

PG conference SOL

**What elements of ‘speaker engagement’ in paired interaction, as observed by candidates and raters, are evident in paired discourse data?**

This paper reports on empirical rating scale validation by using a mapping technique to find evidence in candidate discourse for what is said by candidates and raters in verbal protocols.

Using N vivo to map the results from three previous studies on to each other, the aim is to demonstrate the correspondence between observable features in the candidates’ speech sample and the features of ‘engagement’ that language experts claim to attend to while observing paired interaction which candidates also report on after performing a test.

The data includes the speech sample of 17 beginner dyads in a Spanish foreign language context, 12 Spanish teacher raters Verbal Protocols and Stimulated Verbal Recall from 17 candidates. The analysis of the speech sample is guided by features that have been already identified in previous studies which leads to the findings of the study that show what the speech sample and the protocols have in common.

Studies on paired tasks in oral proficiency tests have largely focused on what affects candidate output and /or test outcomes; this study, however, validates the crucial mediating position between the output and outcomes. It is argued that at the point of intersection of what raters attend, to what candidates are monitoring and the actual output lies an empirical basis for qualitative construct and scale validation.