

A Case Study on the English Language Learning through Virtual and In-person Learning Environments: Perceptions of Undergraduates

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Abstract – English is a global language which bridges the communicative purpose of the worldwide countries. Sri Lanka being an outer circle country, English is learnt/ taught for various purposes. It is observable that, education system of the worldwide countries including Sri Lanka have totally undergone a substantial transition with the outbreak of COVID-19 pandemic in 2020 where the education is associated with virtual platforms. Therefore, the case study investigates and compares the undergraduates' attitudes and perceptions towards enhancing their listening skills through virtual (zoom) and in-person learning environments in Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka. The fundamental objective is to identify the students' preferences, needs and lacks in mastering listening skills through virtual and in person environments. A quantitative research design was followed to collect the primary data by distributing a questionnaire using the convenient sampling technique among the undergraduates of SUSL. The study has been carried out a six months duration and findings depict that 75% of undergraduates show a less preference to adapt to the virtual environment and to master listening skills since it is a new experience. Further, it creates more a teacher-centered classroom and the students have technical issues in participating for the lectures and the listening activities. Most of the students' perceptions bear the notion that conducting virtual lessons are boring for them and some students are incapable to enhance their listening skills followed by the other three language skills. So, they suggest that the best way is to learn the language through in-person learning environments where the instructor guides them in learning. Therefore, the study concludes that the instructors should attempt to apply the novel techniques to develop an active, student-centered classroom where the English language can be taught/learnt well in-person learning environments.

Keywords: Virtual and In-person Learning, English Language, Undergraduates