

# STUDENTS' ACADEMIC SPEECH EVENTS AS SEEN BY STUDENTS AND TEACHERS IN A HUNGARIAN EFL SETTING

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**Abstract:** This paper is a report on a research project with two major aims. One of these was to determine the types, the frequency and the perceived importance of academic speech events in the language specialisation courses of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of Pázmány Péter Catholic University. The other aim was to juxtapose practice and needs in connection with the academic oral repertoire of these courses in the light of the discourse arising from the classroom observations and created by the participating teachers themselves. Three research tools were used: a 25-item questionnaire based on academic speech event categories identified by Ferris and Tag (1996), semi-structured interviews and classroom observations. The most frequently occurring academic events were, in order, note-taking, questions asked by students in class, students initiating/leading discussions, group work, and questions asked by students outside class. There seemed to be a high degree of consciousness on the teachers' part to reconcile the objectives of content-based instruction with the diverse aspects of communicative ESP teaching.

**Keywords:** academic speech events, EFL in an academic setting, oral academic discourse, content-based instruction, two-dimensional analysis: frequency and importance

## 1 Introduction

Researching academic oracy is an emergent field of scholarly interest. One might form the impression that relatively little attention has been paid so far to the empirical potential inherent in this domain of discourse analysis owing to the more central role traditionally ascribed to investigating written academic discourse. As this circumstance may be noticed in the context of tertiary education in Hungary in particular, where English as a medium of instruction has lately been assigned a prominent role, studies investigating various aspects of academic oral communication in an EFL setting may be seen as relevant and opportune.

The overall aim of the present paper accords with the growing demands of this emerging field. Choosing an available and timely cross-section of the diverse context of tertiary EFL educational reality in Hungary, the current study attempts to give a description of selected attributes of students' academic speech events as practised in the foreign language specialisation courses at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of a prestigious Hungarian university, Pázmány Péter Catholic University (PPKE), where English, alongside other foreign languages, has lately been introduced as a medium of instruction. The research targeted an approximately 100-member population composed of the participants and the instructors involved in three language specialisation courses run by the Foreign Languages Department of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of PPKE. For data collection, three research tools were used: a

questionnaire, semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. Findings were obtained by means of interpreting and juxtaposing questionnaire data analysed statistically with the qualitative data derived from the other two instruments.

As two of the primary aims in working with the collected data were to describe and compare the values for the frequency and importance of selected academic event categories, it was found that some of the most common academic events for students in the chosen courses were note-taking, questions asked by students during class time, students initiating/leading discussions, and group work. At the same time, it was also discovered that for half of the examined categories values assigned to frequency and the perceived degree of importance seemed to converge. The statistically based findings were embedded and constantly re-interpreted in the context of instructors' insights and the challenges expressed by them.

## **2 Background to the study: researching academic oracy**

Although studies examining the problem of academic oracy are relatively recent, the connection between this novel area of inquiry and previous traditions in the domain of the psychological and sociocultural approach to language socialisation is well established. Capitalising on the Vygotskian understanding of 'activity', Duff (1995) and Willet (1995) discussed the process of language socialisation as a result of lasting exposure to language-mediated social activities. Besides this general treatment of second and foreign language socialisation, a substantial body of recently published reports has emerged focusing exclusively on the academic scene. These studies, however, tend to address only written genres (Atkinson & Ramanathan, 1995; Currie, 1998; Johns, 1997; Leki, 1995; Riazzi, 1997).

A noteworthy exception to the tendency mentioned above is Baxter's (2000) description of a paradigm shift evident in the British context of teaching and testing academic speaking. What she labels as the emergence of the 'public voice' is defined as an increasing preference for formal, expository talk as opposed to the earlier model of the collaborative speaker.

Interestingly, two studies carried out in the North American academic context point to a rather different conclusion. Ferris and Tag (1996), who investigated the academic oral communication needs of EAP learners as determined by 900 subject matter instructors at four different institutions in the USA, demonstrated a marked departure from formal lecture type speech events to less formal interactive types. As a result of their survey, it turned out that requirements varied across academic disciplines, types of institution and class size. Based on frequency measures, a rank-order of academic speech event categories was set formed with class participation, small group work, working with peers, oral presentations, leading discussions and debate as the top six items on the list.

