Lessons Learned: Insights from Japanese L2 Conversations

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***Abstract*—As we are often blind to our conversational lapses and shortcomings, the presenter will discuss the issue of dysfluency based on L2 interactions by Japanese speakers based on the JUSFC2018 corpus. The study's first aim was to examine if the number of words and mean length runs increased with proficiency, as represented by TOEIC scores (Group 1: scores 150-370; Group 2: scores 371-570; Group 3: scores 571-770). The second aim was to compare the dialogic fluency of each group of Japanese EFL learners with that of native speakers to identify significant differences regarding speaking rates, as well as acoustic, lexical and syntactical dysfluency. Results showed that the number of words only increased in the second range, before dropping in the most proficient range; likewise, mean length runs (MLRs) showed an increase from 11.2 syllables from Group 1 to 30.2 syllables in Group 2, before dropping in Group 3 to 9.7. Concerning possible differences in the number of words, Kruskal-Wallis tests showed that there were statistically significant differences in speaking rates, cross-talk pausing, the total amount of silence, the percentage of silence, length of pauses, and the use of L1 among the three groups of EFL learners and native speakers. The post hoc tests of pairwise comparisons revealed that native speakers differed from all three EFL groups. The speaker will also discuss the issue of production, in particular how individuals can be more aware of their fluency to provide more meaningful, fluent and productive interactions.**

***Index Terms*—Fluency, shyness, proficiency, hesitation phenomenon.**

I. Introduction

On paper, with the right test scores, students can seem to be representatives of genius. It seems logical to assume that with more proficiency, there will be increased fluency, more accurate grammar, and more lexical and syntactical complexity. Often this line of proficiency is viewed as rising and linear for all three dimensions of language, so much so that a high TOEFL or TOEIC scores immediately open the gates for many job seekers. However, businesses often do not fully understand the complexity of L2 oral discourse, so many of their new trainees may be ill-equipped to handle many overseas negotiations. Furthermore, there are many cultural traits that can impact conversation or writing, and for many Japanese, the tendency is to be cautious and reserved. Many younger Japanese also do not have the confidence to express their opinions on a wide range of topics, or to disagree; moreover, there is often an aversion to trying out new vocabulary that may have been learned, so safe and banal interactions can become quite commonplace. Actual usage of a language becomes complex when considering cross-cultural pragmatics such as status, cultural beliefs, norms, gender issues, and the context that might be involved in any one particular discourse. Most EFL learners have not had enough interactive experiences and training in order to deal with a variety of problems that they might encounter. To cope, many learners might withdraw and limit their interactions to safe transactions.

The aim of this study, therefore, is to examine how dysfluency and oral grammatical accuracy change with increasing proficiency as denoted by TOEIC scores. It seems commonsensical to assume that with a greater knowledge of grammatical forms, and a broader range of vocabulary that EFL learners will be able to express themselves effectively and engage in a broader range of speech acts, and interactive roles. In short, this paper attempts to better understand the nature of spoken output over a range of proficiency and if standardized test scores are useful measures for language acquisition. Comparisons then will be made with the fluency of native speakers to show differences regarding fluency rates and with acoustic, lexical and syntactical dysfluencies.

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II. Review of Literature

A. Dysfluency

While the issue of fluency has had more than enough attention in the literature, the issue of dysfluency often is sidelined to those with speech impediments or given little attention in comparison. Chambers (1997, p. 541) [1] makes the observation regarding dysfluency, "Speech rate alone cannot be what contributes to the feeling that, as a listener, we are interacting with a foreigner." What appears significant from research in this area is: (a) the frequency of pauses rather than the length, (b) the length of run (the number of syllables between pauses, (c) the places of pauses in an utterance, (d) the transfer (or not) of pausing pattern from L1 to L2.

