



Student and Teacher Orientations to Multimodality in EAP Summative Oral Presentation Assessments

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Inspiration and Contribution

Need for research on classroom-based EAP assessments developed
in house (Schmitt & HampLyons, 2015)

Calls for expanded language test constructs to include multimodality
(Plough, 2021; Shohamy & Pennycook, 2019)

EAP assessment tasks do not reflect contemporary multimodal tasks and literacies required in
Higher Education (Khabbazzashi, Chan & Clark, 2022)



Key Concepts and Frameworks

Multimodality

“describes approaches that understand communication and representation to be **more than about language**, and which attend to the full range of communicational forms people use including **image, gesture, gaze, posture** and so on—and the relationships between these” (Jewitt, 2017, p. 15, my emphasis).

includes **layout, writing** and **moving images** in his definition so as not to exclude **multimedia and technology** (Kress, 2017, my emphasis)

Assessment construct activity

Theoretical - ability assessed as theorized in literature or from experience.

Stated - communicated in official discourse, such as in curriculum documents and rating scales.

Perceived - perceptions and interpretations of the assessment construct, for instance assessor and assessee interpretations of rating scales

Operationalized - the actual assessees' performance and assessors' rating practices (Macqueen 2022)

Methodological Details

RQ: What tensions exist (if any) related to [multimodal](#) communication between [stated](#) and [perceived](#) constructs?

1. Survey

EAP practitioner questionnaire (open-ended questions) - [14 responses](#)

2. Fieldwork

[2 EAP sites](#)

Observation of lessons and assessment events

Field notes

Interviews with Teachers and students

Observation and recording of rating discussions

Document Analysis



Field Site Details

| Category | Field Site 1 (FS1) | Field Site 2 (FS2) |
|------------------------------------|---|--|
| Type of programme | Pre-Master's Programme | International Foundation Programme |
| Modules on the programme | EAP module and content pathway modules | EAP module and content pathway modules |
| Module under study in the research | EAP module | EAP module |
| Students | 14 students, IELTS 5.5 on entry | 11 students, IELTS 4.5 on entry |
| AOP assessment task | Group presentation on group project findings 7mins per presenter followed by 5mins Q&A | Individual presentation on topic of student's choice 10mins per presenter followed by 5mins Q&A |

Stated Constructs (1)

[EAP Practitioner 10, EAP Questionnaire]

Equally weighted: grammar, vocabulary, interaction, pronunciation, fluency

[EAP Practitioner 5, EAP Questionnaire]

40% linguistic features 20% Spontaneity in Responses 20% Presentation Skills 20% Presentation Content and Preparation

The majority of rating scales included at least 40% linguistic features.

Practitioners widely refer to AOPs as “speaking” assessments, their broader theoretical construct of the AOP assessment.

Stated Constructs (2)

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| <p>AOP rating scale sections (reworded to uphold higher degree of anonymity)</p> | <p>Field Site 1</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Content2. Fluency and Intelligibility3. Accuracy and Range4. Presentation Skills5. Group Work | <p>Field Site 2</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Overall Competence in Academic English2. Content3. Fluency and Coherence4. Vocabulary5. Grammar6. Pronunciation |
|--|---|--|

Perceived Constructs - teachers (1)

Difficulty assessing target stated construct

EAP Practitioner 6, EAP Questionnaire]

probably language (use of appropriate vocab and grammar) as easier to reflect back on content/argument and easy to notice delivery.

validity concern related to confidence with making judgements on the target construct (Knoch & Macqueen, 2019, p.136).

[Georgina, Field Site 2, Interview]

So this (the language section in the rubric) needs changing. Because this bit here is based on the IELTS marking criteria

Concerns over relevance of linguistically oriented descriptors in proficiency tests when mapped to classroom-based integrated EAP assessments (Green, 2019; Uludag & McDonough, 2022)

Perceived Constructs – teachers (2)

Valuing presentation skills not in stated construct

[Georgina, Field Site 2, Rating discussions]

Basically read from whatever slides she had on.

[Tracey, Field Site 2, Rating discussions]

Tell you one thing I did like though, I liked her slides. Very clear.

Reference to criteria outside the rating scales in decision making processes (Or, 2002)



Perceived Constructs – students

Valuing posture, gaze, gestures and use of multimedia

[Aimee, Field Site 2, Interview]

The main message they many times saying and the main message in the presentation (slides)

[Henry, Field Site 1, Interview]

So the first important thing is to stand face to the audience and your eyes need to look around. This is very important. Probably like your hand have a little bit of action and when you show a graph probably use shaped hand.

Students regarded communicative proficiency as shaped by artefacts (Kuby, 2017)



Reflections

- Do current stated constructs overvalue spoken linguistic mode in a way which is artificially restrictive?
- How well do rating scales and teachers' rating practices value modes available -- and used by students -- in the task?
- How are slides, gestures and eye contact treated? Are some teachers and students overvaluing / undervaluing these modes?
- How do perceived and operationalised constructs diverge from stated constructs? How do you ensure greater alignment and what will you value?



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