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Using webcasts for student presentations: a case study

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Abstract

Purpose – Adopting Davis' (1989) technology acceptance model (TAM), the purpose of this paper is to investigate the perceived differences between asynchronous presentation tools (webcasts) and in-person presentations in a graduate program designed for the professional development of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers at a private university in Turkey.

Design/methodology/approach – Data were collected for the three different types of presentations (i.e. in-person, video, and Prezi webcasts) the students performed in four different courses throughout the 2013-2014 academic year.

Findings – The analysis of the data coming from a three-part questionnaire revealed that students preferred in class presentations for learning purposes but agreed that webcasts were higher in quality as they included audio-visual materials. This study also concluded that for procedural knowledge that came from hands-on activities, students preferred in-person presentations, while for conceptual knowledge, Prezi webcasts were more preferred as they allocated time for students to reflect, do more research on, and effectively contribute to online discussions.

Research limitations/implications – The data came from questionnaires; had there been interviews with the students, more insights could have been gained into their perceptions of webcasts as well as how the students actually used them for learning purposes.

Originality/value – The studies specifically focussing on the use of audio and video podcasts/webcasts integrated these tools as supplementary materials to course content in traditional lectures. Yet, the use of webcasts as a student presentation tool rather than a duplicate of teachers' lectures or supplementary materials still remains unknown especially in relation to the extent to which individuals' acceptance of this instructional technology.

Keywords Perceived usefulness, Ease of use, Technology acceptance model, Webcasts

Paper type Case study

Introduction

Traditional in-person presentations are really common in many teaching/learning contexts where students individually, in pairs or in groups present a topic which are followed by short discussion sessions. An alternative to these presentations is through the use of synchronous (real-time) and asynchronous (delayed-time) computer-mediated communication (CMC) systems. While synchronous-CMC consists of video-conferencing, webinars, and instant messaging, asynchronous-CMC takes place through blogs, discussion boards/forums, podcasts as well as webcasts.

A webcast (or a webinar) refers to the process of disseminating previously recorded or live content over the internet (Giannakos and Vlamos, 2013). In that sense, webinars allow conferencing events such as meetings, classes, presentations, and seminars to be shared on the web with participants at remote locations through the use of various internet technologies. Webinars can be both synchronous and asynchronous depending on the purpose, yet, the asynchronous form is usually called webcasts, a term that will be preferred in this study. While webcasts and video podcasts are two terms that are used interchangeably, "class capture, Web lecture, lecture recording, and screencast" (Traphagan *et al.*, 2010, p. 20) are also some of the terms used in the literature. Both webinars and webcasts can include video, audio, and textual materials to convey the

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content of a seminar with presenter(s) and multiple participants from one site as well as multiple sites (Mohorovičié *et al.*, 2011).

According to Mishra and Khan (2009), "Transmitting video and audio streams over the Internet allows events such as lectures, seminars, and webinars to become available to users in remote location" (p. 85). Some of the reported functions of webcasts are dissemination of knowledge, school-wide broadcasting of news and guest lecture presentations, and as supplementary class materials especially for note taking, course revision, and review purposes usually before exams (e.g. Bryans-Bongey *et al.*, 2006; Copley, 2007; Harris and Park, 2008; Hew, 2009; Harley *et al.*, 2003; Traphagan *et al.*, 2010; Van Zanten *et al.*, 2011). Mohorovičié *et al.* (2011) provide a list of the advantages and disadvantages of webinars. Among those, the ones that apply to webcasts are presented in Table I.

According to Boyd (2012), "[a webcast] is not tied to place and may transcend through time" (p. 192). The fact that learners can control the speed and pace of the webcasts enable them the opportunity to process the information at their own convenience avoiding cognitive overload (Copley, 2007; Hargis and Wilson, 2005; Traphagan *et al.*, 2010).

Most of the research on CMC has compared online and face-to-face learning in terms of student discussions (e.g. Shea *et al.*, 2014; Wang and Woo, 2007); however, the use of webcasts, which can provide a platform to present a particular content and further discuss some of the issues, is less common. The limited research in the field of education has focussed on delivering lectures online either through webcasting or podcasting. The effectiveness of video-conferencing to broadcast lectures in multi-campus large classes (Freeman, 1998), the role of certain variables (e.g. demographic variables and self-efficacy) on webcast acceptance (Giannakos and Vlamos, 2013), the impact of webcasting on attendance and learning (Traphagan *et al.*, 2010) as well as students' continued use (Lust *et al.*, 2012) are some of the issues discussed in the field. The studies specifically focussing on the use of audio and video podcasts/webcasts integrated these tools as supplementary materials to course content in traditional lectures (e.g. Bryans-Bongey *et al.*, 2006; Copley, 2007; Hew, 2009; Traphagan *et al.*, 2010). Yet, the use of webcasts as a student presentation tool rather than a duplicate of teachers' lectures or supplementary materials still remains unknown.

