

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEWS  
RATING RATIONALE  
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Interview: #1  
Language: Urdu  
Interviewee: Emen  
Level: Advanced Mid

In the warm up, the tester asks the testee to tell about herself. This gives the tester an idea of the speaker's level and also lets her know what topics will interest the interviewee to bring them up later on during the conversation. The tester follows with another warm up question to learn more about the testee.

Since the testee speaks in connected sentences, it indicates to the tester that she has a higher level and the interviewer further checks her level with an Advanced level question to compare her stay in all three countries she mentioned. The testee answers the question in well constructed paragraphs with cohesion markers (*isliye, jaise*) and complex syntax (*bolte rahnaa chaahiye, dekhte rahe, jis tarah...to, aage jaake*). Then the tester probes her with an abstract question on religious issues in Pakistan. After 'milking' the topic, the tester then moves to another abstract and formal topic, the education system.

The testee is able to answer all these questions which are abstract in content and in the formal context but she lacks high level complex vocabulary, so her answers remain mostly at the Advanced level, using informal phraseology and she often resorts to English to answer them fully by employing code-mixing (i.e. by inserting English words or phrases in the Urdu syntactical structures, e.g. *itnii importance nahiiN detaa*).

The tester introduces another topic – joint family, and stimulates the discussion about its various aspects which demonstrates the testee's strength and ability to handle a variety of topics at the Advanced level. At the same time, the inability to handle Superior level probes becomes apparent as well, because the testee increasingly uses English vocabulary, which shows her breakdown at the Superior level, e.g. on the question about the use of second language.

Next, another abstract topic on the environment is introduced. The testee's answers are simplified and do not address the complexity of the subject due to her limited control of the Urdu vocabulary. The testee is fluent, speaks in extended discourse, but relies on the English language to keep the fluency (*bahut zyaadaa freedom de, agar main run kar rahii hotii, main control rakhtii*). The role-play is also a Superior level probe and the testee answers mostly at the Advanced Mid level -- she brings it down by personalizing her response based on her own experiences and views and by continuing to employ code mixing. During the wind-down stage, the interviewer purposefully brings the conversation down to the Intermediate level and asks about

the future plan, thus making the testee absolutely comfortable with a positive sense of accomplishment at the end of the interview.

To sum up, the testee meets all the criteria of Advanced level: she can handle most familiar and some unfamiliar topics in mostly informal and at times in formal setting. She narrates and describes in past, present, and future tenses by providing a full account. Narration and description are intertwined, events are logically sequenced and there is a solid control of aspect. In addition, she handles linguistic challenges presented by a complication or unexpected turn of events in a routine communicative situation with ease. The testee communicates easily and effectively in well constructed paragraphs, and at times in extended discourse, i.e. a chain of paragraphs. Her linguistic performance shows that she can handle some Superior level functions, too, however in order to do that she supports herself with the use of English. Therefore she is a strong Advanced level speaker. Strength is the criterion of a Mid level which means she is Advanced Mid.

Please make a note that the testee appears to be at the Superior level as she answers all questions with fluency (including accuracy, native intonation, high speech speed rate, pronunciation, etc.); she seems to perform the tasks, speaks with confidence in extended paragraphs and handles various abstract and hypothetical topics. However, as a heritage speaker of Urdu she has a broad range of vocabulary used in informal contexts but her formal Persio-Arabic vocabulary is limited. In other words, due to the lack of adequate high register vocabulary appropriate, her proficiency level remains Advanced Mid.