Chambers goes on to say that the concept of fluency is confused, multi-layered and due to these variables and that the validity of the judgments (of fluency) made by assessors is seriously in question. Essentially, research on dysfluency has been divided into two camps, with one group viewing dysfluency as a means of correcting oneself (Heeman, 1997, [2]; Shriberg, 1999), [3] and those who view it as a natural part of conversation, often with a pragmatic function (Clark & Wasow, 1998, [4] Allwood *et al.*, 1990 [5]). The latter group will refer to dysfluency with terms as speech repair, hesitation, self-repair, whereas researchers like Shriberg

view dysfluent speech as having filled pauses, hesitations, and rewordings. Similarly, Yaruss (1998) [6] in his real-time analysis of speech dysfluency adds in other criteria such as hesitations, interjections, revisions, unfinished words, phrase repetitions, word repetitions, prolongations, syllable repetitions, blocks (inappropriate timing for initiation of a phoneme or release of a stop element), and multi-component (combination of dysfluencies right in a row). Despite the research on this topic, conclusions are difficult to make due to differing instrumentation, methodologies, text genre, and languages, which makes replication or comparisons difficult.

Another issue with dysfluency is how EFL learners can have a "mask" of fluency by limiting the complexity of their speech, resorting to a series of short and "safe" sentences. Szmrecsanyi, (2004) [7] points out that complexity (or scope) can be understood by either taking into account pure length, duration and size of the unit or by appealing to notions, which are not related to these constructs. Yuan and Ellis (2003, p.2) [8] also agreed with this concept of equating complexity with phrasal and clausal complexification by stating, "Measures of complexity are generally based on the extent to which subordination is evident." (e.g., the number of clauses per T-unit or c-unit. In some studies, lexical complexity has been assessed by means of type-token ratio.) For many other scholars, reducing complexity to type-token ratios and to the number of clauses does not provide for an in-depth understanding of the term. Skehan, (1996, p. 22) [9] notes that complexity "concerns the elaboration or ambition of the language that is produced" and that complexity should also take into consideration "learners preparedness to take risks." Complexity, as Ellis & Barkusizen notes (2005, p.139) [10] is the "extent to which learners produce elaborated language" and is often related to the syntactic and lexical aspects of narrative performance. Of course, complexity has little meaning if the speaker's fluency is so weak that it interferes with meaning or the overall impact of the narrative. While there is syntactical complexity, there is also the issue of lexical density, a measure of the relationship between grammatical items and high- and low-frequency lexical items of oral performance; taking into account the use of academic words that an EFL learner can use is also a key variable to fluency.

A third issue, particularly with dialogic interactions, is the fragmented and unintegrated issue of the syntax, and of minimal responses. In research on Japanese youths, (Long, 2017), [11] found that minimal responses made up a total of 10% to 24% of the discourse, with fillers like *ah, yeah, uh / huh-uh, oh* being the most prevalent along with one or two-worded replies. The reasons for this include passivity or indifference, with both speakers just repeating each other's words as their turn, A second issue comes with minimization is used as a function of highlighting meaning, or showing agreement. This is done through echoing or repeating a key word or phrase that the speaker had said. A second reason for minimal responses (MR) and fragmentation is to highlight meaning or show agreement, with speakers giving grunts of approval or echoing the speaker's comments; thirdly, participants may not want to disagree or to cause any annoyance, so MRs are used to hide answers or deflect a situation.

In this case, minimal responses might reflect the listener's confusion, anger, stress or fear. Minimal responses also might mask outright disagreement, and help to deflect a particular point of contention. Of course, there are factors like a poor attitude, lack of motivation, stress, time-pressure, status issues, and a variety of pragmatic issues, but it is important that individuals become more attuned to their responses, and the 'turn-taking' in discussions as well as how they provoke interest.

III. The Study

A. Rationale

The study is motivated by the pressure on students to increase their standardized test scores, while believing that these scores or benchmarks are indications of progress in their speaking skills and fluency. The data should reveal how fast (if at all) students progress from one range in proficiency to another (as denoted by TOEIC test scores). The variables include production (number of words / mean length runs (MLRs); furthermore, a comparison of EFL students' fluency with native speakers will be conducted to clarify issues in regards to pause frequency, pause duration, pause location, micropausing, production, and dysfluency.

B. Research Questions

The research questions are as follows:

1. Are there significant differences among the three groups of EFL learners (based on TOEIC test scores) in regards to the number of words and mean length runs?

2. How does dialogic fluency with each group of Japanese EFL learners differ from that of native speakers, in regards to speaking rates, and acoustic, lexical and syntactical dysfluency?