Technology acceptance model (TAM)

According to Davis' (1989) TAM, the two determining factors of individuals' technology acceptance (e.g. attitudes toward using) rely on perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use both of which influence their attitudes toward using a particular system. Traditionally, Davis (1989) defines perceived usefulness as "the degree to

Advantages	Disadvantages
Possibility of watching prerecorded webinar	Possible technical issues
Cost and time savings	Computer literacy
Teaching from distant locations	Lack of personal contact and interaction between the teacher and the students
Ease of use for both teachers and students	Possible distractions

Source: Mohorovičié *et al.* (2011, p. 1272)

Table I.
Advantages and disadvantages of webcasts

which a person believes that using a particular system would enhance his or her job performance" and perceived ease of use as "the degree to which a person believes that using a particular system would be free of effort" (p. 320). In this study, however, perceived usefulness refers to the extent to which students' believe using any form of instructional technology (i.e. webcasts) will contribute to their learning; while perceived ease of use is related to the extent to which their use of this particular technology is free of challenges that might hinder their cognitive processing. While perceived usefulness and ease of use can be considered as cognitive factors, their attitudes of usage relate to their negative or positive judgments as a result of a certain performance (Ajzen and Fishbein, 2000; Ng *et al.*, 2013).

The literature on instructional technology includes many studies adopting TAM. These studies examined university students' use of e-learning (Park, 2009), web-based learning (Landry *et al.*, 2006), internet-based learning (Lee *et al.*, 2005), and e-portfolio (Ng *et al.*, 2013). All these studies confirmed that TAM is a useful theoretical model to understand individuals' acceptance of instructional technology.

Method

Aim of the study

This case study aims to investigate the perceived differences between asynchronous presentation tools (webcasts) and in-person presentations in a graduate program designed for the professional development of English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers. Giving the rising popularity of webcasts, the present study adopts Davis' (1989) TAM to explore the differences between asynchronous web-based presentations (i.e. webcasts) and synchronous, in-person presentations. The research questions addressed in this study are:

RQ1. To what extent graduate students' attitudes toward using in-person presentations and webcasts (video and Prezi) differ in terms of:

- their learning experiences?
- the quality of presentation type?

RQ2. To what extent can graduate students' attitudes toward using in-person presentations and webcasts (video and Prezi) be explained in terms of:

- Perceived usefulness?
- Perceived ease of use?

Figure 1 below presents a visual representation of TAM and how the present study addresses each factor displayed in the model.

As seen in Figure 1, while the first research question addresses the graduate students' attitudes toward the acceptance of webcasts as opposed to in-class presentations, research question 2 aims to explain the determining factors (perceived usefulness and ease of use) of their attitudes. It is noteworthy to mention that this study measures neither students' actual use of webcasts nor their learning outcomes but only focusses on their attitudes toward webcasts as opposed to in-class presentations.

Description of the case

Data were collected at the end of the 2013-2014 academic year at a private university in Turkey. As part of their master's program, the students were required to take five classes each semester along with the requirement of a master's thesis at the end.

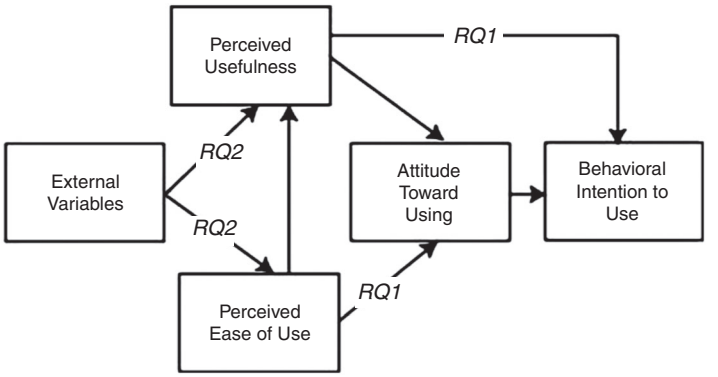

Figure 1.
Technology acceptance model in relation to the present study's research questions

Source: Davis (1989) adapted from Teo *et al.* (2008)

As it was a graduate program geared toward the professional development of foreign language teachers who had at least two years of teaching experience, the classes required them to do in-class presentations, group work projects, in-class and online discussions, etc.

