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The Examiner as Interlocutor



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TESTING ENTERPRISES
Paragon

Session Outline

- Formats of speaking tests
 - The types of discourse elicited
 - Intended and achieved construct
- Role of the examiner as interlocutor
 - Alignment between interlocutors
 - Interlocutor effects
- Interplay between test construct and interlocutor behavior
- Interlocutor training and interlocutor frames

Monologue

- Face to face
 - Via telephone/computer
 - Simulated long turn
 - Presentation
- (with different communicative goals)

Dialogue

- Face to face
- Via computer/telephone
- Interview
- Conversation
 - With different communicative goals

Multilogue

- Face to face
- Conversation
 - With different communicative goals
- “Validity evidence in a university group oral test”,
Van Moere, 2006:
Candidates’ scores to a large degree affected by the characteristics of interlocutors and interaction dynamics within the group

Multilogue

- Face to face
- Conversation
 - With different communicative goals
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Interlocutor in dialogue

- Examiner
- Non-examiner: peer
(or, perhaps: a confederate...?)
- Native speaker
- Non-native speaker

Insights from Conversation Analysis: Interaction is co-constructed

- Interaction is co-constructed (e.g., Young, 2011)
- Clark (2002): in conversation, there are two 'levels' of speaking
 - *Primary message*, i.e. the propositional content of the speaker
 - *Collateral message*, in which the speaker is informing the listener about his performance

Insights from Socio- and Psycholinguistics: *Interactive alignment*

- Interlocutors mimic or align their speech in order to be socially approved and to increase similarity between speaker and interlocutor (Giles, Coupland, & Coupland, 1991).
- On different 'levels' of speaking
 - speech rate (Wilson & Wilson, 2005), pausing frequency, and pausing length (Jaffe & Feldstein, 1970)
 - inter-turn interval duration (Ten Bosch, Oostdijk, & De Ruiter, 2004)
 - grammar and words to achieve mutual understanding (see Pickering & Garrod, 2004)

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- With respect to non-verbal behavior, *chameleon* effect (Chartrand & Bargh, 1999)

Impact on elicited speech

- In an interview situation, as in OPI, discourse management is not part of elicited speech of the testee (Van Lier, 1989)
- Co-constructed dialogue means individuals should get shared scores in paired settings (May, 2009)
- In paired tests, the effect of alignment will impact both speakers' speech features: Whom one is paired with will impact the score
- **In groups and in pairs, how does the rater disentangle speakers' *individual* performance?**
- Co-constructed dialogue means that interlocutors need to be trained! (Brown, 2003: same candidate is scored differently when interviewed by different interviewers)

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Role of the examiner-interlocutor

- ... to give the test taker an opportunity to provide a representative performance.

BUT

How might this be achieved?

Best Practice

- Standards for Educational and Psychological Testing (2014: 114)
 - To support useful interpretations of score results, assessment instruments should have established procedures for test administration ...
 - Those responsible for administering ... should have sufficient training and supports to help them follow the established procedures.
 - Adherence to the established procedures should be monitored, and any material errors should be documented and, if possible, corrected.

What does this mean for a speaking test?

- The test should have a clear structure.
- Examiner training and accreditation must be provided.
- There should be a 'frame' or script to guide examiners/examiner-interlocutors.
- Examiners should be monitored.
- Periodic re-training and re-accreditation should be required.

Examiner training and accreditation



Main steps

- Orientation to the test
- Learning to deliver the test
- Scale familiarization
- Rating the performances

Example: Cambridge English

Taylor and Galaczi (2011) - Face-to-face workshop

- Detailed introduction to each stage of the test
 - the focus of each task
 - the interaction pattern
 - the nature of the prompts
 - timing
 - anticipated response

Example: Cambridge English

- Peer practice in test delivery
 - handling test materials efficiently and discreetly
 - learning how to support and encourage
 - how to give test takers space to complete the task
 - ensuring equal opportunities for test takers

Example: Cambridge English

- Practice speaking tests with volunteer test takers
 - handling test materials efficiently and discreetly
 - learning how to support and encourage
 - how to give test takers space to complete the task
 - ensuring equal opportunities for test takers

Example: ACTFL

<https://www.actfl.org/professional-development/training-certification>

- Attend a training workshop
 - Become familiar with the ACTFL interview by observing and conducting live practice interviews.
 - Refine interview technique by critiquing and discussing interview elicitation, structure, and rating.

Example: ACTFL

- Personal OPI and Rating Activity
 - Provide evidence of your proficiency in the target language (usually by taking an ACTFL OPI).
 - Complete an online rating activity (8 – 12 interviews).

Example: ACTFL

- Guided interviews (2 interviews)
 - Conduct an ACTFL OPI alongside a trainer.
- Independent Interviews (4 interviews)
 - Conduct speaking tests independently.
 - Submit recordings for review and critique.

Example: ACTFL

- Certification round
 - Conduct four interviews.
 - Submit audio-recordings along with the ratings.

Designing an Interlocutor Frame



ECCE SPEAKING TEST



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cN2FoaEwlc>

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