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The Development of an Oral Test to Assess the English Proficiency of Bilingual Teachers

Ruth Inzinna

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THE DEVELOPMENT OF AN
ORAL TEST TO ASSESS THE ENGLISH
PROFICIENCY OF BILINGUAL
TEACHERS

FINAL THESIS

Submitted to the Graduate Committee of the
Department of Curriculum and Instruction
State University College at Brockport
in Partial Fulfillment of the
Requirements for the Degree of
Master of Science in Education

by

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

The New York State Department of Education is issuing a certificate extension in bilingual education to teach an already established subject or area in two languages. This extension certificate goes into effect in September, 1983. Whenever a certificate or an extension is issued in a new area of study, an established set of criteria must be met by those seeking the certificate of extension. This is usually done by following a prescribed course of study at a college or university. The extension being offered in bilingual education is different because not only must a designated course of study be completed but in addition, the candidate must demonstrate proficiency in two languages, English and the second language of instruction.

Although there are established tests to reliably assess language competency of prospective bilingual teachers, no such test has been adopted by the State of New York. Furthermore, the state education department has placed the responsibility of establishing language competency on those colleges and universities that offer degrees in bilingual education.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study is to develop an oral English
proficiency test and administer it to a pilot group of students.

Limitations of the Study

In addition to an oral test, a complete language proficiency exam would probably include sections that test reading comprehension, translation, grammar, vocabulary, written composition, and listening skills. It is not the scope of this master's project to develop a complete test as that would be more appropriate for a doctoral dissertation. The focus of this paper is oral proficiency testing by means of the Oral Interview as developed by the Foreign Service Institute in Washington, D.C.

A Historical Overview of the Oral Interview Test

The Oral Interview Test was developed because the United States government needed to know the linguistic capabilities of its employees in the Foreign Service. Howard E. Sollenberger (1978), Director retired, of the Foreign Service Institute provides the historical development of the interview test used by the Foreign Service Institute in a paper entitled "Development and Current Use of the FSI Oral Interview Test presented at the 1978 conference held at Georgetown University. Since Sollenberger was at the Foreign Service Institute while the test was being developed, he is best able to report on the many changes and refinements that took place from the time
of the test's inception in 1952 up to its current format which was arrived at in 1969.

In the 1950's commercial and diplomatic ties were developing among the many nations of the world. The United States was finding itself unable to communicate face-to-face with the representatives of the various countries. In 1952 the Civil Service Commission developed foreign language testing in order to compile a registry of all persons in the United States government with skills or experience in foreign languages and countries. The early tests consisted of six defined levels of proficiency, but there was no separation of the different language components. These early tests were shelved because of a change in administration, the Korean Conflict, and the growing bureaucracy of the federal government that didn't consider language testing important.

In 1955 the government realized the increasing needs of establishing contacts around the world. The early tests ordered by the Civil Service Commission were first administered to military officers who were unable to measure up to the criteria established in the test.

On November 2, 1956, a new language policy was established by the Secretary of State. All those serving in Foreign Service posts were to be encouraged to learn a second language with enough proficiency to use greetings, attend social events, ask simple questions, give directions, recognize proper names, streets, and locations. The testing
was to be carried out by the Foreign Service Institute. After this policy was announced, the Foreign Service Institute was forced to develop reliable test procedures.

A two part test was developed; the first part tested speaking ability and the second, reading capacity. Five levels were defined. Since the Foreign Service Institute was providing instruction in the languages as well as administering the testing many problems developed. Students often received a compassionate "3" from a professor who had been instructing the candidate whereas an applicant for the test who had not been in class might be judged in a more arduous manner.

In 1957 mandatory testing of all Foreign Service Officers was ordered and the test had to be improved. A checklist of five factors was developed including accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Each factor was to be rated individually on a six point scale. The checklist worked. There were far fewer complaints among the candidates as well as a higher degree of consistency among the examiners. By the 1960's the scale developed by the Foreign Service Institute was being used by many other government agencies such as the CIA, the Peace Corps, and the Defense Language Institute. It was also adopted by the Supreme Headquarters of the Allied Powers in Europe. Recently use of the Oral Interview Test has been spreading to many universities and colleges throughout the United States and Europe.
Given the established validity and extensive use of the Oral Interview as developed by the Foreign Service Institute, it becomes an appropriate model for determining language proficiency of prospective bilingual teachers as required by the State of New York.

New York State Requirements of Certification for Teachers in Bilingual Education

To qualify for a certificate extension in bilingual education, a candidate must meet the requirements specified by the Division of Teacher Education and Certification of the State Education Department in three separate areas of teacher training: preparation, practice, and language proficiency. Only the conditions relating to language proficiency pertain to this study. "In addition to the required study and practice, the applicant should demonstrate proficiency in both English and the other language of instruction other than English on an approved examination" (N.Y. State Dept. of Ed., 1983, unpaged).

The Education Department of New York does not intend to be involved in language proficiency training and has placed that responsibility on the colleges and universities offering teacher preparation courses in bilingual education.

For applicants completing State registered programs in bilingual education or E.S.O.L., the responsibility for establishing English and language of instruction proficiency rests with the preparing institution. An
appropriately completed Report of Language Proficiency in English and/or the other language must be filed for each person completing a State registered program (N.Y. State Ed. Dept., 1983, unpaged).

The test developed from this study will be considered for adoption by the bilingual multicultural teacher training program of SUNY College at Brockport.
CHAPTER TWO
REVIEW OF LITERATURE

When it became apparent that the various colleges and universities in New York State offering teacher training in bilingual education are to be responsible for assessing the language proficiency of their students, a suitable evaluation procedure would have to be developed. This project presents an Oral Interview Test that is to be used by State University of New York College at Brockport, an institution that offers teacher training through the bilingual multicultural program there. Therefore, a review of literature was completed based on material found in ERIC (1970-82), principally material presented at the Georgetown University Round Tables on languages and linguistics. Other materials were found through sources identified in the Drake Memorial Library, SUNY College at Brockport.

