



Use of L1 Private Speech in a Speaking Test Across School Grades*

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Received: October 15, 2021
Revised: December 15, 2021
Accepted: December 27, 2021

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*This work was supported by Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund of 2021.

ABSTRACT

Cho, Sookyung and Chanho Park. 2021. Use of L1 private speech in a speaking test across school grades. *Korean Journal of English Language and Linguistics* 21, 1232-1245.

L1 use has attracted many L2 scholars' attention, even encouraged as a scaffolding from a sociocultural perspective, but it has rarely been studied in an assessment context. This study investigates how test-takers use L1 in an English speaking test, as their age and English proficiency develop. This study conducts an English speaking test on 988 Korean elementary and middle school students of consecutive grades and investigates their use of Korean. The results reveal that they use L1 in self-regulation, translation, and transition and that their uses change from self-regulation, translation, to transition across age groups. These findings imply that L2 students depend on their L1 in an L2 speaking test and that their uses show different patterns as they grow older and L2 proficiency develops.

KEYWORDS

L1 use, English speaking test, private speech, self-regulating speech, translation, transition

1. Introduction

When second language (L2) teaching and learning was settled into a separate professional field independent of first language (L1) teaching and learning in the 1950's and 60's, the use of L1 in the L2 classroom was discouraged and disparaged. Bilingual students were prohibited from using their L1 in schools in the United States, drawn upon the belief that their L1 use may hinder their English learning. However, recently, many L2 scholars started to pay more attention to the positive effects of the students' use of L1—whether they are cognitive and sociocultural—in a second and foreign language classroom (Hall and Cook 2012). For example, Vivian Cook (2001) argues that bilinguals are cognitively different from monolinguals and that therefore, they are more adaptable and more advantageous in manipulation of more than one language. Additionally, scholars who are working within a sociocultural perspective argue that learners use L1 as a mediational tool in the process of learning a second language (Lantolf 2000). According to Lantolf, L2 learning is similar to children learning their first language in that they go through externalization through internalization. Learning first becomes externalized through the help of others and artifacts, and it gradually becomes internalized, which can be observed in various forms of talking to oneself, such as inner speech or private speech. Inner speech refers to the speech that is addressed to his or her self, but not audibly spoken, and thus it is usually studied through the process of self-reporting, such as interview, questionnaire, or survey. On the other hand, private speech is audibly spoken speech addressed to his or her self. Many scholars have investigated L2 learners' use of L1 in the form of inner speech (e.g., Dewaele 2010, 2011, 2016, 2018, Knickerbocker and Altarriba 2010, Pavlenko 2005, 2006, Resnik 2021) or in the form of private speech (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Blyth 1995, Brooks and Donato 1994, Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez 2004). In spite of this large volume of literature on L1 use in second language acquisition, L1 use in a testing context has rarely been studied since most of these studies are restricted to a classroom setting. An assessment context usually requires students to perform as best as they can to show their highest achievement, which will reveal how language learning students utilize their L1 to their utmost. This study specifically investigates this assessment context by conducting an English-speaking test on Korean school children of various grades—from those who just started learning English to those who have been learning for six years, which will contribute to revealing how their use of L1 changes as they grow old and their L2 proficiency develops.

2. L1 Use in a Second/Foreign Language Classroom

In a cognitive framework, bilinguals are usually considered to be different from monolinguals in their language learning process. Criticizing the longtime view that L1 should be avoided in a language classroom, Vivian Cook (2001) has emphasized the usefulness of L1 in second language learners' language learning. Based upon this belief, he suggested a multicompetence model, that is, bilinguals have “the knowledge of more than one language in the same mind” (2008, p. 231). According to this model, bilinguals have multiple languages at their disposal and use them in a different way than monolinguals do. Scholars who work in this branch have proven that bilinguals approach the same task differently from monolinguals (Bialystok et al. 2005, Bialystok and Feng 2009, Cook 2001, 2002, Herdina and Jessner 2002). For example, in their 2005 study that compared Cantonese-English and French-English bilinguals with monolingual English speakers, Bialystok et al. (2005) indicated that, even in dealing with a same task, bilinguals used different parts of brains—superior and middle temporal, cingulate, and superior and inferior frontal regions—more actively than monolinguals. In the similar vein, Bialystok and Feng (2009) compared bilingual children and adults with their monolingual counterparts in the Proactive Interference task

