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Assessment of situated orality: The role of reflection and revision in appropriation and transformation of new knowledge

Abstract

In this study, we aim to investigate how students on a cross-disciplinary postgraduate course in research communication describe the formative peer feedback they have received on their oral presentations and what impact they report it has had on their performance. The study is based on a qualitative analysis of 36 transcribed video recordings from the course. Our findings show that the students, through their reflections and revisions, clearly demonstrate to have appropriated and, in some cases, also transformed the course content: they were able to select parts of the feedback relevant to their development and redefine some of the concepts to suit rhetorical situations. Surprisingly, feedback on deficits in student presentations resulted both in reflection and revision, while affirmatory feedback resulted, if at all, in reflection only. These results may help develop effective educational tools for assessment of oral performances in higher education.

Keywords: situated orality, revision, formative feedback, research communication, rhetoric

Introduction

The focus of this paper is the assessment of situated orality: oral performances in which both subject content and presentation form are assessed and feedbacked in an educational context. Here, we specifically investigate how postgraduate students engage in giving feedback on planned oral presentations to relate certain subject content to a particular audience.

In education, assessment, and formative assessment in particular, necessarily aims at facilitating learning. Black and Wiliam's (1998) review of 250 previous studies on assessment in different educational contexts and levels has so thoroughly established this convention that nowadays assessment practices within an educational system are considered to be indicative of this system's general quality. Moreover, research shows unequivocally that timely and detailed

formative assessment specifically is beneficial to learners (Black and Wiliam 1998; Hounsell et al. 2005; Arild 2006; Hattie and Timperley 2007; Hattie 2009; Burke and Pieterick 2010).

In higher education, assessment of oral presentations is often modelled on assessment of written texts. One general assertion is that oral presentations structure and organise content similarly to written texts produced in these educational contexts. On the Web, and in many handbooks on rhetoric, one can find examples of grading rubrics with lists of various criteria to be used while assessing oral presentations. These rubrics, however, are often based on and aligned with different organisational frames for written texts. Within writing studies, assessment based on such rubrics is called criterion-referenced assessment (e.g. Elbow 2000; Dysthe, Herzberg and Hoel 2011; Lok, McNaught, and Young 2016). However, criteria suitable for assessment of writing may not be adequate for assessment of situated orality. Importantly, oral rhetorical situations (see Bitzer 1968) are much more complex than written texts as body, voice and room add additional, situationally anchored dimensions to content and language (cf. Kjeldsen 2009). Therefore, all content in situated orality is communicated and conveyed through language, body, voice and room, and it is necessarily the sum of content, language, body, voice and room that is assessed.

In this paper, we aim to investigate how postgraduate students (henceforth students) describe the formative feedback they have received on their oral presentations and what impact they report it has had on their situated orality. This investigation is based on the data collected from the postgraduate course *Presenting Research Results to Different Groups* (MAH00214), a five-credit course offered at Malmö University since 2011. Our research questions are as follows:

- (1) In what way do students report to have understood the formative feedback?
- (2) In what way, if at all, do students report this feedback to have impacted their reflection and revision following the assessment situation?

Background

The course from which we have collected our data is, first and foremost, grounded in the socio-cultural view on learning (cf. Vygotsky 1978; Lea and Street 1998; Hyland 2004; Kindeberg 2008), where interaction leads to the development of communities of practice (Wenger, McDermott and Snyder 2002). Apart from acquiring new knowledge in this course, the students ideally develop both novel linguistic repertoires and registers and the ability to use these in other settings. Within the socio-cultural learning theories, such development is classified into two different stages of learning: appropriation and transformation respectively (Säljö 2000, 2013).

Moreover, the course is grounded in theoretical rhetoric. As a discipline, rhetoric also deals with the planned use of speech to stimulate appropriation of the relevant skills and the transformation of this knowledge to other contexts. Further, theoretical rhetoric provides a norm against which speakers are able to assess critically the impact of their rhetorical choices on their audience (Weiner 2006; Kjeldsen 2013). The socio-cultural view on learning, theoretical rhetoric and the rhetorical feedback model (see below) form our theoretical point of departure for the analysis of the collected empirical data.