The Oral Interview as used by the Foreign Service Institute

The procedure for administering the Oral Interview Test (Wilds, 1979) consists of an interview conducted by a testing team made up of an observer, who is usually the senior member of the team, and an interviewer. The interview begins with the social amenities such as greetings, introductions, and comments about the weather. The candidate's responses
will determine in what direction the interview will go. If he has trouble with the preliminaries, he will be asked to talk about himself and his family; and the interview will be brought to a close. If, however, he has no trouble with the first few questions, he will be led into natural conversations about his job, his family, new events of the day, right up to topics relating to his profession. As the questions continue, the interviewer will be attempting to elicit complex grammatical constructions as well as check on the limitations of the candidate's vocabulary and comprehension. Trained examiners can usually establish a rating within the first five minutes of the interview, and the remainder of the interview is used to verify the examiner's preliminary rating. If the candidate manages to avoid certain grammatical forms or if the examiner is unable to pinpoint a numerical score for comprehension or fluency, the candidate may be asked to interpret a contrived situation for the examiner. The interview is an attempt to get at the examinee's linguistic capabilities and limitations in a controlled conversation. The test ends when the examiner has arrived at a rating for oral proficiency which is usually within twenty or thirty minutes. At the conclusion of the interview both the examiner and the observer independently fill out the "Checklist of Performance Factors" provided by the Foreign Service Institute. The checklist is a profile of the candidate's strengths and weaknesses, but it is also intended
to force the examiners to consider each of the five elements of the test and relate them to the sample of speech given by the examinee.

A weighted scoring system for the checklist has been derived from a multiple correlation with the overall S-rating assigned (R = .95). The weights are basically these: Accent 0, Grammar 3, Vocabulary 2, Fluency 1, Comprehension 2. Partly because the original data came mainly from the test in Indo-European languages and partly because of a widespread initial suspicion of statistics among the staff, use of the scoring system has never been made compulsory or even urged. The result has been that most examiners compute the checklist score only in case of doubt or disagreement. Nevertheless the occasional verifications of the checklist profiles seem to keep examiners in all languages in the line with each other.... Those who once distrusted the system now have faith in it (Jones and Spolsky, 1975, p. 32).

The purpose of the checklist (see page 11, Table I) is to provide a record of an examiner's evaluation of certain aspects of a candidate's oral language. The aspects rated by the Foreign Service Institute include accent, grammar, vocabulary, fluency, and comprehension. Beside each factor is a scale for rating purposes. Only the extremes of each factor are defined with six possible levels of each factor. The examiner using the FSI scale is instructed to rate each language component according to the following:

1. Accent - consider the pronunciation of individual sounds (consonants and vowels), as well as pitch and stress.

2. Grammar - consider individual words and arrangements of words for grammatical accuracy.
3. Vocabulary - consider adequacy of vocabulary (both sufficiency and accuracy) for the topics discussed.

4. Fluency - consider general smoothness or evenness of performance.

5. Comprehension - consider both completeness and speed of understanding.

These factors aren't considered to be necessarily related to each other and each factor is considered separately. Each of the five factors listed in the checklist have six levels of proficiency, each of which has been defined by the Foreign Service Institute in the Testing Kit (Adams and Frith, 1979).

The proficiency level assigned to each language component is weighted in order to obtain an overall language proficiency rating, which the Foreign Service Institute designates as an S-rating as shown by the following table.
TABLE I

ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY CHECKLIST
OF THE
FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

<p>| | | | | | |</p>
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1. Accent</td>
<td>foreign</td>
<td>native</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Grammar</td>
<td>inaccurate</td>
<td>accurate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Vocabulary</td>
<td>inadequate</td>
<td>adequate</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Fluency</td>
<td>uneven</td>
<td>even</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5. Comprehension</td>
<td>incomplete</td>
<td>complete</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Absolute Rating S-
Examiner
Interviewer
TABLE II

WEIGHTING OF SCORES OF THE ORAL LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST OF FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
<th>6</th>
<th>(A)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grammar</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>30</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Vocabulary</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>24</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fluency</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>12</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>23</td>
<td>------</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The values obtained from the checklist for each language factor are placed in Column A and totalled. The total score is then converted to a final S-rating according to the following conversion table.
TABLE III

CONVERSION TABLE OF THE ORAL
LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST OF THE
FOREIGN SERVICE INSTITUTE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
<th>Score</th>
<th>Rating</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>16-25</td>
<td>S-0+</td>
<td>43-52</td>
<td>S-2</td>
<td>73-82</td>
<td>S-3+</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>26-32</td>
<td>S-1</td>
<td>53-62</td>
<td>S-2+</td>
<td>83-92</td>
<td>S-4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>33-42</td>
<td>S-1+</td>
<td>63-72</td>
<td>S-3</td>
<td>93-99</td>
<td>S-4+</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

When there is a disagreement between the examiner and the interviewer, the policy established by the Foreign Service Institute is that the final rating be established by the average of their total scores.
The rating given is usually based on the examiner's interpretation of the definitions of each rating as set down in the Testing Kit. Before making a final determination of the rating of an individual candidate the raters confer. This conferring may take the form of a written vote or a verbal discussion. In case of an irreconcilable disagreement, the lower rating is always given by the Foreign Service Institute. "The rationale for this rule is that the rating is a promise of performance made by the FSI to assignment officers and future supervisors. The consequences of over-rating are more serious than the consequences of under-rating, however disappointing the marginal decision may be to the examinee himself," (Wilds, 1979).

Surprisingly, there is very little discrepancy among raters whether they are participating in a live test or making ratings from tape-recordings of interviews. Because retesting for research is not part of the program at the Foreign Service Institute there are at least two questions that have not yet been answered concerning the Oral Interview Test. It is not known if a speaker's foreign language proficiency fluctuates from day to day nor if his performance varies according to the competency and efficiency of the examiners.
Levels Of Proficiency are described in the following definitions:

Elementary Proficiency
S-1 Able to satisfy routine travel needs and minimum courtesy requirements. Any person at the S-1 level should be able to order a simple meal, ask for shelter or lodging, ask and give simple directions, make purchases, and tell time.

Limited Working Proficiency
S-2 Able to satisfy routine social demands and limited work requirements. At the S-2 level a person can handle most social situations, casual conversations about current events and has a speaking vocabulary sufficient to express himself.

Minimum Profession Proficiency
S-3 Able to speak the language with sufficient structural accuracy and vocabulary to participate effectively in most formal and informal conversations on practical, social, and professional topics.

Full Professional Proficiency
S-4 Able to use the language fluently and accurately on all levels normally pertinent to professional needs.

