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THE ROLE OF PRESENTATIONS IN THE LEGAL ENGLISH CLASSROOM

This article examines the potential of presentations as a tool for enhancing language skills and fostering essential professional competencies in the Legal English classroom. Presentations are a vital component of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) courses, offering a practical and interactive means for students to apply their language skills in real-life contexts. It has been established that by engaging in the process of preparing and delivering presentations, students develop critical thinking, time management and attention to detail, alongside their linguistic abilities. These soft skills, coupled with enhanced speaking proficiency, are indispensable for future legal professionals navigating the competitive labour market.

The author explores the multifaceted role of presentations in Legal English lessons, emphasizing their capacity to motivate learners by bridging the gap between academic learning and professional application. It highlights how students, through tailoring content for specific audiences and addressing questions, gain experience in real-world communicative scenarios. Additionally, the article highlights the importance of structuring presentations effectively, designing visually appealing slides, and adhering to professional standards of delivery.

The study touches upon application of self-assessment tools at the stages of presentation structuring and finalizing to foster reflective practices among students. These tools enable learners to evaluate their own performance, recognize strengths, and address areas for improvement. Self-assessment tools, particularly self-checklists, play a crucial role in guiding students through a structured evaluation of their work, prompting them to assess specific aspects such as content accuracy, presentation techniques, and slide design. By engaging with these tools, students develop independence and accountability in their learning process, while also enhancing critical reflection, analytical thinking, and the ability to set actionable goals for continuous improvement. This comprehensive approach hones future lawyers' linguistic competence and professional skills necessary for effective communication and career success.

Key words: *English for Specific Purposes (ESP), Legal English, a presentation, communicative skills, soft skills.*

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РОЛЬ ПРЕЗЕНТАЦІЇ НА ЗАНЯТТЯХ З ЮРИДИЧНОЇ АНГЛІЙСЬКОЇ МОВИ

У статті розглянуто особливості презентації як інструменту для вдосконалення мовних навичок і розвитку основних професійних компетентностей на заняттях з правничої англійської мови. Презентація є важливим компонентом навчання англійської мови для спеціальних цілей, практичним та інтерактивним засобом для застосування студентами мовних навичок у ситуаціях, наближених до реального життя. Встановлено, що процес підготовки та проведення презентації сприяє розвитку критичного мислення, оптимальної організації часу та стимулює увагу до деталей, а також розвиває лінгвістичні здібності. Адже ці м'які навички в поєднанні з розвинутими комунікативними навичками є незамінними для майбутніх юристів, які хочуть бути конкурентоспроможними на ринку праці.

Авторка досліджує багатогранну роль презентацій на заняттях з правничої англійської мови, наголошуючи на їхній здатності мотивувати учнів шляхом подолання розриву між навчанням і професійним застосуванням. У дослідженні наголошується, що студенти, адаптуючи зміст для певної аудиторії та відповідаючи на запитання, набувають досвіду в реальних комунікативних сценаріях. Крім того, у статті підкреслюється важливість ефективного структурування презентацій, розробки візуально привабливих слайдів і отримання високих стандартів презентування.

Дослідження розглядає застосування інструментів самооцінювання під час підготовки та на етапі перевірки презентації для вдосконалення рефлексивної практики у студентів. Ці інструменти дозволяють оцінити власну

продуктивність, розпізнати сильні сторони та аспекти, що потребують покращення. Інструменти самооцінювання, зокрема бланки самооцінювання, відіграють вирішальну роль у спрямуванні студентів через структурований аналіз їхньої роботи, спонукаючи їх зважувати конкретні аспекти, такі як зміст, техніка презентації та оформлення слайдів. Використовуючи ці інструменти, студенти розвивають незалежність і відповідальність у процесі навчання, покращують критичне та аналітичне мислення, а також здатність встановлювати досяжні цілі для постійного вдосконалення. Такий комплексний підхід розвиває лінгвістичну компетентність та професійні навички майбутніх юристів, необхідні для ефективного спілкування та кар'єрного успіху.

Ключові слова: англійська для спеціальних цілей, правнича англійська мова, презентація, комунікативні навички, м'які навички.

Introduction. The importance of presentations in English as a Foreign Language (EFL) lessons is increasingly recognized as a vital component of language education. Presentations not only facilitate language acquisition but also enhance critical thinking, engagement, and communication skills among learners. This is particularly significant in English for Specific Purposes (ESP), where students are required to apply language skills in specialized fields, such as law. In Legal English, students must not only master legal terminology but also develop the ability to convey complex legal concepts in a clear, precise, and persuasive manner to various audiences. Presentations serve as an ideal medium for this, enabling students to synthesize legal knowledge, tailor their message to different audiences, and deliver it confidently in professional settings.

Moreover, presentations provide dual benefits for Legal English learners: they enhance both linguistic and professional competencies. On the one hand, students refine their language skills, such as vocabulary, grammar, and fluency, within the specific context of legal discourse. On the other hand, they develop essential professional skills, such as structured argumentation, critical thinking, and public speaking. These skills are crucial not only for academic success but also for students' future careers in the legal field, where clear communication, effective persuasion, and the ability to mediate complex ideas are indispensable. Presentations, therefore, not only help in mastering Legal English but also prepare students for real-world legal practice.

