



CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS: CRITERIA TO CHECK LEVEL OF SPEAKER

Sumera Baby

Director & Principal at Leads School System project of Lahore Leads University, Lahore Pakistan
Educator & trainer at NCHD, Member of "Save the Children" UK, former organizer at CCF (ILO) & Sudhar IT Alliance.
Email: sumeeranaveed123@gmail.com

Article history:	Abstract:
<p>Received: April 2th 2021 Accepted: April 17th 2021 Published: May 4th 2021</p>	<p>This audit is designed to calculate the methodology of assessment of speaking skills specifically. Assisting intention of this analysis is to set a scheme of study for learners by evaluating their speaking skills. In this regard, a particular language assessment technique, ACTFL was utilized to know speaking level of a speaker. ACTFL mechanism checks the level of the speaker, as either the speaker is in high advance level or on intermediate level of speaking. An interview was conducted with a student to check his level, interview questions were designed according to the standardized level of assessment warm-up session, level check, probation, and wind down session, and then uttered lines of participant were analyzed in line with ACTFL level. Findings of the study manifest that how a speaker has some levels to step up for next level. For evaluation of a speaker, specific strategies to ask questions are very prime through which coach can know that speaker is on standardized level of speaking or not. By checking level of the speaker, a teacher can decide that what type of steps should be taken ahead, if learner is novice with 0-1 bands, with low proficiency, with poor pronunciation and with low level of cohesion and coherence, he or she is not an exemplary declaimer at all, wherefore, there is need to change teaching techniques and time duration of learning.</p>

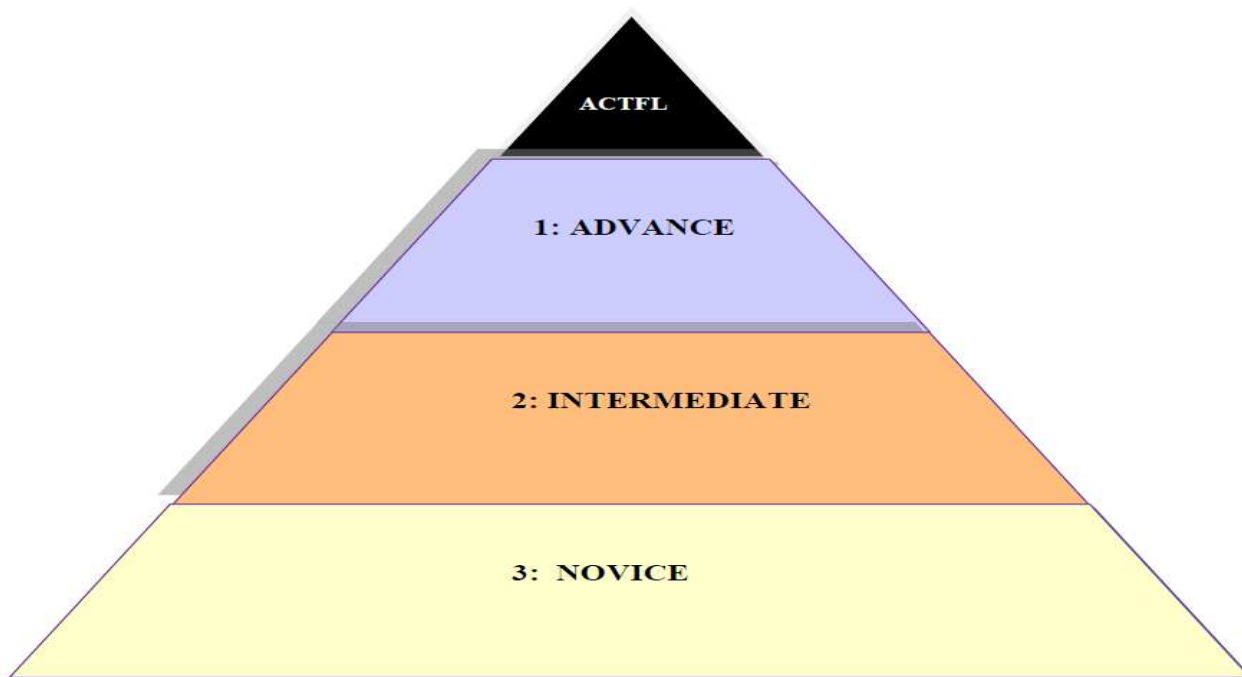
Keywords: speaking skills, high advance level or on intermediate level of speaking, speaker, specific strategies to ask questions, teaching techniques, language assessment technique

