

VARIETY OF SPEECH ASSESSMENTS IN PROMOTING PROFICIENCY IN ENGLISH AMONG THE FRESHMEN AT THE UNIVERSITY OF JAFFNA

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The primary objective of this study is to identify an effective technique in teaching speaking skill of English as a second language (ESL) among the freshmen of Faculty of Arts and Faculty of Science at the University of Jaffna. The research problem is that the freshmen find it difficult to express in English mainly due to lack of communicative proficiency and the mode of assessment is also partly responsible. As such, mixed method research methodology was designed. In the quantitative study, quasi-experimental method was adopted in which the test was the main instrument. The speech test was rated using number of hesitance, pauses, vocabulary, and use of different structure. In the qualitative study, participant observation, interview and discussion were employed. Variety of speech assessments were employed as an intervention to find out whether it would have an impact on promoting communicative proficiency. It has been found that students, who performed poorly in the pretest (before intervention of), performed well in the post test (70 % of students got through above 65-70 marks). The qualitative results from participant observation revealed that it created awareness on speaking skill among the students, it motivated them to come out with their personalized experience of variety of ideas and interview revealed that speaking was the most preferred skill. In short, this mixed method study strongly established the effectiveness of variety of speech assessments in promoting proficiency in English.

Keywords: *Effective technique; Speaking skill; Variety of speech assessments*
