

SUB THEME 01

**Exploring Innovations: Integrating Technology in
English Language Teaching and Linguistics**

English Language Teaching Integrating E-Learning Flipped Approach and Sustainability: A Phenomenological Study on Faculty Experience in Higher Education

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Abstract

Higher Education (HE) is going through a paradigm shift in developing the English language proficiency skills of graduates for a sustainable world in achieving Quality Education (SDG 4). The Sustainable Development Goal 4 (SDG 4) – Quality Education confirms comprehensive and equitable lifelong learning prospects. Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) is an important aspect of teaching paradigms as ‘Research emphasizes that education is the prerequisite to achieving other Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs)’ (Kioupi and Voulvoulis 2019; Lewin 2019 cited in Burbules et al. 2020) in the multi-dimensional world. English Language Teaching (ELT) to be more attuned to the context, purpose and needs of the learner and transforms teaching from curriculum-based to problem-solving. Thus, applying topic-led project-based teaching and learning resources with authentic global issues would create a sustainable lifelong learning experience.

Online teaching is continuing at a larger scale even after the pandemic and it has become a potential alternative in HE. The e-learning platform provides innovative teaching-learning opportunities, unlike traditional classrooms. There is a paradigm shift in teaching adapting to various e-learning tools and instructional strategies. The application of online platforms such as Google Classroom, Zoom, social media and other virtual learning environments and blended learning strategies including flipped classrooms are being explored than ever before.

The study aims to discover ELT instructors' perceptions of applying the flipped approach in ELT, integrating SDGs. The study is based on three rationales. First, this approach to teaching can be applied during modern catastrophes and crises. Also, by integrating novel technologies into education, the instructors can be exposed to modern

e-learning teaching pedagogies. Furthermore, the integration of SDGs in ELT would improve the teaching content by addressing global issues and would lead towards ESD.

Literature Review

A comprehensive and holistic pedagogy is required to have quality teaching and learning (Peter 2015 cited in Garg 2020). The modern generation's innovative teaching requires novel teaching strategies to keep them engaged in the lesson and students prefer that teaching involves more discussions with more engagement (Rehman et al. 2020). Online learning is the exposure to synchronous and asynchronous environments using technological devices with internet access (Dhawan 2020). The synchronous environment is where there are live lectures, live interactions and instant feedback whereas asynchronous learning content is available in different learning systems. Låg & Sæle (2019) define a flipped classroom as “one in which the activities traditionally done by students outside class (e.g., practicing problem-solving) are moved into the classroom session, whereas what is traditionally done in class (e.g., expository, information transmission teaching) is done outside and before class.” Time and space can be managed better by integrating technology in a flipped approach (Asiri et al. 2021 cited in Hamzah 2023). According to the constructivist learning theory, learners construct new knowledge by applying active learning techniques and with self-directed learning. This is much evident in the flipped approach where learners have access to learning material in advance and learn through self-directed learning techniques before participating in in-class activities.

The flipped classroom also causes some difficulties in terms of availability, internet speed, the teacher's role as a guide rather than an instructor, the making of digital resources and students' responsiveness to their learning (Alali 2020). Technical issues can be solved by having a Plan B and having pre-recorded lectures: online courses to be more interactive and dynamic: setting time limits for tasks and activities: personal attention to be given to students to make online learning adaptive; group forums can be used to enrich communication and making effective strategies in giving online instructions are some of the teaching strategies the instructors can employ in online teaching (Dhawan 2020). The flipped approach is effective in language learning

as students can develop their higher-order thinking skills by emerging in the learning process (Webb and Doman 2016 cited in Hamzah 2023)

According to Sargent & Casey (2020), the findings of this study on flipped learning pedagogy and digital technology reveal the development of DigiTech and its accessibility in both the school and home environment has become the vehicle for delivering flipped learning and it is one of the pedagogical approach that can be applied to scaffold the use of DigiTech in the in-class time. In addition, the teacher's instructions are based on the understanding of the discipline, open mind, thinking ability, scientific trends and beliefs about the teaching trend also reflect on teaching and students' learning (Alali 2020).

Online education continues its journey even after the pandemic. There is inadequacy especially about ELT in the post-pandemic era though many studies flourished during the pandemic about online learning in education. Further, there are extensive studies based on other disciplines (Laloo et al. 2020; Garg 2020; Wilson et al. 2021) compared to the education field. In addition, most of the studies based on the flipped approach have explored the perceptions of learners but very few studies on the perspectives of teachers/ instructors.

Therefore, the overarching purpose of this study is to understand the perceptions of ELT instructors in integrating the flipped approach and SDGs in ELT, to make ELT effective and in achieving Quality Education (SDG 4) and ESD. Accordingly, the objectives of this paper are

1. To investigate the perceptions of ELT instructors on the application of e-learning flipped approach and SDGs in ELT
2. To discover the factors that contributed towards maximizing e-learning flipped classrooms.
3. To examine what processes and strategies were employed in the process.

Methods and Methodology

The study was based on the main continuum of qualitative research especially on phenomenological study and also built on the constructivist worldview. The study involved ELT instructors with more than five years of ELT experience in HE. The five participants for the study were selected based on convenience sampling, who were

competent in online teaching. The data was collected from open-ended semi-structured interviews. The qualitative data acquired from the interviews were transcribed through quotations of their perceptions using Microsoft Word. Then the themes were identified through the transcribed interviews. Moreover, the interviews' spoken text converted into text format was codified based on research questions were categorized and themes were formed.