where they were asked to repeat a list of words shown to them before an interference comes in. As a result of the task, Bialystok and Feng found that the two groups did not show any statistically significant difference in their performance, although the bilingual group's vocabulary size was smaller than that of the monolingual group. Bialystok and Feng attributed the bilinguals' similar level of performance as monolingual groups to their better control of attention to the task, although they were disadvantageous in vocabulary size compared to the monolinguals.

Along with the issue of how bilinguals and monolinguals are different from each other, second language acquisition (SLA) scholars have also become interested in how L1 use has affected the learners' language learning in several areas. On the one hand, O'Malley and Chamot (1990), Oxford (1996), and Cohen (2012) approached L2 learners' use of L1 and translation as a language learning strategy and argued its effectiveness in their learning. Another group of researchers examined the effects of L1 use in their vocabulary learning (Bruton 2007, Laufer and Girsai 2008, Nation 1997, Prince 1996). For example, Prince (1996) compared two learning conditions—the context learning where learners recalled the meaning of the words learned merely in L2 and the translation learning where they recalled the meaning based on their L1 translations—and found superiority of the latter in terms of learners' learning outcomes, no matter how proficient they were. Bruton (2007) also found the positive effects of using a collaborative translation activity on a learners' recall of vocabulary even in a delayed test, which occurred one week later after the experiment.

Positive effects of L1 use have also been argued for by the scholars who work in a sociocultural framework. These scholars viewed a learners' use of L1 as a kind of scaffolding activity (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Brooks and Donato 1994, Guerrero and Villamil 2000, Swain and Lapkin 2000, Villamil and Guerrero 1996). For example, in their study that examined the collaborative talk of five dyads of Spanish learners, Antón and DiCamilla (1999) argued that their use of L1 served as a scaffolding, by performing various functions, such as maintaining intersubjectivity between peers and externalizing private speech that regulates their mental activity. Similarly, Villamil and Guerrero (1996, 2000) found that English as a second language (ESL) learners oftentimes resorted to their L1 as a mediational tool. In their 1996 study, they found that learners used L1 as one of the mediating tools in their peer revision of written texts, and based on the findings from their 2000 study, Villamil and Guerrero argued that learners' use of L1 not only promotes their communication, but also helps them to control the task.

Some scholars who work in the sociocultural framework have paid special attention to the learners' use of L1 in private speech (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Blyth 1995, Brooks and Donato 1994, Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez 2004). According to Vygotsky, as one of the most representative mediational tools in the sociocultural theory, private speech facilitates a learner's knowledge to be internalized from interpsychological to intrapsychological level. For example, in their study that investigated student discourse of three pairs of Spanish learners during their jigsaw tasks, Brooks, Donato, and McGlone (1997) found that the learners often used private speech in L1, which not only mediated their participation in the task, but also helped them regulate themselves. In other words, they emphasize the importance of L1 private speech as "attempts at self-regulation and cognitive engagement with the task" (p. 523).

Learners' use of L1 private speech seems affected by other factors, such as their proficiency level, task familiarity or complexity. Brooks, Donato, and McGlone (1997) found that their learners depended less on private speech once they became more familiar with the task. Similarly, Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez (2004) discovered variation in the learners' use of private speech in L1, depending on their proficiency level. They compared private speech of three different groups—advanced and intermediate learners of Spanish, and Spanish native speakers—during the problem-solving tasks, such as logic, mathematics, and visual spatial problems. Through this comparison, Centeno-Cortés and Jiménez Jiménez found that intermediate learners used more L1

private speech than advanced learners and that they used more L1 in their private speech as the task became more complicated and challenging. However, since most of the previous studies on a learners' L1 use are small-scale, qualitative studies, to date, they have a limitation in that they cannot systematically examine the variation in a learners' L1 use in an L2 task across various proficiency levels and age groups. In order to compensate for this drawback, this study examines student answers in an English speaking test, which was conducted in a large scale on learners of consecutive school grades to answer the following research questions:

1. How do Korean learners of English use their L1 in an English speaking test?
2. How different is task completion according to the uses of L1 in an English speaking test?
3. How different are Korean learners' uses of L1 across school grades?

