

From Corpus to Classroom

The build of a new spoken corpus of learner language by **CASS Lancaster** (The Centre for Corpus Approaches to Social Science - Lancaster University), based on oral assessments conducted by **Trinity College London**, has generated valuable insights into how learners negotiate meaning within a test.

This in turn has provided a window onto a range of strategic and pragmatic competences that can be taken back to the classroom in order to enhance learners' communicative skills.

The corpus, which contains over 3.5 million words, was investigated for features of successful and less successful candidates at B2 level. Along with more anticipated elements, some interesting additional aspects of language emerged which were characteristic of those achieving high scores in the test.

These almost all represented features of strategic or pragmatic competence.

This study looks at the results so far from this project and how this data emerging from the test might offer new insights for the classroom. It suggests that some of the most effective features of communication may need to be given more overt attention by teachers and learners. It also raises the complex issue of how far tests designated for one purpose can or should overlap with multiple purposes.

SPEAKER

Dr Elaine Boyd has been involved in assessment design and development, standardisation and quality standards for over 30 years and has worked on exams across a range of levels and domains. She has developed and delivered courses in assessment literacy for teachers in Europe and India and has published articles in this field as well as authoring several exam course books. Her research also includes intercultural communication and pragmatics and she holds a PhD in spoken language and pragmatics from the University of Cardiff.

Elaine is a post graduate tutor at University College London and is currently working with Lancaster University on the Trinity Lancaster Corpus of Spoken Language.