

Name of Test: Language Production Test Date: 9/27/18

Developer's name: Allison Smith Reviewer's name: Bethany Anderson

1. **Test Purpose:** What do you understand to be the purpose of this test? What specific competencies are being addressed?

Assessing speaking skills on the topic of physical/personality descriptions and family relationships

2. **Test Design:** How would you classify the techniques used in this test?

Text retelling, directed (situational) response, oral report

3. **Test Appeal:** What do you find appealing as a test taker? What do you find frustrating?

Appealing: Topics are interesting and relevant, techniques allow students some degree of flexibility and choice

Frustrating: The directed response section seems out of place—it doesn't exactly fit with the topic of this unit and the grammar is more advanced (future tense)

4. **Layout:** What do you find attractive or helpful about the layout of the test? How could it be improved?

Since this is a speaking test and as such it cannot be administered to all students at the same time, some thought should be given to the location and logistics of administration to avoid heightened anxiety, wasting students' time by making them wait around with nothing to do while their classmates are tested, etc. (This is definitely a challenge that I struggled with when writing my own assessment!)

5. **Language:** How would you evaluate the language used throughout the test in terms of natural usage, grammatical correctness, and mechanics (spelling and punctuation)? Can you suggest any corrections or improvements?

Good overall—one instance of awkward phrasing noted in comments

6. **Directions:** Are clear, simple directions provided for each section? Are the expectations transparent in terms of grading criteria? Are any items open to misinterpretation?

Clear overall but some improvements are suggested in comments

7. **Multiple choice items:** Are any of the distractors weak or misleading? Do you find any of the features that should be avoided?

N/A

8. **Scoring guidelines:** For *objectively* scored items, do you agree with the scoring key? Can you suggest other equally correct responses? For *subjectively* scored items, or items for which partial credit is possible, are scoring guidelines and rubrics clear and consistent with the purpose of the test?

Very good, precise rubrics! I have suggested some changes in comments but overall, I think it would be easy to score this test with the scoring guidelines and rubrics provided.

9. **Relevance:** Is the test *appropriate* to the students and purpose for which it is designed? Try to identify specific ways in which the test is well matched or possibly mismatched to the students or curriculum objectives.

In many ways, the test is appropriate to the student profile described; for example, describing physical characteristics and personality traits is relevant and interesting and appropriate for beginning students. Some tasks seemed too advanced (e.g. future tense in directed response) and some scoring criteria seemed too demanding for this level (as noted in comments).

10. **Validity:** Considering both the content and the scoring procedure, try to identify at least one feature of this test that fortifies its validity and one that weakens it.

Strong validity: The oral presentation allows students to demonstrate their speaking skills using familiar vocabulary and sentence constructions learned in the past two units. Clear expectations and parameters are provided while still allowing students the freedom to choose a topic that is interesting and motivating.

Weak validity: The directed response section does not seem to correspond to learning objectives for this unit.

11. **Reliability:** Similarly, identify aspects of the assessment that might strengthen or threaten the consistency of the results. [Again, try to identify at least one of each.]

Strong reliability: Clear and precise scoring rubrics are provided, especially for the oral presentation.

Weak reliability: The scoring guide for the story retelling section specifies length as a necessary component of each score, making it difficult to achieve a scoring outcome consistent with student's actual speaking skill level.

12. **Ethics:** Are you aware of any ethical issues that this test might raise?