3. Method

3.1 Participants

The participants of this study consist of 988 Korean elementary and middle school students of six consecutive grades (505 males and 483 females): 199 4th graders, 196 5th graders, and 181 6th graders from nine different elementary schools located in a large city in South Korea; and 155 1st graders, 141 2nd graders, and 116 3rd graders from eight different middle schools located in the same city as the elementary schools are. The data was collected from the 4th graders based on the assumption that a speaking test requires a certain level of L1 proficiency: in Korea, English education starts from 3rd graders, but their level of English proficiency was too low to take a speaking test. The 4th graders received English instruction two hours a week, and the 5th and 6th graders three hours a week, in particular, concentrating on listening and speaking based on Communicative Language Teaching Method, while all the middle school students received English instruction of four hours a week, mostly concentrated on reading, although the Korean National Curriculum acclaims the Communicative Language Teaching Method (Korean Ministry of Education 2015).

3.2 Data Collection

All the participants took a speaking test, which was developed based on what they have learned in their English classes. The tests were developed by a group of elementary and middle school English teachers who are familiar with the school curriculum. After they developed a first version of each test, it was validated by a group of content and assessment specialists. Each test is composed of two sets of open-ended questions: in each set, the first question is for the participants to look at a picture and answer based on it, while the second question is to elicit a similar kind of answer based on their own experiences and everyday lives (See Appendix for the test example for 5th graders). The participants took the test on different days, depending on their schools—the participants from the same school took the test on the same day. In the test, their English teachers, who are native speakers of English from various English-speaking countries, such as the United States, United Kingdom, Australia, and New Zealand, asked the two questions one by one, and the participants were supposed to answer in English. The test took less than one minute for each examinee on average both for elementary and middle school students.

3.3 Data Analysis

All the test results from the participants were recorded and the recordings were repeatedly listened to by the authors to identify their uses of Korean in the data. All the Korean uses were transcribed word by word, and the transcripts were repeatedly read by the authors to first find some recurrent patterns across the participants, no matter what school grades they were in. Only the uses of Korean addressed to the self, which were articulate and audible, were counted in this study; oftentimes the participants, in particular, elementary students, answered in Korean, like “*i-ge mwo-ye-yo?* (what’s this?)” or “*mol-la-yo* (I don’t know),” which were addressed to the test conductors, considering their use of honorific endings in Korean. This kind of Korean use was not included into the current data because it cannot be considered as a private speech addressed to oneself. When a participant used L1 several times, all of them were counted separately.

In order to answer the second research question, how different uses of L1 affect task completion of speaking tasks, task completion was checked whenever a Korean private speech was used. A successful completion was decided by the criterion, whether students answer a particular question to the point (e.g., to the question, “where is the ball?” “under the table,” “it’s under the table,” or “the ball is under the table” were all considered as successful task completion), no matter what grammatical errors their answers contain. Lastly, to answer the third question, how different are students’ uses of L1 across school grades, the transcripts were revisited to see if there exist some patterns specific to each school grade.

All the activities of coding were performed by the two authors separately and they later agreed upon the common patterns that emerge across all the participants. Although their interrater reliability was not calculated, any differences were discussed and reconciled between them.

4. Results

The analysis of students’ use of Korean in their speaking tests reveals three different types of private speech across all the school grades, no matter whether they are elementary or middle school students. The three types are self-regulating speech, translation, and transition. Table 1 summarizes their frequencies across the school grades.¹ As seen in the table, private speech is the most-frequently used for the purpose of self-regulation, followed by translation and transition. Considering its contribution to task completion, transition was the most efficient type of private speech, followed by translation, whereas self-regulating private speech was found not as efficient as transition and translation.