Results and Discussion

According to the thematic analysis, ELT instructors' perceptions of flipped learning approach were favourable in presenting content knowledge, especially integrating SDGs where ELT became more relevant by addressing global issues and leading towards a multidisciplinary approach to teaching. Also, the in-class time was used effectively in organizing higher-order thinking tasks and promoted collaborative learning. Further, the flipped learning environment promoted a more relaxed teaching pace and space. However, their perceptions based on e-learning techniques and strategies revealed that they emphasized more technology-based teaching pedagogies and tools to be enhanced and updated, especially with the influence of Artificial Intelligence in education contexts.

Conclusions and Remarks

The study contributed to experiencing the e-learning flipped approach in ELT integrating SDGs to make teaching more relevant addressing global issues and developing English language skills. The primary reason for applying the flipped approach is to provide in advance the content knowledge in the asynchronous mode and to use the synchronous environment more productively by utilizing student-centered activities to promote higher-order thinking collaborative tasks.

This study provides meaningful implications for scholars, curriculum developers, teacher trainers, faculty members, and supervisors with adapting to an effective instructional strategy - the online flipped model as it can be applied in any discipline. Also to integrate sustainability themes across ELT curricula into language education. Thus it can change their professional practice and teaching perspectives. Further research is recommended to explore the optimum use of e-learning flipped

approaches and the application of SDGs in teaching experiences and in reaching the full potential of ELT to contribute towards a sustainable world.

In conclusion, online teaching has become mandatory in education. Therefore, teachers need to be prepared psychologically and practically to adapt novel technology-based teaching practices. Further, teacher training programmes based on teaching through technology are to be developed to promote an effective technology-based teaching platform on par with modern teaching practices.

Keywords: *e-learning flipped classroom, English Language Teaching, faculty experience, higher education, Sustainable Development Goals*

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A Study of the Challenges in Producing Authentic Assignments in Language and Linguistics Classes in Colleges in Sri Lanka: Students' Perspectives

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Abstract

Creating authentic assignments is a critical aspect of language and linguistics education, fostering critical thinking, creativity, and independent analysis among students. However, in the context of Sri Lankan colleges, students and educators face significant challenges in creating genuinely original assignments. This study aims to explore the barriers that hinder the production of authentic work in language and linguistics courses within Sri Lanka's higher education system. Factors such as limited access to academic resources, time constraints, pressure to achieve high grades, and the temptation of plagiarism will be examined. Furthermore, the study investigates the role of institutional policies, teaching practices, and student preparedness in shaping assignment authenticity. Through qualitative and quantitative methods, this research seeks to provide insights into these challenges, offering recommendations for educators and policymakers to enhance the effectiveness of assignments in promoting deeper learning and academic integrity.

Literature Review

The literature on challenges related to producing authentic assignments in language and linguistics classes highlights a range of issues, particularly in developing countries. Andersson (2008) identifies several key barriers to quality education in Sri Lanka, including technological limitations, lack of access to resources, and inadequate teacher training. These challenges contribute to difficulties in fostering originality in assignments. The integration of emerging technologies and artificial intelligence in education has been explored by Dimitriadou and Lanitis (2023), who note both opportunities and risks, such as the increased potential for academic dishonesty. Similarly, Susnjak and McIntosh (2024) raise concerns over the impact of tools like

ChatGPT on assignment integrity, especially in online settings.

Efforts to promote authentic assessment have been emphasized by Ismail et al. (2023), who argue that self-regulated learning and autonomy are essential in improving assignment quality. Esmaeilee (2024) adds that the use of electronic portfolios in EFL settings can enhance language learners' performance, supporting authentic assignment creation.

In terms of academic integrity, Walsh et al. (2024) and Wulandari et al. (2024) discuss the evolving norms of cheating and plagiarism, with a focus on cultivating a culture of appreciation for originality, especially through culturally grounded approaches like Tri Hita Karana. These perspectives provide a comprehensive view of the challenges faced in Sri Lankan colleges.

Theoretical framework

The challenges in producing authentic assignments in language and linguistics classes in Sri Lankan colleges can be analyzed through three key theories. **Cognitive Development Theory** (Piaget) suggests that students at different stages of intellectual growth may struggle to create original work, as underdeveloped critical thinking skills hinder their ability to synthesize and express ideas independently. This cognitive immaturity can result in reliance on copying or superficial work.

Ajzen's Theory of Planned Behavior adds that students' attitudes, social norms, and perceived control shape their behavior toward academic integrity. In a context where plagiarism may be normalized, or when students feel pressured by grades, they are more likely to engage in dishonest practices, seeing it as a viable solution.

Finally, **Constructivist Learning Theory** (Vygotsky) emphasizes the importance of social interaction in knowledge construction. When students lack opportunities for meaningful engagement with peers and educators, they miss the chance to deepen understanding and generate original ideas, leading to more inauthentic submissions. Promoting collaborative learning environments can help foster authentic academic work by enhancing critical thinking and problem-solving skills.

Methods and Methodology

This study employs a mixed-methods approach, combining qualitative and quantitative research methods to examine the challenges in producing authentic assignments in language and linguistics classes in Sri Lankan colleges.