INTRODUCTION

Language proficiency can be scrutinized on discrete proportion, it encompasses speaking and listening on an equal level. In fact, four English language dexterities are embedded with each other to learn a language. A speaking skill analysis of a person who belongs to the educational sector was done; all extents were observed by taking an overview of his speaking skills by ACTFL mechanism of speaking appraisal. Observer intended to evaluate related speaker's English language proficiency speaking skill by taking an interview according to ACTFI proficiency test benchmark. By interviewing with the consent of the speaker, all assessment criteria were checked by using all steps of evaluation, as a warm-up session, level check, probation, and wind down session. Interview questions were devised by ACTFI assessment criteria. A further intention of the observer was to check major levels of proficiency that were distinguished superior, Advanced, Intermediate and Novice these criteria are used to check the ability of the speaker, on which criteria of speaker actually falls and what speaker can do or not, either the speakers can fulfill all requirements of good speakers, such as good intonation, stress, fluency, and pronunciation, what type of background knowledge he has? What type of cultural, social background he has? Either speaker can narrate his ideologies his view and values in his language or not.

SETTINGS:

It was one on one interview with a traditional approach to interviewing the speaker and observer alone; it was not conducted in a group. It was a chance to speak without distraction that determines to help speaker's genuine skills. Another technique of digital interview was used by recording the voice of the speaker to make a good evaluation of speaking skills. It was not a panel interview. The interview room was appropriate in size, the space was big enough to accommodate, it was conducted in a fine office with a booth set up with the distance between interviewer and interviewee, any possible interruptions were removed, and windows were covered.



There was a clock, chairs were arranged properly, a table was positioned between the interviewer and interviewee but there was a distance from the interviewer can observe the body language of the interviewee.

CONVERSATIONAL ANALYSIS

Pronunciation:

Pronunciation presents style and method through which a speaker learns to utter words accurately according to a native speaker. A specific mechanical procedure that a speaker uses to pronounce the word is with super segmental mechanism. A speaker also changes sound by using muscles of the mouth, so to use these muscles accurately to control the shape of the mouth and the flow of air, a speaker makes much practice and situation. As far as it is concerned with the related speaker, whose speaking skill was evaluated, not same as native speaker's but it was to some extent close to a native speaker, in the warm-up session, in greeting "Yes good never mind" was good in pronunciation but not according to the situation. He uses "never mind" word improperly.

His pronunciation was good but the improper selection of words is ineffective.

Speaker uses consonant blends to some extent, vowels blends; one thing that I found on the intermediate level was his linking power of words. The linking technique of words is actually a connection of words. For example

That _ Time

In the above words, two words "that " "time" first words end with |t| and second-word start with "t" here he does not uses blending of consonants in the right way.

[Over *come my*]

"Come" ends with |m| sound and "my" start with |m| sound

The same was the criteria of vowel linking sounds that the speaker ignored. Vowel blending was dropped on the intermediate level.

Speaker uses {probably} word in level check session, it was not much close to a native speaker, for example, pr-, pr-pro- stress should be on the first syllable, the first vowel is AH as in FATHER word sound's jaw does need to drop, for the pro,the second syllable should be unstressed but speaker has not unstressed the second syllable.

The [Actually] word was spoken in the warm-up session by the speaker; accurate pronunciation of this word is [ak-chuh-lee] but due to stress on the second syllable, the pronunciation was not proper. Another word was [agony] accurate pronunciation is [a-guh-nee] speaker did not pronounce [guh] sound properly, furthermore word is [entertained] was spoken by speaker in level check, accurate pronunciation is [en-tuh-teind] here also speaker's level is intermediate, because stress is not on a specific syllable.