As the postgraduate students participating in the course come from different disciplines, they have diverse experiences and understandings of situated orality. Nevertheless, through the learning activities—lectures, seminars, group discussions—during the course, the students acquire common understanding of how to plan, construct and deliver two oral presentations directed towards two different types of fictive audience: interested laypeople and academic peers. Therefore, the course activities can be seen as norming. Previous studies have demonstrated that such norming increases the quality of peer feedback and its agreement with instructor feedback (see Landry, Jacobs and Newton 2015; Suñol et al. 2016).

The course is offered periodically in English and in Swedish; the participants choose to what version of the course they apply depending on their personal preferences. It ends with two examinations where the students deliver and discuss their presentations. The aim of the second

examination is for the students to revise, clarify and improve their presentations based on the feedback on content and form they receive from peers and instructors.

The rhetorical working process, the rhetorical feedback model and emendatio

The students plan, construct, deliver and discuss their presentations with the six stages of the rhetorical working process (Hellspong 2011; Crowley and Hawhee 2012), henceforth RWP, as their point of departure. The RWP is often used as a simplified tool for structuring the oral (or written) process, and the speakers move, more or less, freely between the stages in preparation of their oral presentations. Although our account of the RWP here is necessarily simplistic, each of these stages is also a theoretical field within rhetoric; therefore, the disciplinary terms used are explained, not translated. The six stages are the following: (i) *intellectio*, understanding the rhetorical situation at hand; (ii) *inventio*, selecting content and arguments for conveying a particular idea; (iii) *dispositio*, structuring the content in a logical and effective way to convey one's idea in the rhetorical situation at hand; (iv) *elocutio*, selecting forms of expression that are linguistically and stylistically appropriate for the rhetorical situation at hand; (v) *memoria*, choosing what is needed to support one's own memory while presenting and what is needed to support the audience in their listening; and, finally, (vi) *actio/pronunciatio*, delivering the presentation with the help of one's voice and body (see, e.g., Andersen 1995; Hellspong 2011, Crowley and Hawhee 2012).

These different stages of the RWP are not linearly or hierarchically ordered (see Figure 1). Rather, they are recursive in that the first stage, *intellectio*, permeates the whole process. All the speaker's choices within the different stages are made with regard to the rhetorical situation at hand: the content is chosen in relation to the situation, the language is chosen in relation to the situation, and so on. The RWP then describes the stages that a speaker must take into account when preparing an oral presentation. After having delivered a presentation of a particular content, the speaker may receive some feedback.