During the 2013-2014 academic year, there were 13 students (five male and eight female) enrolled in the program who took all the three courses that required student presentations. Two of the students were native speakers of English while the rest was Turkish. The students graduated from nine different universities and were, at the time of the study, working as a language instructor in nine different Turkish state universities. Their ages ranged between 24 and 31, with 69 percent between the ages of 26 and 28.

Data were collected for the three different types of presentations (i.e. in-person, video, and Prezi webcasts) the students conducted in three different courses. The in-class presentations took place in teaching-related courses such as EFL Methodology and Testing. The video-webcasts took place in the second language acquisition (SLA) course while the Prezi-webcasts occurred in the curriculum development and evaluation course (see Table II for a description of each presentation type).

Table II.
Description of each presentation type

	In-person	Video	Prezi
Course	EFL Methodology testing	Second language acquisition (SLA)	Curriculum development and evaluation
Number of students enrolled	13	13	13
Topics	Teaching methods Teaching and testing language skills	Current issues on SLA (research articles)	Current issues on curriculum (research articles)
Knowledge	Procedural	Conceptual	Conceptual
Assessment	Rubric	Rubric	Rubric
Interaction	In-class discussions during/ after	Moodle discussions after	Moodle discussions after
Presentation software	PowerPoint	PowerPoint	Prezi
Group work	Yes	Yes	Yes

Video and Prezi-webcasts

The video-webcasts took place in SLA course and required students, either in pairs or groups of three, present an article of their choice. In a 25-minute presentation to the class, they were asked to summarize the material and explain the significance of the study, theory, or discussion to SLA and language teaching. The recorded presentations were synced with Zentation and posted on Youtube, and a link to the video was sent over Moodle.

For the Prezi-webcasts, the students were again asked to select their own article to present as long as it was related to that particular week's topic (e.g. beliefs, teaching, testing, etc.). In a 25-minute presentation to the class, they were asked to summarize the material and explain the significance of the study, theory, or discussion to curriculum development and evaluation. The students were asked to prepare their Prezi presentations by using its interactive features such as videos, voice comments/questions etc. The Prezi presentations were shared through a Dropbox link posted on Moodle. For both Prezi and video webcasts, they were also asked to integrate questions to their presentations for the follow-up online discussions that would be held on Moodle. The students were required to make at least three constructive comments throughout these online discussions. Both webcasts were graded by using a rubric that measured organization, questions posed during the discussions, level of detail, and webcast transmission.

In-person presentations

Over the 2013-2014 academic semester, the students, either in pairs or groups of three, had three in-class presentations that were related to their teaching practices. One of these presentations required them to present the EFL teaching methods in groups of three. Each group was to summarize the information in the assigned readings about a particular method of their choice. These presentations were 40-minute-long, with ten minutes allocated to discussion at the end. For the discussion section, each group was required to prepare at least three discussion questions, but during the presentation itself, the audience was encouraged to participate with questions and comments. The other presentations were similar in terms of the requirements except the content was related to teaching and testing specific skills (i.e. reading, writing, listening, and speaking). These presentations were again graded by using a detailed rubric with main categories such as completeness, organization, creativity, and delivery of information.

The role of the instructor

In all types of presentations, the instructor/researcher took the role of a facilitator "in the mode of the guide on the side" (Boyd, 2012, p. 199). During in-person presentations, as long as there was no major issue to address, the instructor/researcher did not intervene with the presentation and the discussion. For the webcasts, the instructor/researcher only advised the students in their article choice. She watched the webcasts after they were posted on Moodle in her own time, and followed the discussion on a regular basis with very short comments indicating teacher presence (Shea *et al.*, 2003). Adopting a learner-centered approach, she encouraged students to take the lead in the discussion with minimum interventions in the process.

Data collection and analysis

At the end of the academic year, the students were administered a questionnaire developed by the researcher (see Appendix for the questionnaire). The items were developed by referring to the literature on Davis' (1989) TAM (e.g. Park, 2009;

Landry *et al.*, 2006; Lee *et al.*, 2005; Ng *et al.*, 2013), the differences between face-to-face and online learning (e.g. Murphy *et al.*, 2011; Wang and Woo, 2007) and other studies on the use of webcasts in educational settings (e.g. Copley, 2007; Giannakos and Vlamos, 2013; Lust *et al.*, 2012; Traphagan *et al.*, 2010). Once the items were developed, the questionnaire was sent to two experts in the field to check the content validity of the items. Once the necessary revisions were made, the final version of the questionnaire with three parts was developed. In the first part, there were 13 Likert scale items (1 – none, 5-very substantial) related to the learning experiences of the students in regards to the three types of presentations. The second part with ten items, again Likert scale (1 – very poor, 5 – very good) examined students' perceptions regarding the qualities of presentations. The third part included six open ended questions addressing their perceptions of webcasts and in-class presentations by discussing its advantages and disadvantages as well as suggestions for improvement. The data coming from the questionnaires were analyzed quantitatively with the help of SPSS. The first two open-ended questions regarding perceived usefulness were first coded quantitatively to explore participants' overall perceptions on the usefulness of the three types of presentations. Next, all students' responses to the open-ended questions were analyzed qualitatively by using the two determining factors of TAM: perceived usefulness and ease of use.

