

## **Designing *Freier Vortrag* Lectures by 21<sup>st</sup> Century Skills**

**Kalvin Karuna**  
**Universita Pattimura**

**Henderika Serpara**  
**Universita Pattimura**

**Maria M. Nikijuluw**  
**Universita Pattimura**

**M. Kharis**  
**Universitas Negeri Malang**

*This research aims to describe the implementation of the Freier Vortrag course as a course that trains students' abilities to present certain ideas systematically based on the results of critical thinking. The data obtained is the behavior shown by students during lectures, when presenting their work. The results of data analysis show that (a) students still experience difficulties, especially at the level of using the German language in presenting the results of their studies, and (b) students have not been able to think critically in the form of identifying problems, analyzing and processing data to solve problems, (c) students have not had the freedom to determine presentation topics according to their interests, (d) assessments of students have encouraged the need for the application of metacognitive strategies but are not trained during process takes place. The results of this study are used as the basis for improving and developing teaching materials for Freier Vortrag courses to improve oral language skills as well as critical thinking skills as part of 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills.*

*Keywords: Freier Vortrag, presentation, 21<sup>st</sup> skills, creative thinking, critical thinking*

### **INTRODUCTION**

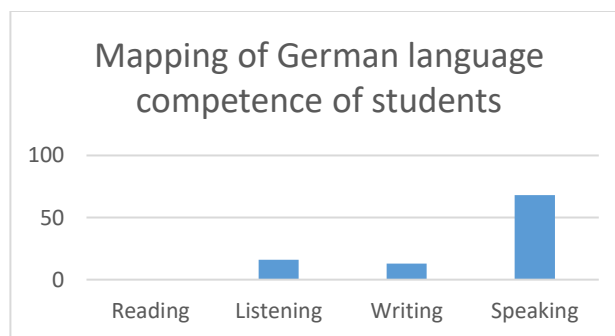
A good presentation does not only focus on the language used but also on the content of the presentation. The expansion of the use of foreign languages as described above is also a concern for the German Language Education study program, Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Universitas Pattimura Indonesia (Unpatti). This attention can be seen in the graduation profile that all graduates are required to achieve a minimum linguistic competence at the B1 level according to the *Gemeinsamer Europäischer Referenzrahmen für Sprache* (GER) standard, which is a system agreed upon by the European Union and functions to describe language teaching and learning and language competency assessment based on the criteria set out together. *GER* becomes a reference for curriculum

development and study materials for German language learning in the world. One form of the oral test at level B1 in the German Language Education study program FKIP Unpatti is a German presentation on a particular theme. To answer the linguistic targets above, the German Language Education study program, FKIP Unpatti, conducted a study of the graduation profile and analyzed study materials that could help achieve the linguistic level courses. So that besides basic courses in linguistics, there also laid some subject material spread into study courses that direct students to the achievement of linguistic competence at level B1, namely;

- a. Basic language courses, which include *Sprechfertigkeit* 1 – 4, *Schreibfertigkeit* 1 – 4, *Hörfertigkeit* 1 – 4, and *Lesefertigkeit* 1 – 4, each of which is taught from semesters 1 – 4.
- b. *Deutsch für Zertifikat (DfZ)* preparation of language skills at level B1, introduction to the exam format, which includes reading, listening, writing, and speaking competencies, deepening linguistic materials and their use in context (*Sprachliches Handeln*).
- c. *Freier Vortrag* means identifying and formulating problems and looking for alternative solutions, and then presenting them in German. In the *Freier Vortrag* course, there are several important focuses, namely productive German language skills and the ability to identify, analyze and solve problems in various contexts. Productive abilities are related to students' ability to design presentation materials and then communicate them orally to others in the German language. Besides that, the *Freier Vortrag* course not only teaches language but also trains students to think creatively and critically and develop the ability to collaborate and communicate, which is then presented systematically.

However, in reality, students still have not achieved linguistic competence at the B1-GER level significantly, as described by Karuna in the following chart:

**FIGURE 1**  
**LANGUAGE COMPETENCY USED IN THE COURSE**



(International Journal of Advanced Science and Technology, vol. 29. No. 5s, (2020) pp. 1447 -1456).