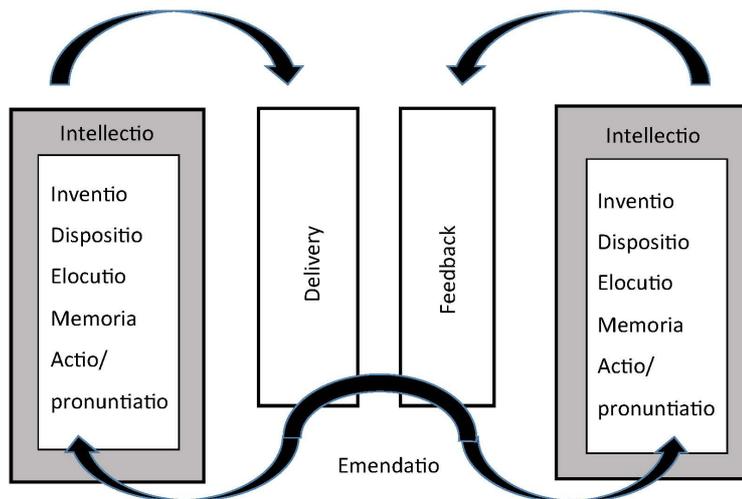


Figure 1. The Rhetorical Working Process and the Rhetorical Feedback Model

The feedback, given according to the model, may then result in post-presentation processing through active reflection and critical revision over what has been said, *emendatio* (cf. Kock 2013), which may also affect future presentations. *Emendatio* is, therefore, a purposeful, meaning-making process allowing understanding of rhetorical situations (cf. Mälkki 2011; Lycke and Handal 2012). Compared to a general pedagogical concept of praxis (cf. Bernstein 2011), *emendatio* is a rhetorical term for reflection and revision specifically adapted to situational orality. Moreover, it may be an effective educational tool that not only makes possible students' appropriation of new knowledge (cf. Kock 2013; Barnholdt Hansen 2016; Isager 2016) but results in their transformation of this knowledge to apply in novel rhetorical situations and, therefore, in their professional development.

Surprisingly, *emendatio* is seldom taken up in textbooks and handbooks used in educational contexts; instead, these textbooks focus on the planning, preparation and delivery stages of the RWP (see, e.g., Crowley and Hawhee 2012). Moreover, the term itself does not stem from the classical rhetoric (Kock 2013) but was added to their description of the RWP by, among others, Hellspong and Ledin (1997). The term initially related to a text-critical evaluation

of earlier versions of hand-written texts with a purpose of recreating a credible version of the lost original (Irvine 1994). In an educational context, however, emendatio occurs in response to feedback and, therefore, ensures productive learning (cf. Nicol, Thomson and Breslin 2014).

The RWP is used in the course repeatedly: i) during the preparation stages, ii) during the delivery, iii) during the subsequent feedback and iv) during the post-presentation processing. The preparation stages, the delivery of the oral presentation, the feedback and the post-presentation processing together form the rhetorical feedback model (see Figure 1). This allows the students first to purposefully attempt to construe their oral research ethos based on their understanding of the RWP more or less on their own while preparing the presentation. Once the presentation is delivered, the students receive feedback on some selected parts of their RWPs from their peers and instructors and process this feedback in relation to their understanding of the RWP. As a consequence, the students develop their oral research ethos both on their own and in collaboration with others.

Situational criterion-referenced feedback

In the course, the students are instructed to provide their peers with formative feedback. Formative feedback is, first and foremost, constructive in that it is focused on the future learning situations (Burke and Pieterick 2010). Here, this constructive formative feedback is adapted particularly for the assessment of situated orality and reflects the RWP; it is situational criterion-referenced feedback (cf. criterion-referenced assessment of writing above). The RWP is referenced in this feedback to make visible the relation between the preparation stage and the post-presentation processing (see Figure 1).

The feedback on the students' presentations is focused on the four RWP stages: inventio, dispositio, elocutio and actio/pronunciation. During the oral examinations, this choice was necessary for practical reasons of time. Although the students were also required to review their entire RWPs in written reflections they have submitted at the end of the course, these reflections

were excluded from the present study. These four stages were selected for feedback because they allow the students to focus their listening and feedback both on the more general, cognitive stages related to planning (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*) and on the more specific, observable stages related to delivery (*actio/pronunciatio*) of the RWP. Together, these stages illuminate a range of speaker decisions: from abstract decisions on structure, through stylistic choices to more concrete decisions, such as speaker placement in the room. The students receive the so-called direct feedback (Olsson Jers 2012) on each presentation from four peers who are assigned to listen and comment on one of the stages according to a set schedule. Direct feedback thus focuses on both content and form, and it is given, and received, directly after the oral presentation has been delivered. During both examinations at the end of the course, the students are also encouraged to engage in giving and receiving extended feedback in whole-group discussions of more general or disciplinary issues (see Olsson Jers 2012, 2015).

