

**Assessing speaking: Developing and Applying Rating Scales**

EALTA’s mission statement is to promote the understanding of theoretical principles of language testing and assessment, and the improvement and sharing of testing and assessment practices throughout Europe. Our proposal for a pre-conference workshop to EALTA’s 2019 conference focuses on developing and applying rating scales for speaking.

The workshop will address the theoretical and practical underpinnings of rating scale development and design as well as the challenges of training raters to reliably apply the scales in testing contexts. While we will be focussing on speaking in this workshop, there will be opportunities to discuss how the principles of scale development and rater training apply to the context of writing. The target audience is graduate students, pre- and in-service language teachers and teacher trainers. In light of the interactive nature of the workshop, up to 25 participants can be accommodated.

The course will cover the following topic areas:

* The construct of speaking, alignment to rating criteria and rating scales
* Methods for developing and refining rating scales
* Procedures for rater training and rater alignment

Intended learning outcomes

By the end of the workshop, attendants will be able to reflect on how rating scales are aligned to tasks (and constructs). They will become familiar with different approaches to rating scale design and aware of the challenges of training raters. Participants will also apply existing rating scales on speaking performances and explore commonalities and differences in interpreting rating scales with their peers. Opportunities will be provided for participants to reflect and receive feedback on rating scales that they have developed for their own contexts.

The content areas covered by the workshop

The proposed programme is outlined in Table 1.

**Table 1: Draft Programme**

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|  | Session 1 | Session2 | Session 3 | Session 4 |
|  | 9.00 – 10.30 | 11.00-12.30 | 14.00-15.30 | 16.00-17.00 |
| Tuesday  May 28nd |  |  | Plenary: The Construct of Speaking | Plenary: Principles of Rating Scale Design |
| Wednesday May 29rd | Workshop: Rating Scale Design | Discussion/Q&A: Rating Scales | Plenary: Principles of Rater Training | Workshop: Rater Training (Part 1) |
| Thursday  May 30th | Workshop: Rater training (Part 2) | Discussion: Summary and Reflections  (until 12.00) |  |  |

Learning methodology

The workshop will combine the plenary delivery of input with small group discussions and hands-on activities in which participants will be involved in practical work, such as discussions of rating scales and descriptors, rating performances, and discussions of ratings. Participants are requested to bring a laptop computer so that they can work with data and save the results of their work.

Any specific background or prior knowledge you expect the participants to have

This workshop is aimed at individuals with beginning to intermediate experience in language testing and assessment. Participants do not need any specific background or prior knowledge but it will be helpful if they are currently involved in assessment (either as a classroom teacher or as part of a national assessment team). Individuals with an extensive language assessment background are unlikely to find the workshop sufficiently challenging.

Pre-workshop activities, such as preparatory reading (please state sources)

Registered participants are recommended to familiarize themselves with some of the following texts:

* Fulcher, G. (2003). *Testing Second Language Speaking*, Harlow, UK: Pearson Education Ltd.
* Isaacs, T. (2016). Assessing speaking, in Tsagari, C. & Banerjee, J. (Eds.). *Handbook of Second Language Assessment* (pp. 131 – 146). Boston, USA: Walter de Gruyter Inc.
* Jong N.H. de, Steinel M.P., Florijn A.F., Schoonen R. & Hulstijn J.H. (2012). Facets of speaking proficiency, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 34: 5-34.
* Luoma, S. (2004). *Assessing Speaking*, Cambridge, UK: Cambridge University Press.

Background of the workshop leaders

Kathrin Eberharter is currently an active member of the Language Testing Research Group (LTRGI) at the University of Innsbruck and involved in a number of various research projects. Currently Kathrin is working on her PhD in the area of assessing speaking and a study investigating language acquisition in healthy subjects and patients with Multiple Sclerosis. She has taught the pre-service teacher training module on Testing and Assessment at the School of Education (University of Innsbruck) for four years and has a lot of experience in rater training, specifically in the context of in-service teacher education programmes.

Nivja de Jong is associate professor in Second Language Acquisition and Pedagogy and chairs the Language Learning Resource Centre at Leiden University. Her research focuses on assessment and pedagogy of L2 speaking. She has published on L2 speaking proficiency and L2 speaking fluency in the following journals: *Applied Psycholinguistic, Language Learning, Language Testing, Second Language Research,* and *Studies in Second Language Acquisition.* From 2008-2012, she was principal investigator in a research project (funded by Pearson language testing and Utrecht University) on speaking fluency. In 2016, she was one of the teachers in the EALTA Summer school on assessment of the productive skills. Since 2017, Nivja de Jong is an expert member of EALTA.

