

Undergraduates' Perception on Zoom Technology in Learning English at the Faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

Ishari Maduwanthi, AAM Nizam, SMC Bandara, and BGDS Nandarathna

Department of English Language Teaching, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka

<aaimaduwanthi@agri.rjt.ac.lk>

Abstract – With the sudden closure of all the higher education institutes in Sri Lanka to tackle the spread of COVID -19, the Sri Lankan education system plunged into a huge crisis. The tutors had to gear themselves for online teaching and other distance learning modes which were challenging for both tutors and undergraduates as teaching and learning through an online platform is a new experience for all. Against such a backdrop, it is crucial to examine the undergraduates' perception and readiness for online learning methods implemented at the university levels. Thus, this study aims to find out students' perception of zoom lectures towards learning English. For the present study, the qualitative, thematic approach has been adopted and the data has been collected by using the random sampling technique where ten students were selected from the faculty of Agriculture, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka. Data were gathered through a semi structured interview and a Likert chart. Based on the thematic analysis results, it is clear that the students have a positive attitude towards the ESL lectures conducted via zoom and not as an impediment since they have a more dialogic and participatory class with interactive activities than at the face-to-face classroom. Findings revealed that online teaching facilities encourage them to have more dialogic classes which improved their motivational level and confidence in practicing language skills. In fact, E-learning has emerged as a new concept of enhancing the teaching and learning process. However, slow speed internet connection and environmental disturbances were identified as hindrances to the learning process. But the study implicates some issues related to the curriculum designing and use of novel techniques as well. This study is of vital importance since it will facilitate the educational institutes and syllabus designers to take this online platform to a next level in a better way to cater to all the students equally.

Keywords: E-learning, undergraduates' perception, Covid 19