

# Validity of Peer Feedback In Assessing Presentation Skills of ESL Adult Learners

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**Abstract-** *Student-centered learning plays a major role with the development of the education system, especially in learning English as Second Language (ESL) contexts. Here, the learner is also entrusted with much responsibility in the teaching/learning process. In such circumstances, the part played by peer assessment as a prominent alternative assessment tool is significant. The significance of peer assessment is highlighted in different learning contexts and research. However, studies on peer assessment are still limited in Sri Lankan context. Hence, this study aims to investigate the extent to which peer feedback is valid in assessing presentation skills in the ESL context. Peer assessment is still a new concept in the context where this study has been conducted, and it needs more exploration and practice. The participants of this quantitative study were three teachers, 20 students as assessors and 30 students as assesses, who were studying technology in a higher educational institute. The assessors gave peer feedback for the oral presentations of their peers. The feedback forms were the research instruments of this study and independent Samples T-test was used to analyze data. The results indicate that student assessors have given higher marks than teachers. This study underscores the need to approach peer assessment from a systemic perspective, considering its role within the course as a whole and its interconnections with other learning activities.*

**Keywords:** ESL, alternative assessment, peer assessment, higher education, student-centered learning

## I. INTRODUCTION

Presentation skills are essential for both academic prospects and career prospects. Presentation skills are included in the syllabi of many diploma programs. Here, students are supposed to make presentations in English as they follow English medium diplomas Assignment, Viva and etc. However, it was identified that many students lack presentation skills.

Previous studies have highlighted the importance of incorporating peer assessment into presentation skills. Falchikov (2005) points out, “involving students in the assessment of presentations is extremely beneficial” (p.16). Thus, it is imperative for students to develop many skills and abilities. In the study of De Grez et al.(2012) they depict the

importance of peer assessment of oral presentation skills and conclude that “the results reflect a very positive attitude towards the value of peer assessment of oral presentation skills” (p.10) Interestingly, according to the study of Kovac et al. (2012) “The majority of participants (88%) think that peer evaluation, in other words, commenting about different levels of performance (verbal, non-verbal, technical and organizational) can help perceive errors more clearly and consequently improve some aspects of future presentations”. (p.14-15). Thus, it is obvious that peer assessment not only develops the peers but also the individual who assesses the peer. Kwan & Leung (1996) have claimed that “The ability to judge the peers critically and objectively is a skill that students should possess when they enter employment in any profession’ (p.211) The benefit of using peer assessment is not limited to a particular field or profession. Hence, it is imperative to involve students in the peer assessment process.

In a teaching/learning context, the validity of peer assessment is a crucial factor to consider as peers are involved in grading the students. In literature, Falchikov and Goldfinch (2000) have mentioned that “validity in assessment is the ‘degree of agreement between [the teachers’] marks and those awarded by their students’. Hence, the proposed study attempts to examine the validity of peer assessment process.

## II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Assessment is pivotal in education, with scholars advocating for the integration of modern concepts into traditional frameworks. Dysthe (2004) emphasizes that “assessment shapes how teachers and students learn,” highlighting the transition from teacher-centered approaches to more learner-centric methods, where students take on increased responsibility.

Peer assessment in alternative assessment is recognized for fostering various skills among students. According to Karami & Rezaei (2015), its significance is evident in diverse educational contexts. Similarly, Weaver & Cottrel (1986) highlight that peer assessment enhances student involvement, responsibility, and academic excellence while providing clearer course frameworks and valuable feedback. The primary objective of peer evaluation is to facilitate

constructive feedback from peers, which can be confirmatory, suggestive, or corrective (Topping, 2009).

Validity remains a critical concern in assessment practices. In their study, Ohland and Layton (2000), indicate that university students can often evaluate each other accurately when compared to teacher assessments. However, validity of peer assessment has become controversial since, rather than the instructors, the peers doubt whether they have received fair grades from peers. At the same time, some researchers including Nortcliffe (2012) have found that in peer assessment, “racial prejudice, personality clashes and personal loyalties may distort the results”. Topping (1998) presents a distinction between validity and reliability, noting a lack of comprehensive literature on both constructs. He argues that many studies labeled as reliability assessments actually focus on validity by comparing peer evaluations with those of professionals rather than among peers over time. Hence, with the insights gained from the literature review, the proposed study attempts to examine the validity of peer assessment process.

### III. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 The Sample

50 students with the same proficiency level were selected as the sample of this study. A Bio-data questionnaire was used in selecting the sample.

Three teachers participated in teacher assessment of this study.

#### 3.2 Feedback form

The research instrument of this study is feedback form which will be used by teachers (3 lecturers) and the peers (selected sample of students) to provide feedback for the presenters. According to Aryadoust (2016) “To improve the quality of peer assessment, it is crucial to give the same weight to both students’ and teachers’ evaluations by assessing their validity with reference to the same measurement criteria” (p.4) Therefore, same feedback form will be used by peers and teachers. This feedback form consists of variables such as content, voice, body language and effectiveness. The feedback form is adopted from White (2009) and Yamashiro & Johnson (1997). Thus, scores awarded by the peers and teachers are considered as the data which will be collected for the study to analyze quantitatively.

#### 3.3 Procedure

The sample was instructed on peer assessment and the feedback form. Then the students were trained to provide feedback, and the peer assessment was conducted in the next phase. During the peer assessment session, the students were supposed to deliver individual presentations. Each student had to deliver one presentation. While one student was delivering his/her presentation, the peers and the teacher were expected to provide feedback in the feedback forms. One peer had to fill in only one feedback form per presentation. Feedback forms of the peers and the teacher were taken as the data of this study.

