Academic Discourse Training with E-Material

The Example of Oral Exams

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Content

1. New Learning Environments
2. Academic Discourse Training with E-Material
   1. Academic Discourse Conventions
   2. Oral Exams
   3. E-Material Design
3. Summary
1 New Learning Environments: computer based

Communicative Device
CMC: authentic communication

Tool
presentation tools, e-dictionaries …

Medium for LT/LL
e-material, games …

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2 Academic Discourse Training with E-Material

- Example: EUROMOBIL, oral exam

- Preparation for communicative conventions at universities and highschools 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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Agents</th>
<th>Clients</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Represent the institution</td>
<td>Make use of the institution</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Competences
Rights
Restricted possibilities to act within the frame provided by the institution

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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)
EUROMOBIL Objective

Preparation for oral academic discourse conventions

- Study advice
- Lecture
- Seminar
- Oral exam

Authentic oral communication

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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 tetrajodide or -chloride in the Kroll process

Purification after van-Arkel-de-Beur

Guiding signals and comments

- Questions, further questions
- Limited agreement (foa/yeees)
- 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 ist' 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.)

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Types of Tasks and Exercises

Communicative skills training
• Global comprehension
• Listening & reading comprehension
• Vocabulary & abbreviations
• Interaction strategies (presentation, questions)
• Evaluation & discussion
• Writing & speaking

Right-Wrong Feedback

Drag & drop

Matching

Memory

Gap Fill

Forum contributions

Comparisons: own judgement

User Feedback

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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
Literature


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