Stress and Intonation

Stress is a very important factor in English speaking skills in which a speaker's emphasis is on words and sentences. With stress, the meaning of the words and sentences may change and intonation is the process through which the pitch of the speaker's voice goes up and down as they speak.

Non stressed words are considered to function words such as Determiners (e.g. a, some, a few) Auxiliary verb {e.g. doesn't, is, can, and was)

Prepositions {e.g. before, next, to, opposite) Conjunction (e.g. they, she, us)

Verbs: have and "be" even when used as main verbs.

Observer observed that sometimes speakers stressed on the function words as well, for example [they] [us] [Can] that should not be stressed, contrarily stress on main words was not proper on some words but the stress level on other functional words such as [have] [don't] [am] was advance Intermediate level. On the other hand stress on main verbs nouns and on adverbs was not up to the mark. Collectively speaker falls on intermediate level.

words	Standardized stress	Speakers level	Actfl criteria
Actually	Ak'-chuh-lee(adv)	Stress on 2 nd syllable	intermediate
agony	A'-guh-nee(noun)	Stress on 2 nd syllable	intermediate
acquaintance	Uh-'kwein-tns(noun)	Stress on right syl	advance
probably	Pro'-buh-blee(adverb)	Stress on 2 nd syl	intermediate
convenient	Ken-'vi-nient(adj)	Stress on right syl	advance
substandard	Suhb-stan'-dund(adj)	Stress on right syl	advance
history	'Hi-stuh-ree(n)	Stress on second syl	intermediate
words	Standardized stress	Speakers level	Actfl criteria
certainly	Suh-tuhn-lee	Stress on 1 st syllable	intermediate
paucity	Pa-si-ti(noun)	Stress on right syl	advance
fake	Fe-'ya-k	Stress on right syl	Intermediate(h)
electronic	Ilec-'tranik(adj)	Stress on right syl	advance
psychological	Syke-'ladzikal	Stress on 1 st syllable	intermediate

Speaker uses falling intonations on many occasions for example:" I'm studying" "every human being feels exhaustion" he uses a falling tone to start the conversation. Sometimes he uses raising intonation for example: when he says, "HIRAN MINAR" "electronic media is a reliable source". Overall thorough analysis conveys information that the speaker's level of intonation and stress on words and sentences is of intermediate level.

Usage of Vocabulary

Vocabulary is a body of words that are used in a specific language a range of artistic or stylistic forms, techniques, or movements according to a situation are called vocabulary. Incorrect usage of vocabulary leads towards broken language, speaker should be skilled in using compare and contrast sentences, cause and effect vocabulary, of compound words, adjective phrases, adverbial phrases in the right way. In this conversation, a speaker uses linking words, compound words, many adverbial phrases and words; his selection of words was good as presented in these tables. Speaker uses all categories of words, he uses phrases, clauses, compare and contrast words, all classes of words, for example, noun, verb, adverb, adjectives and linking words but his constant use of same words, like [as well] and [you know] phrases repeatedly do not give good expressions. Repetitive words do not present a good impact on the listener on a professional and formal level, his choice of diction was good but in some places, it was not up to the mark, that's why his collective result of vocabulary usage is of intermediate level.

Words	category	Purpose of usage	Actfl criteria
Good, psychological, amusing, reliable, electronic	adjective	To define noun	advance
Situated, is visit, provide, says. Knows, relax	verb	To define actions	Intermediate level
In, out of, that, because, for, by, as	preposition	To define place and position	Intermediate level
Probably, first, really, pretty much, certainly	adverb	To modify verb	Intermediate level

Sentence structure

Sentence structure is a combination of different words, contained subject, verb, object, and modifiers. It may consist of a group of a word like phrases clauses that convey meaning and message. Speaker uses compound sentences, compare and contrast sentence and complex sentences in his conversation skillfully, like compound sentences contain at least two independent clauses, a speaker should be skilled in sentence formation, as far as it is concerned with the related speaker, he uses compound sentences, simple sentences, and complex compound sentences as well, he uses some inferences sentences, cause and effect sentences, compare and contrast sentences. He uses them on intermediate and contrast levels because there are some structural gaps that he ignores. For example