A similar research focus was adopted for a nationwide study conducted by Ferris (1998), exploring EAP students' perceptions of their instructors' requirements regarding academic aural and oral skills at three different institutions in the USA. The most prominent categories identified by the respondents included formal speaking, general listening comprehension, pronunciation, communication with peers, class participation, note-taking during lectures and communication

with professors.

### **3 Rationale for the current study: academic oracy as a relatively under-researched area**

It has already been noted that despite some impressive attempts to characterise certain aspects of academic oracy, it has received considerably less attention than academic writing. This is especially true of the context of tertiary education in Hungary, where academic oral communication has so far been largely neglected as a research topic. This circumstance seems to have entailed a number of problems ranging from a disturbing mismatch between the assessment and the description of oral academic activities at many institutions with English as a medium of instruction, through the lack of uniformity regarding the instruction and applications of oral skills across disciplines and institutions, to the insufficient attention paid to the analysis of students' needs both within and beyond the classroom.

On the basis of the author's professional experience as an instructor at an institution where English is both a subject and a medium of instruction, the problems referred to above appear to be common and persistent even in a setting where this twofold role of a foreign language is a traditionally endorsed practice. Previous- as well as on-going research projects implemented at the School of English and American Studies of Eötvös Loránd University have underpinned the assumption that a thorough enquiry into various aspects of the teaching and practice of academic oracy in a Hungarian educational setting is justified and relevant. As a new angle to such an ambitious undertaking, the idea of expanding the research focus to encompass other disciplines and different academic traditions became realistic when a public foundation (*Tempus Közalapítvány*) kindly provided the author with the opportunity to collect data on academic oral genres at the Faculty of Law of PPKE, where language specialisation courses focusing on legal terminology and content-based law courses have recently been introduced as optional components of the curriculum. Thus, the underlying motivation for conducting a study on academic speaking at that institution could broadly be defined as the interest in making an inventory of academic speech events and describing some of the pertinent properties thereof at an institution where oral academic traditions in a foreign language are still in their incipient stages and, therefore, are open to moulding and multiple interpretations.

### **4 Research questions**

The primary aim of this study was to find out what types of academic speech events are practiced and required in the language specialisation courses and the content-based courses offered by the Foreign Languages Department of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of PPKE. Within this focal point, answers to several related questions were also sought. Apart from acquiring a rank-order of the most frequently occurring speech events, similarly to Ferris and Tagg's (1996) interest in attaining a comparison of two related dimensions, the relationship between frequency measures and the corresponding values for the perceived importance for each speech event was also identified as a key target. Furthermore, the third focal point for the current study centred around the juxtaposition of student responses with remarks given by instructors. Thus, the

following major research questions were formulated:

- (1) What types of student academic speech events occur in the courses under examination?
- (2) Which are the most common types of the occurring speech events?
- (3) How do practice, on the one hand, and students' and teachers' expectations, on the other hand, compare with respect to the identified speech events?
- (4) How do responses given by student respondents compare with the comments of participating instructors regarding the same speech event?
- (5) What major challenges do the participating instructors identify?

## 5 Setting and participants

The investigation reported on in the present paper was carried out at the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of PPKE. This university is a young but prestigious institution maintained by the Conference of Hungarian Catholic Bishops with the approval of the Holy See (cf. Radnay, 2002, p. 5). The Faculty of Law and Political Sciences was founded in 1995. Apart from the various legal institutes, an institute of economics, a postgraduate institute and information sciences institute, the Faculty also includes a foreign language department. The Foreign Languages Department (*Idegennyelvi Lektorátus*) is responsible for running general language courses in English, German, French, Italian, Spanish and Russian, providing students with the chance to take a language examination in these languages at the end of the fourth semester of the respective language course (cf. Radnay, 2002, p. 25).

