

## EXPLORING HOW INTERVIEWERS ASSESS THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE COMPETENCE OF THE INTERVIEWEES THROUGH PRONUNCIATION

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Sri Lanka is a highly literate country where over 92% of its population knows at least one of the following languages: Sinhala, Tamil and English languages. However, a minority of the population possesses sound knowledge and fluency with standard pronunciation in English within the country. English is a lingua franca and is a link language according to the Sri Lankan constitution. Therefore, employers among other reasons look for local employees who speak fluent English. The interviewers evaluate the interviewees on their fluency and knowledge of English as the majority of current organisations use English extensively. Communication plays a crucial role in interacting with native speakers of English. Therefore, employers prioritise fluency in pronunciation of the English language in their employees. This study intends to explore the methods of evaluation used by interviewers to assess the English language competence of interviewees through their pronunciation. The study uses a qualitative approach. The researcher obtains primary data from semi-structured interviews conducted with interviewers. The sample includes five participants. The sample consists of organisations selected through convenient sampling. The selected organisations are multinational companies in Sri Lanka. The study provides insight into the contemporary evaluation methods used by interviewers to evaluate English language proficiency through pronunciation. The results of the study highlight the importance of standard pronunciation for effective communication in English in the fields where individuals have to deal with native speakers of English. The evaluation methods focused on pronunciation, stress and intonation, phonetic accuracy and intelligibility. Therefore, this research sheds light on the evaluation methods used by interviewers about oral skills in English in Sri Lanka. It provides a foundation for further research into the field. The research helps interviewers and interviewees with their concerns about English Speaking Skills in the Country.

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