cannot be said with any conviction, based on the findings from this study, that they are any more integral than a host of other interrelated factors. This finding contradicts my beliefs, prior to commencing this study. This inference is based on the findings related to proposition two, proposition four, assertion one, and assertion two.

The second high-level inference in this study is by now self-evident, given the complex array of findings presented in this dissertation. Aristotle (Cooper, 1960) and many researchers since have believed an effective speaker needs an array of skills to be persuasive, and the findings from this study support that notion. Neither Phase 1, nor Phase 2 was able to establish a central determining factor for enhancing the persuasiveness of the oral presentations in this study. The focus group sessions and case study participants all highlighted a range of factors that either contributed to or detracted from the persuasiveness of the oral presentations. Even the participants, who explicitly singled out one factor as being more crucial than others, still prefaced their beliefs and admitted that other factors played at least complementary roles. The overlying conclusion drawn from exploring the persuasive techniques used by presenters in this study

is that persuasion is determined by a multitude of factors. This inference is based on evidence related to proposition two, proposition four, assertion one, and assertion four.

6.3 VERIFYING THE FINDINGS

With the findings of this study now presented and explained, it is pertinent to consider how verifiable they are. Schmidt and Kess (1985) caution that research on oral presentations from a linguistic perspective typically generates results that are difficult to generalize beyond their specific contexts. This is especially true for research using a qualitative approach and such generalization shortcomings also apply to this dissertation. However, it is still necessary and possible to establish the credibility and trustworthiness of this research, within the study, and to establish that the findings presented in the previous two sections can be verified. Credibility and trustworthiness are two of the key factors in verifying and administering 'quality control' of one's analysis of qualitative work, and are best achieved by working and writing transparently (Miles et al., 2014; Saldaña, 2014). According to Miles et al. (2014, p. 294), potential pitfalls researchers need to be aware of that can undermine the veracity of the findings include the holistic fallacy (overgeneralizing), the elite bias (placing too much emphasis on certain participants), and personal bias (following one's own bias at the expense of contradictory evidence). This section will now explain the verification of the study's findings and how these pitfalls were avoided, minimized, or otherwise dealt with.

Firstly, the fact that the some of the findings and assertions presented in the preceding sections of this chapter at times contradict my personal bias can be seen as demonstrating self-reflexivity, and as a form of verification. Assertion one (originally derived from proposition two) stems from my belief before the study commenced that persuasive discursive techniques were the key factor in determining the persuasive impact of oral presentations. The findings from both phases revealed this not to be the case, and my acceptance of this through assertion one serves to strengthen the veracity of the overall study.

The richness and range of data collected also serve to more strongly verify the findings and assertions of this study. The quality of the data was improved by adhering to suggestions by Miles et al. (2014, p. 294): checking for representativeness and triangulating sources. Representativeness of the data was strengthened in the research design in several ways. In Phase 1 there were three focus groups – one of which included non-Japanese participants – to guard against only having a homogenous group of participants. In Phase 2 the four case study participants were selected based on a 2 x 2 research design and according to the principle of maximum variety (see Section 4.2.1). Equally weighting data from all the participants (not just the most persuasive presenters) improved the representativeness of the data and was a strategy for avoiding the elite bias. Incorporating paralinguistic data (e.g. data related to delivery skills) also widened the scope of inquiry and led to a more representative view of persuasive techniques in oral presentations that was not strictly limited to linguistic techniques. Having two phases to the study and collecting data from two different perspectives (the audience and the presenter), and then triangulating all the forms of data (from different instruments, perspectives, and phases) and findings into four assertions that span the whole study also strengthens the veracity of the findings and the study's conclusions by guarding against overgeneralizing from a single case.

The credibility of a study can be established in several ways (Saldaña, 2014). Firstly, credibility can be established through an extensive literature review. With this dissertation exploring a broad and under-researched topic, covering the relevant literature was achieved by focusing on a wide range of studies that explored the different elements of oral presentations, models and theories on the persuasive process, and English education in Japan. The key results in the literature from a range of academic fields were synthesized and influenced the approach to designing the research framework in Phase 1 and Phase 2.