Having successfully applied to *Tempus Közalapítvány* for a grant for curriculum development advertised in the Programme 'Szakma plusz nyelv felsőfokon' (Professions and languages at tertiary level), from September 2003 the Foreign Languages Department has been in charge of two-semester-long introductory language specialisation courses intended to acquaint students with legal terminologies in English, German and French. Thanks to a subsequent conclusive application within the framework of the same programme, in September 2004 the Foreign Languages Department was enabled to launch two kinds of one-semester, 30-hour content-based courses in English: a course on EU law and another one on civil law. All three types of courses taught with the support of the programme grants are optional, but upon their successful completion students are awarded credit points. The three courses may be taken in any order without any prescribed prerequisites, although, as pointed out by the Head of Department in an introductory interview, students are encouraged to complete the introductory language specialisation courses before attending the EU law or the civil law course.

In the introductory interview it was also divulged that a language examination certificate is not a requirement for enrolling in these courses. Instead, students are advised to register for such a course if they are convinced that their level of language competence qualifies as intermediate. On the basis of the account given by the participating instructors concerning the Department's policy of not checking language competence before the relevant course, experience shows that participants whose language skills do not reach the intermediate level tend to drop out during the semester. As a preparatory step before the start of an introductory language specialisation course, students are given a needs analysis questionnaire demanding a declaration

of language competence, asking for the identification of language skills that the student feels he or she needs practice in and inquiring into the types of legal subject areas that the respondent takes a special interest in. Regarding the curriculum of these language specialisation courses, it was stated that the syllabi and the course materials were compiled as an outcome of legal experts and foreign language teachers' joint work.

As mentioned earlier, the participants of the present investigation were the students and the teachers involved in the three types of English specialisation courses described above. The number of students attending any language specialisation courses is around 160. Over 50 percent of these students are on the English courses. They are mostly in the second and third year of their studies. Class size varies between 20 and 25. Instructors employed in the programme number ten with three of them teaching courses in English. Two of the instructors concerned are non-native, and one of them is a native speaker of English. The two non-native teachers are both qualified language teachers. One of them also has a degree in law, whereas the other one has several years of experience working as a legal language specialist translator. The native speaker instructor is a qualified law expert with substantial familiarity with teaching the subject matter belonging to his field of expertise to speakers of English as a second or foreign language.

## 6 Instruments

Data was collected with the help of three research instruments: a 25-item questionnaire, three semi-structured interviews and classroom observation. Research questions 1, 2, 3 and 4, which centred around the types, frequency, and practice-vs-expectation related aspects of students' speech events, as well as the different perception thereof by students and teachers, were primarily meant to be answered by means of the questionnaire. The categories that the bulk of the questionnaire was intended to seek information about were based on a survey devised by Ferris and Tagg (1996). The partial adoption of the aforementioned authors' categories in an ongoing research project conducted by the writer of the present paper focusing on speech events as practised and performed by students of English at the Faculty of Arts of Eötvös Loránd University pointed to a number of modifications that their adaptation to a Hungarian educational context necessitated. The conclusions drawn on the basis of the validation of that previous questionnaire were applied when drawing up the first version of the questionnaire used for the present study. The most fundamental changes cover clarification of certain terms (e.g. *debate*) and the splitting of confusing notions (questions posed by students concerning course content before, during and after classes were presented separately). The resultant eleven categories were as follows:

1. Class participation
2. Group work in class
3. Project work carried out in teams outside class, followed by an in-class report
4. Oral presentation
5. Students initiating and/or leading discussions on the topic of the class
6. Students participating in structured formal debate
7. Students doing interviews and/or having consultations in English with individuals whose field of expertise is germane to the content of the course

8. Note-taking during classes
9. Students asking questions about the subject matter of the course in English during classes
10. Students asking questions about the subject matter of the course in English outside the class
11. Students talking to the instructor in English in private about the content and the requirements of the course

