

Academic Discourse Training with E-Material

The Example of Oral Exams

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1 New Learning Environments: computer based

Communicative Device

CMC: authentic communication

Tool

presentation tools, e-dictionaries ...

Medium for LT/LL

e-material, games ...



CMS

2 Academic Discourse Training with E-Material

- Example: EUROMOBIL, oral exam
- Preparation for communicative conventions at universities and highschoools of the host country, i. e. in educational institutions



2.1 Academic Discourse Conventions

- Institutionalized
- Certain roles for agents and clients
- Culture bound

Actants in institutional communication

Agents

Represent the
institution

Clients

Make use of the
institution

Competences

Rights

Restricted possibilities to act within the frame
provided by the institution

Tasks for discourse organisation and action constitution

- Cooperation
- Understanding
- Time management

2.2 Oral Exams

- Roles of actants and clients
 - Testee: demonstrate one's own knowledge and skills
 - Tester: assesses and attests/certifies a testee's knowledge and skills
- Genre characteristics
 - Face to face
 - Question-answer sequences
 - Role specific actions (time management, change of topics, evaluation)



*The smile was nice,
the answer unfortunately wrong.*

Culture bound discourse conventions

„We prefer oral exams because in an oral exam one can prompt people very well with mime or a small word. In an oral exam I can, for example, give somebody a hint by looking shocked or encouragingly or, in terms of an alternative, I can say ‚Maybe this is better after all.‘ Like in a quiz, like in a TV quiz.“

(Quotation from EUROMOBIL: Study Advice)



Other Countries - Other Customs

- *I'm also glad that we, in fact, have only written exams. I'm sure my grades would be lower if we had oral exams because I get nervous in situations like that and forget everything that I have learned.*
(Excerpt from EUROMOBIL-Forum: Finnish student)
- *Exams are totally different. In Finland, one mainly studies for a four hour written exam or does projects of varying length. There are no oral exams. One must definitely know the language very well for oral exams if they have to be taken in German.* (Excerpt from EUROMOBIL-Forum: Finnish student)

www.euro-mobil.org



EUROMOBIL Objective

Preparation for oral academic discourse conventions

- Study advice
- Lecture
- Seminar
- Oral exam

Authentic oral communication



2.3 E-Material Design

Example: Oral Exam

1. What are the special genre features of oral exams that are important for foreign language learners?
2. How to prepare field specific examples of oral exams for learners of different subjects?
3. How to design tasks and exercises for e-material for practising academic discourse skills?



Examples: authentic oral chemistry exams



Examples: Abtestat, Kolloquium



Prof.: Which steps would you take in case of a threatening gas explosion?

Stud.: Very long steps, Professor!

Video Based E-Material Design

- Synopsis
- Authentic AV-recordings
- Transcription and analysis
- Editing
- Storyboard for tasks and exercises
- Design and implementation
- Test
- Corrections



Tasks

- Vocabulary
- Listening comprehension
- Analysis
- Evaluation
- Writing, Speaking





Analysis

Expected answer chain

Extraction of titanium

Ilmenite as basis



Production of titanium tetraiodide or -chloride in the Kroll process



Purification after van-Arkel-de-Beur

Guiding signals and comments

- Questions, further questions
- Limited agreement (*joa/yees*)
- Objection (*aber/ but*)
- Confirmation, agreement (*gut/ good, mhm*, iteration of answer *Als Ilmenit. ...also das Ilmenit/ as Ilmenit ... the Ilmenit now then.*)
- Emphasizing the expected (intermediate) answer (*Das is' auch praktisch der Grundstein dann/ That's practically the basis then*)
- Evaluation (*gut/ good* + summary of expected answers, *Das ist sehr schön/ that's very nice.*)

Types of Tasks and Exercises

Right-Wrong Feedback



Restrictions

- Productive skills
 - Individual feedback > demanding and expensive programming
- ⇒ Hybride programmes and blended learning

Feedback from Students



- **What did you learn in the exam module?**
 - *What an oral exam is like in Germany.*
 - *Vocabulary, different word meanings (everyday/LSP)*
 - *What an ‚Abtestat‘ is.*
 - *That an exam does not necessarily have to be such a horrible experience, if the professor helps.*

3 Summary

1) Important characteristics of oral exams for foreign language learners:

- Guiding comments of the tester
- Collaborative discourse construction
- cooperation
- ensuring understanding

2) Facilitating and supportive programme parts (help to comprehend LSP)

- Exercises: vocabulary, listening comprehension
- Glossary

3) Tasks for academic discourse training

- Analysis of interaction
- Evaluation (Forum)
- Blended Learning



Added value of e-materials: multimediality & autonomy

- Preparation for academic communicative conventions
- Authentic AV-recordings

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