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Participating in ELT Presentations for Professional Development

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Abstract: *While there is a myriad of people attending academic ELT presentations for professional development purposes annually, research on this subject has been notably insufficient. We know very little about what ELT professionals gain from attending those presentations or how to improve their experiences participating in such professional development activities. The focus of the present study is on the latter: ways to enhance the positive experience of attending ELT presentations. To that end, data were gathered through questionnaires and interviews. The study participants were those who attended ELT presentations delivered by three prominent scholars in the field. The participants of this study provided several particular as well as general suggestions about ELT presentations. These were grouped into categories involving presentation logistics, content, and delivery. Based on the research findings, implications for ELT presentations from the viewpoints of presenters, attendees, and presentation organizers are proposed.*

Keywords: ELT presentations, professional development, presenters, attendees, presentation organizers

A key to sustaining and raising the quality of English Language Teaching (ELT) professionals is for them to continue professional development throughout their careers (Borg, 2015). As Mann (2005) posited, professional development is a continuing process of being and becoming a better teacher, and there should never be an end to it. Without professional development, teachers are unlikely to be able to keep abreast with changes in the field, properly review and evaluate their teaching practices, or appropriately deal with new teaching and learning challenges in their contexts (Richards & Farrell, 2005; Walsh & Mann, 2019).

Among a plethora of ways to encourage growth in ELT professionals, such as journal writing (Gebhard, 1999), peer observation (Day, 1990), exploratory practice (Allwright & Hanks, 2009), and team teaching (Hiratsuka & Barkhuizen, 2015), one that has relished relative freedom from empirical scrutiny is attending conferences and taking part in academic presentations. In fact, attending professional conferences is extremely popular for ELT professionals around the globe. For instance, TESOL International Association, an ELT professional organization founded in 1966 and based in the United States, claims its annual convention to be the largest professional development event in the ELT field, with more than 6,000 attendees, 1,000 education sessions, and more than 100 exhibits. The convention offers attendees an opportunity to gain knowledge of current teaching trends, develop a professional network, and cultivate a global perspective (TESOL, 2020). Similarly, IATEFL, founded in 1967 and based in the United Kingdom, holds its conference annually that involves around 500 talks, workshops, and forums as well as numerous vibrant social events. Attended by more than 3,000 delegates from over 100 countries, the conference is acknowledged as a platform to enable English language teachers worldwide to connect, develop, and support each other (IATEFL, 2020).

Furthermore, a significant number of researchers argue that joining conferences and presentations aids attendees in updating their knowledge on the latest issues on English teaching and learning as well as bolstering their confidence in evaluating and assessing new skills and techniques (e.g., Borg, 2015; Ur, 2012). Despite, or perhaps because of, their immense popularity and tremendous funding, the legitimacy of the conferences and their presentation sessions have neither been questioned nor investigated until recently. In other words, participation in such events has been widely praised and "assumed to have a positive impact on those attending" (Borg, 2015, p. 35). Against this background, the objective of this study is to investigate the expe-

riences of the ELT presentation attendees without the pre-conceived notion and delineate some concrete ways to make the experiences more rewarding.

The present study is hence of value to the ELT field, particularly in the area of second language teacher education, because, firstly, the findings will add new insights into this under-explored area of inquiry by contributing a Japanese perspective to the discussion. The second significance comes from its focus on ways to better experience ELT presentations for all the stakeholders to develop as competent professionals. To the best of my knowledge, empirical studies that specifically scrutinize these dual purposes are scarce. Implications based on this study will therefore contribute uniquely to the professional lives of ELT presenters, their audience, and presentation organizers.