During both examinations, each student performs the presentations directed to interested laypeople and academic peers and provides and receives feedback as outlined above. Both examinations are video-recorded. After the first examination, the students may watch through their performances and the direct feedback they have received. About a week later, the students are examined again on the revised versions of their presentations. The second examination follows the structure of the first. This examination is also video-recorded. However, the additional element in the second examination is that the students, before presenting, are asked to summarise the feedback they have received and then list and motivate the changes they have made. This summary of student reflections and revisions is the focus of the present investigation since it is here taken to be the students' account of their *emendatio*-processes. In this study, to avoid affecting these *emendatio* accounts' authenticity, we have not assessed them specifically.

Material and method

In this study, we focused on the videos recorded during the second examination since it was there that the students' accounts of emendatio-processes could be located. This qualitative study was based on 36 randomly selected recordings from courses given in English and in Swedish: 18 recordings of presentations for laypeople and 18 recordings of presentations for academic specialists. The recorded students came from different disciplines: education, computer science, criminology, odontology and biochemistry. Most of the students in the Swedish version of the course were native speakers, while all of the students in the English version of the course were non-native speakers. The students were in different stages of their postgraduate studies; some had just started, while others were almost finished. This means that the student group was heterogeneous also with respect to their experience of and attitudes to presenting their research to different groups.

The data collected was subsequently transcribed using intelligent, or broad, orthographic transcription (Kvale and Brinkmann 2009): without indicating false starts, hesitation marks, intonation patterns, stress, pauses. All personal names and disciplinary terminology were omitted or changed in the transcriptions to preserve the students' anonymity. During the second examination, different students spent different time summarising their emendatio-processes: some spoke for just over a minute, while others took more time to describe their reflections and revisions. The transcribed material corresponded to roughly two and a half hours of speech; the average length of the summaries was about four minutes. All direct quotes originally in Swedish have been translated to English. All grammar and word choice errors in the English originals have also been corrected not to impede understanding of the examples. To further maintain the students' anonymity, we used the pronoun *she* to refer to all students irrespective of their gender.

Both the authors have conducted a close reading of the transcribed material. Initially, we have worked independently of each other to have later compared our observations; we have categorised, analysed and discussed our individual observations together. The analysis was

informed by the different theoretical fields stemming from the description of the RWP and the socio-cultural theories of learning. The main focus was on what the students claim to have changed in the revised versions of their presentations and why. The themes that emerged in the analysis were (i) student understanding of feedback, and (ii) impact of feedback, and (iii) the role of audience.

Results and discussion

After having categorised and analysed the students' emendatio-accounts, we concluded that similar formulations recur when the students summarise the perceived feedback and list the changes made both in the laypeople and in the specialist presentations both in English and Swedish versions of the course.

Student understanding of feedback

Although the students clearly demonstrate their understanding of the different RWP stages in the transcribed data, they tend to be selective, consciously or unconsciously, of what feedback they summarise. In addition, they tend, to a certain degree, to redefine some of the RWP stages.

Selecting

All students receive more or less equal amounts of feedback on the four RWP stages. These four stages, as mentioned earlier, are inventio, dispositio, elocutio and actio/pronunciatio. It is not equally easy to give feedback on these stages. This difficulty has previously been discussed, for example, in Olsson Jers (2010) for oral texts and in Burke and Pieterick (2010) for written texts. Inventio is not directly observable, while being able to pick up dispositio is conditioned on knowing what to look for. Elocutio and actio/pronunciatio are, on the other hand, more easily observed. Also, the first three stages focus on the more content-related and organisational aspects of situated orality, while actio/pronunciatio focuses on speaker physical characteristics that are

immediately accessible to the listener even without prior training in rhetoric. In a previous study, the feedback the post-graduate students receive in this course was, however, shown to be focused, specific and relevant to each RWP stage (see Olsson Jers 2015). Nevertheless, only one student summarises the feedback on all the four stages in her emendatio-account. Student A reports the following:

