



Rating Fluency in the Age of English as a Lingua Franca

New Directions
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Rating Fluency in the Age of English as a Lingua Franca



Overview

1. Three definitions of fluency
2. Three rating scales
3. A challenge?
4. Dore's Study of Perceptions of Fluency (Italy and UK)
5. Our Study of Perceptions of Fluency (China)
6. Next steps in our research

Rating Fluency in the Age of English as a Lingua Franca

Defining Fluency

- Speaking without unnecessary pauses
- Coherent and semantically dense --
- Appropriate to social context
- Creative (**Fillimore 1979, on native speaker fluency**)

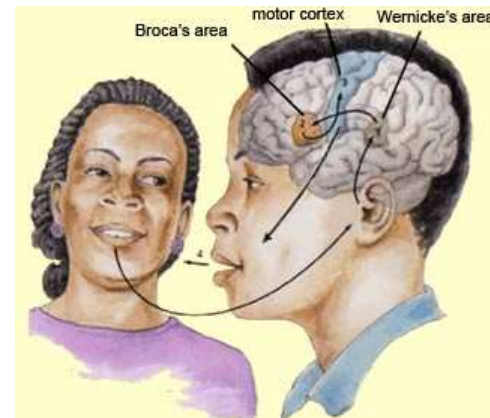
“The rapid, smooth, accurate, lucid and efficient translation of thought or communicative intention into language under the temporal constraints of on-line processing.” (Lennon 2000)

Defining Fluency: Segalowitz (2010)

Cognitive Fluency: speech is being produced effortlessly by the brain

Utterance Fluency: the physical aspects of speech production function well, and provide evidence of cognitive fluency

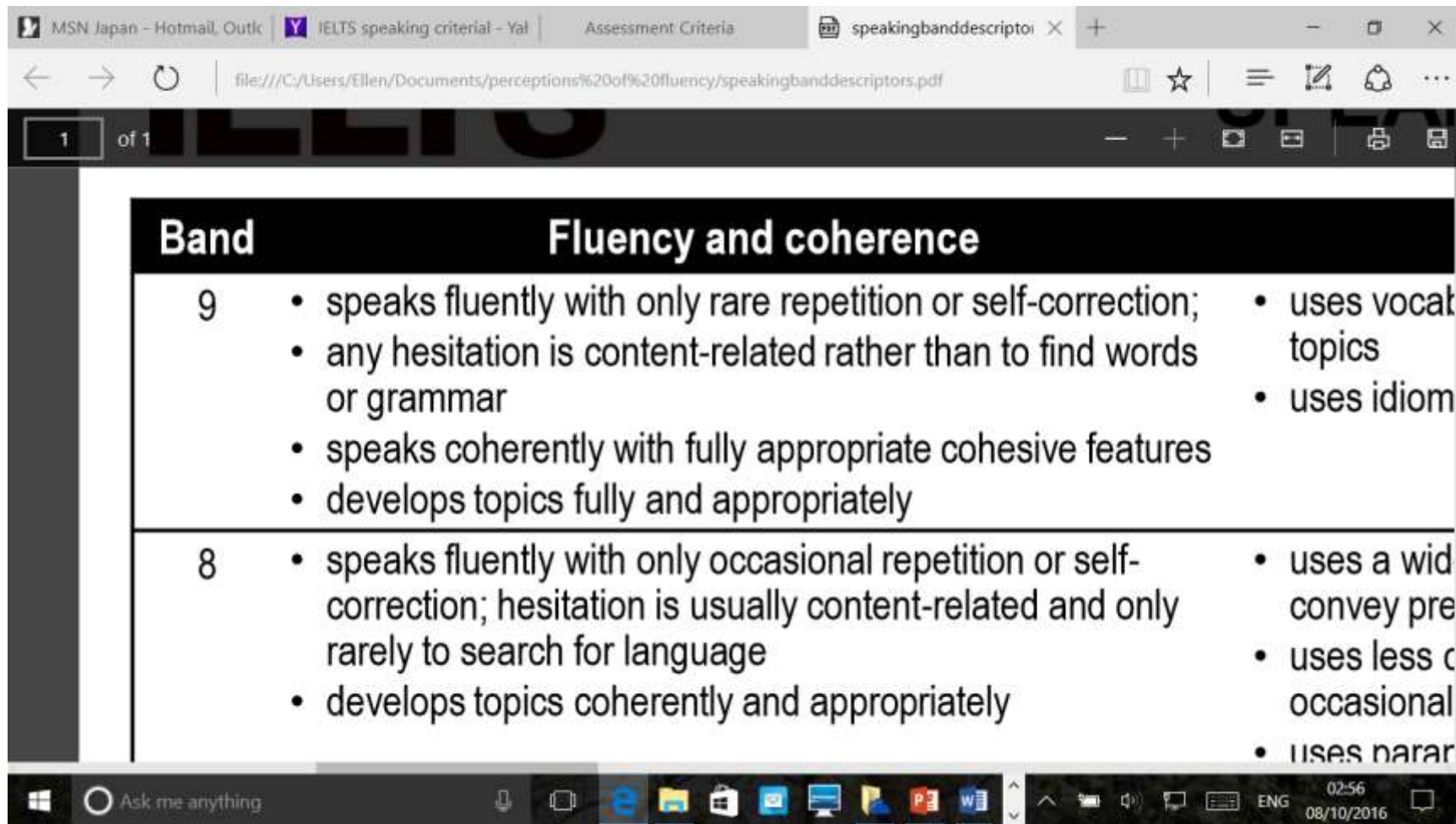
Perceived Fluency: the listener's impression and the inferences they make about the speaker's cognitive fluency based on their perceptions of utterance fluency