The hypotheses are as follows:

(H1) There will be no significant differences in the number of words or mean length runs among the three groups.

(H2) There will be no significant differences in acoustic, lexical and syntactic dysfluency between all groups and native English speakers.

C. Procedures

Twenty-seven Japanese students were asked to give a self-introduction monologue, which was then followed by a three-question dialogue. They were then asked to sign permission forms allowing them to be videotaped and the sessions to be transcribed for research purposes. Students did not know of the contents or questions of any topics beforehand. The interviews were conducted in April and May of 2017. Sessions ranged from 2.01 minutes to 11.1 minutes with the average speaking time being 6.52 minutes. Students were first asked to introduce themselves, which formed the monologue for the session. The dialogue was based on having them discuss their friends, then their family, and about their major and why they chose it. Based on the TOEIC scores of these participants, three groups were formed, with the first group having scores that ranged from 150 to 370, the second from 371 to 570, and the third from 571 to 770.

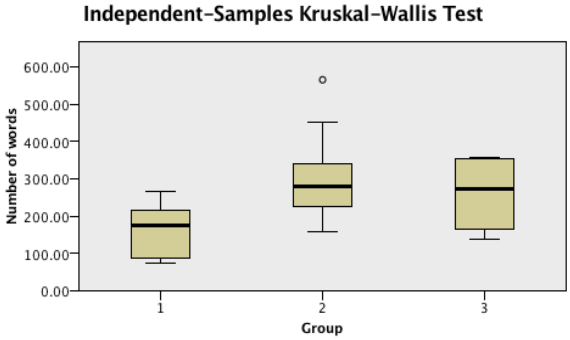
D. Corpus

The interactions, which were videotaped and transcribed, make up the Japanese University Student Fluency Corpus (JUSFC2018), containing 23,539 words. Students were not paid for their interviews; coding of the transcripts reflects the Conversational Analysis Conventions. There are three examples of transcripts from the three groups, starting at the lowest range. This corpus and others can be seen at <genderfluency.com>, which allows educators to see the problems concerning balance, meaning, initiative, dysfluency (acoustic, syntactical and lexical), and the importance of developing strategic competency along with fluency.

IV. Results

To address the two research questions, Kruskal-Wallis tests were used. The Kruskal Wallis test is a non-parametric test that enables one to test the null hypothesis for multiple samples that come from identical population distributions. A significant chi-square statistic indicates that at least one of the groups is different from the others; however, it does not indicate how many of the groups are different from each other. When the obtained value of the chi-square statistic is significant, pair-wise comparison were used to locate the source of variation.

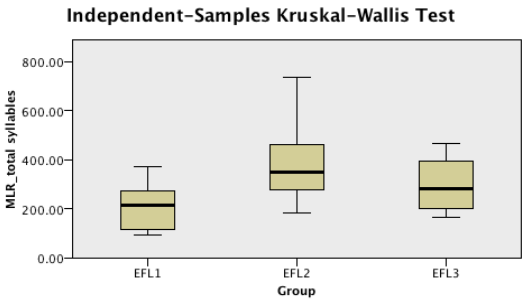
As for the first research aim, concerning possible differences in the number of words, a Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was a statistically significant difference for the variable of the number of words among the three EFL groups ($^2(2) = 8.492$, $p < .014$). The post hoc tests of pairwise comparisons revealed that EFL group 1 was significantly different from EFL group 2 ($p < 0.05$) such that participants in EFL group2 spoke a greater number of words than those in EFL group1. In regards to mean length runs, significance was also noted: ($^2(2) = 7.1668$, $p < .028$), see Fig. 2; however, no statistically significant differences were found in the other pairwise comparisons, see Fig. 3. The first hypothesis is rejected.



Total N	26
Test Statistic	8.493
Degrees of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.014

1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Fig. 1. Kruskal-Wallis Test for the number of words for the three groups.



Total N	26
Test Statistic	7.168
Degrees of Freedom	2
Asymptotic Sig. (2-sided test)	.028

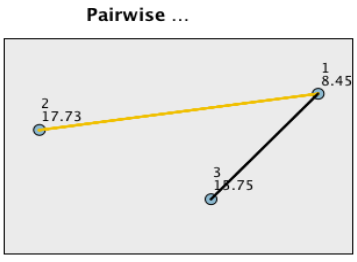
1. The test statistic is adjusted for ties.