The graph above shows that the students' language skills at the B1-GER level are still not optimal, both in reading, listening, writing, and speaking skills. Especially for the ability to speak as a productive skill needs attention, especially if it is associated with presentation needs as described above. The results of Triyono's research ( <http://eprints.uny.ac.id/5076/1> ) concluded that students showed unpreparedness when presenting certain themes because students experienced difficulties both in terms of delivering content and language. Based on the results of the research above, it is necessary to conduct a study on the implementation of the *Freier Vortrag* course learning, focusing on the content and process of implementing the course. The results of this study can be used as the basis for improving and adjusting the content and process of *Freier Vortrag* lectures according to the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning.

Based on this background study, this research focuses on (a) the ability of students to present the results of their studies, both language and presentation content, and (b) the lecture process, especially in the formation of 4C (Critical thinking, Creative thinking, Collaboration, and Communication) in the form of identifying problems, analyzing problems, processing data to solve problems through the lecture process

and communicate them (c) freedom of students to explore their potential in the lecture process, and (d) form of assessment of students' abilities.

## THEORITICAL REVIEW

### Freier Vortrag

In the structure of the German education curriculum in several German-language study programs, the term *Freier Vortrag* is known as a course that generally trains students to study a problem, and then the results of the study are presented in German. The course is described as a course directed at mastering skills in using German at the B1 plus level, which includes the use of various strategies and communicative speech to present a topic from the problem being analyzed using self-level German. The lecture process shows the existence of a scientific process through problem analysis and presentation. Kuzbari & Ammar (2006: v, 1-2) suggest that *Freier Vortrag* is a scientific activity that requires the readiness of each referent to present complex information, even uninteresting ones, in an interesting way so that others can follow it. Therefore, many students use strategies in making presentations, as revealed by Kharis in his research (Kharis, 2021). The information can be presented in the form of pictures, graphs, diagrams, or descriptions.

Normatively, referents are people who are experts in their fields and present the material in the time provided. Referent readiness is also seen in his ability to explain matters related to critical questions presented by the audience, for example explaining in an interesting way with strong and logical arguments based on facts and data.

The description above contains several elements, namely the delivery of information with interesting methods and data-based arguments. Attractive and argumentative presentations are, of course, supported by critical thinking skills, creative thinking, and communication skills. These skills are in line with the needs of learning in the 21st century, namely *learning skills* known as the 4Cs, which include *Critical thinking, Creative thinking skills and innovation, Collaboration, and Communication skills*. Communicative skills in context *Freier Vortrag* courses are closely related to skills in using communication strategies and communicative utterances in German to convey information so that the information can be understood and even used by the audience or other people. The description above requires the existence of two important abilities, namely the ability to collect and data processing and the ability to communicate data or facts to others. In this case, a referent must be able to think critically and creatively and even collaborate with other parties to obtain the data and information needed.

The description above shows that *Freier Vortrag*, this study refers to courses that train students to examine certain problems and then present them using good German language and communication strategies so that they can benefit others. In addition, *Freier Vortrag's* lectures are in the phase of using language independently, so they are no longer tied to language learning in the form of vocabulary and grammatical exercises because they have been studied in the early phases of lectures according to the curriculum structure used.

In practice, the *Freier Vortrag* course must also have minimum standards, which include content, process, and assessment as regulated in PERMENDIKBUD Number 3 of 2020 concerning National Standards for Higher Education. The content standards refer to the depth and breadth of course content and process standards related to methods and techniques of presenting material that describe the characteristics of 21<sup>st</sup> century learning through critical, creative, collaborative thinking activities and communicating in German. At the same time, the assessment standard refers to the development of test material according to the objectives and content of learning and the determination of criteria and evaluation principles. There are two assessment criteria for this lecture, namely content, and language.

