

Sri Lankan English as the Standard/ Model for Language Assessment in English Language Teaching in Sri Lanka: Understanding Tertiary Level Teacher Resistance

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Abstract

While Sri Lankan English (SLE) has been prescribed as the standard for English Language Teaching (ELT) practices including Language Assessment (LA) in Sri Lanka, there has been considerable resistance to it both from scholars and teachers. Within this context, this study investigates why English teachers resist adopting SLE as the Standard/ model for LA in ELT. The study adopts a qualitative approach since similar studies of quantitative nature have been conducted. The study collected data from 10 teachers who teach English at two Faculties (Humanities and Social Sciences as well as Natural Sciences) at a state university through semi-structured in-depth interviews. The collected data were coded and then analysed using the method of thematic analysis. Seven themes explaining teacher resistance to SLE as the model/ standard in LA in ELT were identified through the analysis of data: SLE as ungrammatical and unacceptable outside Sri Lanka, teachers' sense of professional responsibility to train the students in "correct" language usage, lack of awareness regarding variation within SLE, difficulties arising in marking student answers due to lack of codification of SLE, image as a competent teacher and pressure from the academic community, SLE as unacceptable in the domain of English for Academic Purposes and accepting SLE as the standard as discriminatory against students whose mother tongue is Tamil. The study highlights the importance of further research, particularly of qualitative nature, on SLE as the standard in other practices in ELT such as material development and pedagogy.

Keywords: *Sri Lankan English, English Language Teaching, Language standards*