#### 3.4 Analysis of Data

As assessed, 30 students participated in this research. 03 teachers and 20 students participated to give marks (assessors). According to that 53 participants were selected for the study.

Participants of the Research	Count
Number of Teachers	03
Number of Students as assessors.	20
Number of Students who were assessed	30
<b>Total Number of</b>	<b>53</b>

Table 3.1: Sample Unit

In this study, SPSS is used for a comparative analysis of relevant data. To present and analysis data regarding this study SPSS 22 statistical software were used by researcher. When analyzing the data collected from the questionnaire the researcher used number of statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, standard error, and independent sample T-test. Data was collected, organized and coded into the SPSS data analysis program. The correlation was calculated dividing the data for male, female and total participants using SPSS 22.0.

### IV. RESULTS

The data collected from feedback forms were coded and checked for consistency and entered the SPSS spreadsheet. Descriptive statistics was employed to analyse data and the results were tested with non-parametric tests of significance. Besides, measures of central tendency (mean, standard deviation) were used to analyse the feedback form result.

When analysing the data collected from the feedback forms the researcher used number of statistical tools such as mean, standard deviation, standard error, independent sample T- test. Recreation and Correlation are a series of statistical methods that allow complex relationships between one or more independent variables and one or more dependent variables. In this research variable is scale variable. Data was reviewed using a cross-sectional design according to frequency of response determine valid percentages for each sample population per survey variable (Hsi et al., 2011).

Objectives	Analysis Method	Result of the Analysis
Objective 01	Pilate Serve Reliability Test T-Test	Consistent Result To find out the extent to which peer feedback is valid in assessing presentation skills of adult ESL learners.

Table 4.1: Summary of the Analyses of the Research

The fear of computers, fear of statistics and fear of maths subscales of the SAQ all had high reliabilities, all Cronbach’s  $\alpha \geq .579$ . However, the fear of negative peer evaluation subscale had relatively low reliability, Cronbach’s  $\alpha = .57$

Case Processing Summary			
		N	%
Cases	Valid	690	100
	Excluded	0	0
	Total	690	100
a. Listwise deletion based on all variables in the procedure.			
Reliability Statistics			
Cronbach's Alpha	Cronbach's Alpha Based on Standardized Items	N of Items	
.579	.599	6	

Table 4.2: Reliability Statistics

**Objective**

To find out the extent to which peer feedback is valid in assessing presentation skills of adult ESL learners.

**Hypothesis 1**

H<sub>0</sub> - There is no statistically significant difference between peer assessment and teacher assessment

H<sub>1</sub> - There is a statistically significant difference between peer assessment and teacher assessment.

Group Statistics					
Score	Group	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	Std. Error Mean
	Teachers	90	65.58	10.985	1.158
	Students	600	79.65	9.581	.391

Table 4.3: Significant difference between peer assessment and teacher assessment

An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare the difference between scores given by the teachers and students. An independent-samples t-test was conducted to compare scores in students and teachers’ conditions. Table 4.3, the teachers averaged 65.58 (SD=10.98) and the students averaged 79.65 (SD=9.58). That means students score more than teachers.

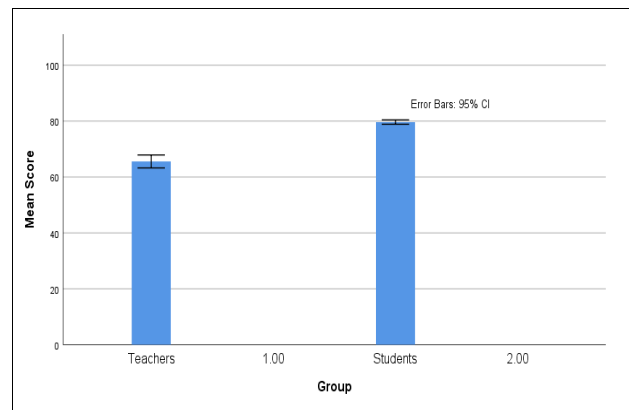


Figure 4.1: Mean difference between peer assessment and teacher assessment

According to the Figure 4.1, The marks given by the students are more than the marks given by the teachers. Compared to the mean of the two groups, the mean of student respondents is 79.65 which is higher than the mean of teachers which is 65.58. That means the null hypotheses was rejected. Accordingly, when giving marks to the students, marks were given by students rather than teachers.

## V. CONCLUSION

As an alternative assessment tool, peer assessment has been utilized for many years. In an assessment process both reliability and validity are major factors to consider. However, validity of peer assessment has become problematic as many studies have focused on the validity of peer assessment in the instructor's perspective and only few studies have focused on the student's perspective of validity. Hence, this study examined the Validity of Peer Feedback in Assessing Presentation Skills of ESL Adult Learners. The students in this study neither had experience with peer assessment nor heard of the peer assessment process. The results indicate that student assessors have given higher marks than teachers. The findings of the study suggest that, although peer assessment demonstrates considerable pedagogical potential, its validity is dependent upon several critical factors, such as training for students, the use of well-defined and transparent assessment criteria, and the incorporation of learners' perspectives in the design and implementation of the assessment process. It is expected this study will stimulate the researchers and practitioners to carry on future studies on peer assessment.

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