The items in the questionnaire are organised into three sections (see Appendix) The first three items generated and finalised as a result of the piloting of the questionnaire with three randomly chosen students attending a language specialisation course and two members of the staff of the Foreign Languages Department at PPKE seek demographic data. Partly in line with the structure of the survey developed by Ferris and Tagg (1996), the remaining part of the questionnaire contains two sections probing into two dimensions of the eleven categories under examination: frequency and importance. The instructions preceding both sections were created in accordance with observations made by the respondents participating in the piloting phase. Questions in the section focusing on the frequency dimension (items 4-14) are presented with four response options: 'always', 'often', 'sometimes' and 'never'. For the questions concerned with the perception of importance (items 15-25), on the other hand, a five-point Likert-scale is employed ranging from 'very important' to 'not important at all'.

The second set of research tools, the interviews, which were conducted with three participating teachers, involved three broad topics as determined by research questions 3 and 5: challenges arising in connection with starting to teach in the language specialisation programme, the interviewee's expectations about students attending the courses in question and the interviewee's comments on the eleven categories presented in the questionnaire.

The third means of gathering data was classroom observation. As this instrument was meant to gain only ancillary information to complement and provide illustrations for the data collected by the other two research instruments, the observations were done without any extensively prepared or structured framework. The only criteria that were borne in mind when the data were recorded sprang from the focus formulated in research question 1: identification and description of any speech events that occurred during the classes.

## **7 Procedures of data collection and analysis**

Before data collection commenced, a meeting with the head of the Foreign Languages Department of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of PPKE was arranged. This was necessary to make sure that the research design of the current undertaking would be as closely accommodated to the local academic circumstances as possible. The introductory conversation centred around the most essential questions regarding the particulars of the execution of the programmes evaluated and supported by *Tempus Közalapítvány*, the professional background of the personnel involved and general information about the students signing up for the courses in question.

As the academic duties of the instructors teaching in the language specialisation put a premium on the amount of time available, the data collection procedure was launched shortly after the preliminary interview with the head of department. As pointed out before, the piloting of the questionnaire to be used as the major instrument in the process was carried out with the involvement of three students and two instructors participating in the relevant programme. The observations made by these respondents were subsequently considered, and the questionnaire was finalised accordingly. When the final version of the questionnaire was attained, as many as a hundred copies were handed over to the three participating teachers, who kindly volunteered to distribute the allotted number of copies to their students. Thanks to the teachers' genuine cooperativeness, the response rate was as high as 50 per cent of the whole population.

Responses in the questionnaire (except for the three introductory questions designed to confirm the demographic assumptions about the sample) were analysed statistically with the use of SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences). Respondents were numerically coded, and for each respondent the responses given for both the frequency and the importance dimension were tabulated. The numeric rendering of the responses for the latter dimension was straightforward, as the values assigned to each category in that section were numerically defined in the questionnaire itself (5, 4, 3, 2, 1). The answers supplied to the eleven questions in the frequency section had to be converted into non-parametric numeric values along the following lines: 'always' = 4, 'often' = 3, 'sometimes' = 2, 'never' = 1. Although one might argue against the comparability of the two scales saying that whereas the former is a five-point scale (for items 15-25), the latter utilises only four digits (for items 4-14), the reason for choosing to employ two slightly different scales is to be sought in conventions, as well as in the considerations dictated by common sense: while the concept of frequency is ordinarily captured in terms of 'always', 'often', 'sometimes', and 'never', a Likert-scale, which is based on non-parametric members, is most easily manageable in a Hungarian context via analogy to the five-grade academic assessment system. Admittedly, however, it has to be kept in mind that upon correlating values for the two dimensions, minor distortions may arise as a consequence of this discrepancy between the coding of the two sets of data. Taking cognisance of this caveat, 22 variables were entered into the software programme along with the numeric values pertaining to them. In order to set up a rank order of the most frequently occurring academic speech events in line with research questions 1 and 2, the mean was calculated for both dimensions (Variables 1-11 and 12-22) separately. To obtain a comparative description of the frequency and the importance dimension as envisaged by research question 3, the two-tailed Spearman correlation test was used.

