
Meeting the Challenges of the ‘New Normal’ in English as a Second Language (ESL) Learning among Sri Lankan Secondary School Learners

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Abstract

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the period of ‘New Normal’ learning was commenced. The brief transition from traditional classroom learning to online learning mode was new to many Sri Lankan students. The new learning space becomes disembodied virtual, not actual. Even if online learning creates more opportunities to continue active learning, it sometimes negatively influences the learners’ performance and learning outcomes. This study aims exploring and investigating the challenges confronted by Sri Lankan secondary school learners in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) online. The objective of this study is to evaluate the learners’ new experiences in online learning and to reevaluate the methods of teaching online. An online survey-based questionnaire was designed to collect data from 60 Sri Lankan secondary school ESL learners (from government and non-government schools). The qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyze the data. It is found that the students encountered challenges related to technical, academic and communication aspects of online learning. Further, the results demonstrated that these challenges heavily influence students’ ‘new normal’ learning and most of the students are not satisfied to continue with online learning. The study offers implications to investigate the solutions to minimize the challenges that Sri Lankan ESL learners may face in learning English on digital platforms.

Keywords: *English as a Second Language, Global emergency, Language learners, New normal, Online learning*

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