The second way to establish credibility is to "specify the particular data analytic methods employed" (Saldaña, 2014, p. 604). This was achieved firstly by

utilizing established research tools, methods and procedures from the qualitative research approach, outlined in the respective methodology sections and chapters of this dissertation. In addition, credibility was achieved through a rich and robust description of the how data were gathered, processed, and analyzed, and then ultimately by how the findings were substantiated in both phases of the study.

A third way to achieve credibility, according to Saldaña (2014) is through corroborating the data analysis with the participants. Unfortunately due to the complexities of this study, and the timeline (some participants had graduated and were no longer contactable before the analysis was complete) corroboration was not possible.

In summary, the veracity of the findings and conclusions from this study are evidenced by the transparent description of the research process, the data gathered, and the analytical procedures followed, and by the confessional approach to accepting conflicting findings and a demonstration of reflexivity.

CHAPTER SEVEN

CONCLUSION

7.1 INTRODUCTION

This study explored the use of persuasive techniques by Japanese university students in English oral presentations. The objective to was ascertain which persuasive techniques the participants in this study used in their oral presentations, and how prominent these techniques were in determining the persuasiveness of the oral presentations. While there has been extensive research on multiple aspects of oral presentations, little is known about the impact of different persuasive techniques, and in particular, about the role persuasive discursive techniques can play in enhancing the persuasive impact of an oral presentation (see Chapter 2). Phase 1 explored the audience's perspective through three focus group sessions, and served as a preliminary study. Phase 2 explored the presenters' perspectives over the duration of two separate oral presentations through four case studies. This chapter revisits the two phases of the study, the overall findings and limitations of the thesis, and then discusses the significance of the thesis and implications for future research.

7.2 PHASE 1

This section summarizes Phase 1, which explored the audience's perspective of persuasive techniques in oral presentations, by holding three focus group sessions (see Chapter 3). My personal bias meant it initially had been expected that persuasive discursive techniques would be one of the primary – if not the primary – factors contributing to making a presentation persuasive. The findings from Phase 1 show that persuasive discursive techniques were not the primary factors determining persuasiveness in the oral presentations, but suggest they still played a prominent role. The overall finding from Phase 1 mirrors the existing literature (e.g. Smith & Sodano, 2011; Soureshjani & Ghanbari, 2012), in that isolating which factors are more prominent for enhancing a persuasive oral presentation is extremely complex and that there is likely no single key factor. Phase 1 also yielded a host of related

findings, which were subsequently organized into general themes, specific themes, and absent themes.

There were three general themes in the findings for Phase 1. Firstly, there was no apparent agreement between the three focus group participants, regarding which presentation had been the most persuasive, or least persuasive. There was also widespread disagreement regarding the effectiveness of the specific techniques each presenter had used. For example, the delivery style of P2 divided focus group members as to whether or not it had been persuasive, and the pausing by P1 was seen as either deliberate and effective, or indecisive. A second general theme that emerged from Phase 1 was that there were no apparent distinctions between the Japanese and the non-Japanese focus group participants regarding their views of the presentations, the presenters, or the techniques the presenters had used. The only distinction of note was that the non-Japanese participants defined 'persuasive' by focusing more on intent of the speaker, instead of garnering agreement from the audience, which, was how many of the Japanese participants defined it. The third general theme in the findings from Phase 1 was that the participants discussed and placed more emphasis on the content and the delivery of the presentations, than the persuasive discursive techniques used by the presenters. While persuasive discursive techniques were noticed and discussed in all the presentations, they appear to have been less of a factor for the focus group participants, when deciding the persuasiveness of the presentations they had seen in Phase 1.