<p>The feedback was mainly related to <i>the overload of information</i>; it was too long for the time we had assigned [for the presentation]. And that made me <i>speak too fast</i>, and the people could not follow the story I tried to tell. I have presented <i>more of a chronological story than a logical story</i>, so I changed this. [...] So I have introduced different tools to help you to follow what I am talking about. I really liked that X was using a lot of transition words. I don't really remember if you have suggested this to me, but I just wanted to introduce <i>more transition words</i>. I think it helps a lot. I had also to shorten the introduction because I was actually talking about things that further on I was not developing, like I was not talking about them. So I introduced more transition words, less introduction and content.</p>	<p>INVENTIO</p> <p>ACTIO/ PRONUNCIATIO</p> <p>DISPOSITIO</p> <p>ELOCUTIO</p>
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All other students have consciously or unconsciously selected feedback on two or three RWP stages. Student B has, for example, only mentioned dispositio and elocutio:

<p>I focused on <i>promoting</i> my results, <i>demoting</i> the theoretical model and <i>adding more to clarify</i> the term x.</p>	<p>DISPOSITIO</p> <p>ELOCUTIO</p>
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Most frequently chosen feedback was on inventio; least frequently chosen feedback was on actio/pronunciatio.

In addition, that the students, even in a cross-disciplinary context, select feedback related to their own and others' disciplines (as in what arguments, in what order and expressed in what

manner) speaks in favour of making both the process and the model available to students. During the course, several students have also expressed their surprise at having found new angles for their research through constructing their presentations according to the RWP stages. Several of the students have also reported changes from a more general description of their research field to the reevaluation of the significance of their own research. Therefore, it is possible to discern a transition in students from trying to construe research ethos in general to striving to construe themselves as specialists in their field. In her emendatio-account, one of the students, for example, has been able to synthesise from the feedback on the four RWP stages and formulates an overarching meta-comment pertaining to intellectio with regard to her research project:

My presentation was quite *descriptive*, and perhaps too *simplistic*. So, I have cut out INTELLECTIO
a lot of this description and elevated *my own specialist contribution*. (Student C)

Many students, likewise, have chosen to make changes to dispositio, thereby effectively cutting the general introduction in favour of elevating their own research. That students clearly understand the RWP stages and can select what is relevant to them from the received feedback is indicative of their appropriation of the concepts (cf. Selander 2008).

Redefining

In several emendatio-accounts, the students redefine the stages slightly or include certain aspects of other stages into the stages they have received feedback on. For example, we find students relating comments on visual aid (traditionally part of memoria) to either dispositio or elocutio:

I had *too much info on the slides* and my aim was not well-structured. [...] So my DISPOSITIO/
VISUAL AID
actions regarding this were to cut down the text and *split the info into more slides*.

(Student D)

Other students connect visual aid to clarity of presentation:

This was black the last time, and we discussed the *colour choice*. I think it is kind of *effective to have it black*; it goes with the other lights in the room. But now I have changed it to white, and we can see how that works. (Student E)

ELOCUTIO/
VISUAL AID

This may demonstrate that, nowadays, visual aid is commonly reinterpreted as an indispensable part of oral presentations: speakers are used to making visual choices as much as they are used to making stylistic or linguistic choices (cf. Kjeldsen 2006). This conclusion is also supported by the fact that very few students and instructors choose to talk without the help of a powerpoint presentation or some similar visual aid (Lyngfelt 2000).

Furthermore, there are several cases where the students categorised changes to their manuscripts (traditionally also part of *memoria*) as belonging to *actio/pronunciatio*:

I have also scribbled instructions to myself in the manuscript [...] to try to vary my tone, pace, stress and so on a bit more. (Student F)

ACTIO/
PRONUNCIATIO
VISUAL AID

A number of students also use *inventio* to make *elocutio* more effective:

Then I have also taken away a couple of *terms* that I considered unnecessary to include to make the whole thing *easier to understand*. (Student G)

INVENTIO/
ELOCUTIO

This redefinition or inclusion of some aspects of the RWP stages into novel ones may not only be the result of the direct feedback received on the four stages; it may also be the result of the extended feedback in the whole-group discussions or own reflection stemming from the RWP. Moreover, it implies that the students have understood the interdependence between the RWP stages and that they not only have appropriated the RWP but also have started transforming it to

fit their understanding of novel rhetorical situations. In turn, this may indicate that teaching the RWP and the feedback model explicitly matters for the students' development of their oral research ethos.

