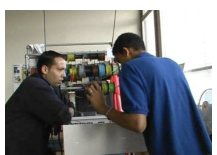
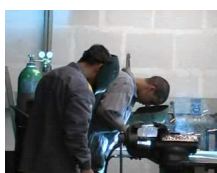




**UNIVERSITÉ
DE GENÈVE**



Researching workplace
learning from a linguistic
perspective

**Empirical evidence from
the Swiss initial VET system**

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The Swiss VET context

- Apprenticeship in the Swiss VET system (OPET, 2008)
 - Importance of initial VET programs in the Swiss education system (65%)
 - Predominance of the "dual" apprenticeship model (80%)
- Current issues and challenges
 - Difficulty in accessing apprenticeship in a "market-driven" VET system (Dubs, 2006; Gonnon, 2005; Stalder & Nägele, 2009)
 - More than 20% of all young people do not gain direct entry to upper secondary education
 - Young people from migrant backgrounds are typically enrolled in "bridging courses" preparing for apprenticeship
 - The high level of non-completions, dropouts and changes (Stalder, 2008; Lamamra & Masdonati, 2009)
 - 20%-40% of apprentices do not finish their apprenticeship within the stated terms of the contract
 - Relational problems in the workplace and insufficient training conditions are seen as main causes leading to attrition



Apprenticeship in the Australian context



- Accessing apprenticeship & traineeship programs
 - Assessing the impact of the economic downturn on apprenticeships and traineeships (Karmel & Misko, 2009)
 - A decline of around 20% in trade commencements is expected
- Non-completion in apprenticeship & traineeship programs
 - Non-completion rates are estimated between 24% - 60% (Grey et al. 1999; Ray et al. 2000; Snell & Hart, 2008)
 - Various reasons for non-completion and dissatisfaction are being proposed (Cully & Curtain, 2001; Callan, 2000; Snell & Hart, 2008)
 - The importance of personal and work-related factors
 - The high level of dissatisfaction regarding training conditions
 - Relational problems in the workplace



SCHWEIZERISCHER NATIONALFONDS
ZUR FÖRDERUNG DER WISSENSCHAFTLICHEN FORSCHUNG

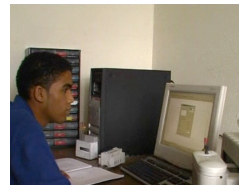
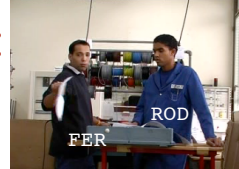
Researching training and learning in practice

- Understanding the specificities of workplace learning
 - The cognitive and social dimensions of workplace learning (Lave & Wenger, 1991)
 - The dualities of workplace learning (Billett, 2009)
 - The role of direct and indirect guidance (Billett, 2001)
- Applying a sociolinguistic lens on workplace learning
 - Conversation analysis (Sacks, Schegloff & Jefferson, 1978)
 - Interactional sociolinguistics (Gumperz, 1982)
 - Multimodal discourse analysis (Kress et al., 2001; LeVine & Scollon, 2004)
- Collecting empirical evidence of naturally occurring training practices
 - 150 hours video recordings
 - Three different occupations: car mechanics, automation, electrical assembly
 - 1 vocational school, 2 training centres and 7 training companies in the Geneva area



Joining the workplace: A case study

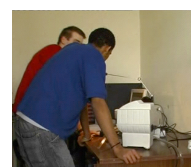
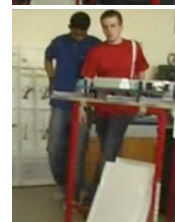
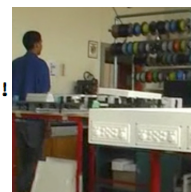
- The apprentice observed : ROD
 - 1st year automation specialist
 - Migration from Cape Verde
- The training company
 - Construction of electric boards for the building industry
- The training environment
 - The work supervisor : FER
 - Direct immersion into work
- A problematic immersion into the workplace
- Addressed issues
 - What sorts of difficulties did ROD experience when interacting with his trainer and colleagues?
 - In what respect were these difficulties related to language use and participation in interaction?



Engraving plastic tags



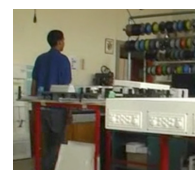
1. ROD: ((ROD leaves the computer room and goes back to the workshop))
2. ROD: I have a problem. It doesn't work.
3. FER: Of course it doesn't work! It can only function!
4. FER: You go JUL, I've had enough!
5. JUL: What's the problem now?
6. ROD: Are those the T-shirts?
7. JUL: Yes these are the T-shirts.
((moves towards the computer room))
8. JUL: And what's your problem then?
9. ROD: It doesn't work.
10. JUL: What's the problem? What doesn't work? What's-
11. ROD: I don't know it says this all the time.
((ROD and JUL stand in front of the screen))
13. JUL: But- ((starts typing on the keyboard))
14. It's like last time, you have too many layers.
You have to delete them, you see?
15. ROD: Oh I always forget that.
16. JUL: Yes oh yes I know er because this is the second time I've had to come here.
And why didn't you do it all at the same time?
17. And why didn't you do it all at the same time?
18. ROD: Because there are some EFI breakers here and I don't know how to deal with that.
19. JUL: Right but 8 - 9- 10 what's that?
20. ROD: 8 - 9 - 10 come before the EFI breakers.
21. JUL: Right I'll explain this to you another time.
((JUL leaves the computer room))



Observable difficulties

■ Reshaping participation and asking for assistance

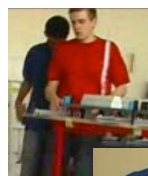
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■ Referring to the work environment

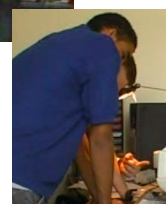
■ Explaining the "problem"

5. JUL: **What's the problem now?**
6. ROD: Are those the T-shirts?
7. JUL: Yes these are the T-shirts.
((moves towards the computer room))
8. JUL: **And what's your problem then?**
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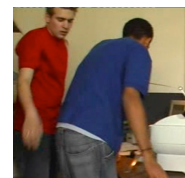
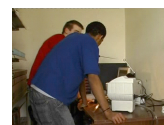
■ Justifying ways of doing

17. JUL: **And why didn't you do it all at the same time?**
18. ROD: Because there are some EFI breakers here and I don't know how to deal with that.
19. JUL: **Right but 8 - 9- 10 what's that?**
20. ROD: 8 - 9 - 10 come before the EFI breakers.



Observable difficulties

- Delivering instruction in the workplace
 - Retaining instruction
 - 14. JUL: **It's like last time, you have too many layers. You have to delete them, you see?**
 - 15. ROD: Oh I always forget that.
 - 16. JUL: Yes oh yes I know er because this is the second time I've had to come here.
 - Acting in substitution of the apprentice
 - Postponing instruction
 - 19. JUL: Right but 8 - 9- 10 what's that?
 - 20. ROD: 8 - 9 - 10 come before the EFI breakers.
 - 21. JUL: **Right I'll explain this to you another time.**
((JUL leaves the computer room))
- Doing relational work
 - Displaying negative attitudes towards the apprentice: "Of course it cannot work. It can only function!", "I've had enough", "What's the problem now?", "It's the second time I've had to come here!"



Implications and conclusions

- Theoretical implications
 - Accessing vocational knowledge in productive conditions
 - Developing identities in the workplace
- Methodological implications
 - The mediating role of language and discourse in the making of problematic pathways
 - New ways for investigating VET issues
- Practical implications
 - Language use as "content" and "resource" for vocational learning
 - Better training for vocational trainers