

FACTORS IN SPEAKING PROFICIENCY

| | S-1 | S-2 |
|---------------|---|--|
| Pronunciation | Often unintelligible | Usually foreign but rarely unintelligible |
| Grammar | Accuracy limited to set expressions; almost no control of syntax; often conveys wrong information | Fair control of most basic syntactic patterns; conveys meaning accurately in simple sentences most of the time |
| Vocabulary | Adequate only for survival, travel, and basic courtesy needs | Adequate for simple social conversation and routine job needs |
| Fluency | Except for memorized expressions, every utterance requires enormous, obvious effort | Usually hesitant; often forced to silence by limitations of grammar and vocabulary |
| Comprehension | May require much repetition, slow rate of speech; understands only very simple, short familiar utterances | In general understands non-technical speech directed to him, but sometimes misinterprets or needs utterances re-worded. Usually cannot follow conversation between native speakers |

| S-3 | S-4 | S-5 |
|--|--|---|
| Sometimes foreign but always intelligible | | Native |
| Good control of most basic syntactic patterns; always conveys meaning accurately in reasonably complex sentences | Makes only occasional errors, and these show no pattern of deficiency | Control equal to that of an educated native speaker |
| Adequate for participation in all general conversation and for professional discussions in a special field | Professional and general vocabulary broad and precise, appropriate to every occasion | Equal to vocabulary of an educated native speaker |
| Rarely hesitant; always able to sustain conversation through circumlocutions | Speech on all professional matters as apparently effortless as in English; always easy to listen to | Speech at least as fluent and effortless as in English on all occasions |
| Understands most of what is said to him; can follow speeches, clear radio broadcasts, and most conversation between native speakers, but not in great detail | Can understand all educated speech in any moderately clear context; occasionally baffled by colloquialisms and regional- | Equal to that of the native speaker |

0035-3

TESTING KIT

ASSIGNMENT OF + RATINGS

At the request of a number of linguists and instructors, I have attempted to formulate criteria for assignment of the + ratings; that is, those which fall between those ratings for which we have official definitions. These criteria, given below, are not to be considered as official definitions, but as guidelines to help you decide those awkward cases that do not fall neatly into any defined category.

S-1+ Exceeds S-1 primarily in vocabulary, and is thus able to meet more complex travel and courtesy requirements. Normally his grammar is so weak that he cannot cope with social conversation because he frequently says things he does not intend to say (e.g., he may regularly confuse person, number, and tense in verbs). Pronunciation and comprehension are generally poor. Fluency may vary, but even quite voluble speech cannot compensate for all the other serious weaknesses.

S-2+ Exceeds S-2 primarily in fluency and in either grammar or vocabulary. Blatant deficiencies in one of these latter factors or general weaknesses in both usually prevent assignment of an S-3 rating. If a candidate is an S-3+ in vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension, and if his grammatical errors do not interfere with understanding, he should be awarded an S-3, not an S-2+.

S-3+ Exceeds an S-3 primarily in vocabulary and in fluency or grammar. The kind of hesitancy which indicates uncertainty or effort in speech will normally prevent assignment of an S-4, though the candidate's way of

speaking his native language should be checked in doubtful cases. Frequent grammatical errors must also limit the rating to an S-3+, no matter how excellent the pronunciation, fluency, vocabulary, and comprehension.

S-4+ Should be considered as just short of an S-5. Examiners should always be prepared to justify the awarding of an S-4+ rather than an S-5 by citing specific weaknesses. Reminder: native-born and educated Americans can conceivably attain S-5. Performance in the test, not biographical information given, is what determines assignment of a rating.