



# FILM 2.

# USER PACK

The aim of this User Pack is to help you get the most out of our Language Assessment film series.

## What is included?

- 1. Tips for Watching** - suggestions for how to get the most out of viewing the film.
- 2. Reflection Questions** - questions to help you relate the film content to your context.
- 3. Talk to Text Cards** - cards which provide a text version of the topics discussed in the film.



## Film 2: Assessing Speaking and Listening Skills: Where will the material come from?

Watch the film [here](#).



### Tips for Watching

- Use a device with good sound quality – the audio is an important part of the film.
- Find a quiet location to watch the film – you can also watch the film as a group with colleagues.
- Use the 3 Rs as you watch: Rewind, Reflect, Repeat – pause and re-watch parts of the film to help you consider what has been said or allow more time to read on-screen text.
- Watch the film 2 or 3 times – this will help you to grasp any new ideas presented.
- Take notes while you watch – you may want to talk with colleagues about the content of the film afterwards.



## Film 2: Assessing Speaking and Listening Skills: Where will the material come from?



### Reflection Questions

Take a few minutes to think about what you have learned in the film. If you are viewing the film as a group, you can discuss these questions together.

1. Think about the children's books available in your local language(s). **How do you feel about the number and range of books available?** If there are enough books available for different age bands (e.g., 3-to-5 years; 6-to-8 years, etc.), **how could you go about using these books to create a language assessment?** If there are not enough books, **is there a way to begin with what is available?**
2. The film describes how the aspects of vocabulary, phonology or grammar may be more difficult in different languages. **Have you come across any features of grammar which are simple in one language but difficult in another?** (e.g., how tenses or singular/plural nouns are formed, or the order of the subject, verb and object in a sentence). **Have you encountered odd test items/questions which you feel don't fit the grammar or phonology of your language?**
3. The film recommends that tests reflect the signature sound patterns of the language they assess. **What kind of sound patterns does your language(s) have?** Consider the way that syllables and phonics typically appear - open-syllabled like **rama-rama** or with some open and closed syllables like **thithli**.

## TALK TO TEXT CARDS

### Film 2:

## Assessing Speaking and Listening Skills: Where will the material come from?

### 1. CHILDREN'S BOOKS AS TEST MATERIAL

Children's books are a good resource for developing language assessments. This is because in books we see a richer variety of language. We see, for example, more abstract words. Words like **freedom**. Words like **honesty**. We also see more complex grammar being used in written language and books.

Using children's books, of course, needs to be done in a systematic manner.

### 2. USING MORE BOOKS IS BETTER

It is best to use a wide range of children's books to source the material for language assessment. For example, it is better to try and get 50 sentences from about 30 books than to say *I'll take all 50 sentences from two books*. Why is that a problem?

It is a problem because within a book you have one or two topic areas. So the vocabulary issues are linked to those topic areas and they repeat themselves: you don't get enough variety. Language assessment, however, thrives in the variety of words and sentences in the assessment scheme, because you want to be able to access the whole range of language that the child has.

So books become an excellent source to get the variety that you want in your language assessment system.

### **3. SOURCE BOOKS FOR DIFFERENT AGE BANDS**

Another aspect of using storybooks and being systematic in the use of storybooks as a source for developing language tests is to make sure we source stories for different age bands.

For example, in picture books and books for pre-schoolers, most of the vocabulary would be language that is learned early. These words are commonly known to very little children; these words are commonly used with little children.

But as you go into primary school books - storybooks for children in the primary grades - you start seeing more ambitious words appearing. You start seeing words that are learned later.

That means you when you capture books from different age bands you are able to get easy words and more difficult words, common words and rare words, high frequency words and low frequency words.

This is good because in any language assessment you want your words to be graded. you want the test to have the easy, to the not-so-easy, to the difficult. That is what allows us to capture the differences of the language levels of he children we assess.

#### 4. A SIMPLE TRANSLATION IS NOT A GOOD STARTING POINT WHEN DEVELOPING ASSESSMENTS

It may seem like a good idea to borrow a test from elsewhere, but this may not always work. There might be a lot lost in translation. New things might get added as one translates into a new language. It's important, therefore, to be alert to the fact that languages differ, and a mere translation brings in aspects that one may not obviously be aware of.

Let us take the word **butterfly**. If I was constructing a test in Bahasa, for example, **butterfly** would be **rama-rama**. That is an open syllable word, and it has its own demands for getting children to segment it.

If I was trying to develop a test in Filipino and I wanted **butterfly** and simply translated it again, it would also be an open syllable word: **paroparo**.

But if I were doing this in Hindi or Urdu, the word would be **thithli**. That word has a closed syllable within it: **thith**. So the demand for that same butterfly as it travels from language to language is somewhat different when you want to segment it.

What that also then means is that if you want a test that reflects the signature sound patterns of the language as a whole - the balance of open syllables, closed syllables, consonant clusters - then you want the test to be informed from within the language. You want the test to not be distracted by what is offered up from a list that was developed to work for another language.

In short, a simple translation method does not work all the time. I have only given an example for phonology, but this applies for vocabulary, grammar and discourse in language assessment.

Storybooks become a good starting point for developing a language assessment and for thinking about what to assess when there are no good tests available in the language.