

## **Challenges and Issues in Teaching English via Online: A Survey based on ESL Teachers in Sri Lanka**

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**Abstract** - Due to COVID 19 pandemic crisis and lockdown, the entire education system has been shifted to online learning. However, teachers and students in Sri Lanka encounter a number of challenges and difficulties in online teaching/learning process. This survey research was carried out with the aim of exploring the challenges and issues encountered by ESL teachers in Sri Lanka in teaching English via online portal. In this study, 30 ESL teachers in Sri Lanka were randomly selected as sample population, and a focus interview was used as research instrument of the study. The data collection method was qualitative. An interview was used to collect opinion survey among the ESL teachers regarding the challenges and issue they encounter in teaching English via online portal. The findings of the opinion survey show that all participants have been using Zoom and WhatsApp applications for online teaching since the emergence of COVID 19 pandemic crisis. Further, the challenges and difficulties include: dissatisfaction in teaching/learning process due to unstable internet connection, problems in including poor students, lack of classroom interaction, difficulties in pairing and grouping students for speaking and other activities, challenges in monitoring students and evaluating their performance in classroom, challenges in using language teaching materials, techniques and games in classroom, and difficulties in teaching vocabulary and pronunciation. Further, physical classroom learning is more effective than virtual learning. Therefore, this study concludes that online teaching is not suitable for ESL teaching, and physical classroom is appropriate particularly for ESL learning/teaching process.

**Keywords:** COVID 19, English as a Second Language, Online learning