

## Second Language English Comprehensibility Global and Analytic Scales, Version 1.0

**Overall description of comprehensibility** (1 = low comprehensibility; 5 = high comprehensibility)

COMPREHENSIBILITY LEVEL	OVERALL DESCRIPTION OF COMPREHENSIBILITY (Summary Statement)
5	<p><b>Speech is effortless to understand</b></p> <p>Errors, are rare and do not interfere with the message</p> <p>**Sounding natively like or producing hesitation- or error-free speech is <i>not</i> necessary to achieve a level 5 (highest level)</p>
4	<p><b>Speech requires little effort to understand</b></p> <p>Errors minimally interfere with the message</p>
3	<p><b>Speech requires some effort to understand</b></p> <p>Errors somewhat interfere with the message</p>
2	<p><b>Speech is effortful to understand</b></p> <p>Errors are detrimental to the message</p>
1	<p><b>Speech is painstakingly effortful to understand or indecipherable</b></p> <p>Errors are debilitating to the message</p> <p>**Not enough <i>comprehensible</i> language is generated for coherent communication, confining the speaker to level 1</p>
UR	<p><b>Unable to Rate the speech</b></p> <p>No assessable speech sample is produced (e.g., unresponsive to the task, no articulation of English-like sounds)</p>

The process of developing the Second Language English Comprehensibility Scale is documented in the following article: Isaacs, T., Trofimovich, P., & Foote, J. A. (2017). Developing a user-oriented second language comprehensibility scale for English-medium universities. *Language Testing*. DOI: [10.1177/0265532217703433](https://doi.org/10.1177/0265532217703433)

COMP	PRONUNCIATION	FLUENCY	VOCABULARY	GRAMMAR
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation is <b>effortless to understand</b></li> <li>- errors do not interfere with the message</li> <li>- pitch variation may make the speech sound lively or engaging</li> <li>- sounding natively like is <i>not</i> expected</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- fluent speech, which is optimally paced, is <b>effortless to understand</b></li> <li>- hesitation markers are used at appropriate junctures or strategically to sustain listener attention</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- precise lexical choice relevant to the task is <b>effortless to understand</b></li> <li>- errors do not interfere with the message</li> <li>- nuanced idiomatic expressions may be present, depending on the task</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammatical use conveys precise meaning or nuance, resulting in speech that is <b>effortless to understand</b></li> <li>- errors do not interfere with the message</li> <li>- complex sentences may be used, depending on the task</li> </ul>
4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation requires <b>little effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors minimally interfere with the message</li> <li>- speech may be characterized by too many or too few variations in pitch, sounding disjointed or monotone</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- mostly fluent speech, which may be slightly too fast or slow, requires <b>little effort to understand</b></li> <li>- hesitation markers are generally used at appropriate junctures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sufficient lexical choice mostly relevant to the task requires <b>little effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors minimally interfere with the message</li> <li>- unusual or less familiar lexical expressions may be used</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammatical use mostly conveys precise meaning, resulting in speech that requires <b>little effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors minimally interfere with the message</li> <li>- a mix of simple and complex sentences are used</li> </ul>
3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation requires <b>some effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors somewhat interfere with the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- somewhat fluent speech, which is too fast or slow, requires <b>some effort to understand</b></li> <li>- hesitation markers are occasionally used at inappropriate junctures</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- simple lexical choice requires <b>some effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors somewhat interfere with the message</li> <li>- occasional gaps in vocabulary make the speech somewhat labored, although meaning is still roughly conveyed</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammatical use conveys general meaning, resulting in speech that requires <b>some effort to understand</b></li> <li>- errors somewhat interfere with the message</li> <li>- simpler sentences are used instead of more complex ones</li> </ul>
2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation is <b>effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are detrimental to the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)</li> <li>- production difficulties may obscure the meaning of a few words</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speech, which is markedly dysfluent or too fast, is <b>effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- hesitation markers are frequently used at inappropriate junctures</li> <li>- compensatory strategies are used to offset gaps in fluency (e.g., ideas are described in a roundabout way, self-correction)</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- limited lexical choice and frequent lexical errors are <b>effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are detrimental to the message</li> <li>- frequent gaps in vocabulary may make the speech labored or unelaborated</li> <li>- lexical chunks may be used to compensate for limited vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammatical use may obscure meaning, resulting in speech that is <b>effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are detrimental to the message</li> <li>- only basic sentence structures are used</li> </ul>
1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- pronunciation is <b>painstakingly effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are debilitating to the message (e.g., misplaced word stress, sound substitutions, not stressing important words in a sentence)</li> <li>- production difficulties may make words sound slurred or indistinct</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- speech, which is extremely dysfluent or much too fast, is <b>painstakingly effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- hesitation markers are very frequently used at inappropriate junctures, leading to halting or “broken” speech</li> <li>- no compensatory strategies are used to offset gaps in fluency</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- extremely simplistic or limited lexical choice and very frequent lexical errors make the speech <b>painstakingly effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are debilitating to the message</li> <li>- frequent gaps in vocabulary make the speech unelaborated or indecipherable</li> <li>- no lexical chunks are used to compensate for limited vocabulary</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- grammatical use obscures meaning, making the speech <b>painstakingly effortful to understand</b></li> <li>- errors are debilitating to the message</li> <li>- only very basic or fragmented sentences are used</li> </ul>
UR	Unable to Rate. Speaker does not produce an assessable sample of speech (e.g., unresponsive to the task, no articulation of English-like sounds)			

1 = low comprehensibility; 5 = high comprehensibility

**NOTE: The pronunciation and fluency criteria may weigh more heavily in assessments of comprehensibility than the vocabulary and grammar criteria**