

## **The opinions on the use of Sinhala language in adult ELT classroom: A survey conducted at the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya**

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The study set out to investigate the opinions of the use of Sinhala language in adult English Language Teaching (ELT) classrooms. First it is important to state that research in regard to the opinions of the use of Sinhala in Adult ELT classrooms is limited in the Sri Lankan context. The survey was conducted at the Faculty of Arts, University of Peradeniya. For the purpose of this study 20 first year undergraduates belonging to the basic level group were randomly chosen. The study involved both qualitative and quantitative methods of data collection. The main research questions of this research study were whether first language (L1) favoured ELT classrooms or not and whether students and teachers favoured the use of L1 in ELT classroom for teaching and learning processes and also whether L1 use in the classroom motivated and influenced students in an attitude change. The findings were used to determine whether they agreed or disagreed with the use of first language in the second language (L2) classrooms. At the same time, two ESL classrooms were monitored and observed for a semester in which one class used only the target language (TL) and on the other L1 was used for classroom activities and instruction. In order to gauge whether L1 use improves students motivation and attitudinal changes through student attendance, student attendance records were summarized and the number of students in each group who participated in ESL classes during the semester were listed down. Finally, the records of the percentage of the students' attendance was calculated to gauge whether L1 use in ESL classrooms led to student motivation and a change in student attitudes. The data collected from the students and instructors' responses in the interviews were also analyzed. The study revealed that students' L1 is used for pedagogical, administrative and international purposes in the English as a Second Language (ESL) classroom and that instructors teaching in these basic level classes used the L1 as a strategy to accommodate students' low language proficiency and also as a strategy to create more student friendly classrooms. Based on the findings it is posited that the students' L1 might be a useful strategy that enhance target language acquisition. With respect to the opinions with regard to L1 use in adult ELT classrooms, both the students and instructors stated that it facilitates the teaching and learning of English as a Foreign Language (FL).

**Keywords:** English language teaching, first language, foreign language