Compare contrast sentences: (intermediate)	Speaker uses some compare and contrast sentences like "they Avoid displaying wrong news if we talk about social media....."
Cause and effect sentences: (intermediate)	"They will help us to come out of psychological pains because they provide information as well and amuse as well"
:Simple sentences: (advance)	"It is situated in my city" "they provide information" "I am studying these days" "my favorite TV show is drama"
Negative sentences:	No any particular negative sentence is used by speaker.
Complex sentences	"I feel tired and I overcome my agony" every country has its Own civilization and culture "we often compare our parks with other civilization and culture.
Exclamatory sentences	No any particular exclamatory sentence is found in Conversation.

- 1) Speaker wants to make a comparison of two modes but the use of "if" in comparison is inappropriate because in compare and contrast we use some specific words, for example: "on the other hand" and "contrarily" these sentences is looking conditional due to word "if"
- 2) In cause and effect sentences, he uses poor structure, when he says: "they will help us to come out of psychological pains because they provide information as well and amuse as well" this sentence is structurally wrong but it is conveying message and content. Furthermore, he utters another sentence "electronic media that is pretty much reliable, you know including television because it is monitored by PARAMA" this sentence is structurally improper. After all, he uses a sentence [you know].

- 3) Simple sentences used by the speaker are structurally right but somewhere these are used with "and" further and with other conjunction words, these are structurally wrong.

Grammatical usage

When grammar comes to speaking all go off the head, it takes too long to think of the grammar, speaker freezes at a moment but correct grammatical usage is very important specifically in the formal environment while taking professional interviews particularly. Grammar is the rules of a language governing the sounds, words, sentences, and other elements. As the speaker was observed on a grammatical level he uses grammar on the advanced and intermediate level but off and on he did some grammatical mistakes according to tenses and structure of the sentence, moreover he also makes mistakes of word choice and word arrangements.

For example: "he guide me" instead of saying 'guide' he should have to say guides there is no difference of TG level of the sentence, besides this on level check session speaker uses word "help" in the past tense, he used here first form amusing nerves were not according to grammatical rule [people uploads] in level check use so and but is not specified according to grammatical rules.

Sentences used by a speaker	Grammatical mistakes	Actfl criteria
People are inclined as well, that is a good thing and sign because one more thing, every country has its own civilization	(People are) "because one more thing"	intermediate
They will help us to come out of psychological pains because they provide information as well.	Not any specific mistake but the use of "as well" is grammatical wrong.	intermediate
"They avoid to displaying wrong news and fake news"	"To displaying"	intermediate
We often compare our parks with other civilizations, which is not a good thing, you know, as well as.....	Words(you know)(as well as) makes no sense	intermediate

Volume of voice

Volume is the perceived loudness of the speaker. Loudness is what the listeners actually perceive and it correlates with physical strength. A good speaker naturally uses a volume of voice without any amplification, by keeping in mind the distance, covered by the voice.

The volume of voice used by a speaker	Sentences used by a speaker with divergent volumes of voice	Actfl criteria
Low voice	When he was telling about	intermediate

	the check and balance of media, that is spreading false news	
The high pitch of voice	When the speaker was telling about the future condition of recreational modes	advance

Speaker's volume was clearly audible and he was using normal volume in normal conversation and theme but high volume in objective base discussion in probing session. So, it was a good throw of volume that a listener perceived with normal understanding.

Tone of voice

The tone is about the emotions speakers express in their speech to show anger, happiness, surprise, and pain by uttering words like "great really" and "ouch" in this interview when a speaker says. [it's good that]" what" to some extent was in high tone because he was excited by telling this in level check when he was asked about the recreational sources he mentioned "Drama" that was in high tone and "HIRAN MINAR" word in excitement, he used when he said that a " good question" that was in a medium tone he also raises his tone when he is emotional and passionate to tell the future condition of recreational sources in probing level.

