

# **A Narrative Case Study on the Role of English Language in Successful Transition from School to University during the Pandemic**

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**Abstract** – Transition from school to University demands a certain level of emotional stability in students along with a fairly reasonable command of English. Once enrolled in a University, students will have to study in English and function independently for which the proficiency in English is a key. However, most students are not mentally prepared for it, specifically during the transition and the low proficiency in English exacerbates the problem. As most Universities tend to conduct courses and exams online owing to the pandemic, the nature of this problem has changed over the past few months. Therefore, it was aimed to investigate how the intelligibility in English impacts the transition from school to University during the Covid-19 pandemic. A narrative case study approach was utilized to conduct the research as the method is best used to capture the richness of responses and uncover people's experiences. Accordingly, five first year undergraduates from five Universities in Sri Lanka were interviewed. Their narratives were analysed using thematic approach. The analysis suggested that their levels of fear, anxiety, uncertainty and insecurity have risen due to the issues in understanding the instructions given remotely, poor relationships with teachers, less peer and social support and insufficient digital literacy on utilizing ICT applications for studies on which the level of English proficiency has a direct impact. In fact, low English competency levels affect the effectiveness of the teaching learning experience, level of engagement and the total learning output in contrast to face-to-face classroom instruction. It was therefore, found that the importance of English has been emphasized greater than ever and students are vehemently dependent upon virtual and distance learning resources during the pandemic as they are expected to connect only virtually and work almost independently to carry out their tasks.

**Keywords:** Transition from school to University, English Language, Pandemic, Narrative Case Study