



**Title of Project:**

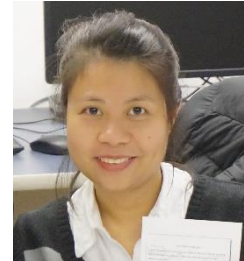
Effects of Task Types on Interactional Competence in Oral  
Communication Assessment

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**Project Summary:**

Studies of interaction in speaking assessment have highlighted problems regarding the unequal distribution of interaction patterns in different task types (i.e., interviews versus paired/group formats; Van Lier, 1989; Young & He, 1998). However, little attempt has been made in these studies to include not only the verbal but also the nonverbal interaction features elicited in interviews versus paired/group formats. Therefore, the purpose of this dissertation study is to examine the effects of task types on verbal and nonverbal interaction features in speaking assessment. The study has three aims: (1) investigate which interaction features judges notice when evaluating interaction in the individual and paired discussion tasks; (2) investigate if these different tasks elicit similar or different interaction features; (3) examine the extent to which these interaction features contribute to variance in interaction scores across task types. To achieve these goals, the two tasks to be studied are an individual scripted interview task and a paired discussion task. The study will analyze the use of verbal and nonverbal interaction features in 60 performances from 30 test takers, and 80 verbal reports from 10 judges using stimulated verbal recall. The expected outcomes will theoretically contribute to a further understanding of what constitutes interactional competence in oral communication assessment. Practically, this study will provide an understanding of how task types affect the elicitation of interaction features. This in turn will provide guidance for English language policy makers on choosing appropriate tasks for measuring test takers' interactional competence.