Data Collection

Surveys will be administered to 50 Foundation Year students at Nawaloka College of Higher Studies to gather quantitative data on their experiences with assignment production, academic integrity, and the use of resources.

Semi-structured interviews will be conducted with 5 language instructors to explore the qualitative aspects of the challenges, focusing on their perspectives on plagiarism, teaching practices, and institutional policies.

Sampling

A purposive sampling method will select participants from the same educational settings but originating from various backgrounds, ensuring a range of insights.

Data Analysis

Quantitative data from surveys will be analyzed using descriptive statistics and correlation analysis to identify key trends. Qualitative data from interviews will be thematically analyzed to uncover deeper insights into students' and educators' challenges in ensuring authenticity.

This triangulation of methods allows for a comprehensive understanding of the issue.

Results and Discussion

A variety of students took part in the survey representing all the 09 provinces in Sri Lanka. They are in the age group of 17-21 years. 36% of them are female students and 64% are male students.

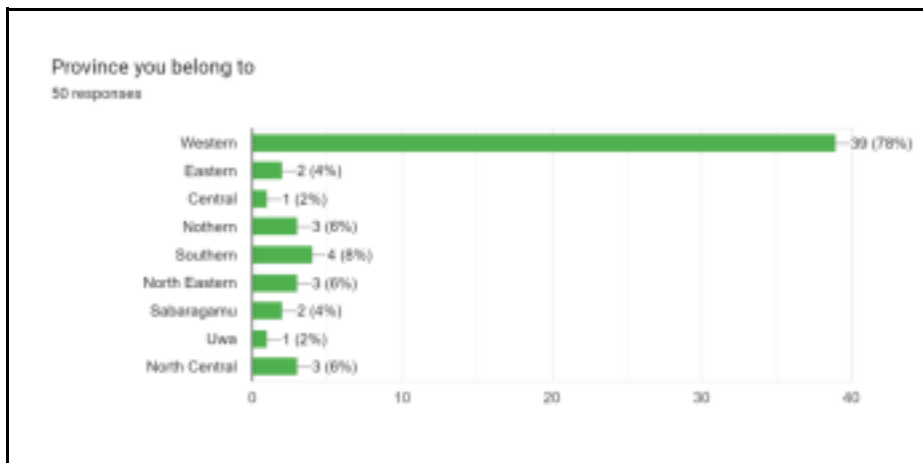


Figure 1

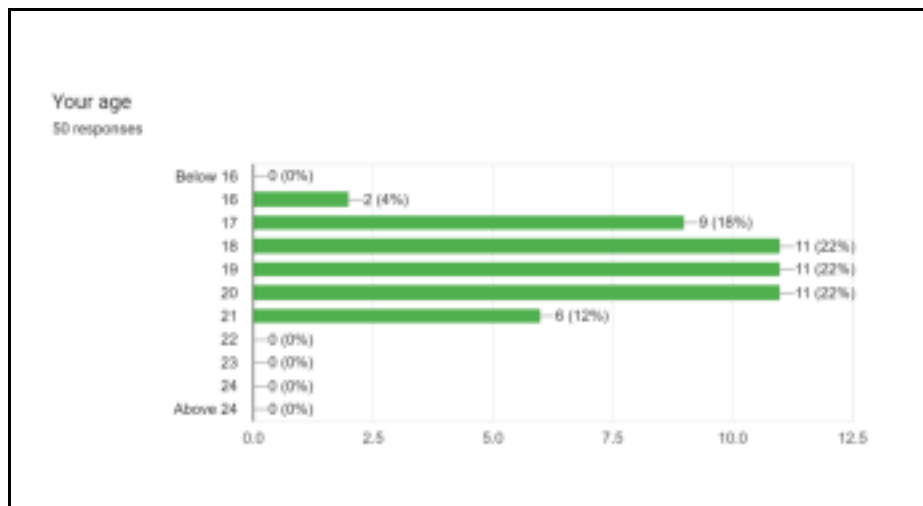


Figure 2

According to the student responses the most common challenges faced by the students when they enroll in their degree program via Foundation programs are as follows.

Students' Challenge	Percentage
Is getting familiar with referencing and citation new to you ?	76
Do you have a fear of making mistakes and being humiliated ?	58
Is the given time for the assignments NOT sufficient?	52

Is your vocabulary not sufficient to produce good assignments?	42
Do you feel that your research skills are inadequate?	34
Is language a challenge/ problem for you.	22
Is it difficult to translate what you learn into your own style of language?	18
Do you feel it is difficult to understand Academic Sources in English?	12
Is technology a challenge?	12
Do you feel a cultural difference in the academic practice?	10

The graphical depiction of the challenges faced by the students is as follows.