As described above, the skeleton for the second research instrument, the semi-structured interview, was largely based on the eleven categories embraced in the questionnaire. The interviews were conducted with the three participating teachers separately in private. Each interview was recorded and transcribed. A detailed reading of the transcripts revealed a number of pertinent insights in response to research question 5. At the same time, to give some more grounded answers to research questions 3 and 4, when the results of the statistical analysis of the questionnaire data and the data obtained from the interviews became available, the two data bases were juxtaposed and the corresponding elements were triangulated.

As the scope of the data yielded by the application of the third research tool was limited due to time constraints during the data collection process, the data derived from that instrument would only be used to provide some illustration of the discussion predicated on the findings from

the analysis of the data acquired with the other two tools. This foreseeable restriction was an important factor in making the decision to observe only a three-hour long block of classes taught by one of the participating teachers. During the classes field notes were taken consistently with an eye to the occurring academic speech events.

## 8 Results and discussion

This section presents how each of the five research questions was answered drawing on the data and the relevant analytical steps with regard to each research instrument.

The first and the second research questions inquiring into the types and the frequency of the academic speech event types commonly practised in language specialisation classes at PPKE were primarily dealt with in terms of determining the mean of the values given by all student respondents to each of the eleven categories in the frequency section of the questionnaire. A summary of the means for the variables concerned is given in the second column of Table 1. (In the first column of Table 1 academic events are listed in a decreasing order of the correlation coefficients.)

Academic events	Means for frequency	Means for importance	Nonparametric correlations for frequency and importance
note-taking	3.380	4.320	0.685 (**)
private talk with instructor	2.040	3.530	0.527 (**)
group work	2.540	3.720	0.466 (**)
questions outside class	2.240	3.673	0.443 (**)
presentation	1.200	2.640	0.423 (**)
questions in class	3.340	4.693	0.358 (*)
debate	2.140	3.760	0.256
class participation	1.953	4.320	0.200
interview/consultation	1.100	2.680	0.149
project work	1.500	2.700	0.109
initiating/leading discussions	2.640	4.300	0.097

Table 1. An overview of the means for the frequency of academic event categories, the means for the importance of academic event categories and the nonparametric correlations for the frequency and importance of academic event categories (\* = significant at 0.005 level; \*\* = significant at 0.001 level)

As the second column of Table 1 shows, the five most frequently occurring academic events are ‘note-taking’, ‘students asking questions in class in English’, ‘students initiating/leading discussions’, ‘group work’ and ‘students asking questions in English outside class time’. All five of these were patently present during the observed classes. Moreover, the list closely accords with the three teachers’ comments on the academic events in question. They all



identified note-taking as a necessary skill for meaningful participation in any of their classes. 'Questions asked by students during class' was also mentioned among the most common events in the teacher interviews. The third item on the frequency list, 'students initiating/leading discussions', was ranked as the third most frequent feature by two of the teacher respondents, while it was associated with a relatively higher frequency by one teacher. The next item in order of statistical frequency, 'group work', was felt to be on a par with 'note-taking' and 'student questions in class' by one of the participating teachers, whereas it was relegated to the second row by another respondent, with the third interviewee not even alluding to it as being a frequent event. The fifth item in order of frequency from the second column of Table 1, 'questions asked by students outside class', was mentioned only by one of the three teachers interviewed. At the same time, it is also interesting to note that in the teachers' accounts three items were included among the three most frequent academic events which appear around the middle and towards the bottom of the statistical frequency list in Table 1: 'class participation', 'formal debate' and 'students talking to the instructor in private'.

In order to answer Research Question 3 regarding the relationship between the practice and the expectations in connection with the investigated academic events, it is necessary to examine the means for the second dimension of the questionnaire: importance. The values displayed in the third column of Table 1 calculated on the basis of the student questionnaire responses indicate that the five most important academic events from the point of view of the successful completion of the courses under examination are 'questions asked by students in class', 'note-taking' and 'class participation' (deemed to be of equal importance), 'students initiating/leading discussions' and 'formal debate'.