Native or Bilingual Proficiency
S-5 Speaking proficiency equivalent to that of an educated native speaker (Wilds, 1979).
Problems Associated with the Oral Interview Test

No matter how well accepted or established a test may be, it must be able to withstand a statistician's scrutiny and testing for reliability and validity. Clark (1975) raises many questions about testing for oral proficiency through an interview. According to him, oral proficiency tests can be categorized as either direct or indirect tests. A direct test is one that involves actual conversation or dialog between the candidate and the interviewer. The Oral Interview is a direct test of oral proficiency. An indirect test consists of any oral activity other than a direct conversation. The candidate may be required to describe aloud objects or pictures, or to participate in an oral cloze-tape technique in which the candidate supplies deleted words or letters from a continuous text. This type of language production that is rarely used in daily life has been labelled indirect by Clark.

The direct test establishes face validity because it is testing verbal ability through a direct conversation. The indirect test must establish correlational validity with an already established direct test. If a high correlation is found between an indirect test and a direct test than the indirect test may serve as a predictor of what a student would probably score on a more direct and oral proficiency test. This would establish a "congruent
or concurrent" validity of the indirect test. In addition to validity any test whether direct or indirect, must also be reliable. It must demonstrate consistency in a student's performance regardless of how many times that test is administered.

After dealing with the matter of validity and reliability Clark (1975) raises the question of practicality. Many have questioned the practicality and expense of providing two raters for each candidate tested as well having to allow up to thirty minutes for each interview. Before any test is adopted, the cost, the administration, the scoring procedures, and the time element must all be taken into account. A test can be administered and scored mechanically or by a person. The scoring can also occur simultaneously or be delayed. Clark believes that human administration and scoring of the test as done by the Foreign Service Institute approaches real-life communication as much as possible in a testing situation, thus establishing the face validity of the Oral Interview Test. In other words it actually tests what it claims to test.

In considering the reliability of the test, the question of whether to use a simultaneous or delayed scoring method must be evaluated. There are conflicting views as to which method is more reliable, and Clark (1975), would like to see "a comprehensive experimental study comparing the two procedures" (pg. 15).
Another possible weakness of the oral interview technique is that certain candidates might be able to control the interview. If this type of test is to be used to measure a candidate's oral proficiency it is important that the interviewer ask the right questions to elicit a variety of grammatical and lexical structures. The Zepeda/Saldate Spanish Language Proficiency Test also uses an interview as a measure of oral ability. In this test the candidates are asked to respond to three questions which are then rated on a given scale. The examiners rate pronunciation, structure, and vocabulary on a scale of one to five. The three questions asked are: 1. ¿Por qué quiere ser profesor(a) bilingüe? 2. Describa sus intereses fuera del ambiente educativo. and 3. ¿Qué papel desempeña la educación dentro de nuestra sociedad? This investigator felt that these three questions, although general and allowing freedom in answering, do not permit the candidates to respond normally. The questions are presented to the candidate one-by-one without any conversation on the part of the interviewer.

Difficulties relating to the Oral Interview Test include the time element and the man power needed to administer the test. Clark (1975), believes that carefully controlled studies should be made to determine if the interview could be shortened and also if the test would be as valid with only one person administering the test. Wilds (1975), says that the interview conducted by only "one interviewer testing alone
is likely to lose both his skills as an interviewer and his perceptiveness as an observer to a degree that cannot be justified on the grounds of economy" (p. 34).

Robert Lado (1978) considered the question of too much being asked of the oral interview. He began by comparing an oral interview with a doctor's examination. Just as it is impossible for a doctor to make a diagnosis from questioning a patient so the interview is not enough to establish language proficiency. He agrees that an Oral Interview Test does have face validity because it tests the candidate's speaking ability. He does not feel that it is a true test of complete language competence because the vocabulary and structures used are limited to the experiences and interests the candidate has encountered in the second language. Another deficiency of the test, according to Lado, is that it only tests conversational ability with no consideration for extended formal speaking. It also does not provide for testing of the cultural features of a language.

Lado believes that the Oral Interview Test should not be used in isolation to determine a candidate's proficiency in a target language. Although he recognizes the face validity of the interview to measure speaking ability, he feels that it should be further structured to provide a better sampling of situational and socio-linguistic com-
ponents of the language. The interview should not be used to measure listening skills. Grammar and vocabulary should not be measured by an interview. These important language factors should be tested in writing.

Jones (1975) sees one of the biggest problems with the oral interview as that of evaluating at the higher proficiency levels. He claims that it is not difficult to distinguish between a 1+ and a 2 however, there is not a specific enough differentiation between a rating of a 4 and 5. The defined standards set by the Foreign Service Institute do not show a developed proficiency. One of the reasons for this might be that too few candidates reach these levels, and so the raters do not have as much experience in these ratings. Jones says that a candidate with a level 3 rating who has confidence in the language and is aware of his weaknesses can probably talk fluently enough of his own interests, thus often completely evading the grammatical structures being tested. This type of examinee can overwhelm the raters with the quantity and content of his speaking ability.

Jones has developed four techniques that will enable examiners to elicit language samples at the 4 and 5 rating levels. These techniques are:

1. a picture vocabulary task
2. an anecdote telling task
3. a repetition task
4. a situational task
He conducted an experiment in the German language; using ten native speaking Germans as a control group against ten non-native German bilinguals. For the picture vocabulary task he assembled pictures of common items that are probably not listed on routine vocabulary lists. The items included a bottle cap, the calf of a leg, a dog's nose, a dumbbell, a hubcap, an earlobe, a weather vane, a ball of yarn, a gas pump, and a placemat. After presenting the pictures to both groups and asking for an identification of the objects, he found that among the native Germans three used the target words, five chose synonyms for some of the objects and two were unsure of what some of the pictures represented. Of the non-native German speakers no one could identify more than three of the objects. Some of the examinees knew the word for yarn but not the word for ball of yarn. Most knew the word for leg but not for the calf of the leg. The same thing occurred with the distinction between ear and earlobe.

The second task involved the telling of an anecdote in German. The native German speakers tended to enhance the story by adding filler and transition words, whereas the non-native speakers tended to follow the story exactly, committing many grammatical errors while concentrating on telling the anecdote. The third task, consisted of repeating sentences of increasing lengths. The native speakers had little or no difficulty with this task while the diffi-
culties experienced by the non-native speakers increased as the sentences lengthened. The fourth task involved the setting up of a situation by the examiner such as: You are looking for the post office. You ask directions by saying _____________. or You are invited to a party you don't wish to attend, You say ___________. Jones believes that tasks such as these should be incorporated into the Oral Interview Test to identify ratings above a 3+.

