

Students as Evaluators of L2 Fluency in Peer-Based Speaking Performance

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Abstract

Fluent speech, characterized by speed and smoothness, plays a crucial role in maintaining listeners' attention (Lennon, 2000) and significantly contributes to scores in standardized assessments of second language (L2) spoken proficiency (Ogawa, 2022). Despite its importance, instructors lack a convenient means of objectively assessing students' L2 spoken fluency. Currently, researchers are exploring one potential solution involving a proprietary mobile application. The focus of this study is on one specific feature of the mobile application; namely, the ability to train students to assess monologic spoken fluency. Evaluating L2 spoken fluency is widely acknowledged as a complex undertaking, a consensus shared by numerous assessors (Kang et al., 2019) and usually, the responsibility of evaluating L2 spoken fluency is held by course instructors and standardized test evaluators. However, the process of evaluating might benefit students by helping to build greater metalinguistic awareness of spoken fluency. For students' evaluations to be useful feedback to speakers, evaluations need to be a reliable indicator of performance. In this study, participants (N = 158) watched a four-minute video on how to use the mobile application to assess speakers' L2 spoken fluency. Next, they watched three videos to practice evaluating with feedback. Afterwards, they watched five videos of students' spoken fluency performances and were tested on their ability to evaluate speakers. Researchers used the Rasch model to investigate the inter-rater reliability of students' evaluations. The results from Rasch analysis will be presented and contextualized with recommendations on the ways to enhance the evaluation process.

Keywords: assessment, inter-rater reliability, metalinguistic awareness, speaking, FL