Literature Review

Despite the mounting assertions of the benefits of taking part in academic conferences and presentations as participants, the literature on this topic remains scant. Simon Borg conducted the first study of this kind in 2015. The study aimed to examine what types of impacts ELT professionals experience as a result of attending academic conferences. The participants of the study were English language teachers located in seven Gulf countries. In total, he collected 66 questionnaire responses and conducted 15 interviews. His findings suggested that the participants felt that conference attendance had led to positive changes in their knowledge of teaching techniques, their practices of daily teaching, and their confidence as professionals. The participants also indicated that conference attendance allowed them to gain the opportunity to meet, talk to, and exchange ideas with other ELT professionals. From a Mexican context, Salas (2016) explored why teachers attended an international convention and what they intended to do with what they learned from the event. Data collected from 32 participants illustrated that most teachers attended conferences because they were interested in learning new methods and techniques in the field. This finding corroborated the findings of Borg (2015). Also, many of those teachers stated that they would like to put into practice the techniques and activities they learned from the conferences in their own lessons.

Likewise, Büyükyavuz's (2016) study of 83 Turkish ELT professionals uncovered that they participated in conferences primarily because they wanted to obtain new information on their profession as well as meet keynote speakers and listen to their presentations. As a result of attending confer-

ences, moreover, the participants in the study said that they became more inclined to use the information and knowledge from the conferences in their classroom practices. More recently and most pertinent to the present study, Hiratsuka (2017) collected questionnaires from 91 participants and interviewed two participants (Canadian male university professor and Japanese female graduate school student) attending presentations delivered by two eminent scholars in the field. The findings revealed that the presentation attendees enjoyed a variety of benefits by attending the presentations, including the acquisition of knowledge about English language teaching and learning. Interestingly, this study also found out that the impacts of such presentations were firmly related to whether the participants were fully-employed teachers/researchers or graduate students. In other words, for the in-service teachers, the presentations by and large served as an opportunity to reformulate or reconfirm their ideas about teaching and learning. On the other hand, students could gain new knowledge about how to best teach and learn English from attending professional presentations.

As seen, research in this area is quite new and therefore lacks variety in terms of the study foci, types of participants and contexts studied, and methodologies employed. Unlike the previous studies, this present study is informative rather than descriptive in that it concentrates on the ways to enrich the experiences of ELT presentations for all the people concerned: presenters, attendees, and presentation organizers. Thus, the research question that directed this study was: What are some of the practical ways in which to make the experiences of ELT presentations better for all the people involved?

Methodology

Chosen as the context of this study were three ELT professional presentations held by three prominent scholars in the field, respectively. The presentations were made on three different occasions at a university located in one of Japan's southern prefectures. I was the event organizer for all the presentations, and each presentation lasted about two hours. One presenter, who was originally from the United States but based in Japan in his 70s, dealt with issues involving English language teaching methods. Another presenter, who was New Zealand-based and also in his 70s, covered topics concerning task-based language teaching. The last scholar, who was in his 50s and also came from New Zealand, gave a talk on narrative inquiry.

After the attendees were briefed on confidentiality, anonymity, and the voluntary nature of the re-

search, questionnaires were distributed to them before the events and gathered immediately after. The total number of respondents to the questionnaire was 142. Of all the respondents, 58 (41%) were teachers/researchers, 78 (55%) were undergraduate/ graduate students, and six (4%) were involved in other occupations. I chose two focal participants who attended all three presentations among the respondents for subsequent individual interviews, during which I inquired in more depth into their experiences as the audience members at the presentations. In selecting the focal participants, I employed a purposeful sampling method, a strategy that is directed by a desire to include a range of variations of populations and phenomena in the study (Patton, 2002), and eventually recruited an undergraduate university student and a cram school English teacher. The recruitment of the focal participant was purposeful in that I realized, after careful literature review, that there has been little research that delved into the experiences of pre-service teachers or cram school English teachers attending academic presentations. Furthermore, the inclusion of a cram school teacher in this study was of particular importance because the population of such teachers is believed to make up quite a high percent of ELT professionals in Japan, if not in the world (Lowe, 2015). The chosen focal participants therefore were Asami (Japanese female cram school teacher of English in her 20s) and Ken (Japanese male university student in his 20s) (names are pseudonyms). They joined the interviews by signing written consent forms after they understood the nature of the research and the consequences of their participation through my explanations and research information sheets. I describe below the data collection and analysis methods employed in this study.