Use of the F S I Oral Interview outside of the United States Government

Despite the questions raised about the Oral Interview Test it is presently in use by many establishments outside of the United States government. In addition to the Foreign Service Institute, Brigham Young University has one of the most ongoing comprehensive cultural and language training programs in the United States. There are three hundred language instructors providing intensive language training to some five to six thousand candidates yearly. There are between seventy-five and eighty certified Foreign Service Institute testers on the campus. After an eight week immersion program in a target language students are given the F S I Oral Interview Test before being sent out abroad to serve as missionaries for two years. The University also trains raters in the procedures of the Oral Interview Test.
Stephen L. Graham (1978) of Brigham Young University reported on an in-house evaluation of the F S I testing program. In 1977, 6,193 interviews in twenty four languages were given at Brigham Young. Of these, 763 were selected for evaluation. The target languages were Spanish, French, German, and Japanese. Of the 763 chosen interviews there were 156 discrepancies between the original ratings and the reevaluated taped ratings of the interviews. Of these 156 discrepancies, 155 were a +. Therefore, in the results of the in-house evaluation at Brigham Young University in the four languages selected, the testers agreed 92.7% of the time without consulting one another. In the few cases of disagreement the difference was rarely more than a +. The study concluded that F S I Oral Interview Test fulfills the requirements of the large language training program at Brigham Young University.

Use of Variations of the F S I Oral Interview Test

As more and more states are adopting bilingual education programs the language proficiency of prospective bilingual teachers must be evaluated. New Jersey is one such state that has already enacted a law providing mandatory bilingual education in the public schools. In order to receive certification in English as a Second Language, teachers must provide evidence of native or near native
competency in English. All teachers in the bilingual program must demonstrate verbal and written proficiency in English and one other language. Once the standards were spelled out by the state department of education it was necessary to find an examination that would measure a teacher's ability to function in the classroom in English as well as a target language. Teachers must have the ability to completely comprehend the "talk" of children and parents. They must also have the ability to communicate with children and parents on school related topics. In addition they must also be able to present subject matter in the classroom, carry on class discussion, ask and answer questions, explain concepts, and discuss special interest topics (Brown, 1976).

The New Jersey Department of Education went to the Foreign Service Institute for help in developing a test to fit the requirements of bilingual certification. An Oral Interview Test was developed specifically for New Jersey and named the Language Proficiency Interview. This new test allows for a shorter interview because most of the people in the field of language testing seem to concur that the first five minutes of an interview establishes a rating and the remainder of the time verifies the proficiency of the examinee. However, depending on the candidate's ability and the examiner's inclinations the interviews may take as long as thirty minutes.
Once New Jersey decided to use the Language Proficiency Interview as a means of assessing bilingual teachers, it became necessary to select and train interviewers. Since the Educational Testing Service is located in Princeton, it was decided to use this site as a training location. A two-day workshop was planned to train and certify potential interviewers. The interviewers who were selected from the various state colleges and the state university are either native speakers of the test language or who have an S-4 rating in that language as established by the Foreign Service Institute. Since these interviewers would be rating prospective bilingual teachers who wish to be certified it was suggested that the interviewers be from different areas of New Jersey, that they be language teachers with some experience in evaluation, that they be comfortable with recording equipment, and that they have effective interviewing skills. Once these raters have been certified, they would then conduct Language Proficiency Interviews at their individual colleges and universities to assess future bilingual teachers.

Certification for teachers in bilingual education, modern foreign languages, and English as a Second Language went into effect in Massachusetts September 1, 1982. In addition to demonstrating language competency candidates in Massachusetts must also exhibit a knowledge of the culture and history of the target language. Five levels of competence were established in the areas of Speaking and Listening, Writing, Reading, and
History and Culture. The requirements in Massachusetts which are already in affect seem to be quite rigid as the candidate must achieve a level 4 rating in the target language to receive bilingual certification (Language and Culture Proficiency Criteria, Massachusetts 1980).

When New Jersey selected the Language Proficiency Interview (LPI) developed by the Foreign Service Institute as a means of assessing language proficiency, it was following examples set by Massachusetts and Illinois. In Massachusetts the scale used by the Foreign Service Institute was adopted for certification purposes, and Illinois uses it to establish a "cut score" for certification. It is also used in Illinois to screen applicants entering a training program for bilingual teachers.

Spanish Variation at the University of Arizona

Veronica Carlisle-Zepeda and Macario Saldate IV (1977) at the University of Arizona addressed themselves to the problem of developing a test to assess a native English speaker's proficiency in Spanish. They were very concerned about students entering a bilingual program without a solid foundation in the Spanish language. They recommend that as a prerequisite for entering the program the establishment of some basic competencies in the second language, which, in this case is Spanish. "In no instance can one assume that a teacher already involved in bilingual, bi-
cultural instruction is somehow automatically proficient in the second language.... Some sort of measure is also needed at this level" (Zepeda/Saldate, 1978, p. 320). The authors developed a proficiency test, "The Zepeda/Saldate Language Proficiency Test" that assesses the proficiency needed by classroom teachers in a bilingual program. The test content and scoring is modelled after the Foreign Service Institute Oral Interview Test. The test does not attempt to the extremes but rather concentrates on minimal language proficiency needed by a classroom teacher in a program.

Conclusion

The Oral Interview Test has been in existence for more than twenty years and it is still considered as a model for language proficiency testing. It was originally developed for the government; and today it is being tested, modified, and adapted for use in university language programs throughout the United States.
CHAPTER THREE
DESCRIPTION OF THE BROCKPORT ORAL INTERVIEW
ENGLISH LANGUAGE PROFICIENCY TEST

The State University College at Brockport is among the colleges and universities in New York that offer teacher preparation in bilingual education. Bilingual education is being recognized by the State of New York as an area of education in which teachers must be certified. As of September, 1983 a certificate extension in bilingual education is being issued in New York State. In addition to completing a course of study in bilingual education, those seeking this certificate extension must demonstrate language proficiency in both English and the language of instruction used by the bilingual program. Since the State Education Department is not providing language proficiency testing but has designated that responsibility to State registered programs in bilingual education, such as the one at SUNY College at Brockport, it has become necessary to establish a method of testing language proficiency in English as well as second language. The second language of the bilingual program at Brockport is Spanish.