Fig. 2. Kruskal-Wallis Test for mean length runs for the three groups.

The increases in fluency (for the factor of production), see Table I, both variables showed improvement in groups 1 to 2, and how these gains were negated when examining groups 2 and 3. For the average number of words spoken, there was a 85.5% increase from group 1 and 2, but a -13.9% decrease for Groups 2 and 3; likewise, for MLRs, a 169.6% increase for the first two groups followed by a -67.8 decrease for the most proficient groups.

TABLE I: Descriptive Statistics for Dysfluency Variables

Groups		1	2	3
Speaking time Monologue		10.2	180.1	123.1
Dialogue		174.6	197.7	185.3
Speaking Time total		284.2	377.8	308.7
Number of Words		162.6	301.7	259.5
Mean Length Runs		11.2	30.2	9.7



Each node shows the sample average rank of Group.

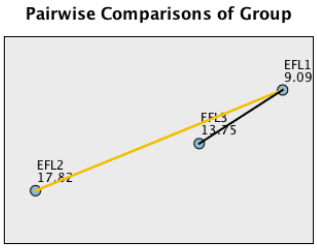
Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj.Sig.
1-2	-9.273	3.261	-2.843	.004	.013
1-3	-7.295	4.466	-1.634	.102	.307
3-2	1.977	4.466	.443	.658	1.000

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same.
Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.
Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Fig. 3. Pairwise comparison among the three groups for the number of words.

For the second research question, concerning possible differences in fluency between Japanese EFL learners and

native speakers, a Kruskal-Wallis test showed that there was a statistically significant difference. The variable of speaking rate A, showed significance among the four groups ($\chi^2(3) = 22.86$, $p < .000$), see Table II, as well as for cross-talk pausing, total amount of silence, percentage of silence, length of pauses, and the use of L1. The post hoc tests of pairwise comparisons revealed that native speakers differed from all three EFL groups, see Figs. 4 and 5.



Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj.Sig.
EFL1-EFL3	-4.659	4.465	-1.043	.297	.890
EFL1-EFL2	-8.727	3.261	-2.676	.007	.022
EFL3-EFL2	4.068	4.465	.911	.362	1.000

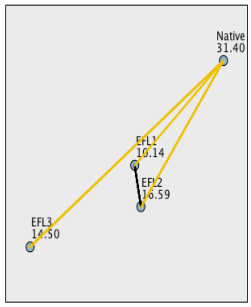
Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same.
Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.
Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Fig. 4. Pairwise comparison among the three groups for MLRs.

TABLE II: KRUSKAL-WALLIS TEST FOR DYSFLUENCY VARIABLES

	Chi Square	Asymp.Sig
Speaking rate A	22.865	.000
Micropauses	13.651	.003
Cross-talk pausing	14.811	.002*
Total Amount of silence	10.800	.013*
Percentage of silence	18.229	.000*
Length of pauses	18.902	.000*
Mispronounced words	8.658	.034
Word fragments	2.204	.531
Use of L1	12.192	.007*
Abandoned sentences	5.060	.167
Retracing	10.801	.013
Repetition	12.216	.007
MLRs	24.861	.000*

Note: DF = 3



Sample1-Sample2	Test Statistic	Std. Error	Std. Test Statistic	Sig.	Adj.Sig.
EFL1-EFL3	-4.364	6.151	-.709	.478	1.000
EFL1-EFL2	-6.455	4.492	-1.437	.151	.905
EFL1-Native	-21.264	4.603	-4.619	.000	.000
EFL3-EFL2	2.091	6.151	.340	.734	1.000
EFL3-Native	-16.900	6.233	-2.712	.007	.040
EFL2-Native	-14.809	4.603	-3.217	.001	.008

Each row tests the null hypothesis that the Sample 1 and Sample 2 distributions are the same.
Asymptotic significances (2-sided tests) are displayed. The significance level is .05.
Significance values have been adjusted by the Bonferroni correction for multiple tests.

Fig. 6. Pairwise comparison among the three EFL groups and native speakers.

