

# **Sri Lankan English as the Target Language Variety in Teaching English as a Second Language: Perspectives of Tertiary Level Educators**

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While features of Sri Lankan English and its use in literature have been explored in studies to a certain extent, there is little research on the relevance of Sri Lankan in English (SLE) in Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) and its degree of acceptance as the target language variety by educators engaged in TESL. Therefore, the objectives of the study were a.) to identify to what extent educators identify SLE as the target language variety of their teaching, b.) to understand how teachers define SLE, and c.) the reasons for educators to choose/ not choose SLE as the target language variety for teaching. The study was conducted in the Faculty of Arts of a state university of Sri Lanka. Convenience sampling method was used to select participants for the research and data was collected through semi-structured interviews (15). The data was analyzed using the method of Qualitative Content Analysis (QCA). According to the analysis of data, 93.4% of the educators (14), were of the opinion that their target language variety in teaching is Sri Lankan English. The reasons for accepting SLE as target language variety were, a.) awareness of SLE as the language variety that is used in Sri Lanka, b.) influence of degree programmes that the educators have undergone and the reading material they have been exposed to. The reasons for rejecting SLE as the target language were the view of SLE a.) as ungrammatical, and, b.) as discriminatory towards ethnic minorities in the country. It was also found that there is significant difference in how SLE is defined by the educators. The findings of the study highlight the importance of assessing practical implications of SLE/ periphery varieties of English in fields such as TESL since studies so far have been highly prescriptive and theoretical in nature.

**Keywords:** World English, Sri Lankan English, TESL, Target Language Variety, Educators