When the speaker tells about social media (they avoid displaying wrong news and fake news, if we talk about social media) he uses a high pitch of a sound. Contrarily when he tells about the parks of our own city, criteria of other countries as well, he uses both high and low pitch tones.

Fluency

Fluency in a language is to speak with a flow, to give a message with a long pause and stop easily, to give a message to the listener in a flexible way. Fluency sounds natural, pauses, gap fillers, and connectors should be used according to the situation. Speaker under observation has good fluency on advanced levels because there were no long pauses, so the speaker's fluency level was good to some extent because the listener was able to understand the content and message that he wanted to convey, all technical field and discussion was comprehensible. He was making a regular interaction by using words and phrases (you know). His way was comfortable to convey the message though he was using the poor structure of a sentence in some places; on the other hand, he was using little linking words and elision in his conversation. His speech rate was good, he was uttering 30 words per minute if the observer uses utterance length and speaking rate.

Speaker uses repetition words, prolongations, blocks, and long pauses filler and starters to speak fluency. His fluency level was good that's why the result shows that he falls in advanced category of ACTFL evaluation criteria.

Coding symbols	frequency	Actfl criteria of evaluation
Repetition words	(you know) (as well as) 7 to 8 times	intermediate
blocks	No any specific	advance
Long pauses	No any specific	advance
filler	4 to 5 times	advance
starters	For every answer	advance