SUNY College at Brockport has an excellent department of foreign languages in addition to the bilingual multicultural program there. Together, the faculty of the
foreign language department and that of the bilingual multicultural program developed a Spanish language proficiency examination. This is used to test students of either program. With the state requirement that applicants for a certificate extension in bilingual education demonstrate a proficiency in English as well as the other language, it became necessary to develop a test of English Proficiency. This project is a report of the development of such a test in English Proficiency, specifically of the oral interview.

The Oral Interview

The first task in creating an oral English language proficiency test is to determine what should be included in such a test. The proficiency requirements already established for certification by the states of Massachusetts and New Jersey, as well as those proposed by the State of New York, "The Zepeda/Saldate Spanish Language Proficiency Test", and the Testing Kit published by the Foreign Service Institute served as models for the development of the test.

Once an oral interview was considered to be a part of the English language proficiency test to be used at SUC at Brockport, it became necessary to adapt it to the situation. The investigator was privileged to observe an oral interview in progress. The technique was being used to measure the Spanish language proficiency of a group of
potential bilingual policemen who had just completed an intensive oral Spanish course. The interviews which lasted from ten to twenty minutes were conducted by two professors who took turns asking questions of the candidates. Each interview was taped and began with introductions which insured the identification of the candidate. The interviews were conducted in a friendly manner in an attempt to ease any anxieties. If the candidate demonstrated little or no ability to converse in Spanish, the interview was quickly brought to a close. If, however, the candidate was able to converse in Spanish, he was soon led into a role-playing situation which demanded more language than he was capable of. At the end of each interview the professors reviewed their ratings. Only two disagreements between raters were noted among twenty candidates. These disagreements were only a half rating apart. Thus, the observed oral interviews supported the high inter-rate agreement maintained by the Foreign Service Institute.

The Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test is intended to combine a controlled conversation led by interviewers with three particular questions or topics that should elicit a range of language ability. The first question is designed to put the candidate at ease and start talking about himself. The interviewer asks the candidate about his background in a casual manner interjecting specific questions if needed, in order to
elicit responses. The second question or topic asks the candidate to present information and express an opinion. Again the interviewer is provided with specific back-up questions to give the candidate a chance to relate to the topic as well as help form a response. The third topic asks that the candidate support an argument.

The oral interview section of the Brockport test is seen as a demonstration of a hierarchy of language ability. The candidate is led from talking about himself to presenting a personal opinion and finally to stating and supporting a case. This is done by means of a simple conversation along the lines suggested by the Foreign Service Institute. Since this interview is being used to rate potential teachers topics two and three relate directly to education.

Both the Foreign Service Institute and the Zepeda/Saldate test use a scale to determine a candidate's proficiency. The scale is very important to the Foreign Service Institute testing because careers may rise or fall according to the rating given. Bilingual teachers, on the other hand, either have sufficient command of two languages to be in a bilingual program or they don't. This investigator feels that it isn't necessary to actually grade each candidate but instead determine if the candidate has a minimal proficiency to perform in a bilingual classroom. This is why the Oral Interview Test presented
here has a pass/fail rating on each section. Each candidate is expected to pass each section of the test in order to be rated as having demonstrated oral proficiency in the English language.

Training of Raters

The FSI trains raters and administrators in weekend workshops. The trainees receive lectures about the history of the Oral Interview Test and see videotapes of the Oral Interview in use. After being given this background the trainees are divided into small groups of three or four led by trained personnel. The checklist and weighting system are explained and mock interviews are held. Finally the trainees are given tapes of previous interviews and asked to rate them. All personnel involved in the administration of the FSI Oral Interview must participate in refresher training courses every two years. Staff members who are located too far away from Washington, D.C. participate in retraining through the mail. This constant monitoring of FSI personnel is a contributing factor to the high rate of agreement among raters of the FSI Oral Interview.

The development of the Oral Interview Test used at SUNY College at Brockport was done by an individual who was trained by members of the faculty at SUNY College at Brockport. The faculty members had participated in a
workshop training session at SUNY Brockport that was given by member of the staff at the Foreign Service Institute. This test developer was given a thorough orientation to the procedure required by the Foreign Service Institute. She was also given the opportunity to independently rate interviews conducted by the faculty members and participated in discussions establishing ratings of these interviews according to Foreign Service Institute practices. Once she felt confident in the test procedure and rating, she met with two graduate students and explained the procedure and the test score sheet of the Oral Interview Test that was to be piloted at Brockport. Each interview was to be taped to allow monitoring of the test by the faculty members of the Bilingual Multicultural Program, and both of the graduate students were to serve as raters of the tapes after the interviews were completed.

**Scoring the Brockport Oral Interview Test**

The questions listed on the Oral Interview Score Sheet (see page 41) that are to be answered by the test administrator enable the interviewer to gauge the candidate's language proficiency without using a scale or weighting system. Each question relates directly to an oral language component; and when combined, establishes the fact that the candidate either is or is not sufficiently competent in English. If the rater answers yes to each of
the questions, the candidate has demonstrated a proficiency level necessary for a bilingual teacher. If the examiner is unsure of a rating, he/she can listen to the tape for a reassessment or ask another rater to listen and rate any segment for which there may be a doubt during the actual test.

The Score Sheet questions for the first topic focus on comprehension, intonation, and vocabulary. If the candidate doesn't understand what is being said directly to him/her, he/she doesn't have to be further tested; and a friendly conversation can be quickly brought to a close without distressing the candidate too much.

The second question relating to the first topic 'Were you able to understand everything that was said?' rates the candidate's intonation patterns. Poor intonation patterns may not always interfere with a person's ability to communicate if the listeners are patient and educated; but since this test is serving as a measure for a future teacher of young children, the ability to communicate easily is crucial. The examiner may wish to continue the test in order to be sure of the candidate's control of English pronunciation and intonation patterns, but if the interviewer must always be reminded that the candidate is attempting to demonstrate sufficient language competency to serve as a bilingual teacher who may be assigned to kindergarten and first grade classes. If the interviewer doesn't
understand what the candidate is saying the interview
should be brought to a close very quickly but in a
friendly manner.