There were also specific findings in Phase 1, relating to the persuasive discursive techniques, the presenter's delivery styles, and the content of the presentations. Firstly, the participants in all three focus groups noticed a number of persuasive discursive techniques that the presenters had employed, but particularly simpler techniques such as tripling and intensifiers. Furthermore, mirroring previous research (e.g. Fennis & Stel, 2011; Gallo, 2014), the impact of these techniques seems to have been largely dependent on the accompanying delivery style and whether or not the focus group participants felt it had been congruent. Regarding the content of the presentations, the focus group

participants frequently seemed to have been more persuaded by statistics and examples particularly relevant to their lives. The focus group participants also typically evaluated the presenter's content holistically, as either simply having been good, weak, or unclear. Lastly, for the presenters' delivery styles, the focus group participants provided very divergent and personal preferences about whether the techniques used had been effective or not.

Finally, there was one other finding from Phase 1, significant for its absence in the data. The language ability of the presenters was rarely – if ever – commented on and seems to not have been a factor in the persuasive process. This may seem counter-intuitive in what is still an English language course, however it provides evidence that the course was perceived to be about 'presenting' in English, not 'English'.

In summary, Phase 1 highlighted an array of persuasive techniques that the presenters had used and revealed that a complex interplay of these techniques largely determined the perceived persuasiveness of the presentations. Phase 1 also raised further research questions, setting the scene for the design and implementation of a more comprehensive study: Phase 2.

7.3 PHASE 2

This section summarizes Phase 2, which sought to further investigate the use of persuasive techniques in oral presentations by Japanese university students, but this time, from the presenter's perspective. Six propositions (see Saldaña, 2014) were used to guide the analysis of Phase 2 (see Chapter 5) and a summary of how they were either confirmed or rejected is provided in this section.

Regarding proposition one (Previous experiences delivering presentations and instruction received prior to this study will shape initial beliefs and attitudes), all the participants seem to have been influenced to at least some degree by their previous instruction and experience delivering oral presentations. Daisuke, Rena, and Shin all explicitly stated as much. Although,

Maki indicated she had not been overly influenced by previous instruction in her first year of university, data from her case study suggests that it had had an influence on her.

The second proposition (Discursive techniques will feature prominently, in terms of their use, their noticeability, and their impact, particularly in the introduction and conclusion sections of the presentations) is only partially supported by the case studies in Phase 2. The participants all believed persuasive discursive techniques were important for building a persuasive presentation. As in Phase 1 though, merely utilizing them proved ineffective unless they were accompanied by a congruent delivery style. Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse further revealed that the most persuasive speakers (Daisuke and Shin) both not only used far more interactional than interactive techniques, but that they also used a greater range of interactional techniques, and used these techniques on multiple occasions, often in combination with one another.

Proposition three (Presenters will exhibit a selective bias and overestimate the importance of presenting skills that they are good at) was contradicted by evidence in the case studies. It had been expected that the case study participants would be persuaded by other presenters who exhibited skills the participants were also adept at utilizing, but this proved not to be the case. In fact, the participants were actually more persuaded by presenters who exhibited skills that paralleled the participants' own weaknesses.

Proposition four (The importance of content, delivery styles, and discursive techniques will be intertwined – meaning it will be difficult to isolate only one as the key for enhancing persuasiveness) was supported by evidence in the Phase 2 case studies and matched earlier findings from Phase 1. Even when the case study participants specified that one area was more important, they still went to great lengths – and even provided several colorful analogies – to explain that they believed the other areas still had a prominent role to play in the persuasive process.

Proposition five (Successful presenters will modify and adjust their beliefs about persuasive oral presentations and their practices according to the situation and context in which they are presenting, by exhibiting a keen awareness of the audience and how they might relate to different topics) was the notion that the persuasive presenters would be more adept at adapting to the context and modifying their approaches over the duration of the study. However, although data from Daisuke and Maki's case studies support this claim, data from Rena and Shin's case studies contradict this proposition. The evidence from Phase 2 suggests that this proposition cannot be confirmed.