The Questionnaire

The questionnaire consisted of two sections: the first section was open-ended and invited the participants to write freely about any experiences they had with regard to the presentations; the second was closed-response and elicited data about the participants' profession, their current work position, their sources of information about the presentations, and their future interest in joining similar events (see Appendix). The responses to the open-ended items were subjected to content analysis. Content analysis is a thematic method that enables researchers to pay attention to the meaning of data, generate codes and themes, and identify salient and recurrent patterns amongst these (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016). In particular, the process of analysis hinged on a hybrid approach of deductive (driven by the research ques-

tion and pertinent literature) and inductive (driven by gathered data and ongoing analysis) analyses in order to demonstrate analytic rigor (Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). Responses to the closed-ended items were grouped and collated to generate statistics that represent the respondents' demographic information.

Interviews

The approach to the interviews of the study was semi-structured, in which the interviewer sets up a general structure in advance by determining the key topics to be covered and constructing the essential questions to be given (Seidman, 2013). In this study, the window of time available (about a couple of weeks) after the collection of the questionnaires and before the interviews with the focal participants became the advantage. Firstly, I could design the overall interview procedures and direct the content of the interviews to be tailored to the particular research question constructed based on the questionnaire responses. Secondly, I could afford to personalize the interview questions to scrutinize some of the unique or repeated themes in the questionnaire responses. In line with the spirit of semi-structured interviews, however, the details of the interview development were still left to be worked out by the interviewees, thereby enabling them to maintain a fair degree of freedom in what to address as well as how to present and how much to share it (Seidman, 2013; see Appendix). Each interview was conducted in Japanese, and it lasted about two hours. The interviews were audiotaped and transcribed, and I translated all the Japanese transcripts into English. In a similar manner to the open-ended items in the questionnaires, the interview data were analyzed, deductively and inductively, by adopting content analysis (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). My prime focus was on the perspectives of the interviewees' comments in order to eventually arrive at primary and frequent themes. The data analysis was further facilitated by re-reading both the questionnaire and interview data, and, at every stage of the analysis, tentative themes were compared and their relationships were scrutinized, resulting in them being coalesced, modified, or abandoned until settled with a few themes which consequently formed categories (Bogdan & Biklen, 2016; Fereday & Muir-Cochrane, 2006). I will summarize the findings of this study below, in accordance with the three main categories that emanated from the data analysis: logistics, content, and delivery.

Results

I have identified three primary categories that the

participants of this study considered were important to provide a better experience of ELT presentations for attendees. In this section, the logistics of the presentation is first introduced along with illustrative comments from the participants that describe the topic. Then, the content of the presentation is addressed, and, finally, the matter of presentation delivery is discussed.

Logistics

The first major issue in participants' comments on the improvement of ELT academic presentations was related to the logistics. Example quotes from the questionnaires describing this category (e.g., presentation information, timetable, and venue) are as follows: "It was unfortunate that the presenter had to stop his presentation due to the lack of time" (Student); "The Q and A session in the end could have been longer but, given the limited time, it might not have been possible" (Student); "A break in the middle of the presentation would have been nice" (Student); "It was good that the presentation was separated into two sessions according to the two different topics" (Teacher); and "The fonts on the Power Point slides could have been bigger" (Teacher). The facilities, visual aids, and the allotment of the presentation time therefore seemed to have played a crucial role in determining the success of the presentations.

The focal participants also put forth in their interviews opinions as to what can make academic presentations better from the logistics point of view:

> I wanted to know more about the presenters before the presentations…. I also wanted to know the content and target audience of the presentations particularly because I was not sure of to what extent I would be able to understand their presentations with my limited English skills. I did not know a lot about the venue, either. Providing information on these would have made the presentation experience better. (Asami)

> There was no information regarding the after-party, contacts of the presenters, or where we could access handouts, Power Point slides, and video-tapes of the presentations. In order for further learning to take place, they should be given to the audience. Oh! I was also wondering if the Q and A sessions at the end could have been organized differently because for students like me it was extremely difficult to ask a question to those prominent scholars. Besides, it meant that I had to speak up in English in front of everyone, so I hesitated.