The third question of the first topic, 'Did the
candidate have sufficient vocabulary to talk comfortably
about his/her background?,' relates to a very limited
vocabulary. If a candidate can't easily talk about him­
self and his personal background, he certainly doesn't
have sufficient language ability in English to teach in
a bilingual program. The first topic can be directly re­
lated to the established S-1 rating of the F.S.I. Oral
Interview. An S-1 rating is not sufficient for a teacher
in a bilingual program.

The second topic, the question relating to television,
test the candidate's listening ability, grammatical struc­
ture, and vocabulary. When the question is presented the
candidate is asked to express an opinion as well as discuss
two sides of an issue. There is no time limit for any of
these questions and the candidate should be allowed 'thinking
time;' but once he/she starts speaking, the examiner is
listening for grammatical structure as well as sufficient
vocabulary to express an opinion and to be able to easily
discuss an every day issue. Any candidate unable to pass
this section can not be considered sufficiently proficient
in English to function as a bilingual teacher.
The third topic, which asks the candidate to state a case, is the deciding factor in this language proficiency test. This section should not be presented to a candidate who wasn't successful in the previous sections of the test. Although this interview test presently doesn't have a weighting scale, it is felt that the order of difficulty in the types of responses required by each topic is sufficient to determine the language proficiency of a prospective bilingual teacher.

General Procedures for Administering the Test

The test should be administered in as comfortable a setting as possible. It is recommended that it be conducted by two people: one who controls the interview, and the second who operates a tape recorder and rates the candidate during the interview. At any time the rater may participate in the conversation, especially to clarify a certain point or note a particular grammatical structure. The taping of the interview allows for a reassessment at a future time, for a discussion of possible disagreement between the interviewer and the rater as well as for an aide in the training of future interviewers. The tape recorder should not be the primary focus of the setting. The candidate and the interviewer face each other along the side of a desk or table. The table should have papers and books on it to distract attention from the microphone.
and the tape recorder. The rater sits a little behind the interviewer next to the tape recorder and fills out the Oral Interview Score Sheet. The rater participates in the greetings and introductions, making sure that the tape recorder is on when the candidate is asked his/her name. He/she also makes sure that the candidate's name is correctly spelled on the score sheet. The interview should be conducted in a friendly manner with both the interviewer and the rater expressing genuine interest in whatever the candidate says. The candidate should be allowed time to formulate an answer, and all circumlocution should be received favorably.

Although the examiner and the rater are to maintain a friendly conversational attitude they should be careful not to supply words and verb forms. Questions may be asked in such a manner as to provide certain words that can be used in an answer to check whether or not the candidate uses these provided words. An example of this that the interviewer might ask relating to the second topic, 'Would you allow your own children to watch T.V.?' The candidate's response to a question such as this gives the rater and the interviewer considerable insight into the English language proficiency level of the candidate.

Throughout the interview the examiner and the rater must keep in mind that they are checking the language pro-
iciency of a 'would-be' classroom teacher in a bilingual program. As soon as the interviewer and the rater are satisfied that the candidate has demonstrated proficiency or lack of it, the interview can be brought to a close. The candidate should be dismissed from the interview with thanks and a friendly farewell. At this point the rater and interviewer should check to see if they are in agreement with their individual ratings. If not, they should plan to reassess the interview from the tape at a later time. The rater and interviewer may also wish to exchange roles for the next interviewer.

**The Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test**

The following is the Oral Interview Test in the format to be used by the controller of the interview.

**General instructions to be given to the candidate:** This interview is being recorded not to intimidate you but to give us a chance to review your performance level. The interview is constructed around three topics that we feel you can discuss in English. One of the topics asks you to express an opinion, please be assured that we are not concerned with your opinion but with the language you employ to express your opinion. Please begin the interview by identifying yourself to us.
**Topic One:** Narrative background information

You are presently enrolled in the Bilingual Multicultural program here at Brockport. Would you please tell us why you chose this field of study? Include in your remarks when you began studying English.

**Specific backup questions:**

1. When did you begin to study English?
2. Why did you come to Brockport?
3. What subject or age group would you like to teach?
4. Where would you like to teach?

**Topic Two:** Presenting information and expressing a personal opinion

Television is an important part of life in the United States. It has both critics and supporters in the field of education. Would you discuss some of the positive and negative aspects including a personal opinion of television relating to education.

**Specific backup questions:**

1. Do children watch too much television?
2. How has television influenced American family life?
3. What impact has television had on education?
4. Would you use television in your classroom?

**Topic Three:** Presenting an argument

You are a member of a curriculum committee along with four veteran teachers, which is to select a new reading
series. Three teachers have expressed a preference for a series that you consider to be inferior. What might you say to convince them they should reconsider their choice?

Specific backup questions:

1. What are some of the features that you would expect to find in a good reader?

2. What kind of follow-up activities should be included with each story?

3. How should a reader develop a child's cognitive abilities?
ORAL INTERVIEW SCORE SHEET

CANDIDATE

I. NARRATIVE BACKGROUND

Did the candidate comprehend the question? ______

Were you able to understand everything that was said? ______

Did the candidate have sufficient vocabulary to talk comfortably about his background? ______

Comments:

P ______  F ______

II. DISCUSSING AN ISSUE AND EXPRESSING AN OPINION

Did the candidate mention at least one positive and one negative aspect of television? ______

Did the candidate employ varied grammatical structures with minimal errors? ______

Did the candidate express an opinion? ______

Comments:

P ______  F ______
III. STATING A CASE

Did the candidate demonstrate sufficient language ability to present an argument for his point of view?

Does this candidate have enough command of English to function as a teacher in a bilingual program?

Comments:

P_____ F_____

ORAL INTERVIEW: P_____ F_____ DATE:____________

ADMINISTRATOR: ____________________________

RATER: ____________________________
CHAPTER FOUR
PROCEDURES USED IN THE PILOT ADMINISTRATION

The issuing of a teaching certificate in bilingual education by the New York State Department of Education has made it necessary for teacher preparation programs in this field to examine the language proficiency of their students. The State Department of Education requires that each registered state program ascertain the language proficiency of prospective bilingual teachers in both English and the language of instruction. Since SUNY College at Brockport has proposed one of the state registered programs, it must provide language proficiency testing. A review of the literature regarding the use of oral interview tests of language proficiency was completed, and principally that regarding the use and variation of the F S I Oral Interview. A test was developed following the general format of the F S I Oral Interview. This chapter describes the pilot use of the developed test.