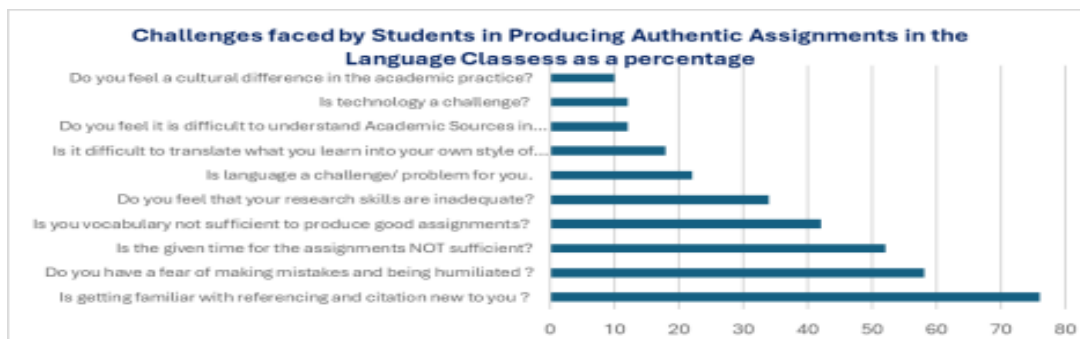


Figure 3

However, the students have attempted the following actions as solutions.

Student Action	Percentage
I have no choice. But to do it as the best as I can do.	96
I search Google	90
I seek friends/ family support	60
Cannot let me FAIL. So, I follow any method advised by my seniors or friends	52
I use AI (Chat GPT and Others)	24
Do you feel that you still do not belong to the college culture?	22
I pay and outsource the assignment	2

The graphical presentation is as follows.

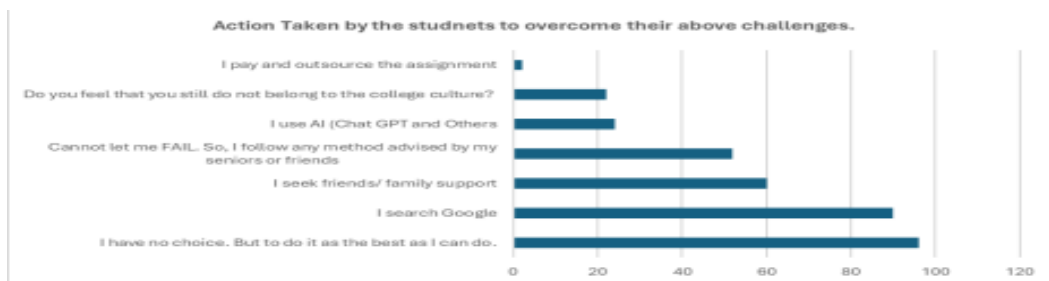


Figure 4

At the semi-structured interview conducted among the lecturers of the English Language, it was revealed that the greatest challenge is plagiarized work that their students submit, in their summative and formative assessments. Though the relevant guidance is timely given, students with the intention of submitting the AI-generated assignments, they get organized at the last minute.

The second challenge in producing authentic assignments is the agencies who write assignments as a business. They undertake the contract from the college level students and submit the poor-quality assignments, which would align with the university policy. It is challenging to obtain the learning outcomes from the students.

Though the Student's survey reflects the real-world challenges the students experience, their educators find it is not easy to recognize and educate students and deliver the learning outcome of the module and the program, when they submit the AI-based or outsourced assessments.

Conclusions and Remarks

In conclusion, this study reveals a multifaceted set of challenges that students in Sri Lankan colleges face in producing authentic assignments in language and linguistics classes. The primary barriers include unfamiliarity with academic atmosphere such as referencing, fear of making mistakes, and poor time management skills. Additionally, issues such as limited vocabulary, insufficient research skills, and difficulty in comprehending academic sources in English further complicate the task. A significant finding is the reliance on external sources, such as AI tools and assignment outsourcing, which further dilute the quality of academic presentation.

From the educators' perspective, plagiarism and the growing use of AI-generated content pose substantial challenges to ensuring academic integrity. Despite timely guidance, many students resort to last-minute efforts, often submitting low-quality assignments that meet institutional policies but fail to demonstrate genuine learning outcomes. This disconnect between student effort and academic expectations highlights the need for more robust institutional policies and teaching strategies to combat these issues.

To address these challenges, educators, policymakers, and institutions need to focus on promoting a culture of originality and deeper engagement with learning materials. Enhancing students' research and language skills, offering clearer guidelines on academic integrity, and fostering collaborative learning environments can help improve the quality of assignments. Ultimately, a holistic approach is needed to create a more supportive educational framework that encourages authentic, critical, and creative work from students.

Keywords: *Assessments, Artificial Intelligence, College, Education, Language, Outsourced*

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Gay Slang Variety 'Nachchi language': Reflexive Ethnographic Observations

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Abstract

In the study of identity construction, language occupies a central and pivotal role because language is social, cultural and interactional (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). Hence, in a discourse study apropos Sri Lankan non-heterosexual men's subjectivity as well as intersubjectivities, reflexive ethnography is key in capturing the language, culture, as well as the politics of the location. This paper, therefore, explores the initial reflexive ethnographic observations of a gay slang variety termed *Nachchi* language (self-identified by the users).

Literature Review

Slang

Language varieties are influenced by many factors such as age, gender, ethnicity, and occupation. Youth, in particular, develop their own slang to establish identity and ensure in-group communication, often using informal styles to foster a friendly atmosphere (Putra & Aditiawarman, 2019). Slang, an informal variety, also characterized by rapidly evolving vocabulary, is a tool for identity expression and group cohesion, while preventing outsiders from understanding. In addition, Wardhaugh (1997), proposes age, sex and occupation as causal determinants of certain varieties of language.