(Ken)

Both the questionnaire and interview data shed light on the need for the detailed information of the presenters and presentations as well as the environments in which the presentations were made. The lack of information surrounding them seemed to have created the participants' frustration, perhaps preventing them from taking advantage of the presentations to the fullest. These elements of logistics, including relevant information, schedules, and facilities, for which presentation organizers, in tandem with presenters, are responsible appear to have an ability to make or break a presentation.

Content

The second major category was connected to the content of the presentations. It was not surprising that the participants felt that when the content of the presentation is engaging, the presentation as a whole is successful. The participants mentioned a variety of elements of the presentation contents, such as the presenters' expertise, topic choice, interpretations, and use of examples: "It is always good to learn something new, outside the textbooks, from researchers who are experts in their respective fields" (Student); "The presentation was good because it addressed the most important topic in English language teaching" (Student); "I like it when presenters deal with matters that have room for different interpretations" (Student); "The content of the presentations needs to be practical and relevant for our lives, from the viewpoints of both teachers and learners" (Teacher); and "Presentations should be filled with concrete examples" (Teacher).

Similarly, the interviewees also expressed a belief that the content is one of the most important, if not the most, components in an academic presentation. They were curious and eager to learn new knowledge from the presentations and were also keenly aware that the presentations should strike the right balance between theoretical and practical aspects of English language teaching and learning:

> I want the presenters to provide abundant knowledge and rich findings of previous research that I do not know. At the same time, I believe that a good presentation has a good balance of theories and practices. A successful presentation must be directly related to actual school and classroom contexts and draw on useful and helpful examples. (Asami)

> I get excited if the content of a presentation is related to what I study or what I want to know. It was such a privilege to listen to talks

directly from those prominent scholars. But, whether they are Japanese or foreign presenters or famous or not, their presentations need to be engaging with full of passion and to be closely connected to daily professional lives of teachers and students in Japan. (Ken)

In addition to new knowledge and the integration of theory and practice, what was particularly valued by the participants with respect to the content of the presentations was the relevance of the content to their daily teaching and learning as well as the usefulness of the content to their own professional situations. At the same time, although some seemed to have enjoyed and exploited the opportunity to attend the academic presentations held by those famous scholars who were the authorities in the field, which was arguably a very rare occasion itself for them to be able to experience in their local communities, what was evidently treasured by them more than the presenters' reputation was the presenters' passion and enthusiasm about the topics on which they are presenting.

Delivery

The third characteristic of a good presentation reported by the participants was associated with good delivery. In other words, how a presenter delivers his/her presentation on the day is pivotal to its success. Examples that appeared in the questionnaire epitomizing this category were: "I am glad that the presenter was using plain and easy-to-understand English for us. His voice was loud and clear, too" (Student); "The presenter constantly included jokes in his presentation in an effective way, which created a comfortable and friendly atmosphere" (Student); "The presentation was interactive and encouraged the audience to participate (Student); "The presenter had a warm personality" (Teacher); and "The level of English used seemed to be appropriate for the particular audience" (Teacher).

In the same vein, the two interviewees explained the intimate link between a compelling delivery and an effective presentation. In particular, they highlighted the presenters' unique features of their presentations, such as their presentation formats (e.g., interactive) and styles (e.g., flexible):

I remember that one of the presenters began his presentation with a question. A good presentation might consist of dialogues between the presenter and the audience like that. Yes, it might be satisfactory for the audience just to listen to what the presenter has to say, but it is perhaps even more productive if the

audience could give comments and ask questions during the presentation. Also, if a presenter is simply reading out a script, I would rather go back home and read a book instead of attending the presentation. (Asami)

I would like a presenter to ask questions to the audience. I would also like a presenter to let the audience explain what was presented so that the presenter would be able to gauge the level of the audience's understanding. To be honest, I don't really care about whether or not the presenter is knowledgeable, a native speaker of English, or old, but I want them to give their presentation with confidence; otherwise, the presentation would be dull. (Ken)

On top of the presenters' presentation features, therefore, the comments from the participants pointed to a range of more issues in terms of presentation delivery, including the presenters' volume, clarity, English level, dispositions, attitudes, commitments, and preparedness. This is a testament that the participants in this study held intricate perspectives with respect to what successful presenters say and do as well as what successful presentations entail.