The test was administered on Saturday morning, April 24, 1982, to 23 students enrolled in either the Bilingual Multicultural Teacher Training Program or the Spanish major of the Foreign Language Department of SUNY College at Brockport. Some of the students were graduates but most were undergraduates. The primary language of six of the stu-
dents was Spanish, and the remaining seventeen had English as their primary language.

The testing was done in Hartwell Hall of SUNY College at Brockport. The Oral Interview Test was given in conjunction with a written test of English proficiency, the Michigan English Language Assessment Battery. The students assembled in a large classroom on the second floor of Hartwell Hall. The purpose of the test was explained by a member of the faculty of the Bilingual Multicultural Program, and the personnel administering the test was introduced.

The oral interviews were conducted in a small room adjacent to the room where the written test was given. A tape recorder with a remote microphone was the major piece of equipment used. The room contained several chairs and a table. The tape recorder was placed at the far end of the table with a chair beside it for the rater. The score sheets were next to the tape recorder. Two other chairs were placed along side of the table in front of the rater's chair. The microphone was in the center of the table. Papers were on the table to reduce the importance of the microphone. The two chairs, facing each other, were for the candidate and the interviewer with the interviewer sitting in the one in front of the rater.

The pilot of the Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test was administered by two graduate students of the Bilingual Multicultural Program at SUNY College at Brockport. The students were interviewed at the same time that
the written test was being administered. They were pulled out one by one by a faculty member of the Bilingual Multicultural Program. This pull-out system was established by a faculty member in order to expedite the testing process. (It is not recommended that this procedure be used as the interruption of one testing situation for another may affect the outcome of the examination.)

The interviews were conducted in a friendly manner. The rater and the interviewer changed roles frequently. Each interview lasted about twenty minutes.
CHAPTER FIVE
RESULTS OF THE PILOT TEST

The purpose of this study was to develop a means of appraising the English oral language proficiency of students in the bilingual teacher training program. A review of the literature regarding the oral interview as a language proficiency test was completed; a test was developed and administered to a pilot group.

Table IV (page 47) lists the results of the candidates who participated in the pilot. Of the twenty-three students, seven were native Spanish speakers; and the rest were native English speakers.

Table V (page 48) lists the results by individual sections. It illustrates two types of failures. Candidates #1 and #3 failed the second section of the test and therefore were not presented with the third section. Candidate #5 passed the first two sections but was unable to pass the third section.

Table VI (page 49) is a comparison of the results of the test by native language. The sixteen native English speakers or 100% of the native English speakers passed the test. Of the native Spanish speakers, four or 57% passed the test while three or 43% of the native Spanish speakers failed the test.
**TABLE IV**

OVERALL RESULTS OF THE PILOT TESTING

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Student</th>
<th>Primary Language</th>
<th>Interview</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Failed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9</td>
<td>English</td>
<td>Passed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10</td>
<td>Spanish</td>
<td>Passed</td>
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<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>English</td>
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<tr>
<td>12</td>
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<td>23</td>
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<td>Section II</td>
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TABLE VI
COMPARISON OF RESULTS BY NATIVE LANGUAGE
OF THE
CANDIDATE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Native Language</th>
<th># of Candidates</th>
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<th>Failed</th>
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<td>4 57</td>
<td>3 43</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>English</td>
<td>16</td>
<td>16 100</td>
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</table>
CHAPTER SIX
SUMMARY, REFLECTIONS, SUGGESTIONS
AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The New York State Department of Education is requiring language proficiency tests in order that candidates qualify for a bilingual extension to a teaching certificate. Language proficiency must be established in both English and the other language of instruction. The purpose of this study was to develop an oral test of English proficiency that could be used by the Bilingual Multicultural Teacher Training Program at SUNY College at Brockport.

The test presented here is a variation of the FSI Oral Interview that was developed after a review of literature showed that the Oral Interview Test of the Foreign Service Institute is considered to be the model of language proficiency testing. The FSI test was originally created for government use, but today it is being modified and used in university language programs throughout the United States.

The oral test developed for use for the Bilingual Multicultural Teacher Training Program at SUNY College at Brockport is a controlled oral interview. Since its purpose is to establish language proficiency of prospective bilingual teachers, the questions asked are directly related to education. Although it might be possible to conduct this test with only one adminis-
trator, the test was developed with the idea of two examiners; one to conduct the interview and the other to rate the language segments being produced by the candidate. The interviews are recorded for reassessment at a later time if it is so wished, for training other raters, for reexamining language segments that may have created a rating disagreement between the rater and the interviewer and for use as a check on general rate agreement.

The test was piloted in April, 1982, on twenty-three students enrolled in either the bilingual teacher training or the foreign language programs at SUNY College at Brockport. The results showed that twenty students passed the test and three were rated as unable to demonstrate sufficient English language proficiency to serve as bilingual teachers. The three students who failed the Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test in the pilot study will be allowed to repeat the test in one year after further work on their English language proficiency.

Reflections on the Pilot Testing

The pilot of the Brockport Oral Interview English Proficiency Test ran smoothly from an administrator's point of view. The rater and the interviewer reviewed the questions and checked the tape recorder before beginning the interviews.

The test seemed to fulfill its intentions. Although the students were anxious before the test (both native and non-
native English speakers expressed anxiety) they relaxed to some degree once the test got going. The test was conducted in a friendly conversational manner and allowed the students to begin by talking about themselves. The second topic, television, is so much a part of the life and culture of the United States that almost all of the students were able to talk comfortably about television and express personal opinions. The third topic, relating to serving on a curriculum committee was found to be too specific and difficult to answer. Many of the students had not yet taken the New York State required reading courses, and others had not yet done any student teaching. (The test developer assumed that all candidates taking the test would have completed these requirements.) The administrator and the rater recognized the problem with the third topic and decided to question each candidate about his/her program of study and ask for particular information about one of the courses mentioned. The third question, however, was presented as stated in the test to each candidate and the circumlocution was used only when necessary.

The Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test must be passed by all candidates seeking a teaching certificate in bilingual education from SUNY College at Brockport. The test can be repeated a year later as the Bilingual Multicultural Program at SUNY College at Brockport offers language proficiency tests every spring. Before repeating the test
The students should be offered a remedial course in both grammar and conversation.