Fluency in some well-known rating scales

C	Can produce clear, smoothly flowing well-structured speech with an effective logical structure which helps the recipient to notice and remember significant points.
B2	Can give clear, systematically developed descriptions and presentations on a wide range of subjects related to his/her field of interest, with appropriate highlighting of significant points, and relevant supporting detail.
B1	Can reasonably fluently sustain a straightforward description of one of a variety of subjects within his/her field of interest, presenting it as a linear sequence of points.
A2	Can give a simple description or presentation of people, living or working conditions, daily routines likes/dislikes, etc. as a short series of simple phrases and sentences linked into a list.
A1	Can produce simple descriptions on mainly personal topics.
A0	Not enough language knowledge demonstrated to allow for any meaningful inferences about the candidate's ability.

Fluency in some well-known band-descriptors



The image shows a screenshot of a PDF document titled 'speakingbanddescriptors.pdf' open in a browser. The document displays a table with two columns: 'Band' and 'Fluency and coherence'. The table lists descriptors for bands 8 and 9.

Band	Fluency and coherence
9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speaks fluently with only rare repetition or self-correction; any hesitation is content-related rather than to find words or grammar• speaks coherently with fully appropriate cohesive features• develops topics fully and appropriately• uses vocabulary• uses idioms
8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speaks fluently with only occasional repetition or self-correction; hesitation is usually content-related and only rarely to search for language• develops topics coherently and appropriately• uses a wide range of vocabulary to convey precise meanings• uses less complex sentence structures• uses occasional idioms• uses natural pronunciation

Fluency in some well-known band-descriptors

The image shows a screenshot of a PDF document titled 'speakingbanddescriptors.pdf' opened in a web browser. The document displays two rows of band descriptors for the IELTS speaking test. The first row is for band 7, and the second row is for band 6. Each row contains a list of characteristics and a list of specific language features.

Band	Characteristics	Language Features
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• speaks at length without noticeable effort or loss of coherence• may demonstrate language-related hesitation at times, or some repetition and/or self-correction• uses a range of connectives and discourse markers with some flexibility	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• uses vocabulary topics• uses some language forms• shows some control of grammar• uses appropriate discourse markers• uses paragraphs
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is willing to speak at length, though may lose coherence at times due to occasional repetition, self-correction or hesitation• uses a range of connectives and discourse markers but not always appropriately	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• has a wide range of vocabulary• and makes some errors• generally produces clear and coherent discourse

Fluency in some well-known band-descriptors

5	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• usually maintains flow of speech but uses repetition, self correction and/or slow speech to keep going• may over-use certain connectives and discourse markers• produces simple speech fluently, but more complex communication causes fluency problems	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• manages to use vocabulary• attempts to
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• cannot respond without noticeable pauses and may speak slowly, with frequent repetition and self-correction• links basic sentences but with repetitious use of simple connectives and some breakdowns in coherence	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• is able to talk about basic meanings• errors in word choice• rarely attempts to