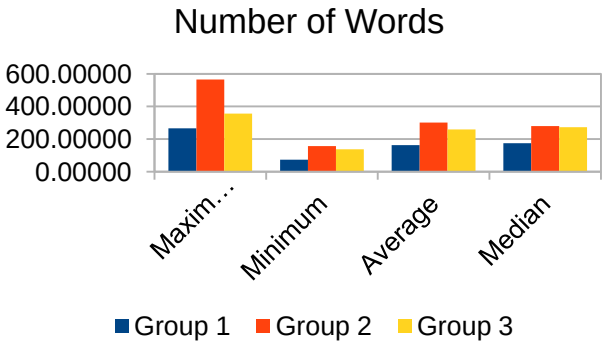


Fig. 7. Number of words for groups 1, 2, 3.

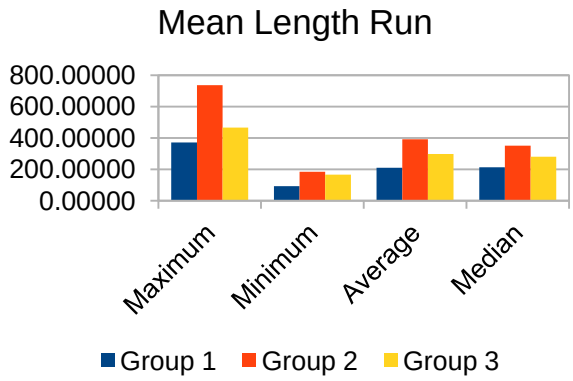


Fig. 8. Mean length runs for groups 1, 2, 3.

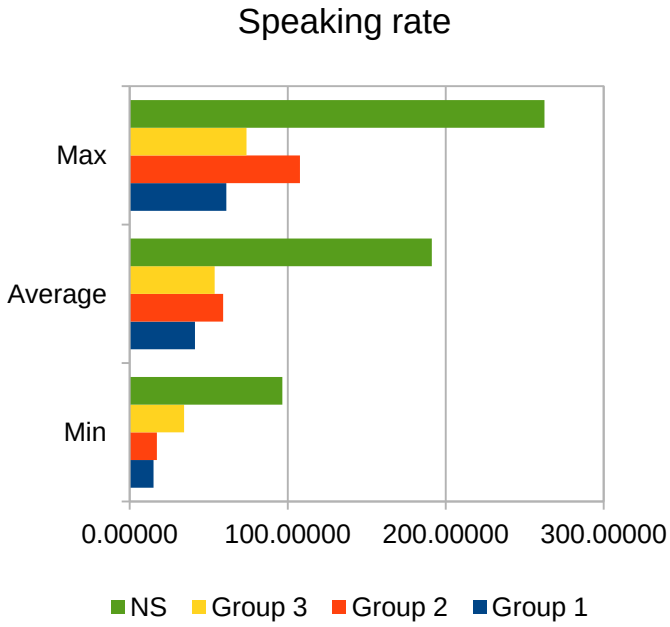


Fig. 9. Speaking rates for groups 1, 2, 3.

V. DISCUSSION

The results of this preliminary study indicate that fluency does not necessarily correspond with the proficiency provided by TOEIC scores. The TOEIC test (Listening & Reading) was used in this research, not the TOEIC (Speaking & Writing), which might have had different results. Nevertheless, our experience of proficiency tests has shown little relation to actual fluency. The results did show that variables such as the number of words, MLRs, cross-talk pausing, amount and percentage of silence, length of

pauses and the use of L1 do have significant differences among these groups of EFL learners and native speakers. Based on these data, classroom pedagogy should address issues relating to these issues, and to help students speak longer and faster. One of the problems is that people rarely think of how to express their ideas in more syntactically complex ways, or with more lexical complexity; conversations seem to take on a life of their own, and self-introductions tend to focus on a specific set of ideas, feelings, experiences, which will be expressed in a certain way. Thus, change in regards to fluency and content will often be minimal in these types of interactions. Nonetheless, there is a real need for educators and researchers to look more closely at *depth*, *production*, *coherence*, and *interactivity*, as the corpus indicates that students are resorting to a series of simple sentences and phrases to express their ideas.