Drawing a distinction between language variety and slang, O'Grady and Archibald (1996, 555) identify slang as a "label that is frequently used to denote certain informal or faddish usages of nearly anyone in the speech community". However, slang, while subject to rapid change, is widespread and familiar to a large number of speakers, unlike gay language (Baker, 2002).

Gay Slang

Baker's (2002) posits *Polari* as anti-language used within the gay community in the UK. Anti-language, a more developed theory than argot (O'Grady & Archibald, 1996) is associated with stigmatized groups. As Baker argues, anti-societies are countercultures within a society, existing by resisting either passively or destructively. Research has shown that people use anti-languages for reasons such as secrecy and verbal art. Similarly, Podgorecki cited in Halliday (1976) studies the creation of an anti-society as a way of constructing an alternative social structure. In his study, he examines the creation of a second identity for the Polish prisoners using anti language known as *Grypserka*. A similar study on gay slang used in Indonesia known as *Padang*, Boellstorff (2004) states that slang reflects a unique social attitude, culture, and history. This language style can be complex, as it mixes and adapts words, making it difficult for outsiders to comprehend.

Levon (2010) using a slang variety called *Oxtchit* explores the complexities of identity and gender norms within the gay community in Israel. Critiquing the common view of gay slang as a straightforward tool of identity performance and resistance, he argues the exigency of a more nuanced interpretation. He examines how *Oxtchit* is used not as a form of direct identity expression, but rather as a form of mockery and distancing. The language serves to construct an "other" — an exaggeratedly effeminate and non-normative figure — which allows users to implicitly affirm their own adherence to dominant gender norms.

Levon's analysis demonstrates that this slang is primarily used by men who identify with mainstream, normative masculine values, not by those who are radically challenging gender expectations. Through this use, the men indirectly assert their gender normativity by mocking or distancing themselves from the perceived gender deviance of the *Oxtchit* persona. Levon argues that this usage highlights the limits of viewing language solely as a vehicle for explicit identity performance and calls for a broader ethnographic understanding of how identity can emerge through indirect and often contradictory linguistic practices.

Methods and Methodology

Fieldnotes from reflexive ethnographic observations are used for this initial understanding of the *Nachchi* language. Heller (2011) identifies that the ethnographic approach aims to understand language as a social practice and its connection to social organization. She emphasizes the importance of ethnographic sociolinguistics as it possesses the ability to follow ‘social processes across time and space, and to see how agency and structure engage each other under specific political economic conditions’ (10).

For this paper, fieldnotes of participant observation for two months in two SOGIESC NGOs were used. There were 10 gay and bisexual men sharing the office space with more than 20 *Nachchi* and transgender women. While most of the conversation took place in “office space”, some transcended safe spaces such as movie screenings spaces, parties, book discussions, workshops, and places of worship. The phrases and words were noted down immediately after hearing them and were later clarified with the help of the speakers.

For the initial understanding of the *Nachchi* language the framework proposed by Bucholtz and Hall (2005) is used. They use the premise that identity is constructed through linguistic iteration and their framework outlines five key principles: **(1) Emergence**, where identity is viewed as a product of linguistic interaction; **(2) Positionality**, encompassing both macro-level demographic categories and specific interactional stances; **(3) Indexicality**, through which identity is linguistically indexed via social meanings; **(4) Relationality**, highlighting identity’s construction through intersubjective relationships; and **(5) Partialness**, acknowledging that identity is always shifting and context-dependent.

Results and Discussion

Nachchi language as used by gay and bisexual men in Sri Lanka is an appropriation of the *Nachchi* language of the mainly Sinhala speaking *Nachchi* and transgender community in Sri Lanka. It has come into usage within the last few decades and become more established among the SOGIESC NGOs among Sinhala speaking youth. As per the partiality principle, which highlights the context dependent

nature of a language, the understanding of the phenomenon is limited to the observed spaces, which in this case are the SOGIESC NGOs.

The identity construction of the non-heterosexual men emerged in the dialogic processes drawing on multicultural voices such as youth language and an appropriation of *Nachchi*'s language use. This is perhaps due to the excessive presence of youth in SOGIESC activism and some of the leading figures of the organization are transgender women and *Nachchi*.

Altogether approximately 20 words with their usage were noted down that belong to several functional categories deriving from either Sinhala or English etymological roots. The *Nachchi* language use can be explained using indexical processes such as labeling, stance taking and style marking (Bucholtz & Hall, 2005). The essentialized label *Nachchi* is not limited to transgender and homosexual men who celebrate their feminine gender identity (Miller & Nichols, 2012) through a process known as *ganda wenawa* (being effeminate overtly for the sake of attracting male attention), the term *Nachchi* has extended to include non-transgender but biological males who appear androgynous and cross dress for certain occasions only. These essentialized labels are always used in the description of subject positions. Conversely, the subject position *Johnsa* is used on men who are gay with obvious male expression and at times it is used to refer to the penis (with a slight grammatical variation). Also, this term is loosely used on men whose sexual desire may oscillate between cis-gender women or transgender women.

Conclusion and Remarks

The non-heterosexual men's appropriation of the *Nachchi* language takes place while invoking humour and mostly at parodic situations, relating to political agency. While its usage is mostly seen among the non-heterosexual men who adhere to the normative feminine values, in this complex identity performativity, there is a distancing from the hegemonic masculine as well as feminine identities striving towards the unique identity of the *Nachchi*. However, this does not imply that the gay/bisexual men known as *Johnsas* did not use this slag. Their use of the *Nachchi* language, in other words an implication of the traditional feminine values and performativity, is essentially partial and relational. While there is obvious subversion of the linguistic

ownership, this adequation is used to posit non-heterosexual men as different in this contested field of gender identity.

