Attitudes of English Language Teachers in Sri Lanka towards Online Teaching: A study Conducted during the Covid-19 Pandemic

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Abstract – A virtual classroom – an online platform through which a group of students and a teacher connect, is similar to the traditional classroom yet is different in the mode of interaction. The concept of virtual classrooms came into light with the COVID-19 pandemic shifting traditional classrooms worldwide, causing many issues for both the teachers and the learners. Unlike other subjects, language learning is driven by the active interaction and engagement of learners. That causes numerous confusions when adapting to online learning strategies. Therefore, qualitative research was conducted to investigate the attitudes of a sample of sixty English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers in Sri Lanka. The sample consisted of primary, secondary and tertiary level teachers revealing mixed attitudes towards online teaching. The questionnaire was structured employing a Likert scale to collect data with a few open-ended questions. According to the results, most of the teachers are new to the online teaching concept. Secondary and tertiary teachers have fairly positive attitudes, while primary teachers have negative attitudes towards online teaching. Teachers also claim that network issues often hinder classroom activities, and there is no reliable way to monitor the students during lessons. Thus, concluding, in-class teaching is the most preferred yet, online teaching is the best possible solution for the prevailing pandemic situation. The researchers suggest awareness and education on the concept by which it will become more successful in the future.

Keywords: *online teaching, English teacher attitudes, Covid-19 pandemic.*

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