Discussion and Implications

It was crystallized from the findings above that the participants in this study had a number of propositions as to how to create better experiences in academic presentations. Based on them, this section presents several ways to improve the impact of ELT presentations, according to three different stakeholders (i.e., presenters, attendees, and presentation organizers) as well as to the timings of implementing the suggestions (i.e., before, during, and after the presentation).

Presenters

● Before the presentation

First and foremost, presenters need to be passionate about the topic dealt with in the presentation and excited about conveying their ideas on the subject to the audience. Although it might be helpful if presenters are knowledgeable about the topic and famous or even the authorities of the topic in the pertinent field, it is not a pre-requisite to be a good presenter. What is therefore valued as a presenter is not the amount of knowledge, level of fame, language abilities, or native or non-native speaker status, but rather their thoughtful attitudes, strong motivation, and well-preparedness. It was suggested by the participants in this study that remarkable presenters

tend to elucidate points they would like to emphasize, for example, by changing tone or volume or by providing visual aids or handouts. Presenters should also rehearse their presentations numerous times beforehand so that they can afford to pay attention to the audience and be flexible in the organization of the presentation on the spot, rather than fixing their eyes on the script and only following what was prepared ahead of time.

In preparing for the content of their presentations, moreover, presenters should familiarize themselves with the audience (e.g., the size of the audience, their language skills, and their educational histories) as well as the audience's sociocultural and teaching/learning circumstances (e.g., novice public high school teachers in rural areas in Japan) (see also Büyükyavuz, 2016). In so doing, they can be in the position to; (a) decide the format and style of their presentations (e.g., lecture and interactive workshop), (b) choose the appropriate amount of knowledge to be offered and the proper level of English to be used (see also Borg, 2015; Salas, 2016), (c) include information and research findings relevant to the particular cohort (see also Borg, 2015; Salas, 2016), and (d) make themselves available, virtually or otherwise, for questions before the presentation. Additionally, visual aids should be made by taking into consideration the seating, layout, and the projector screen of the presentation room in order that the audience can take part in their presentations with minimum distractions.

● During the presentation

It is favorable for presenters to make their presentations joint endeavors with their attendees, rather than arranging them as if they were one-way lectures. Participants in this study did not want to sit and just listen to what the presenters had to say but, as Asami said, preferred to "give comments and ask questions during the presentation" proactively. Presenters might thus be able to start their presentations with a question to the audience for them to be able to devote undivided attention to the presentations and spike interest from the outset (as one of the presenters in this study did). Questions, including comprehension check, can be asked throughout the presentations to include everybody in the room and engender a participatory and collaborative environment. In effect, presenters can ask questions directed both towards the entire audience or to particular individuals, depending on the audience and types of questions. Interactions between the presenter and attendees could be held, orally or in writing, too. The communication does not have to be just between the presenter and attendees, but among the

attendees themselves as well. As one characteristic of an effective presenter reported in this study was one's flexibility, furthermore, the responses and issues raised during the interactions with the attendees should be properly taken up, examined, and reviewed in the latter part of the presentation, rather than just adhering to the plan and organization decided by the presenter before the presentation. Another excellent point for a presenter to bear in mind is to generate a safe and comfortable atmosphere for the attendees by, for instance, being friendly and sharing jokes. Lastly, presenters should allow time for summarizing key arguments to conclude the presentations so that the attendees could refocus the central message of the presentation and leave with an adequate understanding of its details.