Impact of feedback

Common to all student feedback in our study is that it is constructive and based on the rhetorical feedback model, i.e., the students give and receive situational criterion-based feedback. However, we find certain variation in our material as to how the students chose to formulate this feedback: some feedback is positive, while other feedback is negative. To avoid an everyday interpretation of the words *positive* and *negative*, we choose here to use the terms “affirmatory” and “deficit-focused” to denote the feedback confirming the students' choices and decisions, and the feedback pointing out situations when these choices and decisions were lacking respectively. In our transcribed material, we can discern a tendency for the affirmatory situational criterion-referenced feedback to be, if at all, reflected upon. The deficit-focused situational criterion-referenced feedback is, on the other hand, always reflected upon and often also is reported to have led to revisions.

Affirmatory situational criterion-referenced feedback

Researchers often consider affirmatory feedback, pointing out successful practices, to be most conducive for learning as it creates positive attitudes to learning in students (see Baumeister et al. 2001). Other researchers, however, argue that positive feedback may in certain situations be counter-productive (cf. Hattie and Temperley 2007; Hattie 2012) and does not lead directly to learning (Lipnevich and Smith 2009). In our data, we can discern a tendency for affirmatory feedback to possibly trigger some reflection, but no revision. For example, most students do not mention the affirmatory feedback in their emendatio-accounts. Some students mention having

received affirmatory feedback, but they claim not to have made any revisions based on that feedback.

So the feedback you gave me last time...was pretty nice feedback. I *haven't changed anything at all because everyone said it was nice.* (Student H)

INTELLECTIO

Other students are more explicit in their analysis of the affirmatory feedback and see it as a prompt to reproduce the successful practice.

The response on the *interaction with the audience* was fine, so I will just try to do that again. (Student I)

ACTIO/
PRONUNCIATIO

We also find that some students have interpreted the lack of deficit-focused feedback as affirmatory feedback.

About the language that I used, *I don't think anyone had a problem with the words I used...* So I guess it was fine. So I think, well, see, I can keep that because I have changed actually a lot [of other things]. (Student J)

ELOCUTIO

In the example above, the student, in addition to her reporting no revision of the linguistic features because these were not negatively commented on before, demonstrated her understanding of how revisions to one part may have a cumulative impact on the presentation as a whole: even those parts that were not actively revised will possibly be perceived differently in the context of the revisions undertaken elsewhere.

In contrast, Student K reported disagreeing with the affirmatory feedback received and chose to revise based on own understanding of the RWP.

The feedback, you said that purpose was clear... [I know] *I should talk to the winning concept of the treatment*, but I haven't got negative comments on this one, so I hope I don't ruin it now [after having made changes anyway]. (Student K)

INVENTIO

Of the 36 emendatio-accounts in the study, only this one diverged from the pattern outlined above: reflection, but no revision based on affirmative feedback.

Deficit-focused situational criterion-referenced feedback

In our data, students often report in their emendatio-accounts what deficit-focused feedback they have received and what revisions they have consequently made. In the example below, we can discern the student report on several stages of reflection on the deficit-focused feedback received and extensive revision. This emendatio-account also contains the student's motivation as to why after reflecting on and evaluating the feedback and trying out different revisions, she has, nevertheless, decided to disregard some of the feedback.

I will first tell you what I have changed. Unfortunately, last time I took *too long to get to the results*. But I have *tried several different ways to do it*. In the end, I have changed some things, but not much. X suggested I highlight the effect more and I have *done that by adding one more picture*. But more, no, *my presentation contained what I wanted to say*. (Student L)

INVENTIO

DISPOSITIO

Prompted by deficit-focused feedback, students often describe their revisions aimed at achieving a transition from more general to specialist representation of their research. We see this pattern to represent their efforts to construe and strengthen their research ethos. One of the examples above (repeated here) illustrates this.

