

## ABSTRACT

Even though language assessment (LA) is an educational practice in English language teaching (ELT) which deeply impacts students' lives, basic premises of LA like language standards and proficiency are shaped by center-based ideologies on English. Thus, the World English (WE) scholarship suggests that local varieties of English like Sri Lankan English (SLE) should be adopted as the model/ standard for LA. Set against this theoretical premise, the study aimed to investigate tertiary level teacher attitudes and perspectives on the role and function of SLE in LA in TESL. The study was exploratory in nature with an embedded research design. As such, data was collected through four qualitative methods (interviews with teachers, interviews with coordinators, document analysis, and focus group discussions) and one quantitative method (questionnaire). The study found that teachers accept SLE to a certain extent in LA. This is because teachers accept SLE as the model/ standard for LA in the domain of EGP; there is a growing acceptance of SLE features/ words/ expressions amongst teachers; and teachers acknowledge SLE through LA policy. Yet, teachers' acceptance of SLE is limited, and there are inconsistencies in teacher acceptance of SLE. According to the findings, these limitations and inconsistencies are due to conflicting language ideologies that teachers subscribe to, as well as teachers' lack of awareness of SLE, the gap between WE theory and practical application, and lack of formal policy on SLE. Based on these findings, the study recommends raising teacher awareness of SLE, codifying and standardizing of SLE, and initiating a national dialogue on the status of SLE in ELT and LA in Sri Lanka.

*Keywords:* English Language Teaching, Language Assessment, Language Standards, Sri Lankan English, World Englishes