● After the presentation

It is always helpful if presenters could make handouts and slides of the presentation available to the audience (Hiratsuka, 2017). Moreover, presenters could call attention to additional readings or materials that they think are useful based on the reaction from the audience during their presentations. Whenever viable, presenters could also pass along some information on their upcoming research or events and share their thoughts on where the studies about the topic are headed. Lastly, presenters should have the opportunity to read the feedback given by the audience and reflect on and revise their presentations if necessary, as opposed to only the presentation organizers gathering and reading the feedback of the presentations, which seems to have been the common experiences thus far, at least among the participants and the three prominent scholars in this study.

Attendees

● Before the presentation

Attendees can make themselves ready for a presentation by getting to know about the presentation topic, presenter, his/her previous works, and his/her related articles and books (see also Borg, 2015; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). They could then make a list of questions they might want to ask before or during the presentation, individually or collectively with other (possible) attendees of the presentation. At the same time, they could take time and ascertain what they might and might not know about the topic of the presentation and determine their personal aims and goals of attending the presentation (see also Salas, 2016). Prior to the presentation, also, attendees could imagine how what they might hear and learn in the presentation could be useful for

their everyday academic and professional lives (see also Büyükyavuz, 2016).

● During the presentation

In order to make the most of the experience, attendees should concentrate on understanding what is presented and, if permitted during the presentation, attempt to provide feedback and ask questions directly to the presenter, rather than taking notes or memos for later because the chances are that the video clips, Power Points slides, and handouts of the presentation would be accessible long after the presentation for them to go over again although the presenter might not be available. Again, the attendees could also try to fathom during the presentation how what is presented could be beneficial in their own contexts both academically and professionally, rather than regarding it as arm-chaired theories or elusive practices outside of their immediate contexts.

● After the presentation

One practice attendees could engage in after an academic presentation is to review the presentation by watching the presentation video clip and reading the materials given in the presentation (see also Borg, 2015; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004). They can also re-read what they had read before the presentation on the presenter's work and on the topic and evaluate how their beliefs and attitudes changed (or did not) and why. It should also be a customary practice for the attendees to undertake further reading on the topic presented and discussed during the event. According to the three prominent scholars in the field in this study, to my surprise, it is quite uncommon for their audience to contact or ask any questions after their presentations even when the audience appeared willing or explicitly displayed their desires to do so after their presentations (but see Büyükyavuz, 2016). Moreover, attendees should always be encouraged to continue learning and networking so that the presentation does not end up being just a one-shot professional development opportunity but a long-lasting one (Borg, 2015; Büyükyavuz, 2016; Hiratsuka, 2017; Salas, 2016).

Presentation Organizers

● Before the presentation

Most fundamentally, presentation organizers need to accurately provide detailed information about the presenter and venue, aims and goals of the presentation, the topic and content of the presentation, and the language to be used as well as the required level of the language and background knowledge of the audience (see also Borg, 2015; Hiratsuka, 2017; Salas, 2016). They could specify the target audience of a presentation, too (e.g., researchers, teachers, students, and learners of English). In this regard, however, care should be taken because possible attendees might miss a wonderful learning opportunity, thinking that the presentation is not for them and as a result might limit their interests and potentials (see also Hiratsuka, 2017). Organizers should also start planning the presentation far ahead of time so that they can disseminate information sufficiently to communities and secure the availabilities of presenters and attendees who might come from far. Organizers could also collect personal information of the attendees by asking them to register for the presentation with a questionnaire, either online or otherwise. Taking into account the information collected from the potential attendees and the characteristics of the presentation to be given (e.g., a short presentation, workshop, and colloquium), organizers could then decide the structure of the event (e.g., one long session versus two short sessions), break time (e.g., at the middle point of the presentation versus after the first main part of the topic), and the Q and A session (once at the end versus anytime throughout the presentation) (see also Borg, 2015). Crucial also for organizers is to allow enough time in the end for the presenter to summarize and conclude the presentation successfully – better to err on the side of too much time left rather than too little (see also Hiratsuka, 2017).