Finally, as in Phase 1, the presenter's English ability once again seems not to have played any part in either enhancing or undermining their persuasive impact. This finding in both phases appears to confirm proposition six (English ability will not be a factor in enhancing persuasiveness).

In summary, Phase 2 confirmed findings in Phase 1, which suggests that the presenters used a complex array of techniques in their presentations and that the effective interplay between these techniques was largely responsible for establishing the persuasiveness of the oral presentation.

7.4 SUMMARY OF THE OVERALL FINDINGS

This section provides an overview of the pertinent findings from the whole study. The key research objective in this study was to explore the different persuasive techniques used in English oral presentations delivered by Japanese university students, from an applied linguist's view, with a particular emphasis on exploring the prominence and pervasiveness of persuasive discursive techniques. The key research questions are:

- What persuasive techniques do Japanese university students employ in English oral presentations?
- How prominent are these techniques in determining the persuasive impact of the oral presentation?

Findings related to the first question indicate that presenters in both phases of the study utilized a range of persuasive discursive (e.g. tripling, intensifiers), structural (e.g. back-loading, front-loading), and paralinguistic techniques (e.g. sweeping eye contact, chunking) in their presentations. Phase 2 further revealed that the presenters tended to emphasize one aspect (content, delivery skills, or persuasive discursive techniques) more than another and that they were often largely influenced by previous instruction (including from courses I had instructed). In terms of the persuasive discursive techniques they utilized, the more persuasive speakers in Phase 2 (Daisuke and Shin) employed more interactional than interactive techniques, and used a greater range of interactional techniques (according to Hyland's 2005 interpersonal model of metadiscourse). The more persuasive presenters also employed certain interactional techniques on multiple occasions, and often used several interactional techniques together to maximize the impact. The location of these interactional techniques also proved important, as the more persuasive presenters were able to allocate them throughout their presentations, instead of primarily in the introduction and conclusion sections.

The answer to the second research question (How prominent are persuasive discursive techniques in determining the persuasiveness of the oral presentations?) is that the impact of the persuasive discursive techniques depended largely on the presenter also implementing a congruent delivery of the persuasive discursive techniques, as previously proclaimed by Fennis and Stel (2011) and Gallo (2014). Examples of this can be see with Rena in Phase 2, who employed persuasive discursive techniques almost as frequently as Daisuke and Shin, but who was seen as less persuasive due to her constant breaks in eye contact and voice stumbles at key moments. Furthermore, P2 and P3 in Phase 1 also employed persuasive discursive techniques on a frequent basis but were undermined respectively by a polarizing aggressive delivery style and by a flat voice with poor eye contact.

Based on findings related to the two key research questions in this study, four assertions that were originally provided in Table 6.3 are offered here again in Table 7.1 for reference.

Table 7.1.

Final Assertions

Assertions	
1	Persuasive discursive techniques appear to have been prominent in building a persuasive argument in an oral presentation for this study, although the evidence suggests they were not the sole factor. In addition, persuasive speakers used more interactional techniques than interactive techniques to amplify their message.
2	Persuasive discursive techniques only enhanced the persuasive impact of the oral presentations in this study, when verbal and non-verbal styles were congruent. Otherwise, persuasive discursive techniques at times actually appear to have detracted from the persuasive impact of the presentation.
3	Persuasive discursive techniques were more commonly used in the introduction and conclusion sections of presentations, but the more persuasive speakers in this study employed them (in combination) throughout the body sections of their presentations as well.
4	A complex interplay between content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques, leads to a more persuasive presentation, as does a heightened awareness of the audience and context presenters are presenting in.

Ultimately, this study suggests that delivering a persuasive oral presentation in English, and in a Japanese university context, requires effectively balancing the interplay between content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques.