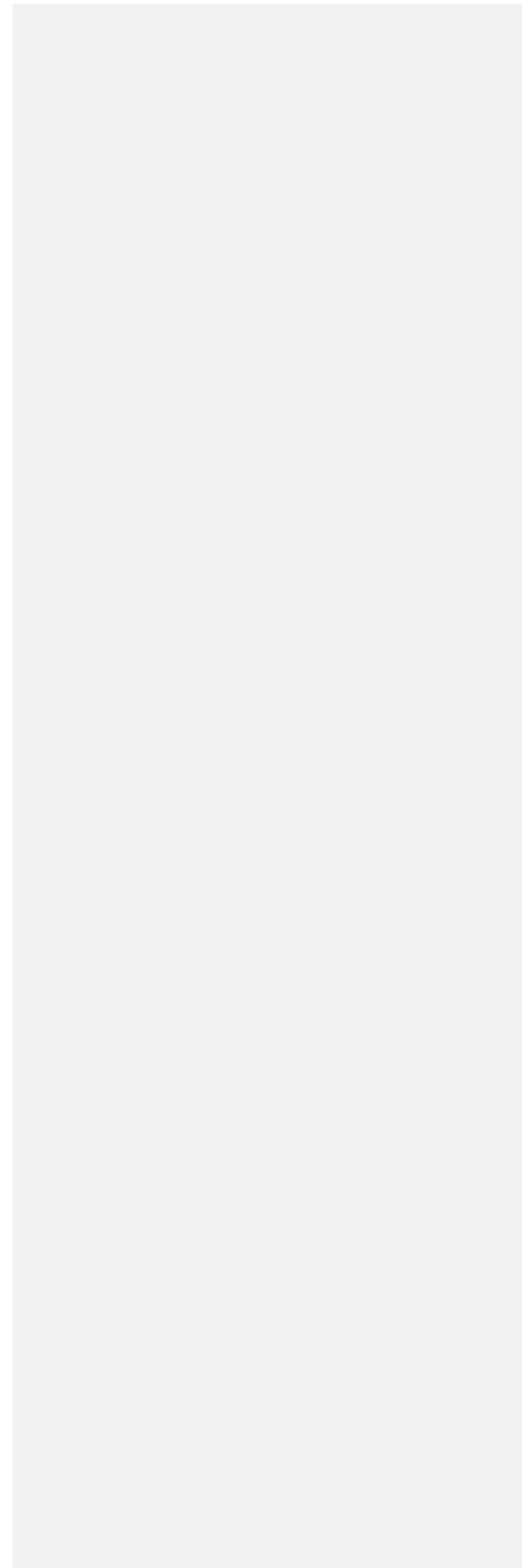
None that I noticed

Language Production Test: Oral Assessment

TESL 570

Allison Smith

Azusa Pacific University



Student and Curriculum Profile

The group of students I am designing this exam for are first year junior high students (junior 1 students) at Seiwa Gakuen Girls’ Junior/Senior High School. This is a school in the countryside of Japan on Shikoku island. It is a private Christian school, possibly the only one on Shikoku. The students who attend this school are mostly students whose entrance test scores made this school the best option. There are also a few high achievers who are competing for a reserved spot at key universities in Japan.

All junior 1 students are required to take an English class for one hour daily. The junior 1 class has 10 students, all of whom are female and Japanese. These students have studied English in elementary school, but are all still beginners. This test is intended for the second half of the school year, when their vocabulary is a little more developed. The students are lower to upper middle class and are hoping to attend a university or vocational school after they graduate. They are learning English mainly for educational purposes.

This unit focuses on the extended family and personality traits. Students will have already studied vocabulary about the immediate family and physical descriptions. The first oral examination they will be required to complete is one that will focus on summarizing, but will use the language, vocabulary, and grammar they have learned in this and previous chapters. They will also be required to talk about what they and their family are going to do for vacation using “will.” Lastly, students will be required to present on a family member. This will be a formal presentation that combines information learned in the past two units. Overall students will be able to use course vocabulary to describe their family members. They will also be able to talk about what they and others will do in the future. Lastly, they will summarize a short description.

Commented [BJL(1): Could you elaborate? Does this mean their test scores are average, above average, or below average?

Commented [BJL(2R1):

Commented [BJL(3R1):

Commented [BJL(4): Are they planning to apply to universities in English speaking countries, or is English important for admittance to Japanese universities as well?