Table 1. Frequency of Private Speech Uses

Type	Self-Regulation		Translation		Transition	
	Yes	No	Yes	No	Yes	No
Frequency	16	32	15	13	10	0
Total Frequency	48		28		10	

¹ Frequency in this table refers to the number of incidences when a student uses Korean, but when a student’s use of L1 performs more than one role., the particular incidence was counted twice or three times, depending on the number of roles it carries out.

4.1 Types of Private Speech

4.1.1 Self-regulating speech

As seen in the above, in this study, private speech was most frequently used for regulating oneself for the task, which has been commonly reported in the studies that have examined L2 learners' private speech (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Brooks and Donato 1994, Swain and Lapkin 2000, Villamil and Guerrero 1996). The purpose of self-regulating private speech is to mediate the task by oneself so that it can be manageable, which originally looks too difficult for his or her current ability. The most common types of self-regulating speech, which were found in this study, are “*mwo-la-go mal-ha-ji* (what shall I say?)” “*a-nin-de* (this is not right),” “*a-nin-ga* (isn't it?),” “*mwo-ji* (what's this?), and “*mo-leu-gess-da* (I don't know).” “*Mwo-la-go mal-ha-ji* (what shall I say?)” and “*mwo-ji* (what's this)” ask oneself how to answer a specific question; “*A-nin-de* (this is not)” and “*a-nin-ga* (isn't it?)” self-check whether the speaker performs a task in a right way or not; on the other hand, “*mo-leu-gess-da* (I don't know)” implies the speaker's inability to perform a task and intention to give it up at the same time.

As seen in Table 1, oftentimes, this self-regulating speech is not quite helpful for the speaker to complete a target task. For example, when a 4th grader was shown a picture of a book, which is on the desk, and asked about its location, he said in Korean as follows:

[Excerpt 1]

- 1 Teacher: Look at the picture
- 2 Student: Ah, picture.
- 3 Teacher: And answer in a full sentence. Where is the book?
- 4 Student: Book? Uhhh *mwo-la-go mal-hae-ya doe-ji?* (what should I say?)
- 5 Teacher: Where is the book?
- 6 Student: Ah, where is the book? Uh, on, uh ball on the ball
- 7 Teacher: Where is the ball?
- 8 Student: Ah, book under the ball
- 9 Teacher: Okay
- 10 Student: Ah, *i-leoh-ge ha-neun geo maj-na?* (Am I doing right?)
- 11 Teacher: Where is the ball?
- 12 Student: book under the ball
- 13 Teacher: Okay, very good.

When the teacher asks about the location of a book, which is on the desk, the student seems to understand the question itself; however, his following answers—“ball on the ball” in line 6 and “book under the ball” in line 8—indicate that he does not know how to answer the question in English. His use of Korean “what should I say?” in line 4 shows his embarrassment at not being able to answer the teacher's question, and it also represents his ongoing efforts to try to answer the question in his mind at the same time. In line 10, his use of Korean, “Am I doing right?” helps him to self-check and monitor whether he is on the right track or not. His continuous efforts notwithstanding, he repeats the same phrase, “book under the ball” in line 12, and eventually, his first speaking task ended not very successfully despite his teacher's compliment.

Although the self-regulating private speech did not help the student answer the question correctly as seen in the above case, in a few cases, it helped students answer the question correctly as follows:

[Excerpt 2]

- 1 Teacher: Question 2. Look at the picture. Answer in a full sentence. What did
- 2 she do on the weekend?
- 3 Student: (no response)
- 4 Teacher: That's okay. One more time. What did she do on the weekend?
- 5 Student: She looking, *eo a-nin-de* (uh this is not right), watched a movie.
- 6 Teacher: Okay, good.

In this excerpt, the teacher asks a 5th grader what she did on the weekend, pointing at the picture where a girl is watching a movie. The student does not produce any response in line 2, but at the teacher's repeated question, he starts to utter "she looking" but immediately monitors its correctness by saying "uh this is not right" in Korean and finally in the same line, he successfully corrected himself, by saying "watched a movie."