Results

Students' attitudes toward using in-person presentations and webcasts

The students' attitudes toward using in-person presentations and webcasts were explored through their learning experiences and their perceptions of the quality of each presentation type.

Students' learning experiences. Descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the mean differences comparing the three types of presentations in terms of students' learning experiences (see Table III).

As seen in Table III, the descriptive analysis comparing the three types of presentations in terms of students' learning experiences revealed that in-person presentations were favored more by the students because of its features of interaction. Having more immediate

Table III.
Descriptives for items related to students' learning experiences

	Part 1: students' learning experiences	In-person $\bar{x}$	In-person SD	Video $\bar{x}$	Video SD	Prezi $\bar{x}$	Prezi SD
1	Provided me the flexibility I need to manage learning	4.46	0.66	3.53	0.66	4.38	0.65
2	Provided me more time to reflect, and respond	3.76	1.16	3.92	0.95	4.69	0.48
3	Has immediate feedback	4.15	1.14	2.33	0.98	2.53	0.96
4	Involved more social presence	4.84	0.37	1.84	0.98	2.38	1.04
5	Facilitated in-depth and ongoing discussion	4.66	0.49	3.08	1.37	3.75	1.13
6	Facilitated community building	4.15	1.21	3.61	1.19	3.76	0.59
7	Promoted student-student interaction	4.46	0.87	3.38	1.16	3.84	1.4
8	Can help me learn conceptual knowledge (know what)	4.23	0.83	6.84	10.6	4.46	0.66
9	Can help me learn procedural knowledge (know how)	4.30	1.10	3.53	1.05	4.30	0.75
10	Preparation took less time and effort	2.92	1.32	1.61	1.19	1.92	1.25
11	Enabled me to participate more in the class discussions	4.23	1.23	3.00	1.52	3.84	1.34
12	As a presenter, it was easier for me to receive confirmation of understanding from my classmates	4.46	1.19	2.92	1.38	3.46	1.19
13	Enabled me to learn the content at my own pace	3.15	1.21	4.00	1.15	4.92	0.27

feedback and social presence as well as facilitating in-class discussions in a way to build a community of practice were the features that received the highest means in in-person presentations. While video webcasts were the least favored, the students enjoyed having the time to reflect on the Prezi webcasts and proceed on their own pace to comprehend conceptual knowledge better.

Second, in order to check whether a parametric test was available for this set of data, the skewness and kurtosis values were checked, which were 0.239 and 0.816, respectively. As both values were within +1 and −1, the data, according to this first normality check, seemed normal. As a follow up analysis, the Shapiro-Wilk test was run, and the result of the test was not significant, again indicating a normal distribution. Therefore, a one-way ANOVA was run to compare the students' overall impressions in regard to their learning experiences via different presentation types (see Table IV).

As seen in Table IV, the one-way ANOVA results indicated a significant difference among the three presentation types $F(2, 36) = 3.976, p < 0.05$. The effect size was 0.18, indicating that the independent variable (presentation types) explained 18 percent of the differences in the dependent variable (students' overall impressions in regard to their learning experiences). Since the results revealed a significant difference among the three presentation types, Tukey HSD test was conducted on all pairwise contrasts. The results indicated a significant difference only between in-class presentations and video webcasts ($p < 0.05$) with a mean difference of 0.77, in-class ($\overline{x} = 4.137$, SD $= 0.477$) and video webcast ($\overline{x} = 3.366$, SD $= 0.991$). These results are in line with the descriptive findings above as students' attitudes toward in-class presentations were the most positive, followed by the Prezi webcasts and then the videos.

Students' perceptions of each presentation's quality. First, the descriptive statistics were calculated to examine the mean differences comparing the three types of presentations in terms of their quality (see Table V).