My presentation was quite *descriptive*, and perhaps too *simplistic*. So, I have cut out a lot of this description and elevated *my own specialist contribution*. (Student C)

INVENTIO

Another example (repeated here) is when Student B strives to achieve clarity of expression in her professional discourse.

I focused on *promoting* my results, *demoting* the theoretical model and *adding more to clarify* the term x. (Student B)

ELOCUTIO

Yet another student is able to foresee what impact her revision may have. Student L reports on the feedback she received on inventio (“Both my presentations were too long”), but she decided to revise elocutio by amending memoria (“my manuscript”) and now expresses hope that actio/pronunciatio will be positively affected (“less formal and easier to follow”). In addition, the student reports on construing her research ethos also by linguistic means (“cut a couple of terms”). These revisions demonstrate that the student is moving freely between the different stages of the RWP and is able to utilise it as a tool for both understanding and evaluating the feedback and own revisions.

Both my presentations were a bit too long, so I have shortened them somewhat because when I looked at *my manuscript*, I have discovered expressions and formulations that cannot be said [as opposed to can be written]. And then I have cut them out. I hope now that my presentation will be *less formal and easier to follow*. I have also *cut a couple of terms* that I thought were unnecessary. I hope it will be easier to understand [for the audience]. (Student L)

INVENTIO

ELOCUTIO/

MEMORIA

ACTIO/

PRONUNCIATIO

Student M reports to have made revisions to the stages of the RWP that relate to delivery: elocutio and actio/pronunciatio (in form of revision of visual aid). Both changes are visible, specific and

concrete. The motivation for these revisions, however, stems rather from the student's understanding of the more general stages of the RWP related to planning: in particular, inventio, what in the given context may effectively communicate the intended message. This is further supported by the student's describing the revisions as experiments ("let's see if it works"). This is similar to Student L's emendatio-account.

I have made two [changes]. Firstly, *I wanted to make [the content] more concrete with respect to the argumentation*. And let's see if it works. Secondly, *I have made changes to my power point: font size and so*. (Student M)

INVENTIO
ELOCUTIO

We can, therefore, conclude that emendatio is more elaborate stemming from the deficit-focused feedback, which can then be seen as the type of feedback to have most impact for assessment of situated orality. Although constructive feedback, focusing deficits and pointing out more successful practices is sometimes implicated to cause student loss of motivation instead of effectively promoting successful revision (Shute 2008), in our study we can discern a clear tendency for the students to mention deficit-focused feedback more often than affirmatory feedback in their emendatio-accounts. In addition, students utilise this type of feedback more often to explicitly construe their research ethos. Their understanding of the RWP allows them not only to understand and evaluate the feedback but also to assess the potential impact of their revisions, which is an explicit sign of both appropriation and beginning transformation.

The role of audience

Within classical rhetoric, the focus lies on the speaker and the way the speaker is seen by the audience; the nature of public speaking is necessarily monologic, and, engaging in public speaking, therefore, becomes an individual project of establishing oneself as a credible speaker: it is speaker-centered (see Kennedy 2007). In the modern rhetoric, on the other hand, public speaking is dialogic, and the speaker's credibility is determined by the speaker's ability to gauge

the needs of the audience in the rhetorical situation: it is audience-centered (cf. Hernández-Campoy 2016).

Our data suggests that the students can be divided into two groups. Those students who in their emendatio-accounts show signs of appropriation only conceptualise their immediate audience of peers as a resource in the assessment situation. For example, Student N reports the feedback received from the peers as strongly normative: she uses the modal of recommendation *should* to describe the peers' suggestions.