4.1.2 Translation

The analysis of the students' speaking tests reveals that they use Korean for the purpose of translating various English words or phrases in Korean second most frequently. It has been often found that L2 learners use L1 translation as a kind of scaffolding to their learning, in particular, when their L2 proficiency is low (Carson and Kashihara 2012, Cho and Kim 2014, 2017, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Shin, Dixon and Choi 2019). In this study, students often directly translate English to Korean, which sometimes helps them to complete their speaking task successfully:

[Excerpt 3]

- 1 Teacher: What is the mother's job?
- 2 Student: mother umm, *ui-sa* (doctor), doctor
- 3 Teacher: Very good

In this excerpt, the teacher points out a picture of a female doctor and asks a fourth grader what her job is. In line 2, the student hesitates and says "doctor" first in Korean, which leads him to successfully answer in English.

Although the use of private speech as translation is found more likely to complete a task than self-regulating private speech is, as seen in Table 1, not all the uses of private speech as direct translation do lead to successful completion of a speaking task.

[Excerpt 4]

- 1 Teacher: Question 1, what is your favorite subject?
- 2 Student: My favorite subject English.
- 3 Teacher: Why do you like it?
- 4 Student: You, *sae-lob-da* (new), Korea, *i-geol mwo-la-go hae-ya-doe-ji* (what shall I
- 5 say)?
- 6 Teacher: Why do you like it?
- 7 Student: Korean *mwo-la-go* (what), *swib* (easy) easy

In Excerpt 4, a middle school 1st grader attempts Korean direct translation twice in lines 4 and 7. Faced with the

question why he likes English, in line 4, he says “new” in Korean and tries to translate it into English, but he fails, demonstrated by his private speech as a self-regulating purpose in lines 4 and 5. In line 7, he gives up that particular answer related to something Korean, and moves to another reason why he likes English, which is because it is easy. Before saying it in English, he uses a Korean translation, which is successfully translated into English this time.

4.1.3 Transition

Finally, in this study, Korean private speech is found to be used as a transition from an English word, phrase, or sentence to another one. In contrast to the diversity and variety of Korean words or phrases used in the type of translation, use of private speech as transition is quite limited to a few words or phrases, such as *geu* (that), *i-geo* (this), *geu-nyang* (without any reason, well), *geu da-eum-e* (next), *geu-lae-seo* (so), or *geu-li-go* (and). The first three serves as a kind of filler that saves a speaker time to process what she or he is going to say next as follows:

[Excerpt 5]

- 1 Teacher: Question 1, what is your favorite subject?
- 2 Student: My favorite subject is math.
- 3 Teacher: Math? Why do you like math?
- 4 Student: Math is *geu* (that), uh ah *geu* (that), smart?
- 5 Teacher: Smart? Very good.

In this excerpt, at the teacher’s question why he likes math, a first grader from a middle school cannot complete his answer after saying “math is.” In this situation, his repetition of *geu* (that) in Korean saves him time to look for an appropriate English word to finish his speaking task. Finally, he says “smart” in English, although it does not perfectly make sense.

On the other hand, the use of conjunctions in Korean, such as *geu da-eum-e* (next), *geu-lae-seo* (so), or *geu-li-go* (and) indicates a temporal sequence.

[Excerpt 6]

- 1 Teacher: What do you usually do on your smartphone? Tell me two things.
- 2 Student: First I watch a Youtube, *geu da-eum-e* (next), second I called a my friend.
- 3 Teacher: Okay, good. Which foreign country would you like to live in?
- 4 Student: uhh China
- 5 Teacher: Why?
- 6 Student: Because China food price is very very cheap, ah *geu-lae-seo* (so) I eat many
- 7 food.
- 8 Teacher: Okay, good, good job.