Keywords: *Gay slang, Indexicality, Nachchi language, Stance taking, Style, Sri Lanka*

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First Language Production Behaviours of Dative Case of Sinhala

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The objective of this study was to examine the first language acquisition patterns of the dative case in Sinhala by its native speakers. Traditional Sinhala grammar employs nine cases (direct, accusative, agentive, instrumental, dative, ablative, genitive, locative, and vocative) but the spoken variety of Sinhala only uses six cases: direct, accusative, dative, genitive, instrumental, and vocative (Gair and Karunatilake 2013, p.37-58) and the inanimate nouns are inflected only into four cases: direct, dative, genitive, and instrumental (Karunatilake 1992, p.8, MacDougall, 1979, p.5, Gair & Karunatilaka 1976, p.1). The dative case in Sinhala indicates the noun that is the recipient of an action, the object in sentences where the direct object is being transferred or affected by the action of the verb, or the purpose or benefit of an action, indicating who benefits from or is affected by the action. This study focused on the first language (L1) acquisition of dative case of spoken Sinhala. The suffix /tə/ (ට) is the case marker for dative case in Sinhala as in [Emilitə] – ‘to Emily’. This study was based on the question “what production behaviours are visible in the L1 acquisition of the dative case of Sinhala?”.

Literature Review

Abesooriya and Perera (2019) discovered 9 forms of directives used by L1 learners of Sinhala aged between 2-4 years: need statements, imperatives, hints, suggestives, requests, refusal, embedded imperatives, predictions, and condition. Kumaranayake (2017) disclosed 17 functions of baby talk (BT/ motherese / parentese) in Sinhala speech. Meegaskumbura (1980) introduced toñdol as a style of Sinhala speech which characterizes a marginal subsystem of ‘baby talk’. The principle feature of the exaggerated simplicity of this variety of speech encourages children to acquire their language with ease. Bandaranayake (2014) examined the expressive skills with

respect to 10 colours (kalu, sudu, ratu, nil, kaha, tæmbili, ro:sə, dam, dumburu, kolə) and the 5 post-positional labels (udə, jatə, issərəha, pitpassə, ætulə) of 48 participants aged between 54 to 72 months, and revealed gender difference does not affect the identification skills. The L1 acquisition of the dative case in Sinhala yet to be examined and this study will fill the gap in the present knowledge.

Methods and Methodology

The primary data were gathered in Gandarawatta and Rassandeniya grama niladhari areas in Matara district. The natural speech and conversations of 50 participants aged between 9 months to 48 months were audio-recorded biweekly during the regular one-hour home visits. The recorded conversations were transcribed into written mode and the utterances consisted with dative nouns and dative case marker were segmented. The linguistic tendencies were examined and categorized with a close attention to the age which each utterance was produced. The onset age of each sub-linguistic tendency is parallel to each utterance.

Results and Discussion

Up to the beginning of the 2nd year, only three examples were found where dative nouns were used and two were similar utterances. A variety of sentence structures, that dative case is used, appeared at the age of 2:0. Expressions of abilities and inabilities, one who feels emotions and feeling sick, ownership or idea of having something. Between 2 to 3 years participants started using the dative form in several other structures such as affirmative and negative expressions with [o:ne] (want), structures with intransitive verbs such as [vela:] happened, [penuna:] saw, [æheno:] hear, and [amatəkə vela:] forgot, utterances with ‘for’, with certain postpositions, forming adverbs by suffixing /tə/ to an adjective. The onset appearance of the dative case in structures such as expressing time (3:2), and likes and dislikes toward inanimate (3:2) or inanimate nouns (3:7) was observed between 3 to 4 years. /tə/ was also used in the interrogative question words, but only after (3:5) [ko: pættətəi] To which side?. However, the participants aged below 4 years did not use numbers to specify the time (ex: at six o’clock- [həjətə]). Only one utterance was found where a numerical word was suffixed with the dative /tə/ to mean ‘broke into two’ (3:4) [vesak ku:duwə dekətə kædila:] – ‘the Vesak lanton is broken into two’. 6-word utterance with two dative

nouns was found in the data at 3:3: [me: ba:skəʔ ekəʔə da:la: pa:rəʔə da:no:] – ‘having put it inside this basket, through it to the road’.

Conclusions and Remarks

In conclusion, five stages were disclosed in the production of dative case by the native speakers of Sinhala. At the first level (up to 1:3) dative case and the case marker had not come into the use of the participants. In the second level they used irregular dative nouns which the case marker was not needed. At the age of 2, the dative case marker appeared in their speech marking a 3rd level. In the next stage, the participants were inclined to produce utterances with dative nouns appropriately in the structures with to, for, abilities, inabilities, feelings, emotions, sicknesses, needs and wants (things and activities), ownership/ having, intransitive verbs. Finally, in the 5th stage more complex structures were produced by adding dative case marker to create adverbs, conveying time, interrogatives, and numerals. Thus it was revealed that parallel to the increment of age, more complex structures were constructed using the dative nouns.