Presentation types	In-person	Video	Prezi	df	F	p	η^2
$\overline{x}$	4.137	3.366	3.715	2,36	3.976	0.028	0.18
SD	0.477	0.991	0.500				

Table IV. Students' overall impressions in regard to their learning experiences

		In-person		Video		Prezi	
Part 2: presentation quality		$\overline{x}$	SD	$\overline{x}$	SD	$\overline{x}$	SD
1	Sound (clarity, pitch, pace)	4.53	0.66	2.46	0.66	4.23	0.83
2	Quality of slides	4.15	1.06	3.38	1.12	4.61	0.65
3	Organization	4.23	1.09	3.46	1.12	4.75	0.45
4	Positive start	4.30	0.75	3.38	1.50	4.61	0.86
5	Powerful ending	3.84	1.28	3.07	1.25	4.53	0.66
6	Questions posed to the audience	4.53	0.87	3.53	1.33	4.30	0.75
7	Contribution to motivation	3.61	1.12	3.07	1.38	4.00	0.70
8	Contribution to learning outcomes	4.23	1.09	3.30	1.49	4.46	0.77
9	Contribution to learner autonomy	3.46	1.33	3.69	1.37	4.53	0.66
10	Level of satisfaction	4.07	0.86	2.46	1.33	4.15	1.27

Table V. Descriptives for items related to presentation quality

As seen in Table V, the students rated the Prezi webcasts highest in terms of presentation quality in all of the items except sound and questions posed to the audience. In items related to organization, positive start, powerful ending, level of satisfaction, and contribution to; motivation, learning outcomes and learner autonomy, Prezi webcasts outperformed not only the video webcasts but also the in-person presentation, which were found to be the most preferred presentation type in terms of their learning experiences. The two qualities favored the most for in-person presentations in this section were sound and questions posed to the audience, representing the interactive features of in-person presentations that take place in face-to-face learning environments.

Second, to check whether a parametric test was available for this set of data, the skewness and kurtosis values were checked, which were −0.955 and 0.741, respectively. As both values were within +1 and −1, according to this first normality check, the data seemed normal. As a follow up analysis, the Shapiro-Wilk test was run, and the result of the test was significant ($p = 0.05$), yet, since the skewness and kurtosis values indicated a normal distribution, again a one-way ANOVA was run to compare the students' perceptions in regard to the qualities of presentations (see Table VI).

As seen in Table VI, the one-way ANOVA results indicated a significant difference among the three presentation types $F(2, 36) = 9.977$, $p < 0.01$. The effect size was 0.35, indicating that the independent variable (presentation types) explained 35 percent of the differences in the dependent variable (students' overall impressions in regard to presentation quality). Since the results revealed a significant difference among the three presentation types, Tukey HSD test was conducted on all pairwise contrasts. The results indicated a significant difference between in-class presentations and video webcasts ($p < 0.05$) with a mean difference of 0.91, in-class presentation ($\overline{x} = 4.100$, SD $= 0.760$), and video webcast ($\overline{x} = 3.184$, SD $= 0.884$). There was also a significant difference between Prezi and video webcasts ($p < 0.01$), with a mean difference of 1.23. The students rated the quality of Prezi webcasts ($\overline{x} = 4.418$, SD $= 0.493$) higher than the videos ($\overline{x} = 3.184$, SD $= 0.884$). The interesting finding, however, was the fact that students rated the Prezi presentations highest in terms of quality, while their overall impressions for learning experiences were highest for the in-person presentation as the first analysis revealed. This finding, then, indicates that, while students do prefer in-person presentations for learning purposes, when it comes to evaluating the quality of presentation type, they believed that Prezi embodied better features over both in-person presentations and video webcasts.

Explaining students' attitudes in terms of TAM

The participants' responses were coded under the two determining factors of TAM: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use.

Perceived usefulness. As mentioned earlier, the two open-ended questions were coded qualitatively to see the broader picture of how students perceived each presentation

Table VI. Students' overall impressions in regard to presentation quality

Presentation types	In-person	Video	Prezi	df	F	p	η^2
$\overline{x}$	4.100	3.184	4.418	2,36	9.977	0.000	0.35
SD	0.760	0.884	0.493				

type in terms of usefulness. The descriptive results confirmed the findings discussed for the first research question as the videos were found to be the least useful tool by the students (see Figure 2).

As presented in Figure 2, six students indicated that they found the in-person presentations the most useful, while seven of them mentioned that Prezi webcasts were the ones they benefitted from the most. While none of the students mentioned Prezis as the least useful presentation tool, all students agreed that video webcasts were the least useful.