Regarding Research Questions 4 and 5, it is also worthwhile to look at the comments attached to these categories by the participating teachers as the respective areas emerged in the semi-structured interviews. In conjunction with students asking questions about the subject matter of the course during class, one interviewee noted that she was systematic in including regular question-answer exchanges in every single class to make sure that students are genuinely engaged in the discourse of the course.

As the brief interpretation of the data in the third column of Table 1 has already suggested, 'note-taking' and 'class participation' were perceived as equally important by student respondents. This is fully in harmony with Ferris and Tagg's (1996) decision to treat note-taking, a seemingly non-communicative feature in the context of speech events, as an indispensable prerequisite for effective communication in an academic setting. This link was emphasised by one of the participating teachers who construed note-taking as a process fostering comprehension practice, which he viewed as a pivotal aspect for an instructor operating in an EFL environment. In his discussion of class participation he stressed the importance of activating students' subject matter related experience by drawing on their L1 background:

When a new concept comes up in teaching, I always try to elicit anything that students may know about that particular issue from anything they've learned in their mother tongue. So prodding students to tell me their impressions, memories, associations about a given subject is not merely a warmer for me and the group. I do that in order to find out what reflexes they may have about the topic. And this is something that definitely gives me a kind of guidance as to how to present a new concept.

This approach to introducing new concepts was evident in one of the observed classes. Before exploring a term key to understanding the legislative structure of the European Union, the instructor used a wide array of techniques, ranging from mimicking through contextualisation to humming a folk song, to activate students' external knowledge or experience, even conniving at whispered negotiations of the term in Hungarian in small self-formed, impromptu cliques. On other occasions, showing awareness that the students were all EFL speakers, the teacher initiated a paraphrasing game. The same teacher offered the following reflection on the use of these 'self-discovery' techniques in the interview:

For me language is not only a medium; it's an objectivity [sic] in itself. I should never forget that they [i.e. students] have some knowledge of these issues in Hungarian. So making them start from Hungarian concepts they are familiar with and helping them make comparisons is very important.

As two of the teachers interviewed pointed out, students initiating and, in some cases, leading discussions is a recurring element of these courses. One of them also connected the necessity of the presence of this feature with the course syllabi:

Although I think that most of the 'official' materials we use have been well-structured and carefully selected, there's a shortcoming: most of them are meant to be primarily for reading, and whatever they read for the class from these books has to be activated somehow. So I always encourage my students to raise issues and start discussions in class. I think it works excellently.

'Formal debate', which was ranked as the fourth most important academic speech event, was approached in somewhat different ways by each of the three contributing teachers. Their comments on this particular feature implied that the different approaches may be rooted in different conceptualisations of the term 'debate'. Whereas one of the teachers seemed to regard debate as a relatively quick and practical introduction to a more thorough-going discussion, the aim of which is to 'engage the brain', the other two interviewees, besides acknowledging its merits in terms of revising learned lexis and exposing students to situations where they have to rely on their persuasive skills, drew attention to the time-consuming nature of teaching and practising formal debate skills. Whereas one teacher related that she had devised a less intricate debate structure harking back to elements of the sessions of the British House of Commons, the other interviewee proposed that a special course could be launched to acquaint students with the 'debating institution'.

If we go beyond the five statistically most important academic events, it cannot be overlooked that 'group work', which came only fifth on the list for importance, was identified as an organisational form of utmost priority by two of the teacher respondents. They highlighted group work as an outstanding opportunity for engaging students in natural conversations capitalising on their impression that in such cases younger students are pleased to be given the chance to discuss relevant questions with senior peers. (Students are admitted to language specialisation course irrespective of their years of study.)

