

The Art of Teaching Speaking

Chapter6: Assessing Speaking (pp.216-227)

Fluency (p.216)

- Fluency refers to the amount of language delivered, not necessarily the accuracy (p.216)

【How to assess the speaker's fluency?】

- The amount of the language a learner produces in a certain period.

⇒(e.g.) John test, which has two parts and both of these parts use a series of five illustrations.

The first part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Learners are shown 5 illustrations at one time; the man appearing in them named John. • Given 30 seconds to read them silently • Given 1 minute to talk anything about the picture • Learners' goal is to say as much as possible in the one minute.
The second part	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Given one minute to tell each learner's story of John which can be made from 5 illustrations ordered chronologically

- For grading: t-units (subject-verb combination) and any errors (pronunciation, grammar, vocabulary, content of pictures)

Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is relatively easy to obtain S's data and to score the assessment.
Disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wondering whether the number of S-V combination actually can be the assessment of speakers' fluency. • The utterances having errors but which native speaker can understand could be taken as the negative score.

Language Accuracy (p.218)

- Accuracy is very important; but too much focusing on accuracy does not necessarily produce a cadre of accurate second language speakers.

【How to assess the speaker's accuracy?】

⇒John test

Advantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The utterance while John test can be natural language. • Relatively easy to score
Disadvantage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of errors could be related to the amount of overall language. (e.g. many errors but one item)

[Reflection]

- John test can assess the speaker’s fluency and accuracy.
- However, the test has both advantages and disadvantages.
- John test is the way to assess accuracy directly.



Indirectly

Direct versus Indirect Assessment (p.218)

- We could assess the student’s accuracy **in speaking (directly)** or **on paper (indirectly)**.
- Direct assessing such as interview is good; but it will take very long time to assess.
 ⇒ grammar ability in conversation could be assessed also in written form. (e.g. the tables of pp.219 - 220)

[Reflection]

- Direct assessing could be time-consuming
- Indirect isn’t assessed in speaking, but by other vehicles.

Scoring

- In scoring, indirect assessing is easier than direct one.
- Assessment is a circular, not a liner, process that must be considered from the very beginning of planning a lesson
- The advantages and disadvantages of direct and indirect assessment

	advantage	disadvantage
Direct	• the positive washback effect	• Scoring could be time-consuming.
Indirect	• much easier to score than direct one	—————

- Teacher should carefully choose direct or indirect. It’s because the choice will be influenced by the target skill (fluency or accuracy) and by the teaching environment (e.g. the number of students).

Proficiency Assessment (p.223)

	Features
TOEFL iBT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• For assessment of the academic English• Reading, writing, listening, and speaking• Teacher should prepare class lessons providing the content and the format and should know the speaking section has 2 tasks (independent & integrated)
TSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Assessment of spoken English• Used for many purposes, such as school entrance, work assignment or proficiency assessment.• Specific tasks, such as telling a story and describing a picture
IELTS	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Listening, reading, writing, speaking• In the writing and speaking modules, the test-takers can choose academic or general training.• Only speaking module will be done one week after the others.

[Discussion points]

- ① In JHS or HS in Japan, it seems to be difficult to assess students' accuracy directly (in speaking) because of the member of the class. If so, do you assess indirectly? Or if you are eager to assess their accuracy directly, how could you do that more efficiently?
- ② The popular proficiency tests, such as TOEFL or IELTS are good materials for assessment of speaking. How could you prepare for the class lesson involving these tests?

[The answers of class]

- ①
 - When ALT comes, who comes to school once a month, total 3 teachers (2 regular teachers and 1 ALT) give speaking test at which students talk to each of these teachers about given topics. It will take shorter time than doing by one.
 - IC recorder is convenient; After recording, teacher assesses from the audio data, focusing on just certain target grammar, such as past tense. And Prof. Hirai said that using IC recorder could students more serious than usual.
 - In addition to the above, pair- evaluation could be more efficient.
- ②
 - Having a speaking task being 英検-like in a class lesson, and assigning students both of roles, interviewee and interviewer.
 - Considering the extra curriculum in which students can prepare for the TOEFL or so on, instead that in a regular class we are able to have no time to prepare.