To begin with, the face-to-face aspects of traditional learning seemed to have influenced the students' perceptions as most of them agreed that there was more participation, more clarification, and more interaction/discussion during in-person presentations that took place real time in the classroom. Receiving immediate feedback from the audience was another aspect that triggered students' attention to this type of presentation. Students' comments to this section, then, concurred with the results revealed for the first research question as they indicated their preference for in-person presentations for learning purposes. Interestingly, as shown in Figure 2, there was one student who benefited least from in-person presentations. According to him, Prezi webcasts were most useful as:

> Presenter doesn't experience the stage anxiety, therefore, the content is presented with more clarity, and also there are many features of Prezi webinars that you can use to enhance your message. I think during in-person presentations presenters can be encouraged to rely on discussions more rather than conveying the content of the topic. This facilitates interaction among peers and it makes the presentation alive (Student G).

Student G's comments suggest that for some students, in-person presentations are challenging as they require on-stage performance in front of classmates and teachers, thus, asyncronous presentations such as Prezi can provide more comfortable contexts for them to convey the content.

Second, the graduate students all agreed that the video presentations were the least useful. Technical challenges and lack of training were two issues mentioned by the students as students all agreed that the video webcasts were in low quality, making it impossible to read the slides, and thus, requiring a lot of patience to watch. The low quality of the video webcasts resulted from the technical challenges that the students faced when recording their videos. Lack of microphones, professional camcorders, and

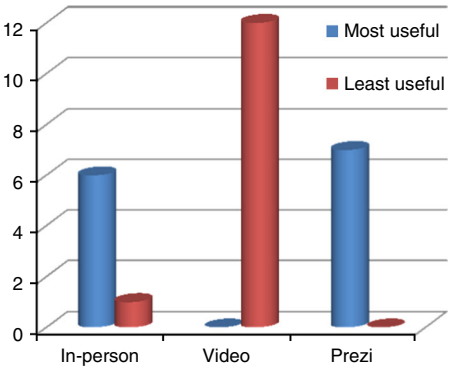

Figure 2.
Perceived usefulness of three types of presentations

a special room to record the videos with sufficient lighting made the presentation process more difficult and time consuming and thus less effective. Lack of instructional training on how to shoot videos and integrate them to Zentation was also one of the concerns raised in students' comments:

> Maybe students need to receive instruction on how to shoot videos. In most of the videos, the PPT presentations were not visible and there were audio and synchronization problems (Student D).

> The students can be trained on how to use and prepare webinars more effectively. Feedback sessions can be organized to explain what needs to be improved in these webinars (Student U).

Third, the students' comments suggested four features of Prezi webcasts that made them most useful: Technological knowledge, interactiveness, creativity, and overall quality. As for technological knowledge, the students mentioned that they learned how to use technological tools that can be embedded into Prezi such as video and audio recordings. This aspect of Prezi also made the Prezi webcasts more creative and interesting. The quality of the Prezi webcasts were better according to some participants, as the slides were more succinct compared to the loaded slides on PowerPoint used for in-person presentations. These comments are again in line with the results revealed for the second research question which suggested that Prezi webcasts were most favored by the students when its quality was taken into consideration.

Perceived ease of use. The questions regarding this factor addressed the advantages and disadvantages of a presentation type of their choice as well as its perceived context of use.

Advantages and disadvantages. Although they were asked to discuss the advantages and disadvantages of a presentation type of their choice, the students all mentioned the advantages and disadvantages of Prezi webcasts. Three themes emerged in regards to the advantages of Prezi webcasts: its overall features, the technical knowledge they acquired while designing webcasts and its influence on their learning processes. As for the overall features, the participants indicated that as Prezi webcasts provided a different means to present a particular content, they attracted attention, caused curiosity in the audience, and were fun to watch and listen to. The students also indicated that they were easier to prepare and the fact that there was no stage fear enabled them to feel more comfortable to focus on the delivery of content. Acquiring technical knowledge while designing webcasts was another theme that was mentioned by the students as they indicated that they learned how to prepare Prezi webcasts by integrating video and audio material into it. While these two advantages were mentioned by the students, the most dominant theme was in regards to webcasts' role on students' learning processes. The students indicated that the Prezi webcasts were interactive and engaging because of the many tools employed for message enhancement, enabling them to come to a better understanding of the content delivered. Flexibility in terms of time was another advantage. Besides the fact that students "could listen to the content again and again and review" when they missed something, they stated that "flexibility in time enabled them to do further research on the topic to engage in Moodle discussions with peers."

> I had much time to perceive the article. I could organize, check, and revise the presentation in a more controlled way. I could ask questions and check answers of my friends in a more relaxing atmosphere so that I could even do further research to provide them better comments (Student E).