After exploring the similarities and the differences between student and teacher respondents' perceptions of the frequency and the importance dimensions, as well as some of the challenges faced by instructors, let us now address the question of correlation between the aforementioned dimensions based on the questionnaire data. As explained earlier, the nonparametric Spearman two-tailed correlation test was employed to obtain a statistical

comparison of the frequency and the importance dimensions. The fourth column of Table 1 clearly reveals that the correlation was significant in six of the analysed categories: ‘group work’, ‘oral presentation’, ‘note-taking’, ‘in-class questions’, ‘questions outside class’ and ‘private talk with the instructor’. In other words, it may be stated that for more than half of the categories in focus practice seems to go hand-in-hand with the related expectations. This is particularly true in the case of some top-rated categories in both dimensions, namely ‘note-taking’ and ‘questions in class’, while it also turns out that in the case of less frequently occurring phenomena, like ‘private talk with the instructor’ and ‘oral presentation’, a similarly strong correlation may be discerned. With regard to the relatively low ranking of these two categories in both dimensions, the participating teachers’ respective remarks may furnish some explanation. Oral presentations, on the one hand, were described as time consuming and difficult-to-carry-out activities considering class size and the large number of topics to be covered during the semester. On the other hand, private conversation between individual students and the instructors was mentioned as a common event, with the added comment that in the majority of the cases the language of these private talks is usually Hungarian.

## 9 Conclusion

The research project reported on in this paper was carried out with the aim of determining the types, the frequency and the perceived importance of academic speech events at the language specialisation courses of the Faculty of Law and Political Sciences of PPKE, as well as juxtaposing practice and expectations in connection with the academic oral repertoire of these courses in the light of the data arising from the classroom observations and provided the participating teachers themselves. To match this complex set of objectives, three research tools were used in the data collection: a 25-item questionnaire based on academic speech event categories identified by Ferris and Tag (1996), semi-structured interviews centred on the notions of challenges, expectations as well as oral activities, and classroom observations. Whereas the questionnaire targeted student respondents, the other two instruments sought data from teachers involved in running the respective courses.

A statistical analysis of the questionnaire data demonstrated that based on students’ answers the most frequently occurring academic events were, in order, note-taking, questions asked by students in class, students initiating/leading discussions, group work, and questions asked by students outside class. This list was shown to largely coincide with the categories teachers identified as being among the most frequent ones. This finding may suggest that students and teachers are equally conscious of the types of speech events occurring at these courses. Furthermore, correlations between the frequency and importance dimensions of the analysed categories revealed a more than 50% match between students’ expectations vis-à-vis academic speech events and the actual practice. This relationship was further corroborated by the participating teachers’ discussion of the frequency and importance of the relevant academic events. Comments made by teachers and the observations made during classroom visits also implied a high degree of consciousness on the teachers’ part of the need to reconcile the objectives of content-based instruction with the diverse aspects of communicative EFL teaching. This was achieved through such means as engaging students in meaningful, real-life-like exchanges, activating their prior knowledge based on L1-related experience, and fostering a

convivial atmosphere to produce discourse which was both professionally and personally edifying.

Although, as indicated, the scope of the undertaking dealt with in the present paper had some limitations imposed by the amount of data collected and the time available for data collection, the findings presented above suggest that researching EFL academic oracy in a Hungarian context is an intriguing and rewarding field of inquiry in terms of promoting a more conscious approach to the oral needs of EFL university students both among the teachers and students concerned.

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## Appendix

### Kedves Hallgató!

Kérjük, az alábbi kérdőívben szereplő kérdéseket a Pázmány Péter Katolikus Egyetem Jogtudományi Karának angol szaknyelvi képzése keretében szerzett hallgatói tapasztalata alapján válaszolja meg. Az alábbi kérdőív célja a Kar Idegen Nyelvi Lektorátusa által biztosított, a Világ - Nyelv Program „Nyelv plusz szakma felsőfokon” alprogramja keretében meghirdetett tantervfejlesztési pályázat révén megvalósult kurzusokon előforduló szaknyelvi beszédesemények számbavétele, jellemzése, jelentőségük megállapítása és a hozzájuk kapcsolódó követelmények összehasonlítása. **A kérdőív névtelen. Ígérem, hogy az Ön által megadott információkat kutatási célon kívül másra nem használom.**

Köszönettel:

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### *KÉRDŐÍV*

1. Mióta tanul a PPKE Jogtudományi Karán?

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2. Mikor vette részt először az Idegen Nyelvi Lektorátus által szervezett szaknyelvi kurzuson?

