



THE IMPACT OF SOCIAL BACKGROUND ON STUDENTS' ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPEAKING SKILLS IN ADVANCED TECHNOLOGICAL INSTITUTES

E. P. M. U Edirisinghe¹

Correspondence: madhawiedirisinghe@gmail.com

Abstract

This paper studies the impact of social background on students' English language speaking skills as a foreign language (EFL) classroom in higher educational institutions in Sri Lanka, a case study based on three Advanced Technological Institutions (ATIs). The objectives of the study were to examine the impact of social background on students' English Language speaking skills and to examine whether the social background factors are unique to create language proficiency in higher educational institutions, basically ATIs. The impact of the performance of English in schools, parents' educational qualification, parents' financial status and parents' profession was investigated as the different social background factors from the previous literature for the research study. A sample of 300 students from ATI Dehiwala, Galle and Kandy, representing five Higher National Diploma courses were selected using a random sampling method. A Likert scaled questionnaire, oral test marks of the students, and structured interviews with the English and non-English academic staff were used to gather data. The collected data were imported to Statistical Package for the Social Science (SPSS), and were analysed using frequency and correlation analysis. The overall results show that the impact of social background on students' English-speaking skills is insignificant, but there is a positive correlation between selected social background factors. The findings highlight the reasons for the impact as the majority of students have come from middle class families whose parents were not capable enough to make an impact on students' language competency. It is also proved that the social background factors are not unique to Higher Educational institutions to create language proficiency in the higher educational context. The findings are registered to undertake further investigation.

Keywords: English, Impact, Skill, Speaking, Student

¹ Sri Lanka Institute of Advanced Technological Education, Sri Lanka.