Ask me anything

02:58
08/10/2016

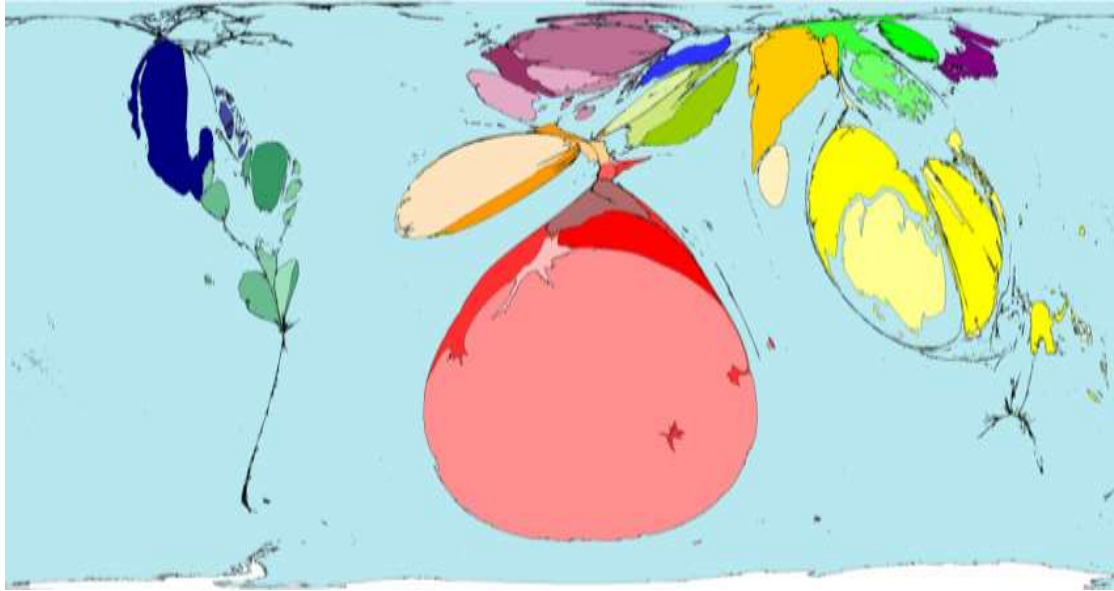
Some well-known band-descriptors replace “fluency” with other terms

TOEFL iBT® Test

Independent SPEAKING Rubric

SCORE	GENERAL DESCRIPTION	DELIVERY	LANGUAGE USE
4	The response fulfills the demands of the task, with at most minor lapses in completeness. It is highly intelligible and exhibits sustained, coherent discourse. A response at this level is characterized by all of the following:	Generally well-paced flow (fluid expression). Speech is clear. It may include minor lapses, or minor difficulties with pronunciation or intonation patterns, which do not affect overall intelligibility.	The response demonstrates effective use of grammar and vocabulary. It exhibits a fairly high degree of automaticity with good control of basic and complex structures (as appropriate). Some minor (or systematic) errors are noticeable but do not obscure meaning.
3	The response addresses the task appropriately but may fall short of being fully developed. It is generally	Speech is generally clear, with some fluidity of expression, though minor difficulties with pronunciation, intonation,	The response demonstrates fairly automatic and effective use of grammar and vocabulary, and fairly

English as a Lingua Franca



Map showing English speakers in countries where England is not L1.

“EIL should be able to embrace non-native local norms and/or dispense with native norms with no threat to intelligibility for the (non-native) receiver in at least the following areas: word stress, features of connected speech, stress-timed rhythm (other than tonic stress).” Jenkins, 1997

English as a Lingua Franca

Implications for Testing and Assessment

“Awareness of ... divergence between normative features in non-native varieties of English and corresponding norms in native-speaker varieties is essential for evaluating proficiency in English in the world context.”

“In order to assess proficiency accurately, examiners must be able to distinguish between deficiencies in second language acquisition [and] varietal differences in the speaker’s usage.”

Lowenberg, 2012 in Jenkins, 2015



Perceptions of Fluency (Dore, 2015)

Research Questions

1. What aspects of fluency do teachers pay attention to when rating NNS fluency?
2. Are there differences between NS and NNS teachers?
3. Are teachers' perceptions correlated with training and years of experience?