Jayanti Banerjee has more than 15 years’ experience in language testing and assessment. She teaches language testing and assessment courses at the Masters level and has supervised numerous Masters and PhD level research projects. She also has extensive practical language testing experience. She has managed a medium-sized language assessment programme. In this role she was responsible for the day-to-day running of the programme, including rater training and monitoring. Jay’s recently published research includes a special issue of *Language Testing* focused on the assessment of interactional competence through speaking tests.

Carol Spoettl is part of the Language Testing Research Group (LTRGI) at the University of Innsbruck, which is involved in language assessment research projects with partner institutions in the UK, Finland, Germany, Italy and Spain. Previously Carol led a government-funded project to reform the Austrian school-leaving exam for the foreign languages English, French, Italian and Spanish in upper secondary schools (2007-2013). She led the team that developed national assessment scales (A2-B2) for speaking and also produced the illustrative benchmark performances. Together with Kathrin, she led national workshops to train teachers in the use of the scale, interlocutor behaviour and speaking task design. Carol is a member of the Innsbruck Model of Foreign Language Teaching and Learning (IMoF). She is involved in numerous in-service teacher training programs nationally and internationally

Kathrin Eberharter brief CV

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| **EDUCATION** | |
|  | MA Language Testing, Lancaster University |
|  | Mag Teaching Degree for Secondary Education, English as a Foreign Language and German as a First Language, University of Innsbruck |

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| **POSITIONS HELD** | |
| 2017 - | Researcher Language Testing Research Group, University of Innsbruck  PhD research on assessing speaking. Researching teaching and learning languages at Austrian schools and externally funded projects on test development and validation. |
| 2017 - | Teacher of English Learning Support and Tutoring, Institut für Sozialpädagogik  Preparing social workers to support children and young adults’ English learning in after school clubs and care facilities. |
| 2013 – 2017 | Pre-Doc researcher and lecturer, School of Education, University of Innsbruck  Involvement in testing and assessment module of the pre-service teacher training programme.  Researching the assessment of speaking, but also other research projects concerning listening and developing benchmark performances for speaking and writing. Freelance in-service teacher training for pedagogical colleges throughout Austria. |
| 2009 – 2013 | Researcher and item moderator for the exam reform project, BIFIE  Managing the task development process for the English writing and Use of English components of the school leaving examination. |
| 2008 – 2009 | Project assistant in the exam reform project for school leaving exams in Austria, University of Innsbruck |
| 2008 – 2009 | Teacher of English and German, BRG Sillgasse |

Nivja de Jong brief CV

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| **EDUCATION** | |
| 2002 | PhD, Radboud University Nijmegen and Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen. |
| 1999 | BA and MA Dutch linguistics, Leiden University. |
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| **POSITIONS HELD** | |
| 2017 - | Associate Professor Second Language acquisition and Pedagogy, Leiden University  Joint position at the linguistics department of the humanities faculty and at the Leiden University Graduate School of Teaching, and chair of the newly founded Language Learning Resource Centre. Within this centre, both researchers and teachers of foreign languages within Leiden University unite. Teaching at BA/MA levels on second language acquisition, supervision of three PhD students on L2 learning. |
| 2008 – 2016 | Assistant Professor, Department of Languages, Literature, and Communication, Utrecht University.  Teaching at BA/MA levels on research methodology/communication sciences and PI of the project financed by Pearson Language Testing and Utrecht University on aspects of L2 oral fluency. Supervision of two PhDs: on L2 speaking fluency and on L1 learning. |
| 2004 – 2009 | Postdoctoral researcher in the NWO-funded project Unraveling second language proficiency, Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication (ACLC), University of Amsterdam.  Carrying out research on L2 speaking, together with Jan Hulstijn, Rob Schoonen, and Arjen Florijn. Supervision of PhD on L2 writing. |
| 2003 – 2006 | Teacher of Dutch as a Second Language at the Language Centre of Leiden University. |
| 2002 – 2003 | Postdoctoral researcher at the Psychology Department of the University of Edinburgh, Scotland.  Carrying out research on the topic of speech error repair, together with Rob Hartsuiker and Martin Pickering. |

