

# TESL/ALT Brown Bag Colloquium Series



**Friday, March 13th, 2020**

**12:00-1:00pm**

**212 Ross Hall**

**Paired discussions with a human partner or ICE  
for assessing oral communication**

Dr. Gary J. Ockey

A challenge of large-scale oral communication assessments is to feasibly assess a broad construct that includes interactional competence. One possible approach to dealing with this challenge is to use a spoken dialog system with the computer acting as a peer to elicit a ratable speech sample. With this aim Interactional Competence Elicitor (ICE) was built and four trained human raters assessed the discourse garnered from 40 test takers that completed a paired oral task with both a human partner and ICE. The test takers were judged on their interactional competence, fluency, pronunciation, and grammar and vocabulary. Repeated-measures ANOVA indicated that fluency, pronunciation, and grammar and vocabulary were scored similarly across the two conditions, while interactional competence was scored substantially higher in the human condition. A g-study indicated that the computer partner, ICE, was more reliable in assessing interactional competence, and rater questionnaire and interview data suggested ICE provided more opportunities to demonstrate interactional competence and a more standardized assessment. Conversely, raters generally favored the human partner, in part because of its perceived naturalness.