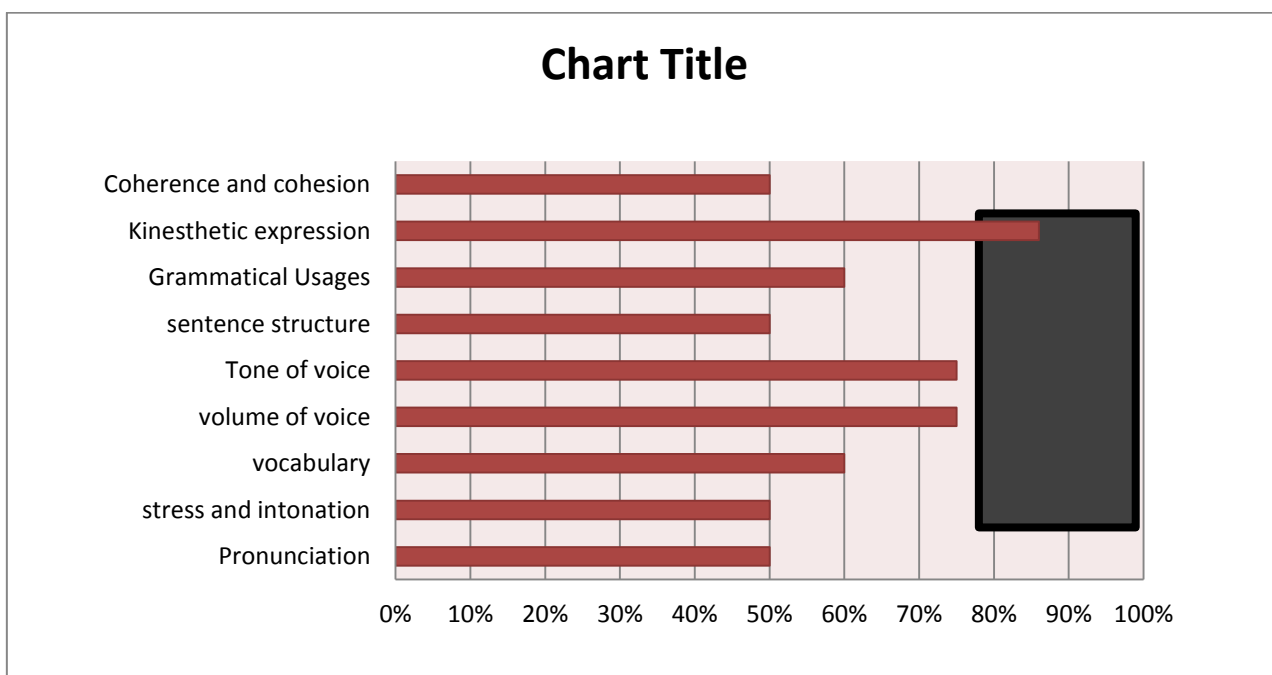
Kinesthetic expression

Kinesthetic expressions are expressions that a speaker uses when he speaks or presents as his body language, his facial expressions, have you ever seen a speaker with passive expressions? That looks ineffective because when a speaker uses hands moments, facial expressions while speaking, the listener becomes more attentive and feels attraction towards the speaker. The related speaker was good in facial expressions and body language, his eye contact with the observer was up to the mark and he understood every uttered word. His conceptual level and his content were equally comprehensible. When he was telling the condition of his countries parks and other entertainment modes, he was very energetic and expressive. When he utters the sentence "you know that's a really good question" and" actually you know our parks and cafeterias, in Lahore Gujranwala, in some cities, parks, and cafeterias developed much" in probing session, his facial expressions were according to his content and theme that he wants to convey

Cohesion in speaking skills

Cohesion is a way to combine thoughts according to the need of content. Cohesion in thoughts ideas and grammar enables the speakers to speak accurately; a speaker can convey his message through a cohesive tool to give a glue tool to his ideas. Speaker in this interview uses adding ideas linking words for example "as well as" "also" etc that was the source of linking his ideas, furthermore he also presents contrastive ideas, for example, "however" "whereas". In the given examples he does not use linking words, because of this demerit speaker's cohesive power was not much good. Word usage like, "however" "because" "also" "which is why" these words make speaking skills cohesive; speaker uses the word "because" to show the link between reason and its impact. So the speaker uses cohesive technique according to an intermediate-high level and on the advanced level in some places, collective data manifests that the speaker falls into an intermediate category of ACTFL criteria of evaluation. On quantitative level his pronunciation was 50%, his stressed and intonation level was 50%, vocabulary was 60%, volume of voice was 75% tone of voice 75% sentence structure was 50% grammatical usage 60%.

RESULT PRESENTATION THROUGH BAR GRAPH



Speaking proficiency components	Novice 0-1	Intermediate 3-5	Advance 5-6	Superior 6-7	Distinguished 7-8
pronunciation		4			
Stress and intonation		4			
Usage of vocabulary		5			
Volume of voice			6		
Tone of voice			6		
Sentence structure		3			
Grammatical usage		4			
Kinesthetic expression				7	
Coherence and cohesion		5			

(Appendix 1)

Interview questions

How's life?

I am Sumera let me know your name please.

Tell me about your family?

What does your father do?

Are you studying or doing a job?

You know, to have the same routine of studying and doing work as well makes a person dull? What do you do to keep a balance?

Which is your favorite TV show? How you get entertainment from it?

Which is your favorite recreational place and why?

What is your opinion about recreational modes like parks, electronic and print media, are they reliable sources?

Where you want to see the parks in your country? How much further improvement you want to see? What would be your role?

What is your opinion about social media entertainment categories?

What type it should be?

Appendix 2 Dialogue

A: How's life?

B: Yeah its good never mind.

A: I'm Sumeera. Let me know your name please? B: I'm Taki Shuzib.

A: Tell me about your family?

B: My father is a professor and mother is a sort of house wife. A: What your father do?

B: Yeah you know he has students and he called me as well. You know many parts of the life and very, you know that of the life, you know helped me to come out from my pain and tensions.

A: Okay.. You are right. Are you studying or doing job these days? B: I am studying these days.

A: You know, to have the same routine of studying and doing work as well makes a person dull? What do you do to keep a balance?

B: Yeah you know like every human being sometimes I feel exhausted as well, but I when I feel exhausted and overcome my Agony.

A: Okay! Good. Which is your favorite TV show? How you get entertainment from it?

B: Actually my favorite TV show is Thomas...Turkish drama serial Ertugrul Ghazi and entertained by each and amused by one more thing.....Tell you one more thing that's now a have well acquainted with a flourishing history of Islam, you know, this law was making progress and the pioneers of Islam as well.

A: Okay! You are just telling about Ertugrul Ghazi. You know it's giving entertainment to you?