Commented [BJL(5): It would be helpful to understand the logistics of how this test will be administered: Will all three parts of the oral test be administered at the same time (in one or more class session?) Will students be in the same testing space all together or will they be called into a private testing space by turns, or scheduled for an individual testing time slot? If the former is the case, how do you plan to minimize the negative effects of nervousness (with all eyes on the person speaking) or the advantage of the students who have turns toward the end and have been able to listen to and get ideas from the answers of the peers who spoke before them?

Commented [BJL(6): For beginners, would it perhaps be better to stay focused on family and descriptions? This seems like it would be more than enough for one assessment without adding future tense to the mix.

Story Retelling: Talking About Your Sister

Directions: You are describing your sister to a friend who has not met her yet. Listen to and/or read the description of your sister. Then summarize the description to your friend.

My sister, Becka, is five years older than me. She is tall with long black hair and brown eyes. She is very intelligent and is studying at a university to be a lawyer. When she is finished with school, she will help people who do not always have a good lawyer. She is a very kind person to everyone she meets. She is also adventurous. She enjoys hiking in the mountains and going to visit new places. One day she will even hike Mount Fuji!

Commented [BJL(7): Although O'Malley & Valdez Pierce do not mention this downside, this technique essentially tests memory as well as summarizing ability. To be honest, I think I would have a hard time remembering these details, especially in a stressful testing situation in my second language. I wonder if adding a picture or two would help to minimize this problem and help cement the details in students' minds, allowing them to focus on the retelling rather than recalling.

Commented [BJL(8): Include expectations of length if you are using this as a part of your scoring criteria

Explanation

O’Malley and Valdez Pierce (1996) state that this exercise is useful for beginning students and is useful for “describing,” “giving information,” and “summarizing.” (p. 77). The purpose of this assessment is to help students learn to summarize what they hear, which is a useful skill in many areas of life. However, they will also be describing and giving information. The vocabulary and grammar used should be familiar from past units and their current unit. These include physical and personality descriptors, as well as the future tense. Students will have 10 minutes to listen to and/or read the paragraph. This is to allow students to choose what method is best for them.

Some students may be more confident in their listening ability and others in their reading ability. Some students may want to utilize both.

Commented [BJL(9): Maybe more time than necessary?

Commented [BJL(10): How will they listen to the paragraph? Will the teacher read it, or do they listen on some sort of personal device?

Scoring Guide

Students will be scored using the holistic rubric below:

4 - Summary included 4-6 sentences and demonstrated good comprehension of the paragraph. Vocabulary was varied and included the use of words learned in the present unit. Few grammatical errors were found. Language was clear and pace was like that of a native speaker.

Commented [BJL(11): What is more important, length or the other characteristics mentioned? What if the length corresponds to a 3 but the other indicators match a 2 or a 4?

Commented [BJL(12R11):

3 - Summary included 3 sentences and demonstrated adequate comprehension of the paragraph. Vocabulary was varied and included at least one word learned in the present unit. Some grammatical errors were found. Language was mostly clear and pace was a little slower than a native speaker.

Commented [BJL(13): This seems like an unrealistic expectation for beginning level students. As Dr. Weber pointed out in Week 4, “the scale should be designed such that you can use the full range: the highest score should be accessible to at least some students in the class” (Designing & Using Scoring Rubrics, Slide 9).

Commented [BJL(14): Personally, I would tend to omit pace as a scoring criterion for beginners. Fluency should not be expected at this level.

2 - Summary included 2 sentences and demonstrated limited comprehension of the paragraph. Vocabulary was limited and did not include any words from the present unit. Grammatical errors were present throughout. Language was unclear and difficult to understand. Pace was choppy and slow.

LANGUAGE PRODUCTION TEST

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1 - Summary included 1 sentence repeated directly from the paragraph and demonstrated very little to no comprehension of it. Vocabulary was very limited. Grammatical errors were extensive. Language was almost incomprehensible and pace was choppy and slow.

