

ORAL PROFICIENCY INTERVIEW
RATING RATIONALE
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Interview: #4
Language: Urdu
Interviewee: Shishir
Level: Intermediate Low

In the warm up, it becomes apparent that interviewee can speak at the basic sentence level. His sentences are short, his speech is slow and strained, and he frequently uses English words. His sentences are fractured, they are missing postpositions and have grammatical errors, such as gender agreement, e.g., 'I was 7 years old' ("*mai saat saal thii*" where 'I' is masculine singular and 'was' is feminine singular and where the postposition *kaa*, a necessary part of this construction, is missing. It is evident, however, that the interviewee produces more than memorized phrases, as he is able to create with the language 'my parents forced me to learn' ("*mere mammii paapaa force kare, siikhne ke liye*").

Therefore, the interviewer proceeds with level check and asks simple questions on very familiar topics. After the testee answers in short sentences, the tester probes with a question about the differences between California and New York ("*california and new york meN kyaa fark lagaa?*") The interviewee uses many English words in his response and as a result the tester asks for further details ("*jaise?*" "*kuch aur bataaye*"). In the answers, the Urdu words used are mostly simple verbs and almost no nouns or phrases, e. g., "it is farm life' ("*farm life hai*"). The interviewer introduces another familiar topic 'friends' ("*dost*") and then probes with 'how do you play cricket' ("*cricket kaise khelte haiN*"), which leads to a description, hence, this is an Advanced level probe. The testee uses some simple verbs ("*khelta hai*", "*rahtaa hai*"); as a heritage learner he uses code-mixing appropriately ("*throw kartaa hai*") and some connectors 'but' ("*lekin*"), 'because' ("*kyoNki*"). However, he is not able to perform this function, even after some clarifying follow-up questions.

The interviewer then introduces a new topic, Hindi films. The speaker, being a heritage student, answers in simple sentences using consistently the Urdu syntax and word order, using however, English words and phrases, e.g., 'one family in Pakistan, one in India' ("*ek family Pakistan meN ek India meN*"), or 'the man's best friend is from India' ("*aadmii kaa best friend India se hai*"), where he uses correctly postpositions and simple verbs in the present 'a fight happened' ("*jhagRaa hotaa hai*"), 'the man dies' ("*aadmii mar jaataa hai*"), and is able to communicate the gist of the story. The interviewer then directs the conversation towards a new topic, namely free time. He is able to answer, e.g., 'In New York there are also parks and I study there' ("*new york meN bahut paark bhii hai. ham udhar study kartaa hai.*"), where he uses the non-imposing first person plural 'we' for self-reference, thus demonstrating cultural sensitivity, but with grammatical inaccuracy – the verb is in the singular. Furthermore, being a heritage learner, he is able to use some frequent

yet quite complicated constructions, such as the use of the conjunctive participle, e.g. 'dies by falling' ("*girke maraa*" where), 'by taking a train will reach there' ("*train lekar vahaan pahuNchega*"), or cases of co-occurrence, as in 'got the death sentence' ("*death sentence mila*", where although using the English word 'sentence' instead of "sazaa", it is followed by the correct verb choice "*milnaa*" which is the co-occurring element of this phrase). Most of their sentences are skeletal, laboriously produced and fractured in terms of grammatical accuracy.

The interviewer then checks for his control of the past tense. The testee is familiar with the simple past 'used to participate' ("*participate kartaa thaa*"), but uses rarely and makes errors in the perfect tense, e.g. "*maiN high school jaaya*" ('I went to school'), where he uses the incorrect verb stem for the perfect form, and uses more English 'debate was one activity' ("*debate ek activity thaa*"). He is able to handle the role-play quite adequately by answering and asking questions well, e.g., 'Is there a food store, a temple and a mosque?' ("*khaane kii dukaan, mandir aur masjid hain?*"), 'what is the price of...?' ("*... kaa price kyaa hai?*").

Towards the end of the interview the tester checks for the future tense as well by asking about Thanksgiving plans ("*kyaa kareNge?*"). He used it only once in a self reference but used the 3rd person singular form ("*pahuNchega*"), the rest of sentences were in the present tense. It is apparent that he demonstrates conceptual familiarity, but he is not yet in control of this time frame either and prefers to speak in the present.

Although the interviewee formulates slowly strained responses, and using a number of English words and phrases, he shows that he can consistently create with the language, ask and answer questions and handle a basic survival situation in the target language. However, clearly, he is doing this at a very basic level. He manages to perform in informal contexts, and in terms of language content, he can converse about daily routine and very familiar topics, his accuracy level is low – he uses grammatically fractured and English loaded simple sentences, which are mostly skeletal and laboriously produced. Therefore, he is rated at the Intermediate level and since his oral performance barely manages to meet all Intermediate criteria, it is rated as an excellent example of Intermediate Low level.