I *should* have a shorter title. And make the explanations for my slides better and also simplify the language. And I have tried to do this. (Student N)

This group appear more passive recipients of the feedback and interpret the peer audience as the ones whose needs must be fulfilled in order to be perceived as better speakers. Weighed together with the students' understanding of feedback and the reported impact of this feedback in the previous sections, this division is indicative of the students' learning processes. Some students have understood and internalised the RWP; they are able to understand qualified, motivated feedback; they have learned how to construe their research ethos. Although these students have unequivocally appropriated the course content, they may still see presenting of their research as a speaker-centred activity.

On the other hand, students who also show signs of transformation in their accounts are clearly aware of the binary nature of their audience in the assessment situation: the peer audience is a resource to facilitate the dialogue with their fictive audiences. Student O, for example, utilises the feedback from the peers on her lay presentation to explicitly address the specific needs of her intended audience:

I have changed the beginning ... to make the consequences of my research results more clear for my *real audience*. I have simplified the language so it could be more

appropriate for my audience who are both the subject of my study and *the group*
whose trust I am trying to win. (Student O)

This group of students are, therefore, active and critical in their evaluation of the peer feedback in relation to their fictive audiences' needs. These students have also understood and internalised the RWP and are able to engage in qualitative rhetorical feedback. However, in addition to having learned how to construe their research ethos, they also exhibit an ability to forge a traditionally monologic situation of an oral presentation to become dialogic through their clear awareness of the audience in a rhetorical situation. These students have started to transform the course content to suit whatever future rhetorical situations may require and understand presenting their research as an audience-centred activity.

Summary and conclusions

In answering our research questions, we have demonstrated how the postgraduate students report to have understood the situational criterion-based feedback they received. From all the feedback given on the four stages (*inventio*, *dispositio*, *elocutio*, *actio/pronunciatio*) of the RWP, most students report selectively on some of the stages, which may indicate that they have appropriated the RWP and have gauged some of its stages as more important than others for how they may proceed construing their research ethos. Moreover, while reporting on the feedback received, many students have redefined some of the stages, which may indicate that they have been able not only to appropriate the RWP, but also started transforming it. Further, the students' *emendatio*-accounts were more elaborate—reporting both on reflection and revision—stemming from the deficit-focused feedback than stemming from the affirmatory feedback, which sometimes triggered reflection, but no revision. This reveals that some students have appropriated the RWP, while others have also started transforming it. We have further observed that how the students in our study construe their research ethos and how they perceive the role

of audience seems to be grounded in their understanding of public speaking as monologic or dialogic.

Reflection and revision are thus necessary for productive learning to occur, and emendatio in our context is crucial for long-term informed development of the students' oral research ethos. Emendatio is indeed a purposeful, meaning-making process anchored in collaborative learning activities (cf. Furberg and Arnseth 2009). This meaning-making process (see Dewey 1927; Selander 2008) results in an increased ability to adapt to the rhetorical situation, to make changes in the working process, to use new terminology, and to engage collaboratively in discussions of oral research ethos. In our data, we find evidence for all of the above.

Emendatio is not only inevitably intimately connected to formative assessment and feedback, but it can also be used as a quality test for the formative assessment and feedback given: the more elaborate emendatio is, the more impact the feedback may have had on subsequent student performance (cf. Zimbardi et al. 2017). In addition, emendatio manifests the socio-cultural concepts of appropriation and transformation, where the learners become autonomous and are able to adapt their oral presentations to novel rhetorical situations. Through this understanding of emendatio, the term provides an interface between rhetoric and the socio-cultural learning theories.

Assessing situated orality is necessarily complex because instructors must consider situated orality as the result of the students' RWP as a whole. Assessing also students' emendatio-accounts, instead of only looking at student deliveries of oral presentations, may provide instructors with explicit evidence of learning, which in turn adds further measure of objectivity to a complex assessment situation. In addition, having actively engaged in reflection and revision, students themselves become aware of their learning, which is a starting point for transformation of their knowledge into new situations. Based on the fact that the students' emendatio-accounts

contained explicit evidence of learning—both of appropriation and transformation—employing emendatio as a learning activity in educational situations aids assessment of situated orality.

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