0 - No summary was given.

Note: The Proficiency Descriptions were a loose guide for this holistic rubric (Adams & Firth, 1979, pp. 25-28 as cited in Hughes, 2003, pp. 131-133).

Directed Response: Family Vacation

Directions: Think of a place you would like to visit with your family. Pretend you are going on vacation there and describe what you will do to your friend using the future tense. For example, you might begin by saying, "I will go to Japan in the summer." You will need to speak for 3-5 minutes. You may talk about things, such as food, culture, people, places, etc. You have 1 minute to take notes before speaking.

Commented [BJL(15): Awkward phrasing, possibly, "describe to your friend" or "tell your friend"

Commented [BJL(16): This seems to be outside the scope of the current unit as you are describing activities rather than family relationships or physical/personality characteristics (Introducing the future tense in this unit also seems premature)

Explanation

This directed response is most similar to a “situational response” (Assessing Speaking, 2017, slide 11). Students will be required to explain a fictional future vacation where they will use the future tense, which is what this oral exam will mainly assess. This exam will also assess vocabulary and fluency. By allowing students to describe a place they want to go, it will hopefully make it interesting to them and give them the freedom to choose a place that they are knowledgeable on. Since these are beginning students, I gave them some starting things that they can choose to use or not use.

Scoring

Please see the analytic rubric below. The max score a student can receive is 20.

Grammar	8-10 Consistently used the future tense of the verb throughout.	4-7 Some errors in the use of future tense.	1-3 Frequent errors in the use of future tense.
Vocabulary	6-7 Vocabulary used was robust and appropriate.	3-5 Vocabulary used was adequate for the task.	1-2 Vocabulary used was limited and/or inappropriate for the task.
Fluency	3 Student talked for 3-5 minutes. Speech was clear with minimal pauses.	2 Student talked for 1-2 minutes. Speech was able to be understood, but had some pauses.	1 Student talked for less than 1 minute. Speech was difficult to understand and there were frequent pauses.

Commented [BJL(17): The highest score in all three categories seems out of reach for this level of students. See my comment on page 9 below

Oral Presentation: Family Member Description

Directions: You will prepare a 3-5 minute oral presentation describing one of your family members. If you do not have a family member to describe, please choose a guardian or friend.

You will be responsible for the following information:

- Family, guardian, or friend's name
- At least 2 aspects of their physical description
- As least two aspects of their personality with at least one example demonstrating each of them
- One reason why you like this family member (different from the personality descriptions above)

Commented [BJL(18): Will students be given time to prepare their presentation ahead of time? If so, how much time will they be given? Are they allowed to use notes while presenting? If so, how will you avoid allowing them to simply read their presentation?

Commented [BJL(19): It would perhaps be helpful to provide an example of each of these requirements

Explanation

This test will give students experience with a formal presentation format and will combine vocabulary used in the previous two units, regarding descriptions of people. This will be a portion of their summative assessment for the two units.

