

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW
RATING RATIONALE
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Interview: #3
Language: Urdu
Interviewee: Sanjida
Level: Intermediate High

In the warm-up section, the interviewee appears confident and fluent with a fast speech rate, but her language production is mostly either at the sentence level or basic or skinny paragraphs. The interviewee's answers are short and at times connected, therefore in order to check the proficiency level, the interviewer asks a series of questions to learn about the interests of the interviewee. The interviewee's responses do give the impression that she is an Advanced level speaker as her speech is quite fluent, accurate, with clear pronunciation and no accent. Therefore, the interviewer proceeds to make Advanced level probes, e.g., what is interesting about Bangladesh ("*agar yahaan kaa aur Bangladesh kaa mukaablaa karnaa hai, to...*") or why she thought of becoming a lawyer ("*vakil banne ka khyaal kaise aayaa*"). The interviewee is able to respond to all these questions with connected sentences, in skeleton paragraphs and with some code mixing.

Then, the interviewer probes the testee's proficiency level with an abstract Advanced level question on the current political situation in Bangladesh and the U.S. ("*akhbaar paRhtii haiN? vahaan kii koi khabar bataaeNgii?*"). The interviewee lacks high-register vocabulary and complex syntax to handle adequately such a topic and her performance exhibits a breakdown because the answers are actually at the Intermediate level with increased use of English words and whole phrases ("*American citizens khush nahiiN haiN democratic politics se, isliye vo badalnaa chaahate haiN*").

The tester further probes with an abstract Advanced level question about the environment and pollution ("*aaloodagii*") and the interviewee demonstrates insufficient language skills to efficiently handle this topic as well. The tester reformulates the question by using different and easier vocabulary and the response is provided in a simple and basic paragraph. The interviewee's language production is characterized by grammatical errors mostly in terms of gender and number agreement 'we don't think about the results' ("*hamko khyaal nahiiN aate haiN kyaa result hoge*" – where '*khyaal*' is singular '*aate haiN*' is plural, also '*hoge*' is an incorrect plural form, the correct one is '*hoNge*'). The testee experiences difficulty in following certain high level vocabulary that the tester uses, e.g. 'political' ("*siyaasii*"), 'nature-system' ("*qudrat ka nizaam*"), etc. The interviewee asks a question using the passive voice, which a structure typical for higher registers and formal settings, as in 'what could be done?' ("*kyaa kiyaa jaa saktaa hai?*"), however the speaker responds by using simple grammar. The breakdown is identified in the

formulation of isolated sentences and in the increased code-mixing at the Intermediate level.

As long as familiar and informal topics are introduced, the interviewee's speech seems confident and at ease but when abstract and unfamiliar topics are introduced, she slows down and speaks mostly at the Intermediate High level. The interviewer double-checks the 'floor' of the interviewee if it is at the Advanced level or not, and therefore selects an orange card with an Advanced level role-play situation comprising a complication component. The interviewee answers with a number of gender agreement errors, e.g. 'the window broke' ("*khiRkii TuuT gyaa*" where 'window'-feminine singular + 'broke'-masculine singular). The tester then asks her a question to check her ability to use past tense that she is unable to employ properly the ergative construction, i.e. using the postposition *ne* with transitive verbs in the perfective form, e.g. 'I sent' ("*maiN bhejaa*"), 'I wrote' ("*maiN likhaa*"), 'I received' ("*maiN receive kiyaa*"), where the ergative postposition *-ne* is required because of the use of transitive verbs in the perfect tense, however it is consistently absent.

The testee is able to converse with ease and confidence when dealing with routine tasks and social situations required at the Intermediate level. She is an interactive conversational partner and asks and answers a variety of questions successfully on concrete level topics. Although the interviewee can narrate and describe, which are the hallmark functions of the Advanced level, she does not meet all the criteria for that level. In addition, she cannot efficiently and consistently handle unexpected situations, complications or unfamiliar topics. The testee is unable to function adequately in formal contexts and cannot handle non-personal and abstract content, such as worldly affairs, women's status, etc. She consistently makes grammatical errors and thus does not show control over basic grammar as Advanced level speakers do. The breakdown includes inability to speak in paragraphs consistently, reduction in breadth and appropriateness of vocabulary, increased errors in basic grammar (e.g., correct noun-verb agreement and use of ergativity) and difficulty in maintaining appropriate use of tense and aspect. Her paragraphs are also basic and lack elaborate structure, although she uses cohesion markers, e.g. 'then' ("*fir*"), 'after that' ("*iske baad*"), their number if limited. She seems to handle most Advanced level functions, such as narrate and describe, however, she demonstrates weak control of formal vocabulary required for dealing with topics of general interest, such as anthropology, feminism, etc. She does not fully and consistently meet all the criteria for Advanced level, therefore she seems to be a 'fallen angel', hence she is rated at the Intermediate High level.