Keywords: *Dative case, First Language Acquisition, Language production, Sinhala*

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**Enhancing Career Readiness through 21st Century Competencies:
A Study on Technology Students and Faculty at the University of Gampaha
Wickramarachchi**

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Abstract

This study examines the perceptions of employability and 21st-century skills in non-vocational technology programs. In the current knowledge-driven economy students should expect to graduate from higher education with transferable skills and specialized knowledge that they can use in various settings. Graduates are expected to be ready for specific jobs and engaged critical members of society as universities come under increasing pressure to demonstrate their relevance. Since they are widely acknowledged as essential to employability transferable 21st-century skills are often highlighted in educational policies. Thus, it's imperative to investigate how instructors and students view the significance of these abilities for the workplace.

This study intends to examine how academics and students view employability and the value of 21st-century skills in the field. Based on Dacre Pool and Sewells (2007) framework the analysis was conducted. Six students and three academics from the University of Gampaha Wickramarachchi participated in semi-structured qualitative interviews and the data was subjected to thematic analysis.

Employability is defined by Hillage and Pollard (1998) as the capacity to successfully negotiate the labour market on one's own and find long-term employment. They stress that a person's employability is based on their knowledge abilities and attitudes and how they are used and portrayed to employers. Moreover, they emphasize how external elements influencing employability include one's own circumstances and the state of the labor market. This is in line with Cashians (2016) perspective which emphasizes the significance of both personal agency and larger social structures in determining employment. An equitable strategy acknowledges that determining

employability involves both individual effort and the broader socioeconomic environment.

This study aims to explore how students and academics perceive employability and the importance of 21st-century (or generic) skills, focusing on which skills are valued and supported in practice. While much of the literature on employability emphasizes the views of policymakers, employers, and academics, there is limited research on students' perspectives, especially in non-vocational programs. Since students are the main beneficiaries of employability development, their insights are crucial (Tymon, 2013). The study will investigate how students view these skills' relevance for employability and whether their perspectives align with those of academics. It will also examine how 21st-century skills are implemented in humanities programs and how students perceive the connection between these skills and their future careers.

Additionally, the study will explore academics' views, as they play a vital role in implementing policy reforms like the Bologna Process, which emphasizes employability (Sin & Neave, 2016). Understanding the required skills for today's labor market and how universities prepare students with these skills is critical. The research will address the following questions:

1. How do students and academics understand 21st-century skills, and what is their connection to future work? Which skills are most valued?
2. How do humanities students and academics view employability and the role of these skills in preparing students for work?
3. How do students and academics perceive the support for developing 21st-century skills in study programs, and where is the responsibility for developing these skills place?

While students place a high value on disciplinary knowledge, the study findings also show that they understand the value of generic skills like teamwork and collaboration for future employment—skills that could be better incorporated into their curricula. Although students have conflicting opinions about their own employability they all agree that disciplinary knowledge should not take precedence over learning that is employability-focused. The value of writing critical thinking and source critique as

practical skills for the workplace is stressed by both academics and students and these points are strengthened by the programs they offer. Furthermore according to both groups students and the university share responsibility for helping students develop their skills and prepare for the working world. By providing perspectives from humanities postgraduates and scholars on the skills they consider important for the workplace this study contributes to the body of literature already available on employability and 21st-century skills.

The study discovered a significant gap in academics and students comprehension of 21st-century skills. Academics saw these abilities as instruments to support disciplinary learning and encourage reflection giving them a more tangible understanding. Both groups however saw independent critical thinking as highly valued and viewed 21st-century skills through a historical perspective. All of the participants believed that writing critical thinking and source critique would be crucial for their future careers. Academics stressed the value of contextualizing facts and sources while students emphasized the importance of writing for public audiences in both academic and non-academic contexts. While discipline-specific knowledge is still crucial employability was also found to be impacted by discipline-specific transferable skills.

The survey found that academics and students had differing opinions about employability. For the majority of participants being employable meant being able to find employment and being prepared for work. Even though many students thought it was more difficult for humanities graduates to find relevant jobs they nevertheless demonstrated initiative by taking part in extracurricular activities volunteering learning languages advancing their digital skills and finding part-time jobs as ways to develop their skills. Opinions among academics differed some emphasized the need of preparing students for the workforce while others focused on maintaining a solid foundation of discipline knowledge independent of employer demands. They both felt that its important to strike a balance between retaining core disciplinary expertise and employability skills. Furthermore the significance of active citizenship skills was emphasized by both students and academics. These skills allow students to critically reflect on historical injustices and are indirectly supported by disciplinary knowledge.

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Integrating Technology in English Language Teaching and Linguistics: A Comparative Approach with Arabic Language

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Abstract

The advent of technology has reshaped education globally, with language teaching being one of the most influenced areas. English Language Teaching (ELT) has significantly benefited from technology, leveraging tools like e-learning platforms, language apps, artificial intelligence (AI), and linguistic corpora. These digital tools have provided more personalized, accessible, and efficient learning experiences. Similarly, Arabic language teaching, though rooted in tradition, has begun to adopt these technological innovations. Arabic's complex script, phonetic system, and cultural richness require tailored solutions, but there are numerous opportunities to modernize its teaching and make it more engaging for a global audience. This study explores how technology used in ELT can be adapted for Arabic language teaching, discussing the parallels in pedagogy, and the linguistic challenges and opportunities provided by modern tools like AI, language apps, and e-learning platforms. It also examines how technology can preserve and enhance the teaching of Arabic, just as it has done for English.