> I had the chance to scrutinize the topic, as I looked for the questions to ask, thought about possible answers, read the others' answers and gave feedback to each of them. This process provided me wide perspective about the topic (Student T).
>
> You can make a short research because you have time to answer the questions (Student A).
>
> They decreased the time we spent in class for the presentations, and we were able to use the time for practice and discussion (Student U).

As implied in students' responses, the flexibility mentioned in students' responses was not only related to studying at one's own convenience but also using the time more effectively for education purposes.

As far as the disadvantages are concerned, similar to the video presentations, technical difficulties were one of the concerns. Preparing the Prezi webcasts took a lot of time as the students "recorded videos and sound files and uploaded them to a separate canvas and then linked those files to Prezi." The other concern was related to the post-presentation discussions that took place on Moodle. For both video and Prezi webcasts, the students complained about the quality of presenters' questions that were posed during and/or at the end of webcasts:

> The questions could be answered without watching the video; just following the PowerPoint slides was enough to answer the questions (Student T).

One student also raised a similar concern saying that s/he skipped some parts of the webcasts as s/he could participate in the discussion without checking the webcast in detail. These comments concur with the findings presented for the research question 2, as one of the two high-rated qualities of in-person presentations was the quality of the questions posed. This finding, then, draws attention to the preparation of webcasts to challenge students' engagement in such a way that they will need to watch the entire webcast to effectively engage in during/after webcast discussions/activities.

Contexts of use. As far as the contexts that each type of presentation should be used, the students mostly agreed that for courses such as EFL Methodology and Testing, in-class presentations should be preferred as these presentations required practice and feedback sessions. The students noted that for the presentations done in these classes more interaction among the students as well as between the teacher and students was required as the presentations consisted of more hands-on activities. In that sense, the students mostly agreed that procedural knowledge was a better fit for in-class presentations. On the other hand, for conceptual knowledge, such as theoretical issues and article summaries, the students preferred webcasts as they noted that they could watch them as many times as needed to comprehend the topic. Yet, among 13 students, one of them stated that s/he would prefer in-class presentations for theoretical issues so that the teacher could build on what the presenters discussed. This difference as well as Student G's comments on stage-fright imply that regardless of what topic the presentations involve, students' learning styles still play a role in deciding whether face-to-face or online learning is more advantageous for educational purposes.

Discussion and conclusion

One of the conclusions of this case study is that students prefer in class presentations for learning purposes but agree that webcasts are higher in quality as they include audio-visual materials. This conclusion is in line with the research examining the use of

webcasts (or podcasts) as a supplementary learning material (Bryans-Bongey *et al.*, 2006; Copley, 2007; Harley *et al.*, 2003; Hew, 2009; Traphagan *et al.*, 2010). In Harley *et al.*'s (2003) study, for instance, the participants have preferred using webcasts as supplementary material rather than as a replacement for lectures. Another explanation for students' high ratings of the Prezi webcasts' quality could be the novelty effect (Lust *et al.*, 2012). In their study, Lust *et al.* (2012) have found that "when students are confronted with a new technology, a distinction can be made between their initial adoption and continued use of webcasts" (p. 55). Thus, the students' initial reactions to Prezi webcasts in terms of its features could result from the fact that Prezi provides them a new way of delivering information when compared to the linear order PowerPoint offers.

Second, this study concludes that for procedural knowledge that comes from demo teaching and hands-on activities, students prefer in-person presentations, while for conceptual knowledge such as theoretical issues, Prezi webcasts are more preferred as they allocate time for students to reflect, do more research on, and effectively contribute to online discussions. The students mentioned that practical issues such as EFL Methodology and Testing require student-student and student-teacher interaction, hence, immediate feedback is necessary to clarify some of the issues or to improve their teaching skills. This result concurs with the findings of Copley's (2007) study which examined the use of audio and video podcasts as supplementary materials in undergraduate and graduate courses. In his study, the participating students indicated that "having access to podcasts of lectures would not increase their likelihood of missing lectures" since "attending lectures included opportunities for interaction and the need for a structured learning environment" (Copley, 2007, p. 398). The participating students' ideas on the use of class time for hands-on activities concur with the studies suggesting the use of webcasts as lectures before the actual class in order to conserve class time for hands-on-activities (Day and Foley, 2006). Additionally, the participating students of this study enjoyed the opportunity to review their notes, and do extra readings on the topic to participate in online discussions. Thus, one of the implications of this study is that conceptual issues are more relevant for webcasts as they enhance information processing and lead to conceptual learning gains (Hargis and Wilson, 2005).