**Suggestions for Changes in the Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test**

The Oral Interview Test should be offered at a separate time from the written English proficiency test. It could be done in conjunction with the written test, either before or after, but not at the same time. Candidates should not be pulled away from one testing situation and placed in another and then returned to the first. The interruption of a testing program probably greatly affects the outcome of the test especially in a second language. This pull-out method cannot possibly lower the anxiety level of the student that should be kept to a minimum in an oral language test.

The review of literature that was completed for the development of this test included *The Zepeda/Saldate Spanish Language Proficiency Test* (Carlisle Zepeda, Saldate, 1977). An interesting feature of this language proficiency test is that it includes the testing of oral reading. Oral reading is an important skill that all teachers employ, and bilingual teachers are no exception. Oral reading tests are often employed by reading specialists to check comprehension and language facility. Oral reading testing has also been incorporated into the Oral Interview used for English language placement testing done by the British Council in Hong Kong.
Michael Milanovic (1983) recommends that all oral language proficiency tests include oral reading testing. Oral reading can serve as a warm-up to actual language production and reduce the anxiety level of those taking the tests. Selections to be read orally may include recipes, labels, maps, signs and directions. A skilled interviewer could then begin a conversation relating directly to the reading selection. More advanced reading selections could be taken from newspapers, magazines, and books. The interviewer could ask for an opinion, an agreement, or disagreement. A conversation skillfully controlled from an oral reading stimulus might elicit more authentic language and reduce the anxiety level at the same time. One suggested change to the Oral Interview Test that was developed at Brockport is the inclusion of oral reading as a direct stimulus to language production.

Another change to the pilot test that should be made is in relation to the third topic. Instead of a single topic directed toward the teaching of reading, the candidates could be offered a choice of topics, and each would be allowed to select that which he/she can handle comfortably. Instead of the candidate being asked to discuss the chosen topic, he can be offered an opportunity to role play with the interviewer. Although the interviewer assumes a fairly passive role, he/she should respond in such a way as to stimulate a verbal reaction from the candidate and thus foster more
real language production. Situations or topics that could replace the third question in the Oral Interview Test that was piloted in Brockport might include:

1. calling a parent and setting up a parent/teacher conference
2. explaining to a parent that you believe his/her child has a vision problem
3. requesting student testing from a reading specialist
4. requesting a psychological work-up on a migrant child from a school psychologist
5. requesting another teacher take over your lunch room duty.

These situations could be presented to the candidate on individual cards and the candidate could choose which situation he wants to use in a role play with the interviewer. This method of language testing should yield more natural language from the candidate as well as give the candidate some control of the conversation. It lessens the emphasis on the testing and creates a spontaneous conversation related to education while maintaining the interview which is to determine whether or not the candidate possesses enough English language proficiency to become a teacher in a bilingual program.

A final recommendation for improving the Oral Interview Test that was piloted at Brockport would be the inclusion of a weighted checklist to improve the scoring of the test. Since the test is serving to determine only whether or not a candidate possesses sufficient language proficiency to
teach in a bilingual program, it is not necessary to employ as rigid a checklist as that used by the Foreign Service Institute. After careful evaluation of both the checklist and the definitions of the absolute ratings as developed by the FSI, a checklist considered to be sufficient to determine the English language proficiency of a prospective bilingual teacher would include three language components: accent, comprehension, and structure.

It is assumed that the candidates being tested would have more than minimal language proficiency. If a candidate demonstrated a very limited proficiency in each of the components listed he would be rated as a '1' and be recommended for remedial English language instruction. If the candidate is a native English speaker he would be rated a '5'. The weighted checklist (page 57), presented here is offered as an aid in determining a language proficiency cut-off point. The students in the Bilingual Multicultural Teacher Training Program at Brockport must achieve a '2+' to be considered language proficient in Spanish. That rating is from the FSI Oral Interview in Spanish that is used to determine oral Spanish proficiency by the Bilingual Multicultural Teacher Training Program at Brockport. The candidate would have to demonstrate the same minimal proficiency in English in order to successfully pass the Oral Interview Test.
TABLE VII

SUGGESTED WEIGHTED CHECKLIST FOR THE
BROCKPORT ORAL INTERVIEW ENGLISH LANGUAGE
PROFICIENCY TEST

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>1</th>
<th>2</th>
<th>3</th>
<th>4</th>
<th>5</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Accent</td>
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<td>(1)</td>
<td>(2)</td>
<td>(3)</td>
<td>native</td>
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<tr>
<td>Comprehension</td>
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<td>(2)</td>
<td>(4)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>complete</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Structure</td>
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<td>(3)</td>
<td>(6)</td>
<td>(9)</td>
<td>accurate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

To arrive at a final rating comparable to the ratings established by the Foreign Service Institute the values (the numbers given in parentheses) of each language component should be totalled and then divided by 5.
Recommendations for Further Study

The oral interview language proficiency test has been in existence for almost thirty years. During this time it has been tested and questioned by language experts, but it has still maintained a reputation for being the most reliable method of oral language testing available. A further study of the Brockport Oral Interview English Language Proficiency Test might be completed to determine if a weighted rating is necessary to determine the language proficiency of bilingual teachers or if a pass/fail rating is sufficient.

One of the many questions raised about using the individual oral interview as a language proficiency test is the cost. Further study of this method of testing might be to determine if language proficiency can be assessed without an oral test. A study of correlational predictability of a group written language proficiency test as compared to an oral interview group should be made.


Jones, R. L. (con't)


Wilds, C. "Assignment of + Ratings"
"Comments and Suggestions on F.S.I. Testing Procedure"
"Factors in Speaking Proficiency"
"F S I Language Proficiency Tests"
"Guia para los Examinadores"
"Language Proficiency Checklist"
"Methode a Suivre (Comments and Suggestions articles rendered in French by F S I French Staff)"
"On Testing for S-1+ and S-2"
Wilds, C. (Con't)

"Questions for Examiners"
"S-Ratings in Spanish: Criteria and Characteristics"
"Self-Appraisal of Speaking Proficiency"
"Suggested Topics for an Oral Test"
"Suggestions for Selection of Reading Materials for Tests"
"The Measurement of Speaking and Reading Proficiency in a Foreign Language"