Literature Review

Research shows that technology has revolutionized English language teaching by providing tools that make learning more flexible and accessible. According to Sadiq, B.J. (2020), online platforms like Duolingo, Memrise, and Quizlet have simplified vocabulary acquisition and grammar practice, while AI-driven software provides real-time feedback on pronunciation and sentence structure. Moreover, the rise of blended learning combining traditional face-to-face teaching with online resources has allowed more customized and learner-centered approaches in ELT (Albiladi & Alshareef,

2019). The use of linguistic corpora, databases of real-world language use, has been another significant advancement. Sinclair (1991) highlighted how corpora provide insights into language patterns, enhancing both linguistic research and teaching by allowing learners to observe authentic language use in various contexts.

Arabic, being a language with distinct grammatical structures, pronunciation rules, and script, presents unique challenges for technology adaptation. However, recent years have seen an increase in technological solutions for Arabic language teaching. Ritonga, et al. (2024) notes that apps and digital platforms such as AlifBee and Lingualism have started offering interactive exercises and pronunciation guides tailored to Arabic learners. These tools replicate many features found in ELT apps but are adapted to address the complexities of the Arabic language, such as its root-based morphology and regional dialects. However, the adoption of technology in Arabic has been slower due to its linguistic and cultural complexities. Linguistic corpora for Arabic, like the Arabic Corpus, are underutilized, though they provide valuable insights into dialectal variations and semantic patterns (Shaalán, 2010). Additionally, AI-driven tools that personalize learning experiences based on user input are still in developmental stages for Arabic, compared to the more established systems for English.

Methodology

This comparative study uses a mixed-methods approach. The literature review was conducted using peer-reviewed journals, books, and case studies on the integration of technology in both English and Arabic language teaching. A focus was placed on identifying key technological tools and methods that have been successful in ELT and evaluating how these can be adapted for Arabic. Interviews with Arabic language educators were conducted to gather qualitative data on the challenges they face with technology integration. These interviews provided insights into both the advantages and limitations of using digital tools for teaching Arabic. Additionally, case studies of successful implementations of technology in ELT, such as the use of linguistic corpora and AI-powered language platforms, were analyzed. These were compared with emerging Arabic learning platforms to identify gaps and opportunities for improvement.

Results and Discussion

The analysis reveals several key findings. **Increased Accessibility:** Just as technology has expanded access to English learning globally, it is beginning to do the same for Arabic. Platforms like AlifBee and apps designed specifically for Arabic learners are increasing access to language education, particularly for non-native speakers. **Adoption of AI:** AI-driven language tools have become central to personalized learning in English but are still underutilized in Arabic language education. Some emerging platforms offer AI-based pronunciation correction for Arabic, though the technology is not as advanced as in English platforms. **Blended Learning Success:** The implementation of blended learning—combining traditional and digital learning methods—has proven effective for both languages. For Arabic, this method allows learners to engage with the complexities of the language in both a classroom and digital environment. **Challenges in Digitizing Arabic:** The morphological complexity of Arabic, particularly its root-based system and regional dialects, poses significant challenges for digitization. While English has benefited from extensive linguistic corpora and AI advancements, Arabic is still catching up in these areas.

The results suggest that while English language teaching has set a benchmark in integrating technology, Arabic language education has yet to fully embrace its potential. This is partly due to the linguistic complexities of Arabic, but also due to the cultural and pedagogical differences in how the language is traditionally taught. **Language Learning Platforms:** Platforms like Duolingo have already shown how technology can make language learning fun and accessible for English learners. The same principle applies to Arabic, but with additional challenges such as managing script differences and accommodating various dialects. Arabic learning apps are still evolving, but they show promise in offering similar benefits as seen in ELT. **Linguistic Corpora:** The use of linguistic corpora in Arabic linguistics has the potential to revolutionize both research and teaching. Currently, English language teaching benefits from large, well-established corpora that aid in the understanding of language use in real contexts (Sinclair, 1991). Arabic language teaching would similarly benefit from the expanded use of corpora to expose learners to authentic language, especially in

terms of dialectal variation. AI-Powered Tools: While AI in ELT has been transformative, offering personalized and adaptive learning experiences, Arabic is still lagging. Developing AI tools for Arabic that can accurately analyze pronunciation, grammar, and syntax would be a major step forward. This would require significant linguistic input to accommodate the nuances of Arabic phonetics and grammar. Cultural and Pedagogical Considerations: The integration of technology into Arabic language teaching also raises important cultural questions. Arabic, as a language deeply tied to Islamic tradition and regional identity, requires a careful approach to digitization to avoid decontextualizing the language. Technology must be used to complement, rather than replace, the cultural richness of Arabic.

Conclusion

Integrating technology into Arabic language teaching offers vast opportunities for expanding access, improving personalized learning, and enhancing linguistic research. However, the specific linguistic and cultural challenges of Arabic require tailored solutions that build upon the successes seen in English language teaching. By adopting AI, linguistic corpora, and blended learning methods, Arabic language education can move toward a more modern, effective approach, without losing the cultural integrity that defines the language

Keywords: *Arabic, English, Language, Teaching, Technology*

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