

Examining the linguistic features of opinion in the Trinity Lancaster Corpus

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Expressing opinions is integral to our communication (Alba-Juez & Thompson, 2014; Hunston & Thompson, 2000), and has been considered as an essential skill for L2 learners to acquire. Despite that opinion-giving skills have been an indicator of L2 competence in widely-consulted language proficiency frameworks (i.e., the Common European Framework for Reference, Council of Europe, 2011; the ACTFL oral proficiency guidelines, American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 2012) as well as standardised language proficiency tests (i.e., International English Language Testing System, or IELTS, IELTS, 2018; Graded Examinations in Spoken English, or GESE, Trinity College London, 2020; and Test of English as a Foreign Language, or TOEFL, ETS, 2018), relatively little attention has been paid to whether and how the actual opinion-giving of L2 speakers varies depending on their proficiency level in L2. This study i) describes the linguistic features that occur in the language used by L2 English speakers for expressing opinion and ii) evaluates the effect of L2 proficiency on the choice of these linguistic means. The data for this study is collected from the Trinity Lancaster Corpus (TLC), which is a 4.2-million-word collection of transcribed spoken L2 English (Gablasova, Brezina, & McEnery, 2019). The samples were elicited by means of Oral Proficiency Interview (OPI) between a test-taker, an L2 speaker of English, and a test examiner, an L1 English speaker. The findings of the study inform L2 assessment and teaching when assessing the opinion-giving skills.