These results do show that research into fluency needs expand beyond its principle construct of complexity, accuracy, and fluency (CAF) as major research variables and to take into consideration issues such as production, complexity and balance. It is also crucial to help students improve their speaking rate, especially with more lexical or syntactic complex material, see the appendix, for examples of student output. As for specific tasks and techniques for improving fluency in the classroom, teachers can then read out exemplary discourses using shadowing so that students can get used to saying various expressions, comments, and questions at the rate that a native speaker would say them. Furthermore, timed gambits are helpful in that pragmatic elements are often included in the scene along with videotaping timed interactions (having students read material that is more syntactically and lexically complex over time while decreasing the amount of time in which to complete the task) and then to have students to evaluate their performance.

In short, it should be noted that the issue of truly understanding one's fluency and dysfluency comes only through examining videotapes of one's speech, and if time allows, transcription and analysis. Gains in fluency are hard to come by, but more so when there is little to no awareness of how poor one's fluency is and what needs to be addressed to make real progress.

VI. Conclusion

The results of this study help to clarify some of the issues of dysfluency as it relates to increasing proficiency and the speech of native speakers. These data indicate that specific issues such as pausing, repetition, short MLRs, pace (lack of stress) and grammar should be given priority in the classroom. Improving fluency is complex (unlike addressing other skills) as it involves helping students cope with poor self-esteem, the fear of public speaking as well as overall confidence issues. But progress comes with consistently videotaped performances in which teachers guide them to be their critics and to help develop awareness of dysfluency. By understanding the impact of different kinds of dysfluency indicators, students can be more motivated to address those issues.

Other factors such as pronunciation and enunciation can also important to help EFL learners to make themselves clear and in reducing lexical dysfluency. As for reducing students' syntactical dysfluency, it is crucial to have students recognize the degree of repetition in their speech and think about how often they might rephrase their ideas. In regards to content and vocabulary, teachers could spend time on having students use different kinds of words (synonyms) along with more academic words to improve the overall appearance of fluency as this is a very noticeable aspect to fluency

By using and being more aware of the real aspects of the authentic language in one's own lives, it can help us to improve day-to-day language and cultural awareness. Indeed, use the time here at this conference to improve one's message? Are we making our point with our audience, colleagues, friends, and students? Is there any aspect of our own delivery or content that should be somehow improved? In the end, it is not how accurate one is in a second language, but how fluent one is, as the *performance* (activation of knowledge) is going to determine the credibility and ability of the speaker. Gains in fluency come not with just improving in speaking rate and vocabulary but also in significantly decreasing acoustic, lexical and syntactical dysfluency. This study has indicated that the variables that are significant are the amount of silence in one speech, re-wording of ideas, repetition, and making subtle changes in their vocabulary, i.e., using more academic words and more varied ones.

Appendix. Examples of Monologues

Japanese EFL Learners

Monologue TOEIC Score 155

My name is K.H. [[ ]] I'm from (.) Kitakyushu. (laugher) eto (13.3) (Japanese) my favorite food is gyoza. Eh↓, I (3.2) I like tennis. Eto↓ (20.1) I like fishing, eh: (15.3) eh: um:

Number of words: 35

Monologue 01:16.2 (76.2 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 15.1

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 4.5

Monologue TOEIC Score 255

I'm O.W., I'm from Tagawa city. (7.9) my (.) friend (Japanese) (1.8) my new friend is have Kawasaki Wataru, Ota Uki, and Kawaguchi (Ushite-kun, (laugher). Thank you.

Number of words: 28

Monologue 0:43.5 (43.5 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 41.2

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 12.8

Monologue TOEIC Score 375

I am H.A. I am 18 years old um: my hobby is playing sports. Especially,. I played volleyball. Uh My hobby is watching movie and watching sports um (1.3) everyday I watched baseball game on TV. (6.4) My favorite song is Urenshigenshi and (2.0) every day I when I, when I go to school, I listening song, (11.7) I'm from Fukuoka uh ah, eh (33.8) eto, I tripped in Tokyo by oneself. Uh. I like Tokyo and Osaka; uh there are a lot of store and amusement park. Um I want to live in Osaka (.) in this year. Uh, I want to go University Studio Japan and Tsutensaku.

