

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW  
RATING RATIONALE

Susham Bedi, certified ACTFL Hindi Trainer

Interview :#2

Language: Urdu

Interviewee: Bushra

Level: Superior

In the warm-up stage, after the introduction the interviewer asks an open-ended question: "*apne baare meN bataayie*" which gives the interviewee a chance to provide detailed information about herself. Thus, the tester learns about her interests, in order to suggest new topics of conversation at a later stage during interview. The tester also can make a general assumption that the speaker is quite fluent. The interviewer then does not waste anytime and follows up with an Advanced level question about an incident that happened after coming to the U.S. The interviewee's response again offers full details about the new things happening in her life and extends the conversation by discussing the difference between the students in the U.S. and those in Pakistan.

Then, the interviewer right away checks further her proficiency level with an abstract question about the educational system ("*taliimii nizaam*") and then probes for the interviewee's opinion on an abstract issue -- the distance between a student and a teacher ("*taaliib*" and "*ustaad*") in each culture, which is followed by an open-ended language- and content-rich discussion.

The tester introduces another topic, literature, seeking to elicit the testee opinion and after getting the answer, probes further by asking for more details. Having found out that the speaker comfortably responds to all prompts, i.e. having established the floor, the tester then introduces a more complicated topic related to sociolinguistics. The speaker uses adequate, abstract and high-register vocabulary to discuss and support opinion at an impersonal level. The interviewer further probes the testee to provide more details and also suggests complications of the issues which are being discussed, such as the influence of English over Urdu and the consequent changes in the language. The interviewer then provokes the interviewee to hypothesize at the Superior level by asking: "If all languages died and only English was the living language, then..." And the interviewee is able to competently fulfill this task at an hypothetical level, which is essentially a Superior level task.

The role-play is then introduced seeking the interviewee's opinion and support of a specific position with arguments. Although the speaker lacks the specific knowledge of the subject, linguistically she can handle the task like an educated native speaker from a hypothetical perspective and in a formal context. She demonstrates an ability to speak in extended well developed paragraphs. In the wind-down the interviewer brings down the high level of language by asking the interviewee to tell about her

plans and what she will do after returning to Pakistan; thus making her feel at ease and comfortable at the end of the conversation.

In conclusion, the testee, consistently handles all the tasks at the Superior level and sustains a linguistic performance according to the assessment criteria for that level across all the topics and functions. She is able to discuss and argue for and against, support opinion with extended arguments and hypothesize about a variety of familiar and unfamiliar topics. She successfully sustains concrete and abstract, simple and complicated content on a wide range of topics of general interest and some special fields of interest in a variety of formal contexts. Her language is characterized by native fluency, i.e. it has no flaws; she uses a wide range of grammatical structures with no patterned errors and she consistently produces extended discourse. Therefore, she is rated at the Superior level.