Literature Review. One of the primary advantages of using presentations in EFL and ESP lessons is their ability to improve speaking skills. L. Sirisrimangkorn (Sirisrimangkorn, 2021: 69) demonstrated how project-based learning (PBL) involving presentations significantly enhanced undergraduate learners' speaking abilities. The research highlighted that learners not only developed their language skills but also expressed positive opinions about the integration of presentations in their learning process. This aligns with the findings of X. Song et al. (Song et al., 2024: 402) indicating that PBL activities, which often include presentations, foster critical thinking

and various language skills, including vocabulary acquisition and writing. The authentic tasks associated with presentations encourage deeper engagement and practical application of language skills, which are essential for effective communication in real-world contexts. Moreover, presentations serve as a platform for promoting self-regulated learning and autonomy among ESP learners. L. Niu et al. (Niu et al., 2022: 1332-1346) emphasized that digital learning environments, which frequently incorporate presentation tools, can enhance learners' digital competence and self-efficacy. This is further supported by S. M. Ismail et al. (Ismail et al., 2023), who found that authentic assessment methods, including presentations, significantly improved learners' reading and writing skills while fostering autonomy. The interactive nature of presentations encourages students to take ownership of their learning, thereby enhancing their motivation and engagement in the language learning process. Additionally, the role of teacher immediacy and empathy in facilitating effective presentations cannot be overlooked (Hu, Wang, 2023). Furthermore, the integration of technology in presentations has been shown to enhance learning outcomes. N. Almusharraf and J. Engemann (Almusharraf, Engemann, 2020: 86) noted that the use of multimodal digital literacy approaches in EFL teaching, including presentations, can significantly impact learners' engagement and comprehension. The incorporation of various technological tools not only makes presentations more interactive but also caters to diverse learning styles, thereby improving the overall educational experience. In conclusion, the integration of presentations in EFL lessons is essential for enhancing language skills, promoting critical thinking, and fostering learner autonomy. The evidence from recent studies underscores the multifaceted benefits of presentations, highlighting their role in creating an engaging and supportive learning environment. As EFL educators continue to explore innovative teaching methodologies, the use of presentations will remain a critical component in developing proficient and confident language learners.

According to S. Dhanapal and J. S. Sabaruddin (Dhanapal, Sabaruddin, 2019: 79), integrating oral

presentations in Legal English lessons presents a number of benefits to language learners as structuring and giving an effective presentation seems to develop a variety of skills essential in a legal profession. Firstly, students need to use different communication styles. The ability to build a rapport with the audience, speaking clearly and concisely, asking right questions, rephrasing to make sure the audience understand you, demonstrating positive attitude and friendliness are also involved. Boosting these skills is essential for future lawyers to be effective in communicating with clients. Secondly, while planning and preparing an oral presentation students practice both reading and writing skills as well as speaking skills. In addition, students acting as the audience members for other students' presentations can practise active listening skills, asking questions and commenting.

Another advantage of integrating oral presentations into Legal English classrooms is that it increases students' motivation to learn legal English as they provide "a more authentic way of practicing English" (Wilson, Brooks, 2014). When planning a PP presentation students have direct control of the content and performance, which fosters their critical thinking and research skills as well as their ability to work independently.

Effective communication is a complex skill which is "about how you say something, why you say it, when you say it, your body language and what you don't say" (Künzler, 2022). As communication skills seem to be crucial soft skills for legal professionals, their acquisition should become an integral part of legal training. Lessons of Legal English may become an invaluable tool to enhance communication skills of future legal professionals through a variety of activities which include planning and giving a presentation. So the **purpose** of this study is to examine the potential of presentations as an effective tool for fostering the practical application of Legal English while simultaneously supporting the development of essential professional skills for future lawyers, and to provide recommendations for the use of self-assessment tools to enhance learning outcomes.

Findings. Incorporating oral presentation as a communicative tool in the classroom requires a lot of effort on behalf of the teacher as this activity needs to be properly scaffolded to be implemented effectively in ESP courses. Oral presentation as a communicative activity can be divided into two main stages: preparing a presentation and delivering a presentation (Tkachenko, 2014: 231-234). Let us start by outlining some techniques for scaffolding the first stage.

In the process of preparing a presentation in ESP lessons, students must first learn to structure

their presentation effectively and design slides that enhance audience comprehension. To address these two issues, students need to answer the following questions before creating a PowerPoint presentation: (1) Who is the audience? (The level of the audience, how much they know about the topic); (2) What are the goals of the audience? (What the audience expects from the speaker, what they want to "take away" from the presentation); (3) What is going to be presented? (The content of the presentation where only relevant information should be included); (4) How is the presentation going to be given? (Equipment, venue and time of presenting should be taken into consideration) (Rockland, 2001: 1).

Preparation begins with understanding the audience. Students should be encouraged to consider the audience's level of knowledge about the topic and anticipate their expectations and key takeaways. By analysing the goals and interests of their listeners, students can craft a presentation that is both relevant and engaging.