In Excerpt 6, a 2nd grader from a middle school student uses the two Korean conjunctions—*geu da-eum-e* (next) and *geu-lae-seo* (so)—while answering the teacher’s question: what he usually does on his smartphone and which country he wants to live in. Faced with the task listing two things he uses his smartphone for, he says one thing, watching Youtube, and then inserts a Korean transition *geu da-eum-e* (next) in line 2. Likewise, in like 6, while explaining the reason why he would like to live in China, after saying the reason, food is cheap in China, he uses

another Korean conjunction *geu-lae-seo* (so). As seen in here, this use of Korean as transition looks natural in the flow and is more similar to code-switching rather than private speech, because it represents several characteristics of codeswitching—alternating languages without any apparent disruptions to production or comprehension (Myers-Scotton and Jake 2015, Polack 1980) or “inserting words, phrases, or even longer stretches of one language into the other” (Brown, 2014, p. 66).

4.2 Patterns Across School Grades

Table 2 summarizes frequency of different types of private speech across school grade levels. Although a gradual difference—whether it is increase or decrease—is not found across grade levels within elementary or middle schools, it is quite apparent that elementary students seem to rely more on the use of L1 than middle school students: the former group used L1 51 times whereas middle school students used it a much fewer 35 times.

Table 2. Use of Private Speech Across School Grade Levels

Level	Grade	Type	Frequency	Sub Total	Total	
Elementary	4 th	Self-Regulation	9	17	51	
		Translation	4			
		Self-Regulation + Translation	2			
	5 th	Self-Regulation	6	10		
		Translation	2			
		Self-Regulation + Translation	1			
	6 th	Self-Regulation	15	24		
		Translation	3			
		Self-Regulation + Translation	3			
Middle School	1 st	Self-Regulation	1	8	35	
		Translation	1			
		Self-Regulation + Translation	1			
		Transition	4			
	2 nd	Self-Regulation	5	17		
		Translation	1			
		Self-Regulation + Translation	4			
	3 rd	Transition	Transition	3		10
			Translation	4		
		Self-Regulation + Translation + Transition	Self-Regulation + Translation + Transition	1		
			Transition	1		
			Translation + Transition	1		

Note. The subtotal and total frequency indicate a sum of all different types of private speech.

Rather than such difference in frequency, the difference in their patterns of using L1 private speech is more remarkable. Elementary students tend to use L1 private speech for the purpose of self-regulating their speaking tasks (36 times) both alone (30 times) or even in its mixture form (6 times) more than twice for the purpose of translation (15 times). In contrast, middle school students were found more likely to use L1 private speech as translation (13 times) and transition (10 times). Although the middle school students also use private speech for self-regulating purposes (12 times), their use is not as great as among the elementary students. Furthermore, the use of L1 as transition or its mixture with other types of private speech is only found among middle school students; not a single case of transition was found among elementary students.

In summary, students’ use of private speech go through both quantitative and qualitative changes as they age;

first, it seems that their dependence on private speech decreases as they grow older, although it is not gradual; secondly, the dominant types of private speech change as they grow older: while the elementary students mainly depended on self-regulating private speech, the middle school students were more likely to use private speech as translation and transition.

5. Discussion and Conclusion

As for the first research question, how the Korean elementary and middle school students use their L1 in the speaking test, the analysis reveals that they used Korean private speech mostly for the three major purposes—self-regulating, translation, and transition. As reported in many other studies on private speech (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Brooks and Donato 1994, Swain and Lapkin 2000, Vilamil and Guerrero 1996), the students used private speech—“what shall I say?” “this is not,” or “I don’t know”—to regulate or manage their tasks and monitor and check their on-going progress. Also, they used translation as a means of scaffolding, as witnessed in many studies (Carson and Kashihara 2012, Cho and Kim 2014, 2017, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Shin, Dixon and Choi 2019). Finally, this study also found that students used L1 as a transitional device from word to word, phrase to phrase, or sentence to sentence. This use of L1 as transition looks like code-switching rather than private speech, because the utterances would still look natural if the Korean words were replaced with their English equivalents.