### The Realism of 21<sup>st</sup>-Century Skills

21<sup>st</sup>-century skills have become one of the important discussion themes in the educational environment in line with the increasing demands for proficiency and skills in the working world. In general, 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills are divided into three major skills. Each skill has sub-sections. These parts are integrated with each other because they support each other. The first skill is learning skills which are described as mental

processes needed by students to adapt and exist in a modern work environment. These skills consist of critical thinking, creative thinking, innovation, collaboration, and communication (4C). “Critical thinking” is often associated with reasoning, which describes the ability to think rationally (rational thought). Rational thinking is a process of analyzing facts and data to draw conclusions (Cottrell: 2005: 3). Conklin (2012: 12) then suggests several characteristics of thinkers in the 21<sup>st</sup> century, including rational thinking, having the ability to solve problems, being innovative and creative, and having the ability to communicate effectively. In relation to Cottrell and Conklin, as described above, Brookhart (2010: 5–7) equates critical thinking with higher-order thinking skills and problem-solving. The second is Literacy skills. One of the elements of literacy skills is reading literacy which is defined by PISA (2020: 10) as the ability to understand written information and then use and reflect on that understanding which enables it to participate in society. This understanding gives a signal that the information understood must be useful for both individuals and the community. Therefore, one of the factors that need attention in developing literacy skills is the reader’s ability to identify facts, publishers, and the technology used and able to distinguish reliable sources of information so that they can distinguish between factual information and false information (hoax). These skills include information, media, and technology (IMT). There are 4 steps of the “Critical Thinking Map,” namely (1) examining ideas; testing and ensuring the truth of the ideas submitted, (2) responding to the ideas submitted, (3) drawing conclusions, and (4) reflecting to ensure the ideas or information read relevant to current issues (Sejnost and Thiese, 2010: 65). The third is life skills which are described as elements encountered in everyday contexts, namely flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills (FLIPS), Media and Technology (IMT). There are 4 steps of the “Critical Thinking Map,” namely (1) examining ideas; testing and ensuring the truth of the ideas submitted, (2) responding to the ideas submitted, (3) drawing conclusions, and (4) reflecting to ensure the ideas or information are relevant to current issues (Sejnost and Thiese, 2010: 65). The third is life skills which are described as elements encountered in everyday contexts, namely flexibility, leadership, initiative, productivity, and social skills (FLIPS).

Operationally, the 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills can be described in more detail that the ability to think creatively can be identified, including the ability to create new ideas that are original, develop, implement and communicate new ideas to others in an effective way so that they are easily understood and to be applied. In addition, collaborate with others through cooperation and accommodating to the opinions or input of others. In learning, especially the *Freier Vortrag* course needs to be accommodated skills as described above, including giving students the freedom to determine topics according to interests, identifying problems related to the chosen topic, reviewing facts and data critically, rationally, drawing conclusions, solving problems and communicating them effectively to others using good and correct German, so that the learning undertaken is beneficial for students as well as for others.

## **METHOD**

This research is an initial study in order to improve the quality of lectures, especially the *Freier Vortrag* course, by adjusting the equipment, materials, and lecture methods to the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning. The participants of this research were 15 students who took the *Freier Vortrag* course. Primary data was obtained from observations during eight face-to-face learning meetings. Observations include the behavior shown by students at the time of presentation. Secondary data was obtained through lecture document analysis (RPS) to ascertain whether the content, learning process, and assessment had encouraged students to be active, creative, and think critically by using good and correct German. The data were analyzed by using a description technique, namely describing the findings based on the observations made.

## **FINDINGS**

This research is an initial study aimed at obtaining an overview of the implementation of the *Freier Vortrag* lecture. The results of this study are used as the basis for improving the implementation of the *Freier Vortrag* course in terms of content, process, and assessment.