● During the presentation

The role organizers should play during a presentation is that of a go-between for presenters and their attendees, as it is likely that they are the ones who know both sides relatively well, at least in comparison to others in the room. At all junctures in the presentation, organizers could pass on critical comments or probing questions expressed by the attendees to the presenters, and vice versa. To achieve this, for example, organizers could collect questions and comments in writing amid the presentation. There are mainly two advantages to this practice. One is that the presenter might be able to adjust the rest of the presentation in order to cater to the interests and wishes of the particular audience. The other is that the audience could put forward their feedback more freely in writing without losing face by speaking up in front of everyone, especially in some EFL contexts, like the context of this study, where learners of English could usually write English better than speak it.

● After the presentation

What should be considered as part of the whole package when it comes to academic presentations is a social gathering after the event in which the presenter and the attendees could reflect on the event and further share their understanding on the topic as well as network in a less formal setting for future communication and collaboration. Another initiative organizers could also consider is to build up an online forum for the presenter and attendees to connect anytime and from anywhere after the presentation in order to foster the sustainability of professional development (see also Borg, 2015; Büyükyavuz, 2016; Diaz-Maggioli, 2004; Hiratsuka, 2017; Salas, 2016). Referring to the registration sheets gleaned prior to the presentation, organizers could send out to the audience relevant information concerning the presenter, his/her upcoming work, and all other materials related to the presentation, as a token of their participation. Furthermore, they might be able to assist the audience in translating any of the work in English during the presentation into their first language, if it is possible and deemed necessary.

The range of suggestions described above might be relatively easy to carry out in some circumstances but difficult in others. There would be inevitable restraints and inhibitions, such as limited time on the day of the presentation, excessive daily workloads involving the stakeholders, diversified expectations and needs concerning the presentations, and other priorities in life. Nonetheless, the suggestions laid out in germane manners on the basis of this study, not for a certain group of people at a particular time period (e.g., only for presenters during the presentation) but for all the stakeholders according to the three different phases of the event (i.e., for presenters, attendees, presentation organizers before, during, and after the presentation) merit consideration and thereby have the potential to greatly contribute to the refinement of ELT academic presentations for the ultimate purpose in the field—successful development of English language teachers and learners.

Conclusion

Much like some recent studies (e.g., Büyükyavuz, 2016; Hiratsuka, 2017; Salas, 2016), this study accepted Borg's (2015) invitation for other ELT researchers to replicate his study on delegates' experiences of attending conferences for professional development purposes. However, the originality and significance of this study stem from the fact that it looked into three regional presentations in Japan provided by three prominent scholars, with its principal focus on the pragmatic ways to enhance the experiences of academic presentations for all the people concerned. The questionnaire respondents and the focal participants, a university student and a cram school English teacher, manifested several suggestions regarding the enrichment of ELT academic presentations. In this article, I have summarized, expanded, and grouped the suggestions, depending on the different stakeholders (i.e., presenter, attendee, and organizer) and the timing of the implications to be incorporated (i.e., prior to, during, and post presentation). Although this study makes a valuable contribution to a clearer understanding of how the impacts of attending presentations could be increased, further work of this kind with diverse presenters, presentation topics, attendees, and data collection and analysis methods in multiple contexts is needed. One promising direction that future inquiries could take is to compare in what ways and to what extent the experience of each individual may diverge when people comply with the implications recommended in this article (e.g., creating a virtual forum where presenters and their attendees could communicate after the presentation) and when they do not. It is my hope that the pursuit of increasing the quality of professional conferences and presentations for all will continue and that the effort will lead to the advancement of the ELT field as a whole.

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Appendix

Questionnaire Items

1. What were your overall impressions about the presentation today?

2. Please write down freely your comments and suggestions concerning professional presentations.

3. What is your occupation and position at work?

4. How did you find out about today's presentation?

5. Would you like to attend professional presentations like this in the future?

Examples of Interview Questions

1. Could you tell me about your experiences in the past in regards to attending professional presentations and conferences?

2. Could you tell me about your thoughts on the three presentations you attended in particular?

3. Could you tell me some of the ways that you think would improve the experiences of attending academic presentations? What accounts for them?