

## Abstract 14

### **Relationship between Mode of Assessment and Second Language Performance: An Analysis Based on the Student Performance in Advanced Level General English Paper**

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General English paper, the paper for which the highest number of candidates (248482) appeared at GCE (A/L) examination in 2015, aimed at testing various language related abilities such as reading, vocabulary, grammar and writing skills. Both subjective and objective test items were included in the question paper. This study investigates the relationship between the types of test items and the student performance at this examination. The study is based on data obtained from the Research & Development Branch of the Department of Examinations, Sri Lanka. According to the data, facility indices for grammar (0.60), vocabulary (0.58) and reading skills (0.82) which were tested objectively are above the average. However, facility index for writing component (0.12) tested subjectively lies far below the average. A similar pattern could be identified in the analysis of student performances in previous examinations results (2012) too. The main issue arising from these data is the lower facility indices of subjective test items. While this can be interpreted in terms of examiner judgment variation, it is imperative to consider lower proficiency rates in productive skills. This suggests the performance gap between receptive skills and productive skills; students are able to recognise language elements in receptive modality but they are unable to produce them in communicative contexts. Unless the learners attain certain threshold level of proficiency, they are unlikely to convert language elements from 'receptive form' to 'productive form'. The study identifies the need to incorporate appropriate strategies for development of productive skills into current teaching programmes.

**Key words:** mode of assessment, productive skills, receptive skills, second language performance, subjective/objective test items