In accordance with the data collection technique used, the data collection begins with an analysis of the *Freier Vortrag* lecture device, which includes the syllabus, lesson plans, and study materials. The results of the analysis show the following things;

- a. The syllabus and RPS for the *Freier Vortrag* course contain the minimum RPS elements which include course descriptions and achievements (CPMK), Lecture Materials, Indicators, learning experiences, evaluations and time allocation.
- b. The students' linguistic abilities in presenting the results of their studies have not reached the expected level (B1-plus).
- c. Lecture material is more focused on presentation procedures
- d. Linguistic material, vocabulary, and grammar have not received attention. Lecturers are more focused on improving the substance of the presentation, while improvements to the language used by students receive a very small portion.
- e. Lecturers often determine the theme of the presentation so as to limit the freedom of students in choosing a theme according to their interests.
- f. Learning objectives are more focused on results but ignore the process. In lectures, students are more focused on presentation material, while the stages or processes of preparation do not receive attention, for example analyzing and defining presentation problems, determining solutions to formulate problems, searching for, processing data, and then presenting them systematically with logical arguments.
- g. The assessment process contains steps for using metacognitive strategies but is not systematically trained in the lecture processes.

In accordance with the purpose of this study, the above findings provide clarity that the *Freier Vortrag* lectures have not been planned and carried out properly, both in terms of content, process, and assessment. Therefore, it is necessary to carry out further studies as a form of improvement and adjustment to the learning needs of the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

## DISCUSSION

In general, the findings of this study are summarized as follows: the *Freier Vortrag* course has been completed with a syllabus, and RPS shows that there is good preparation. However, the preparation must be supported by content and processes that are relevant to the needs of students. The course content is still not comprehensive. The linguistic and non-linguistic material has not been balanced, and the lecture process has not encouraged students to think critically.

Students taking the *Freier Vortrag* course have been in semester 6 (six) and have passed the language skills course and other supporting courses. Therefore, the teaching team is of the view that the *Freier Vortrag* course activities are already in the Anwendungsphase (the language use phase), so there is no need to return to the Aufnahmephase or Festigungsphase (language acquisition/learning phase and the strengthening exercise phase). This view is the basis for theoretically reducing linguistic material. This means that the *Freier Vortrag* lectures no longer make language learning a focus because they are considered to have been passed by students through linguistic courses during semester one to semester four, as well as other relevant subjects. The finding that the student's language competence has not been supported in presenting certain materials or themes is a warning to the linguistic lectures that have been taken by students in the previous semesters. The findings mentioned above are indicators that the linguistic courses taken by students in previous semesters are not sufficient to support students in making presentations or using language freely.

This finding encourages the need to improve the content of linguistic courses, both at the initial stage and at the application stage, such as in the *Freier Vortrag* course. Especially for *Freier Vortrag* lectures, it is necessary to redefine the lecture process by balancing content, process, and assessment. In this case, lectures are directed at the process of identifying, formulating problems, determining solutions, collecting and processing data, and presenting them using good German. In this process, students are trained to apply 4C according to the demands of 21<sup>st</sup>-century learning, namely thinking creatively, critically, working

collaboratively (Beno et al. 1, 2020), and then being able to communicate their products in German at a scientific level. In addition, it is necessary to balance the material between the presentation theme and linguistic content. The addition of a special time allocation to deepen and improve students' language skills. The addition is based on the fact that student's language skills, which are still between levels A2 and B1, have not been able to support the implementation of presentations at the scientific level. Therefore, apart from the *Freier Vortrag* course, other linguistic courses also need to make changes in terms of content, process, and assessment so as to be able to prepare students to be active and productive, especially during presentations.

## CONCLUSION

In general, it can be concluded that the implementation of *Freier Vortrag* lectures at the German Language Education Study Program FKIP UNPATTI has met the administrative requirements. However, the feasibility of content, process, and assessment still need to be adjusted to development needs, especially the need for 21<sup>st</sup>-century skills. This conclusion is based on the findings of a semester lecture plan, but the lecture content is still focused on presentation procedures and ignores linguistic deepening. The lecture process has not encouraged the critical thinking process independently, so it affects student performance in the assessment phase. The ability of students to present the results of their studies has not been supported by good German language skills. Students' linguistic abilities in the phase of using language freely have not been supported by linguistic knowledge obtained in linguistic courses in previous semesters. This conclusion is based on the finding that students still make basic mistakes when making presentations, even though they have passed the previous language course as a requirement for attending *Freier Vortrag* lectures.

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