The third conclusion of this study is that the use of webcasts can be enriched/expanded with more technical support and more quality questions posed during/after webcasts. In this study, video presentations were the least preferred form of presenting course content mostly because of the technical difficulties students faced while preparing them. According to Copley (2007), one of the disadvantages of video podcasts is that "they require a video camera to film the presenter, in addition to the microphone recording the lecture audio" (p. 389). In this study, the video webcasts duplicated the in-person ones, students standing in front of a screen showing PowerPoint slides with light on the slides, hence, making the students' faces almost unrecognizable. These difficulties discouraged students for both preparing the presentation as the presenters and watching them as the audience. Organizing workshops on how to use the webcast technology and to overcome technical problems with the help of an online technical support service could promote students' perceptions of usefulness (Giannakos and Vlamos, 2013), and in general, their acceptance of this particular CMC system. Additionally, this study found that some of the discussion questions required general knowledge on the topic allowing students to skip some parts of the webcasts. Similarly, Lust *et al.* (2012) also found that webcasts in their study were watched for a short time, suggesting that students used webcasts strategically due to time pressures or other academic commitments and thus focussed on the parts that they needed to review.

As Giannakos and Vlamos (2013) suggest, "the design of the instructional content is typically the focal point in attempting to enhance user acceptance of e-Learning" (emphasis added, p. 138). Another implication of this study, in that sense, is related to the questions posed during and/or after the webcasts: they should be structured in such a way that more time to spend on the webcasts would be required to complete the follow-up webcast tasks.

Fourth, the general tendency among this study's participants is that they preferred in-person presentations for procedural knowledge and Prezi webcasts for conceptual knowledge. There were, however, a few students who did not follow this tendency as either they were uncomfortable with in-person presentations or they preferred conceptual knowledge to be discussed in the class with peer/teacher elaboration. This finding calls attention to individual learning styles, a topic widely discussed in relation to online learning (e.g. Hiltz and Shea, 2005; Kucuk *et al.*, 2010; Zapalska and Brozik, 2006). Although the researcher in this study did not administer a learning style inventory to the participants of this study, further research can take this issue into consideration to explore how different learning styles benefit from webcasts.

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Appendix. Perception questionnaire on different presentation types

As you know, throughout the 2013-2014 we had three different techniques to do presentations: in-class presentations, the webinars we did with the use of video recordings, and the webinars we did with the use of Prezi. This questionnaire aims to measure your perceptions towards these three types of presentation techniques. Please answer all the questions below by reflecting on your experiences with these three techniques. Your responses will be kept confidential.

Age: …….. **Gender:**…….

University graduated: …… **Degree:** …….

Current institution: …….

PART A. Read the following items carefully. For each presentation technique, select the most appropriate response on a scale of:

1- None 2- Little 3- Some 4- Substantial 5-Very substantial

	OVERALL IMPRESSIONS	INCLASS					VIDEO					PREZI				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	provided me the flexibility I need to manage learning															
2	provided me more time to reflect, and respond															
3	Had the advantage of immediate feedback															
4	involved more social presence															
5	facilitated in-depth and ongoing discussion															
6	Facilitated community building															
7	Promoted student-student interaction															
8	Can help me learn *conceptual* knowledge (know what)															
9	Can help me learn *procedural* knowledge (know how)															
10	Preparation took a lot of time and effort															
11	Enabled me to participate more in the class discussions															
12	As a presenter, it was easier for me to receive confirmation of understanding from my classmates															
13	Enabled me to learn the content at my own pace															

PART B.

Read the following items carefully. For each presentation technique, select the most appropriate response on a scale of:

1- Very Poor 2- Poor 3- Fair 4- Good5- Very Good

QUALITIES OF PRESENTATIONS		INCLASS					VIDEO					PREZI				
		1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
1	Sound (clarity, pitch, pace)															
2	Quality of slides															
3	Organization															
4	Positive start															
5	Powerful ending															
6	Questions posed to the audience															
7	Contribution to motivation															
8	Contribution to learning outcomes															
9	Contribution to learner autonomy															
10	Level of satisfaction															

PART C. Please answer the following questions.

1. Which presentation (in-class/video/webinar) did you feel helped you the most?

   How did this presentation differ from the others?

2. Which presentation (in-class/video/webinar) did you find the least useful?

   What can be done to improve this presentation?

3. What advantages did you perceive in relation to your select presentation type?

4. What disadvantages did you perceive in relation to your select presentation type?

5. In what situations/contexts would you prefer in-class presentations, video and/or prezi webinars?

6. For which topics do you think one of these presentation types would be more appropriate?

THANKS!

About the author
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