Dore compared 24 UK-based teachers and 24 Italy-based teachers

Qualitative study with UK-based teachers

Survey including quantitative study of aspects of fluency, with participants scoring components of fluency derived from focus group discussion and open-ended questions

Fluency variables (Dore. 2015)

Fluency	Complexity	Phonology	Global
Pauses (number/length)	Grammatical complexity	Accent Native-like	Global proficiency
Hesitations	Variety of vocab	rhythm	Communicative competence
Length of runs	Topic/content complexity		Coherence
Speech rate	Structural complexity		Formulaic sequences
Repetitions			colloquialness
Fillers			
Automaticity			
Effortlessness			

Fluency: non-temporal variables (Dore. 2015)

Fluency	Complexity	Phonology	Global
Pauses (number/length)	Grammatical complexity	Accent Native-like	Global proficiency
Hesitations	Variety of vocab	rhythm	Communicative competence
Length of runs	Topic/content complexity		Coherence and cohesiveness
Speech rate	Structural complexity		Formulaic sequences
Repetitions			colloquialness
Fillers			
Automaticity			
Effortlessness			

UK and Italy-based teachers, S=48

	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Standard deviation
Effortlessness	3	5	4.08	.710
Coherence	1	5	4.02	.956
No. and length of pauses	2	5	3.83	.753
Automaticity	2	5	3.79	.898
No. of hesitations	1	5	3.79	.898
Length of runs	2	5	3.73	.676
Rate of speech	1	5	3.69	.748
Coping in soc. Situations	1	5	3.69	1.133

Perceptions of Fluency (Dore, 2015)

Differences between Italy-based and UK-based teachers

Italy-based teachers gave more importance to accuracy, accent, colloquialness and communicative competence.

UK-based teachers gave more significance to automaticity (large effect size) and hesitations (slight effect).

Negative correlation was found between length of training and selecting the variables native-like rhythm and accent.

Pilot Study

- Based in China. Participants include NS and NNS working as assessment consultants (n=5) and NS and NNS teachers teaching at university (n=5)
- As in Dore's study, participants were asked to listen to three speech samples and rate them out of 7
- To answer open-ended questions about fluency
- To give scores for fluency variables
- The aim is to run a study with a larger population of raters and larger number of speech samples, working with teachers and students at Shantou University, Guangdong Province, in the academic year 2016 -2017.

Working with skewed speech samples to probe judgements about fluency?

Speaker 1: 120 words per minute: mean length of runs: 5

Speaker 2: 75 words per minute: mean length of runs: 5

Speaker 3: 59 to 77 words per minute: mean length of runs: 4

	AC1	AC2	AC3	AC4	AC5	AC6	UP1	UP2	UP3	UP4
speaker 1	5	best	5	5	4.5	5	6	7	7	6
speaker 2	4	least	3	3	4	3	2	6	3	4
speaker 3	6	mid	4	4	3.5	4	4	6	6	5

China-based assessment consultants, N=5

	coping	autom_ty	str compl	accent	gl prof	formulaic	colloq	pause	efftless	rate	acc	repetotn	fillers	reform	
1															
2	3	4	3	1	1	4	2	4	4	4	4	1	4	4	4
3	3	4	3	2	4	3		5	5	5	2		5	4	
4	3	2	4	3	5	1	2	4	4	3	3	2	2	2	
5	2	3	2	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	2	4	3	3	
6															
7	3	5	2	1	2	2	2	5	5	4	1	5	2	2	
8	0.447214	1.140175	0.83666	1	1.581139	1.140175	0.5	0.547723	0.547723	0.707107	0.83666	1.258306	1.30384	1	
9															
10															

Rating Fluency in the Age of English as a Lingua Franca

China-based respondents:

Agreed on what fluency was NOT:

Colloquial range 2/3 S.D. 0.4

Vocab range 2/3 S.D. 0.5

When we remove one person:

Hesitation range 4/4 S.D. 0

NS Rhythm range 2/3 S.D. 0.5

Pausing range 4/5 S.D. 0.547

Effortless range 4/5 S.D. 0.547

When whole sample results are added together:

Hesitation Range 3/5 S.D. (Shanghai) 1.13 (All) 0.67

Effortlessness Range 4/5 S.D. (Shanghai) 1.34 (All) 0.527

Speech rate Range 3/5 S.D. (Shanghai) 1.27 (All) 0.7

BUT

Native-like rhythm Range (Shanghai) 2/3

Range (Shantou) 4/5

Native-like rhythm S.D (Shanghai) 0.78 (All) 1.09

Accent Range 1/3

Accent S.D (Shanghai) 0.899 (All) 1.11