

The Impact of IQ Level and Socio-Economic Background in Improving English Speaking Skills of University Undergraduates

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This study focuses on the development of speaking skills in English of university undergraduates with specific reference to the impact of two social psychological barriers. In relation to social barriers, the emphasis is on the socio-economic background of the undergraduates. Then in relation to psychological barriers, the study deals with the level of *IQ* of an individual.

The subjects of this study are the first year undergraduates of Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, with the majority of students being Buddhist monks.

Objectives of this study are: to identify the speaking difficulties of university undergraduates, to develop possible remedial measures for the identified speaking difficulties, to provide them with a better teaching/learning environment that addresses their specific needs.

A representative sample of approximately 75 students was selected based on random choice and a questionnaire was administered on them in order to examine their socio-economic background. The students' level of *IQ* was tested using a standard *IQ* test to determine their level of *IQ*. A variety of speaking tests were held to discover the students' speaking proficiency in English. At the end of the study the findings of the questionnaire, the scores of the *IQ* and the marks of the speaking tests were correlated to investigate the relationship among the socio-economic background, the level of *IQ* and speaking skills.

Except in a few rare instances, in most of the cases there was a significant correlation among the three factors observed in the study.

Key words: *IQ, Social barriers, Psychological barriers, Speaking skills*