Jayanti Banerjee brief CV

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| **EDUCATION** | |
| 2003 | Ph.D., Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University |
| 1995 | MA in English Language Teaching (Distinction), Lancaster University |
| 1990 | Diploma in Education, National Institute of Education (Credit), Singapore |
| 1989 | BA Hons. English (2.1), National University of Singapore |
| 1988 | BA English and English Language, National University of Singapore |
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| **POSITIONS HELD** | |
| 2018 - present | Director of Language, Trinity College London  I provide academic leadership for all the English Language programmes, ensuring that current and future qualifications continue to innovate and demonstrate high standards. |
| 2016 - present | Course tutor, Lancaster University  I teach online Masters level courses and supervise MA dissertations. |
| 2015 - 2018 | Manager, Test Research & Development, Paragon Testing Enterprises  As the senior language assessment specialist in the organization, I managed a team of 16 people with diverse responsibilities including item development, test rating and scoring, psychometrics and quality assurance, and research and validation. With this team, I developed and promoted the research agenda for all of Paragon’s tests and oversaw the external grants programme. |
| 2007 - 2015 | Language Assessment Specialist and Research Director, CaMLA/University of Michigan  Initially responsible for maintaining the technical standards of a medium-sized testing programme, I designed and conducted research projects related to the examination. Subsequently, I developed and managed the organization's research agenda, the primary aims of which were to: contribute to exam recognition activities; support product development, test revision, and test quality; and, to prepare validation evidence for all products. |
| 2002 - 2007 | Lecturer, Department of Linguistics and English Language, Lancaster University  This position combined teaching, administrative, and research responsibilities. I taught courses in English for Academic Purposes, Research Methods and Language Testing, all primarily at the Masters (MA) and PhD level. I also supervised 6 PhD students. My research work included a grant-funded validation study of the ELPAC test, a test of Aviation English designed by EUROCONTOL and another grant-funded study to investigate the features of written language production typical at different IELTS band score levels. |

Carol Spoettl brief CV

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| **EDUCATION** | |
| 2017 | PhD, Lancaster University |
|  | MA Professional Development for ELT Practitioners, University of East Anglia |
|  | Postgraduate Diploma in Education and Professional Development, University of East Anglia |
|  | B Ed English Literature and Language, History and Education, Edinburgh University |
|  | Certificate in Secondary Education (Merit) Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh |
|  | Certificate in Primary Education, Moray House College of Education, Edinburgh |
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| **POSITIONS HELD** | |
| 2012 - 2017 | Head of Language Testing Research Group Innsbruck/IFD, School of Education, University of Innsbruck  I joined the School of Education when it was founded at the University of Innsbruck in 2012 and set up the LTRGI (Language Testing Research Group Innsbruck). Since then we have been involved in various research projects including the use of eye-tracking in listening exam studies, the cross-validation of rating scales for writing in two European countries, and the introduction of standardised assessment scales for speaking across languages for secondary school leaving exams. In the latter project I designed and delivered instruction in task design, rater and interlocutor training and benchmarking sessions. In addition, the LTRGI has compiled foreign language learner corpora for English, French, Spanish and Italian based on written performances in both trial and live administrations. The group has also recently completed a project on including literature and reading for pleasure topics in competence based writing assessment. |
| 2007–2013 | Leader of the exam reform project for school leaving exams in Austria.  In 2007 the ministry awarded the university a project to pilot a new competence-based exam reform in the foreign languages for secondary school leavers. I was responsible for all aspects of the project, from budgeting to item writer selection. Together with Dr Rita Green, I was responsible for the design and administration of training workshops for all skills and languages, all materials, guidelines, item trials, standard setting meetings and reports. I development training materials for test administrators and advised on project directions and policies. This work was presented at EALTA 2009, 2011 and 2016. During this period, my responsibilities also included the co-supervision of over 15 MA students at the university of Innsbruck in the field of testing. |
| 2004-2007 | Co-ordinator testing and assessment module in pre-service teacher training/ IMoF  Testing and assessment has been a compulsory part of the teacher training programme for the foreign language undergraduates in Innsbruck since 2004. I designed both the initial course content and the accompanying assessment programme for this module. Before the introduction of the syllabus, I trained the English, Italian, Spanish and French staff members. This work was presented at EALTA 2005 in Norway. |
| 1990-2007 | Coordinator for English language learning courses and assessment practices/English Department, University of Innsbruck |