The Examiner as Interlocutor

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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

• “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
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?
• 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=cN2FoaeEwIc
Bibliography