Scoring

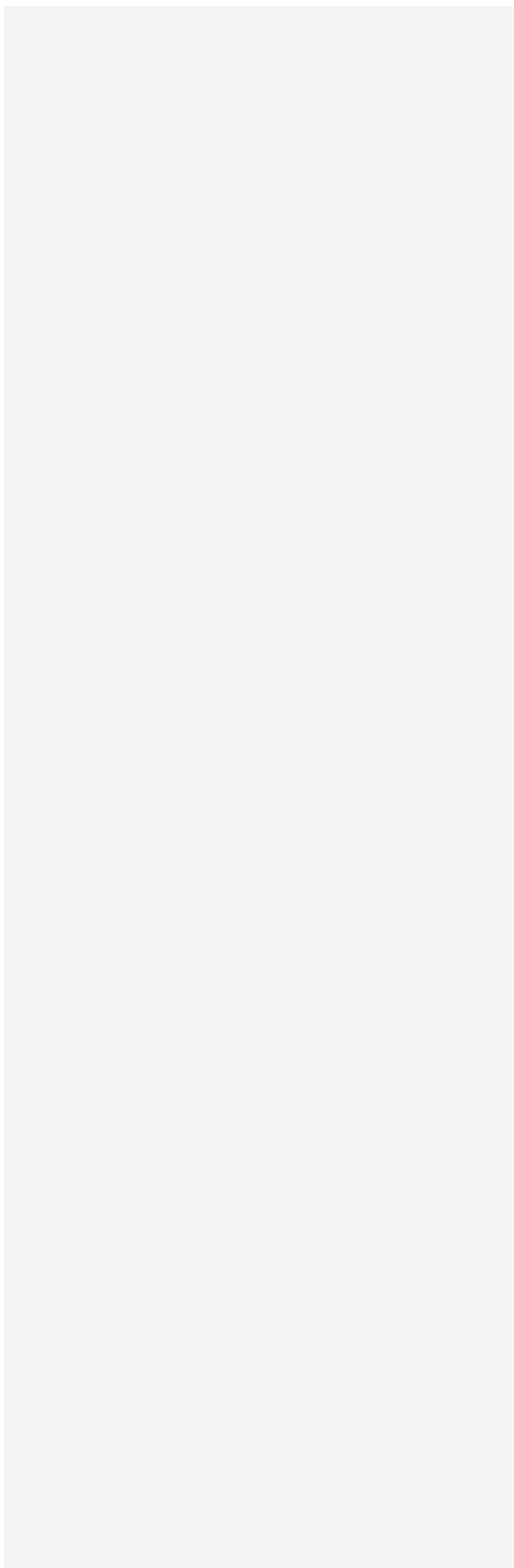
This assessment will use the analytic rubric below:

	5	4	3	2	1
Content	All areas of the prompt were addressed.	3 of the 4 areas of the prompt were addressed.	2 of the 4 areas of the prompt were addressed.	1 of the 4 areas of the prompt were addressed.	No areas of the prompt were addressed.
Grammar	Three or less errors present during the presentation, but communication is not hindered.	More than three errors present, but control is evident, but communication is not hindered.	Frequent grammatical errors, but overall communication is not hindered.	Frequent grammatical errors, and communication is hindered.	Grammatical errors hinder communication entirely.
Vocabulary	Extensive and appropriate vocabulary used throughout presentation, including words from relevant units.	Appropriate vocabulary used, although with some infrequent errors, including words from relevant units.	Limited vocabulary development. Some vocabulary from relevant units used.		
Fluency	Student spoke for 3-5 minutes. Speech was clear with few pauses.	Student spoke for at least 2 minutes. Speech was mostly clear with a few pauses.	Student spoke for at least 1 minute. Speech was difficult to understand and had	Student spoke for less than 1 minute. Speech was difficult to understand and had many	Student was unintelligible.

Commented [BJL(20): Gonzalez Pino recommends that "overall communicative effect" be given the most importance for beginning level students, "with vocabulary and grammar being slightly less important and pronunciation and fluency being least important" (1988, in O'Malley & Valdez Pierce). With this in mind, do you think it might be helpful to assign different weight to each sub-skill, rather than weighting them equally?

			several pauses.	pauses.	
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Note: The Proficiency Descriptions and the ESL Composition Profile were a guide for this analytic rubric (Adams & Firth, 1979, pp. 25-28 as cited in Hughes, 2003, pp. 131-133; Jacobs et al, 1981 as cited in Hughes, 2003, p. 104).



References

Assessing Speaking. (2017). [PowerPoint Presentation].

Hughes, A. (2003). *Testing for language teachers* (2nd ed.). Cambridge, United Kingdom: Cambridge University Press.

O'Malley, J.M., & Valdez Pierce, L. (1996). *Authentic assessment for English language learners*.

New York, NY: Longman.