B: Yes obviously.

A: Okay! Or information? B: Yeah both

A: Okay! What is your favorite recreation place and why?

B: Hiran Minar probably because it is situated in my city first and it's convenient for me to visit again and again. I'm well acquainted with the history of it, Hiran Minar as well. That's what that's really good.

A: Okay! In this time when everyone is under psychological constraints how recreational activities facilitate a person to get rid of all worries?

B: Yeah, you know that's a really good question that how they help. You know, they really help us to come out from psychological pains because they provide, you know, they provide one information as well and one more thing that they amuse us as well, you know psychologically relaxed and that amusing. Hmmm. Relax your nervous and so this is how you come out from psychological pain.

A: Yes, Hmmm. What is your opinion about recreational modes like parks, electronic and print media, are they reliable sources?

B: Yeah, Certainly they are but if I say electronic media, so that is pretty much reliable, you know including television first because it is monetarized by PEMRA and you know it has some restrictions as well. So that's why they avoid.....to restrict.... they avoid to display wrong news or fake news and but if I talk about social media because there is a paucity of monitoring there as well. So, that's why you know people aa aa upload many things like fake news and by making a blend of those, you know, right new and fake news making blend mixture Usually list with fake news.

A: Good Analysis, but you want to see the parks in your country? How much further improvement you want to see? What would be your role?

B: Actually, you know our populated area, you know like Lahore and Gujranwala, Rawalpindi and some of the cities were cities where parks have developed much, people are inclined there as well. So, that's what that's a good thing and so on because one more thing that every country has its own civilization. We often we often compare our parks in civilization with the first at the western culture and civilization. Which is not a good thing, you know as you know that as you mentioned earlier that everyone has his own civilization and culture. So, but they are developed as when people are inclined towards those as well, but we believe that places will get again cafeterias particularly in Pakistan, you know a adulterations is on its peak so that's why they sell substandard food as well. So that's why people do not rely much on that.

A: What is your opinion about social media entertainment categories?

B: Yeah, probably they are you know, but you just have to bound or limit of amusing. I just don't implement the teachings of those in your life, and if they are good then you will have to implement on yours.

A: So you are telling it is spreading false news as well?

B: yes they're. Particularly social media including Face book or Instagram you know because as I mentioned is a paucity of monitoring there.

A: What type it should be? Where you want to see social media?

B: Social media you know first of all you have to make some departments. Those monitor them and one more thing that teach them do not accept bribe. (laugh) first of all you know its culture in Pakistan. So that's why what should be you're your primary aim and now probably they are only good and but as I mentioned earlier Russia is nominating..I having 3000, up to 3000 channels. So that's why you know modes of entertainment, sport and everything will have to build channel. You know, those may spread real news and authentic news and one more thing that you have personally, but but we want to thank you A: Thank you, Thank you so much Tuki it was really better and good with you. Thanks for your participation was really very good.

(Appendix 3)

Interview consent letter

Project title: -----

Speaking assessment project administrators: _____ Project participants name: _____

A related interview is transparent and manifest without any personal benefits. The intention of this interview is just to pencil in an educational evaluation on the topic of speaking assessment and estimation, it may take sufficient time, you have the authority to stop it if you are not willing and comfortable to do that.

We gratefully want your agreement for this interview and full involvement in this project without any bias. This consent letter aims to understand the purpose of your involvement. An information sheet is being provided to you to sign to show your willingness.

We are to inform you that:

Your voice will be recorded.

Your interview will be used only for educational purpose

s.

The interview recording approach will be provided to the project participant and related evaluators.

It will not be used for any type of social media or commercial purposes.

Your interview will be evaluated and assessed based on language proficiency.

By signing this form I agree that I am intentionally and willingly taking part in this task but I have the right to quit if I don't feel it according to my level and thoughts.

It will be according to the above instructions.

I am doing this task without any financial benefit, I will do it voluntarily.

I have also the right to ask a question if I found any type of ambiguity.

Participant Name: _____

Participant's signature: _____

Date: _____

(Appendix 4)
Setting of room
Kinesthetic expressions of the speaker

