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PAPER

Undergraduates' Attitudes towards Learning English as a Second Language (With Special Reference to 1st year Undergraduates of Uva Wellassa University, Badulla)

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It is an undeniable truth that English as a language plays a vital role all over the world and it has become a paramount necessity to be a prestigious member of the globalized world. Especially, this lingua franca has now become the vehicle of accessing novel knowledge and consequently competency in English language is required to achieve scholastic goals of a person in an educational arena. Thus, this phenomenon is also common to Sri Lanka and owing to this situation; Sri Lankan higher education institutes including some universities have introduced English medium instruction.

However, it is observed that even though the Sri Lankan students have been learning English as a Second Language for many years, some of their competency levels in English are not in a satisfactory level and their attitudes towards learning English are not clear. Further, as to the perspective of many second language researchers, it has been found that attitudes play a vital role in mastering a second language. Hence, one of the prime objectives of this study was to explore the attitudes of undergraduates towards learning English as a Second Language. Moreover, as there has been much discussion on distinct values of instrumentally and integratively oriented attitudes in learning a second language and as diverse findings have been obtained by the researchers, this study also, intended to find out whether these students' attitudes are either instrumentally or integratively oriented.

The study was conducted in Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, with the participation of randomly selected 69 first year undergraduates. The data was collected mainly by a questionnaire along with semi structured interviews. The study results revealed that majority of students possess positive attitudes towards learning English as a Second Language and it also found out that most of the undergraduates have instrumentally oriented attitudes.

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