Number of words: 112

Monologue 02:16.6 (136.6 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 59.6

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 22.1

Monologue TOEIC Score 490

Uh: my name is C.N., I'm from Fukuoka, uh: I'm eighteen years old, and my hobby is watching Youtube. Uh I like Youtuber and I often (beauty) (cosme-up) Youtube video and I like K-pop ando I'm interested in foreign country because when I was a high school student, I went to New Zealand for two weeks, and I had a great experience for example, (.) I ate New Zealand local food and I learned New Zealand's um: religious, and so (2.8) oh, I I want to learn more any other country's culture, so I want to go to a lot of countries. ah: I want to go to Dubai, and Hawaiiand Korea uh: Korea's food is very delicious, so I want to go to Korea and Dubai, Dubai's building is very high so I want to see Dubai's building, and I want to (.) see Hawaii's beautiful sea, so I want to go to Hawaii. And Uh: ando I will join American football club in this university because American football team members is very kind. So I want to join American football club and uh (.) uh: I like changing my hair. My, so I often change my hair Uh, I have a dog [[ ]] yeah, so my dog is very small, (.) so Chihuahua so very small, uh so I want to, I like animals, in the future, I want to I wanna have rabbits, rabbit is very cute so I want I want rabbits, um: and: (.) when I was a high school student I joined cooking club. Uh I often cooked many things so I can make a lot of special food. And uh:: (.) I like table tennis. Table tennis is very funny. Oh: (.) oh; and uh, I like ice cream, and sushi. When I went to Taiwan, um: Japanese sushi shop, there are Japanese sushi shop, kaiten sushi, do you know sushi roll [[ ]] uh, there are sushi roll in Taiwan so I was very surprised. And sushi is very famous food in the world. So I like sushi.

Number of words: 352

Monologue: 03:54.6 (234.6 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 107.7

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 105.1 (736 syllables)

Monologue TOEIC Score 575

My name is S.O. I have eh: (1.9) one sister, old sister, I belong to Kyushu Kogiodaikau, eh: (.) (electricity), because I I would like to (2.9) I would like to learn about (9.0) PC Monitor. I like playing the game, and play PC so, I (11.4) I I(.) come to there, I: . . .

Number of words: 57

Monologue: 01:17.7 (77.7 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 34.4

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 6.6 (240 syllables)

Monologue TOEIC Score 620

My name is Y.T. [[ ]] Eto, I'm from Oita. Eto I live in Tobata alone. Eh (3.1) eh (1.9)(laughter). (Japanese) Eto. (laughter). (6.1) I (belong) (Japanese) site. (3.0) I (1.5) in high school I joined brass band club. I played trumpet and trombone, eh (laughter) (4.2) I (laughter) practice is (.) practice was very hard. (3.2) ( ) (4.8) But we: were able to participate in Kyushu (Japanese) so I think (1.9) it was very good (experience).

Number of words: 82

Monologue: 01:39.5 (99.5 seconds)

Interviewee: Speaking Rate B: 54.4

Interviewee Overall Average Mean Length runs: 9.7 (166 syllables)

Monologue TOEIC Score 705

Myself? I'm T.K., and I'm nineteen years old (2.2) Uhm: (5.3) my my favorite thing is carand I I like to watch car race when F1, Nascar, uh (5.7) uh: (4.6) myself. (14.3) Uh, I lived in America for two years when I was um, third, uh first grade course, junior high school student, and I (was) (in) San Francisco, and (5.4) and then I think it was greatgreat experience to me (1.7) and (6.4) so I like to watch foreign (genre), foreign movie like Prison Break.

Number of words: 93

Monologue: 01:58.6 (118.6 seconds)

Interviewee Speaking Rate B: 52.3

Interviewee Average Mean Length runs: 8.0 (321 syllables)