As for the second research question, to what extent does the use of L1 help the students to complete tasks, the analysis shows that self-regulating speech is not as helpful as translation and transition. While only one third of self-regulating speech (16 times out of 48) led to completion of a task, more than half of translation (15 times out of 28) and all the transition (10 times out of 10) lead the speakers to successfully complete their speaking tasks. Regarding the third research question, how different are their uses of L1 across school grade levels, this study does not find any gradual decrease or increase as their grade level increases, but finds that elementary students use more L1 in their private speech, compared to middle school students. Moreover, it is found that lower-grade students are more likely to depend on self-regulating speech, while middle school students are more likely to use translation and transition. These different patterns of private speech across school grades may explain their different success rates, which was confirmed in the second research question. The self-regulating speech was mostly used by elementary students and was least successful in terms of task completion. The elementary students have been learning English just for a couple of years, within a very limited time (two hours a week for 4th graders and three hours a week for 5th and 6th graders); they have been exposed to English just for about 300 hours in total for three years, and thus their proficiency is quite low that even their use of L1 as a self-regulating tool may not be quite helpful for them to complete an English speaking task.

Despite such findings, this study is limited in that only a small number of cases where L1 private speech is used are collected and investigated, in spite of its large number of students (N = 988), which makes it difficult to generalize the findings of this study to other populations or other contexts. However, considering that it is not uncommon for many studies on private speech to obtain only a small number of cases, this study has several implications for language teaching and testing. Larrain and Haye (2012) once argued that a learner’s private speech is a discursive practice involving oneself by stating that “psychological processes (cognitive, affective, and volitional) acquire a dialogical character as far as they are mediated by inner discourse” (p. 13). Likewise, the students in this study used various types of L1 private speech in order to have conversations with oneself, which eventually mediated them to perform psychological processes in a challenging context, such as a testing context where they have to work alone without any help provided by others or artifacts. In addition to this positive role of

L1 private speech as scaffolding in facilitating their task completion, this study also demonstrates that L2 learners' use of L1 private speech goes through both quantitative and qualitative changes as they grow older and their proficiency improves. They not only use their L1 as scaffolding in facilitating their task completion, as L2 scholars have found (Antón and DiCamilla 1999, Brooks and Donato 1994, DiCamilla and Antón 2012, Swain and Lapkin 2000, Villamil and Guerrero 1996), but they will also grow out of this practice as they become proficient enough to go without mediation of L1. And thus this study implies that even in an assessment setting, L2 learners' use of L1 may not necessarily hinder their fluency, but it may help them to complete their tasks by compensating for their lack of L2 proficiency, in particular, in the case when they use L1 as a direct translation from L1 to L2 or vice versa as well as a tool of transition between utterances.

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Examples in: English
Applicable Languages: English
Applicable Level: Tertiary

Appendix

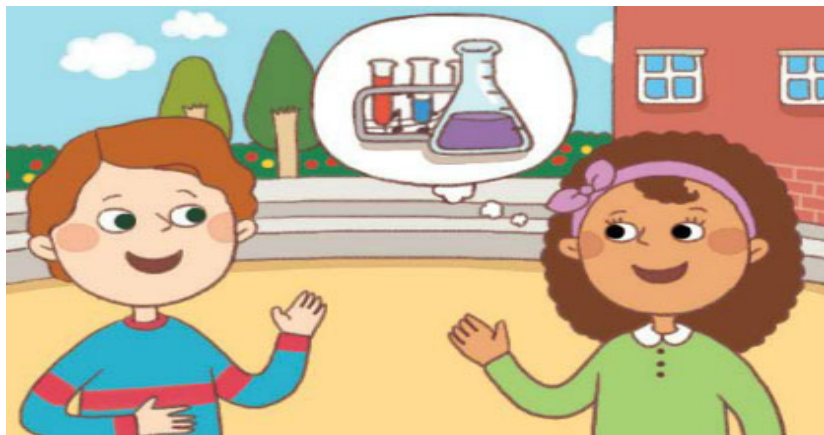
Test Example for 5th Graders

Speaking Test for 5th Graders

Question 1.

Look at the picture. Answer in a full sentence.

- a. What is her favorite subject? (ask while pointing at the girl)
- b. What is your favorite subject?



Question 2.

Look at the picture. Answer in a full sentence.

- A. What did she do on the weekend?
- B. What did you do on the weekend?

