OPTIMUS: A WEB-BASED CORPUS RESOURCE FOR ENHANCING UNIVERSITY SPEAKING

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OPTIMUS

- Online Project for The Improvement of University Speaking
- Cross-institutional language-collaborative project (HKU, CityU, PolyU)
- Online resource to improve speaking
- Authentic best-practice videos (expert and peer)
- Guidance for:
  - Speaking skills
  - Language
OBJECTIVE:
ONLINE & ACCESSIBLE RESOURCE

Produce an accessible online resource to support English academic and professional speaking demands

- Accessible:
  - directly to student users
  - For teachers to use in courses

- A set of best-practice video exemplars

Isn’t that the same as Ted Talks?
# BETTER THAN TED TALKS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Features</th>
<th>OPTIMUS</th>
<th>TED Talks</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Academic focus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professional focus</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Authentic exemplars : expert and student speakers</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subtitles</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcripts</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Transcript annotations</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert analysis of linguistic features</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expert analysis of presentational techniques</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorisation by discipline</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Categorisation by task-types</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Corpus-based</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Detailed searching of disciplines, types and features</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supporting webpages</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>User feedback mechanism</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Direct student access</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td>✓</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sole focus on teaching speaking</td>
<td>✓</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>
THE WEBSITE

Key features:

- The video
- Sub-titles
- Full transcript
- Tagging of structural components
- Tagging of features
- General language support for technique
- Other useful features
THE VIDEO

Optimus is an online resource of recorded best practice exemplars of speaking accompanied by language support materials. It aims to improve the English speaking skills of Hong Kong tertiary level students.

- Science (11)
- Arts & Humanities (7)
- Engineering (10)
- Design & Creative Media (6)
- Social Sciences (5)
- Business (4)
- Law (3)
- Education (2)
- + 15 student presentations/speeches
So normally a word will have objective or literal meaning at a conceptual level.
vagina and then behind is the rectum. There is one peritoneal pouch, or cavity, between the uterus and bladder, and that one is called the utero-vesical pouch. Once again, you look at the structure and you make up the name. Between the uterus and the bladder therefore is called utero-vesical pouch. Ok? Vesical referring to the urinary bladder. There is another pouch called recto-uterine pouch. And that is...if you just read the name, you know that it is between the rectum and the uterus. Between the rectum and the uterus. So this is the pouch. Now why do we make up these names? We make up these...I mean there are so many pouches, bones in the human body, if you, you know, give a name to each of these pouches and bones, I mean, it will be a very difficult time to learn anatomy. Now we give names to these pouches because they have clinical significance. In a ...separate slide, I will show you why. The abdominal cavity, well, including your peritoneal cavity, is covered by a layer of peritoneum. And the peritoneum drapes over the urinary bladder. Actually can I ... invite one of you to come out? ...volunteer. Who’s the class representative? Would you like to come out? That’s the...advantage of being a class representative because I’m sure it will leave you a deep impression. Ok. [Can you stand over there?] I always think that people look like the uterus, because ... we are there together. Now this is the fundus. This is the body. And there’s the cervix. And these are the two oviducts. Moreover, ...at
TAGGING OF STRUCTURAL COMPONENTS
TAGGING OF FEATURES (I)

Implications for the teaching of English for academic purposes

Introduction

Main Body

This relational expression of knowledge more than the sciences. Ok I'm not going to go.

Formality/register and choice of wording
Showing importance and/or relevance of content
Articulating position/stance
Audience rapport
Exploration
Signposting
Eye contact
Gestures and body language
Intonation and stress for key points
Visual aids
Specifying the theme and/or scope
TAGGING OF FEATURES (II) – MORE EXAMPLES OF THE SAME FEATURE
Presentation Feature: Eye contact

What is it?

The presenter looks at the members of the audience, rather than at their slides, the computer screen, their notes or the floor/ceiling.

Why is it important?

The audience is the most important thing in a presentation. Without them, there would be no reason to present. Eye contact shows the presenter’s respect to the audience and makes them the focus of the presentation. The audience feels the presenter is communicating with them, not talking for their own benefit or even ignoring the audience completely.

How is it done?

The presenter looks at the audience while they are talking. If the presenter is describing something commonly known they look at the audience, and move their head slowly from side to side as they speak, to ensure that they make eye contact with as many people in the audience as possible, not just one small section of the audience. Presenters usually look at the audience when they address them directly as ‘you’ or when they pose questions for the audience to consider. Often they will use notes to make sure they give accurate information, but even then a good presenter will glance up at the audience at natural pauses in speech to maintain eye contact.

Example video clips

Dr. Kathryn L.Braun (PolyU) Example #2
Dr. Gary Harfitt (HKU) Example #2
Prof. Frank Shu (CityU) Example #4
**OTHER FEATURES – VARIOUS SEARCHING METHODS**

- Presenter Type
- Presentation Feature
- Discipline
- Event
- University
- Multiple Search
  (e.g. Science, HKU)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>By Presenter Type</th>
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<tr>
<td>Expert</td>
<td>Peer</td>
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OTHER FEATURES - BOOKMARKS
# My OPTIMUS Playlist

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Discipline</th>
<th>Video</th>
<th>Unbookmark this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Invention</td>
<td><img src="invention_thumbnail.jpg" alt="Invention thumbnail" /></td>
<td><img src="unbookmark_button.png" alt="Unbookmark this button" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td><strong>Researching Language Teacher Cognition</strong></td>
<td><img src="unbookmark_button.png" alt="Unbookmark this button" /></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engineering</td>
<td><strong>Fashion – the journey never ends</strong></td>
<td><img src="unbookmark_button.png" alt="Unbookmark this button" /></td>
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</table>
"Every Voice Counts."

Email Address

Do you find OPTIMUS useful? *
- Yes
- No

Suggestions *

Submit

Never submit passwords through Google Forms.
- Uses ‘A Tale of Two Chinese Languages’ for work on stress & pausing.

- Peer speaker
GO CHECK IT OUT!

www.optimus.hku.hk