Native Speaker

Ok. My name is Mason Cal Lampert; I was born June fourth, 1977 in Toronto Canada, uh: I have an older sister and my parents went through a divorce when I was young where my mother eventually re-married a man who had an existing daughter:therefore I have a step-sister. My mother and that gentleman went on to have a child who would become my half-brother, so in total I have a (.) younger half-brother, a full sister and a step-sister, uh all of whom live in various places in Canada. Um: I grew up in the suburbs of Toronto and: attended school as children do, played a lot: ah tried to socialize, got into a little bit of trouble but never anything too big before I wisened up and decided I wanted to continue into ah post- secondary education; ah: after graduating high school (.) I took some time off to work and gain some experience working, and worked mostly in retail. I worked at uh restaurants, movie theater, um: during that time, it firmed up my: (.) uh desire to go on to post-secondary education because I did not want to end up working in retail for the rest of my life. Ah: I then ah entered Trent University which is in (Petersbureuo) Ontario Nineteen-ninety-seven. Ah I did a four year (.) Bachelor of Arts Degree and: on completion of that or nearingcompletion of that I started to think about my next steps in life and: the prospect of going into a company and work a nine to five was a little daunting and I still had a exploratory nature, and I wanted to ah to follow through with. I looked into teaching abroad (.) um and found the JET program which at that time was in its hey-day. And I applied to the JET program and actually, initially did not get a position shortly afterwards put on the waiting list. And shortly after that was offered a position which I accepted. And I was put, (.) placed in a high school in Iizuka, which is in Fukuoka prefecture in Japan. And I: went on the JET program initially plan to spend about a year um just exploring Japan and traveling when I could but I ended up falling in love with the country and feeling like a year went by too quickly so I ended up re-contracting and staying (.) um at the same time I also met my wife, my future wife at that time (.) um: and we ended up getting married here in Japan, had a daughter and after the end of my JET program contract uh we decided to go back to Canada for a while and so she could experience Canada and I also wanted to explore some other career opportunities; uh I found that I really enjoyed teaching but it was the only thing I had done

from graduating university other than part-time retail work so I wanted to try some other things so we went back to Canada I did a three month internship at a: (.) IT company that produced software, procured hardware for self-serve retail kiosks with the touch-screen and uh the company was a start-up company which actually went through a split which made my role more important an uh the work became an all-consuming part of my life for the next three years (.) ah ↑ it was a lot of business trips, a lot of high stress IT start-up environment um: where the boss of the company (.) is sometimes over-selling the capabilities of the company, where the rest of the company has to play catch-up. It was a lot of stress-related things like that and a lot of time away from home, which my wife didn't appreciate being stuck in the cold Canadian winter. Um:, so three years went by whereupon my wife started itching for a return to Japandropping hints, the first few I was able to ignore but after a few she had a different look in her eyes saying I want to go back to Japan and: she caught me at a good time I was working sixty plus hours a week and doing conference calls in the middle heh of the night and so I thought about again teaching and the satisfaction that came with teaching in Japan so I decided to go back and we as a family moved back to Japan with my wife, daughter, and I um: I started working at a Eikawa which is an English conversation school (1.1) in uh Munakata city which is about hour outside of Fukuoka city, in Fukuoka prefecture about an hour away from my wife's hometown so her parents were not too far away and: my wife is a nurse so she went back to work and we were both working full-time and um: (1.0) what was the next step, then I enrolled in Master's program with the University of Nottingham in Applied Linguistics and I started chipping away at that part-time, and around the same timemy wife became pregnant again with our son; also around the same time we decided to build a house so there were ah a culmination of a number of life-changing events happening around the same time ah one of which was me quitting the (.) English conversation school and seeking part-time work at universities, (.) colleges and private work as well. So, for the last three years or so I've been doing that working part-time at universities, colleges, um I worked at a high school part-time as well for a couple of years and: like I said chipping away at the Ma:sters Degree, trying to you know continue study Japanese as well which has always been something I focused on while I lived here and just generally trying to enjoy being a family man, raising the kids and uh: (.) being happy.

Start time: 00:01

End time: 05:56

Total Time Speaking for Interviewee: [05:54.1] (354.1 seconds)

Amount of Silence: (2.1) seconds

Percentage of Silence: 0.5%

Average mean length run: 479 (1437 syllables) (1408 meaningful syllables)

Articulation rate: 4.0

Fluency Rate A: 243.4

Fluency Rate B: 238.5

Micropauses: 14

Note: First Pause at 4:38

Conflict of Interest

I have submitted the work without a conflict of interest.

Author Contribution

Robert Long is the sole contributor of this work, but does acknowledge the role of Aleksandar Radovanovic for his help with statistical output.

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