

Modelling of machining with the PFEM

Josep Maria Carbonell

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Critical Review

The overall structure of the presentation was okay. The introduction was well done but in no way spectacular. The first slide introduced the people involved in the study followed by an outline/agenda with a lot of bullet points and a really technical problem statement. Then there came the never-ending body including a lot of formulas, modelling and technical details. The formulas were well explained in the beginning, however, not so much later on. At some point, I just go lost. The weakest part of the structure was the conclusion which lasted only for around 30 seconds, far too short. It was not well connected to the body and came rather out of a sudden. At the latest after the conclusion it turned obvious that the presentation was lacking a key ingredient for being successful. In both the CS1 and CS2 course this was referred to as the “One Main Idea”. In my opinion, there was a lack of continuity in the framework throughout the presentation or at least I did not get this one key message the speaker wanted to transmit to the audience. The introduction was not too bad actually, there was a nice slow-motion video of machining which outlined the relevance and the challenges in the field, defining the difference between the tool and the workpiece. However, I did not understand the overall aim, the purpose of the presentation. Why is it worth listening? I felt like there was a strong focus on the technical parts neglecting the overall frame of relevance.

Another key aspect when presenting is to know the audience. Now, this might explain some of the negative comments from above because it seems as if the presentation was addressed to an audience with a certain amount of background knowledge. Obviously, students from the communication skills class were not part of this audience. One can argue that this did not matter as we only had to focus on the presentation style itself rather than the content, though, it is somewhat peculiar if two thirds of the room do not understand what the guy in the front is talking about. Moreover, even if I was an expert in the subject, I would have appreciated some more simplicity. It's very important to make your presentation as understandable as possible.

The style of talking ranged from satisfactory up to quite well. The speaker supported his reasoning mainly with logic. Emotions were totally absent. The use of body language was almost excellent. Gentle hand gestures and the appropriate use of a laser pointer had a positive influence on the presentation. The speaker often shifted his weight from side to side which appeared flowy and relaxing but also boring and monotonous. Sometimes there was kind of a rhythm within one slide, however, considering the whole presentation it was rather monotonous. The overall confidence of the presenter was brilliant. He did not appear nervous or anxious at all. It seemed as if he was well prepared. Nonetheless, he could have been a bit more enthusiastic.

The layout of the PowerPoint slides was slightly disappointing. Sometimes there were too many formulas on one slide. Generally, the slides contained too much text and too many bullet points. As a consequence, the fonts were too small and everything appeared packed and complicated which is a pity because it distracted the audience from listening. The logo placement and design was not consistent and there was no numbering of the slides. Overall, the presentation was strongly PowerPoint based and the speaker was wasting a lot of attention focusing on the slides. Nevertheless, he still managed a certain level of interaction with the audience by constantly keeping eye contact which was beneficial. Also, there were no technical issues throughout the whole presentation.

Time management as a whole was successful. The presentation lasted approximately 50 minutes and consisted of around 50 slides. This equals more or less one slide per minute, hence, the maximum pace recommended. However, the distribution of time within the presentation could have been improved. Three minutes introduction and less than one minute conclusion appears too short in comparison to the 46-minute body which once again underlines the importance of structure within a presentation.

All in all, the presentation shows potential for improvement in various areas such as structure, “One Main Idea”, relevance, simplicity and PowerPoint layout. The public speaking skills of the presenter were solid though somewhat lacking excitement.