7.5 LIMITATIONS OF THIS STUDY

There are four limitations to this study that need noting in this section. The purpose of shedding light on these limitations is not to undermine the findings, but to demonstrate reflexivity about this research and to provide important points for researchers to consider when designing similar studies in the future.

A potentially significant weakness in the study that could not be taken into account in either phase was the issue of prior stance – measuring how members of the audience perceived an issue or topic before watching a presentation. Knowing someone's prior stance would be useful as its impact on the ratings given could be significant. Due to the number of participants and the range of topics, logistical limitations had to be accepted, and this factor regrettably remains unaccounted for in this dissertation.

Another potential limitation of this study is the small sample size of participants. Four case studies and three focus group sessions certainly does not represent a large sample of the Japanese university student population. However, as in all case study research, this dissertation makes no claims that the findings can be generalized beyond this study. Instead, the findings are merely representative of what transpired in this study.

A further limitation (potential weakness) of this study is the closeness that I had with some of the case study participants. Both Rena and Shin – and to a lesser extent, Maki – had close ties with me. While this enabled me to obtain a closer and more personal collection of data, it also potentially could have jeopardized the objectivity of the results and findings. Furthermore, there is the question of objectivity/subjectivity as I was essentially both teaching and then analyzing many of the presentation skills and techniques in this thesis. Every effort was made throughout the study to minimize the effect on data collection and analysis, as has been documented in the respective methodology and analysis sections of the two phases.

The final limitation (weakness) of this study is methodological. With little pre-existing work or research in the field of applied linguistics to base this study on, a case study approach was adopted for the core part of this dissertation. A carefully selected collection of instruments and methods were drafted from a range of qualitative approaches and comprise a novel attempt at addressing the research questions. However, the absence of inter-coder reliability in both phases of this study is a weakness that needs addressing in future research. The complex nature and the volume of the data processed in this study led to this oversight, and in the end, only intra-rater coding checks were carried out. Ultimately, it is hoped that the methodology of this study is transparent and can been seen as rigorous.

7.6 SIGNIFICANCE AND IMPLICATIONS FOR FUTURE RESEARCH

After summarizing the overall findings and limitations of the thesis, it is now pertinent to address the significance of the whole study: the 'So What?' question or the 'Why do my claims matter?' question. Essentially this question asks the researcher to demonstrate self-reflexivity and answer what they are arguing for, and why it matters to the relevant research field. This section briefly addresses this matter, so that readers may be "clear about the relevance, significance and wider value" (Selwyn, 2014, p.1) of the findings and "their broader significance and generalizability" (p. 4). The importance of addressing the wider significance of any study, according to Selwyn (2014) is to locate one's argument in the respective field and to establish the contribution to knowledge that it is making. As Silverman (2013, p. 374) surmises, it is essential to link "the particularities of your own research back to the more general issues that arise within (your part) of your discipline".

Selwyn (2014, p. 2), articulates "four distinct strands of the 'So What?' question" that are important for scholars and authors to consider. They have been adapted for this thesis and are presented here:

1. What is the relevance of the study to educational practice, or any other aspect of the 'real world'?

2. What is the relevance of the study to policy?
3. What is the relevance of the study to other academic research and writing?
4. What is the relevance of the study to theory?

Addressing Selwyn's first two questions essentially means determining the practical implications of this study for educators and for Japanese university students. Although oral presentations in English are a common feature of English language courses at university level in Japan, little is known about what makes a presentation 'persuasive' in this context. This study has helped to develop a better understanding of how and why Japanese university students use certain persuasive discursive techniques and how the usage of these techniques affects the persuasive impact of oral presentations. The simple underlying implication drawn from this study for educators is the need to implement a multi-faceted approach to the teaching and assessing of oral presentations. In particular, instruction and assessment of oral presentations should accurately reflect the idea that content, delivery skills, and persuasive discursive techniques are all fixtures – to varying degrees – in an effective oral presentation. Furthermore, instruction and assessment of persuasive discursive techniques needs to both reflect the importance of a congruent delivery skill-set, while also encompassing findings from this study regarding the need to (1) combine techniques, (2) use them on multiple occasions for greater impact, and (3) use more interactional techniques in persuasive presentations. Finally, it can be argued that as oral presentations are common in university education worldwide, this implication has the potential to resonate well beyond the Japanese educational setting.

