

English as a Second Language (ESL) Teachers' Online Teaching Expectations and Experiences during the COVID-19 Pandemic in Sri Lanka

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Abstract – As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the academic institutions have been transferred into synchronous online teaching mode. It required the teachers to transform their lessons into online versions in a short period of time. Teaching online becomes a new adventure for many teachers as they have to cope with innovative pedagogies to redefine learning in a virtual platform in which the traditional methods of teaching are substituted and reformed. The previous studies revealed that the teachers are expected to become technically oriented to support the learners to learn in a digital environment. The current study compares English as a Second Language (ESL) teachers' online teaching expectations (with the time of transition to remote teaching) and experiences (after a year of online teaching) during the COVID-19 pandemic in Sri Lanka. A designed online survey with twenty questions was used to collect data from thirty ESL teachers from government and non-government schools in Sri Lanka. The results demonstrated a significant change in the perception of teachers regarding their expectations and experiences that they had after a year of teaching remotely. The teachers revealed that even though they changed their roles and expanded their responsibilities as they wanted, they could not achieve their expected lesson goals when teaching online due to limited teaching obligation, lack of digital literacy (of teachers and learners) and technical issues. The findings of this study provide implications for the professionalism of teachers in adopting technology in their educational practices and positive and negative aspects of teaching ESL remotely on digital platforms.

Keywords: remote teaching, Teaching English as a Second language, the COVID-19 pandemic