The next step involves determining the content of the presentation. Students are guided to focus only on relevant and topic-specific information, selecting sources critically to ensure accuracy and depth. Clarity and conciseness are emphasized to avoid overwhelming the audience. Additionally, students must consider such issues as the availability of equipment, the venue, and time constraints, as these factors significantly influence the presentation style.

Once the structure and content are established, students move on to slide design. The primary goal of slides is to facilitate understanding, not to overshadow the speaker's delivery. Students should be instructed to use slides judiciously, ensuring each slide contains only essential information. Consistency in font size and style, as well as high-contrast colour combinations, is essential to maintain readability and professionalism. Overloading slides with too much text or visual elements is discouraged to ensure that the audience focuses on the speaker's message rather than reading from the screen.

Instructors can use clearly defined evaluation criteria to support students during preparation and as a basis for assessing their final performance. These criteria may encompass content, presentation techniques, language use, and slide design. Effective content requires a coherent structure that includes a title, the presenter's name, an agenda, and well-organized sections, culminating in a strong conclusion that recaps the main points. Relevance and the use of credible sources are critical, with an emphasis on applying critical thinking to select information.

The delivery of the presentation is equally important, focusing on both verbal and non-verbal communication skills. Students are encouraged to maintain eye contact, use appropriate gestures, and adopt a confident and relaxed manner. Clear articulation, variation in voice tempo and inflection, and strategic pauses are essential for maintaining the audience’s attention. To facilitate comprehension, students should use simplified language when necessary, explain technical terms, or provide a glossary, and employ linkers to ensure coherence.

Grammatical accuracy and the correct use of specialized vocabulary are fundamental aspects of language assessment. Similarly, the design of slides is evaluated on their ability to support the presentation’s message. Slides should be visually balanced, with concise bullet points, consistent formatting, and a professional aesthetic that aligns with the presentation’s purpose.

Finally, incorporating a question-and-answer session enhances the overall experience, allowing presenters to demonstrate their ability to engage with the audience dynamically. To prepare for this, students should learn techniques for handling questions, addressing challenging queries, and managing situations where they may not know the answer. Audience members also play a critical role by actively listening, posing relevant questions, and offering constructive feedback.

To facilitate self-assessment, a Legal English instructor can provide students with a detailed checklist based on the evaluation criteria. This self-assessment technique helps students reflect on their performance and identify areas for improvement. Such checklists can be designed as a questionnaire, prompting students to answer questions about the content and structure of their presentation, presentation techniques, language use, and slide design. Alternatively, they take the form of a list of statements about the evaluated components, with students ticking or crossing boxes to indicate their assessment (table 1).

By integrating self-assessment checklists, students not only refine their presentations but also build a toolkit of skills that are essential for their growth as independent, reflective learners and professionals. Students develop such valuable soft skills as analytical thinking, attention to detail, independence and accountability, in addition to effective communication, which are essential for their future legal careers.

Conclusions. Well-developed presentation skills are crucial for legal professionals to succeed in the competitive labour market. Integrating presentations as a communicative activity in Legal English classroom not only enhances students’ speaking skills but also fosters a range of soft skills necessary for effective communication, such as critical thinking, time management, attention to detail, and the ability to engage with diverse audiences. These skills are particularly important in the legal profession, where clarity, persuasion, and professionalism are indispensable.

Structuring and delivering oral presentations in ESP lessons have been shown to significantly boost students’ motivation to learn English. Presentations provide a dynamic, interactive platform where students practice the language in a natural context. By tailoring content for specific audiences, explaining complex concepts, and addressing questions, students learn to navigate real-world communicative scenarios, bridging the gap between academic learning and professional application.

Furthermore, preparing and delivering a presentation is only part of the learning process. Engaging in follow-up activities such as asking and answering questions, reflecting on feedback, and evaluating their own performances with the help of self-assessment tools offers additional opportunities for language and skill development. These activities not only refine students’ language proficiency but also help them build confidence in handling impromptu situations, a critical skill for legal professionals.

Ultimately, incorporating presentations into the ESP curriculum provides a multifaceted approach

Table 1

Sample of a Self-Check List

1	My presentation contains all necessary structural elements, such as the title, introduction, plan, conclusion and references;	
2	I can speak confidently, using audience-friendly language and correct pronunciation, present the topic logically with the help of appropriate signposting language;	
3	I can complete my presentation within the set time frame;	
4	I use legal terms correctly and try to avoid grammar mistakes;	
5	The amount of text on the slides as well as the choice of colours and fonts is audience-friendly and readable.	

to learning, combining linguistic precision with professional skill-building. By integrating structured preparation, targeted feedback, and reflective practices, this method equips future lawyers with the tools they need to communicate with confidence, think critically, and present themselves as competent professionals in their field. Future research could investigate the integration

of peer-assessment tools into ESP classrooms to complement self-assessment practices. This line of research could focus on the design of effective peer-assessment frameworks, the impact of peer feedback on students' presentation and communication skills, and how peer evaluation fosters collaborative learning and critical thinking among students.

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