Addressing questions three and four can also be accomplished simultaneously by demonstrating "how the research sits within the myriad traditions of academic work that already exist" (Selwyn, 2014, p. 4). The literature review (Chapter 2) detailed studies examining a range of presentation skills and techniques, as well as perspectives on the importance of those skills. However, comprehensive studies encompassing a broad scope and – importantly – exploring the interplay between different presentation skills and techniques is

lacking in the applied linguistics field. This thesis can help begin to fill this gap and to provide impetus for future more encompassing research.

The theoretical significance of this study is that it potentially reveals the limitations of employing models or theories with a singular focus, when researching oral presentations. For example, several of the more recent models of persuasion detailed in Section 2.2.2 argued that either peripheral or central elements were the central factors in determining the persuasiveness of a message (the Elaboration Likelihood Model and the Unimodel). Findings from this thesis show that neither model would have been satisfactory in explaining why Daisuke and Shin were more persuasive presenters than Maki and Rena in Phase 2. In a further example, the utilization of Hyland's (2005) interpersonal model of metadiscourse to categorize and analyze persuasive discursive techniques proved insufficient by itself to address the research questions of this study. The findings from this dissertation suggest that oral presentations are too complex and too context dependent to ever be sufficiently and exhaustively categorized, analyzed, or explained by one model or an all-encompassing theory. This is not to suggest that studying discursive techniques in oral presentations through models, such as Hyland's, has no place in applied linguistics. Rather, that modifying factors (e.g. delivery techniques) play a significant role on the impact of persuasive discursive techniques in oral presentations. Therefore, this dissertation ultimately supports a multimodal approach as the most appropriate method for future research on oral presentations, rhetoric and discursive techniques.

The other significant implication drawn from this dissertation is simply that there is a great need for further research on all aspects of oral presentations. Future research could be done in the form of a replication study of this thesis, with a larger sample size of participants, or by addressing questions that remain unanswered in this study and that warrant further exploration. This could include (but is certainly not limited to) the following research questions:

- Precisely which persuasive discursive techniques are more persuasive and why?
- How does the placement/location within a presentation of persuasive discursive techniques affect their persuasive impact?
- Which delivery styles suit each particular persuasive discursive technique?
- Which combinations of persuasive discursive techniques are most effective?
- How are persuasive discursive techniques perceived outside the university context in Japan (e.g. in a business or political context)?
- What are some of the differences between the Western view of persuasion and the Japanese view of persuasion?

The questions above represent only a few of the potential avenues for future research related to this dissertation. They are indicative though, that research on persuasive techniques in oral presentations is a substantially under-researched area and in need of further exploration. It is considered likely that the experiences and views of the case study participants and the focus group participants might not be overtly dissimilar to other university students in Japan or around the world. Therefore, the significance and implications of the findings in this dissertation, as well as the unanswered questions posed above, will hopefully resonate with other educators and researchers in similar contexts or with similar interests.

7.7 CONCLUSION

This study helps shed light on the use of persuasive techniques in English language oral presentations by Japanese university students. It also reveals how complicated the use of these techniques can be, raising more questions for future research. The most important finding is that there is a complex relationship between the many factors that determine the persuasive impact of an oral presentation and it is likely that there is no single overriding factor. It has yet to be determined whether the trends and findings in this dissertation are generalizable to a wider set of data, but examining this interplay of factors is a

promising area for future research and could lead to a host of interesting linguistics-related findings and contribute to the growing body of research on oral presentations, the persuasive discursive techniques and rhetoric used in them, as well as other factors that enhance or detract from persuasive presentations.

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