

## **4<sup>th</sup> Postgraduate Student Conference: Assessing and Analyzing Discourses**

Faculty of English Language and Literature  
National and Kapodistrian University of Athens  
Athens, 26 June 2014

### **Analysing and evaluating written protocols by raters of the KPG speaking test**

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My PhD research has sought to describe the role examiners play in speaking tests by focusing on the ways in which they get involved in the candidates' oral performance and, also, examine the potential effects such involvement may have on the assessment of this performance. Since the examiners' role has been recognised by many researchers (Brown, 2003, 2005; Merrilees and McDowell, 1999; Lazaraton, 1996, among others) as one of the variables which affect oral assessment, its investigation in the KPG context was seen as a way of shedding light into the speaking test procedure with a view to contributing results to the effort for examiner monitoring and training.

The proposed paper will present and discuss results from the third phase of the study. The first phase involves observation of actual speaking tests yielding a list of types of examiner involvement and the frequency of their occurrence. The second phase consists in a combined method of Discourse and Conversation Analysis of transcribed simulated speaking tests used to study examiner involvement types, identify their causes and evaluate their effect on the candidate linguistic output.

The third phase to be presented involves results from the analysis of written protocols which were conducted by experienced raters who assessed simulated speaking tests. The main goal of this phase has been to examine and describe how KPG-speaking-test-in-English examiners who act as raters assess candidates of two different levels of language proficiency. This task involves investigating whether interviewer involvement, as found in the first two research phases, is actually perceived by raters, and whether it is somehow reflected in the mark they assign.

The analysis of the written protocols reveals different categories of comments that raters make when evaluating candidates, one of which is examiners' action or non-action. Such a finding gives evidence that raters observe examiners' practice during the process of assessment; so, the paper discusses what this may signify for the outcome of the examination, although the analysis does not reveal if and how raters internalise examiners' practice in the marks they finally assign. The paper also presents a model, in a schematic form, which attempts to depict how the examiner may be embedded in the candidate's performance by outlining the process of assessment as inferred from what was reported by the raters of the simulated speaking tests.

### **References**

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