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3. Milyen típusú szaknyelvi kurzusokon vett eddig részt, illetve vesz részt jelenleg? Karikázza be a megfelelő válasz(oka)t.

- a. Bevezetés az angol jogi szaknyelvbe
- b. Angol polgárjogi szaknyelv
- c. Angol EU jogi szaknyelv
- d. jogi szaknyelvi kurzus egyéb nyelven

Az alábbi állítások mindegyike után kérjük, jelezze, hogy az állítás mindig, gyakran, néha igaz, illetve soha nem igaz az Ön által látogatott szaknyelvi kurzusokra nézve. A megfelelő oszlopba tegyen pipát (√).

	mindig	gyakran	néha	soha
4. A kurzusleírásban szerepel, hogy az órai munka számít az értékelésben.				
5. A résztvevők óra közben kis csoportokban kérdéseket beszélnek meg, feladatokat oldanak meg.				
6. A résztvevők az órán kívül feladatokat oldanak meg közösen, melyekről később az órán beszámolnak.				
7. A résztvevők kiselőadást tartanak az órán.				
8. A résztvevők az óra folyamán az óra témájával kapcsolatban beszélgetést kezdeményeznek/vezetnek.				
9. A résztvevők az órán strukturált, formális vitában vesznek részt.				
10. A résztvevők az órán kívül interjút készítenek, illetve szakmai beszélgetést folytatnak a kurzus témája szempontjából releváns személyekkel angol nyelven.				
11. A hatékony órai jegyzetelés elengedhetetlen a kurzus sikeres elvégzése szempontjából.				
12. A résztvevők óra közben kérdéseket tesznek fel a kurzus témájával kapcsolatban angol nyelven.				
13. A résztvevők órán kívül kérdéseket tesznek fel a kurzus témájával kapcsolatban angol nyelven.				
14. A résztvevők az oktatóval négy szemközt beszélnek a kurzus témájáról, illetve követelményeiről angol nyelven.				

Az alábbiakban kérjük, jelezze, hogy a felsorolt jelenségeket mennyire tartja fontosnak egy szaknyelvi bevezető kurzus (bevezető k.), valamint egy EU jogi szaknyelvi-, illetve polgárjogi szaknyelvi kurzus sikeres elvégzése, illetve az Ön további szakmai fejlődése szempontjából. Minden egyes jelenség fontosságát egy 5-től 1-ig terjedő skála segítségével határozhatja meg. Ha Ön úgy ítéli meg, hogy az adott jelenség az említett szempontokból nagyon fontos, az 5-ös szám alatt található oszlopba tegyen pipát (√). Ha Ön szerint a kérdéses jelenség egyáltalán nem fontos, az 1-es szám alatti oszlopba tegyen pipát (√).

		5	4	3	2	1
15. A kurzusleírásban szerepel, hogy az órai munka számít az értékelésben.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
16. A résztvevők óra közben kis csoportokban kérdéseket beszélnek meg, feladatokat oldanak meg.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
17. A résztvevők az órán kívül feladatokat oldanak meg közösen, melyekről később az órán beszámolnak.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
18. A résztvevők kiselőadást tartanak az órán.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
19. A résztvevők az óra folyamán az óra témájával kapcsolatban beszélgetést kezdeményeznek/vezetnek.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
20. A résztvevők az órán strukturált, formális vitában vesznek részt.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
	EU/polg. j.					
22. A hatékony órai jegyzetelés elengedhetetlen a kurzus sikeres elvégzése szempontjából.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
23. A résztvevők óra közben kérdéseket tesznek fel a kurzus témájával kapcsolatban angol nyelven.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
24. A résztvevők órán kívül kérdéseket tesznek fel a kurzus témájával kapcsolatban angol nyelven.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					
25. A résztvevők az oktatóval négy szemközt beszélnek a kurzus témájáról, illetve követelményeiről angol nyelven.	bevezető k.					
	EU/polg. j.					