"Embracing the New Normal: Socio-cultural Challenges and Opportunities"

7th Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (RUICHSS) - 2021

RUICHSS 2021

ABSTRACTS

17th November 2021

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7ᵗʰ Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences

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Abstracts

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Editorial Note

This volume contains all the abstracts that are presented at the 7th Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences (RUICHSS - 2021) hosted by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, Sri Lanka. Under the theme of 2021 conference, 'Embracing the New Normal: Socio-cultural Challenges and Opportunities' a number of research papers have been compiled that are relevant to current world conditions and cover the real contemporary issues facing human society. This research session will focus on the Sri Lankan socio-cultural, religious, economic, political, educational, and behavioral patterns in the Covid -19 situation. The present research work was encouraged to adapt to scientific methods based on independent interests and more attention was paid to the following themes. Language and Literature, Society and Culture, Mental Health and Spirituality, Economy and Development and New Normal Condition and Education. The fifty abstracts presented at the technical sessions which contribute new knowledge compiled on various fields and can be seen to belong to different disciplines as well.

The inspiring keynote speech was delivered by Professor Pramod K. Nayar, an eminent scholar in the Department of English, University of Hyderabad, India. The organizing committee and the editorial board are grateful to the keynote speaker who made an impressive and informative speech that will delight everyone with their knowledge and understanding.

This conference was organized by the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna, with special contribution from the Department of Sinhala. The editorial board, with the organizing committee, is grateful to the authors who have submitted and presented their research outcomes at this conference. We gratefully acknowledge the invaluable support of reviewers in making this work a success by sacrificing their time, strength and the effort. The dedication of the editorial board, language editors and editorial assistants is sincerely acknowledged here. The assistance provided by the technical and printing teams is also gratefully acknowledged on behalf of the editorial board.

Ven. Dr. Morakandegoda Ariyawansa
Chair, Editorial Board, RUICHSS 2021
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Citation-Keynote speaker

Professor Pramod K. Nayar

Professor Pramod K. Nayar, currently a professor in English at the Department of English of the Hyderabad University, India, was Smuts Visiting Fellow in Commonwealth Studies at the University of Cambridge (and a Fellow of Wolfson College) in 2000-2001, the Charles Wallace India Trust-British Council Fellow at the University of Kent at Canterbury in the UK (2001) and a Fulbright Fellow at Cornell University in the years 2004-05. He has lectured at Oxford, Edinburgh, Roehampton, Sussex, Sheffield Hallam, South Carolina, Dayton, Columbia, and many other institutions.

He is a world-renowned scholar in the fields of literary studies, cultural studies, and postcolonial studies. He has penned 46 books, and most of them are published by the international academic publishing giants such as Routledge, Cambridge University Press, Sage, Orient BlackSwan, Pearson Longman, Penguin, Wiley-Blackwell, and Palgrave Macmillan. His books include, among others, *The Human Rights Graphic Novel, Posthumanism*, *Colonial Voices: the Discourse of Empire*, *Essays in Celebrity Culture: Stars and Styles*, *Indian Travel Writing in The Age of Empire: 1930-1940*, *The Indian Graphic Novel, Human Rights and Literature*, *Citizenship and Identity in the Age of Surveillance*, *The Extreme in Contemporary Culture*, *Ecoprecarity: Vulnerable Lives in Literature and Culture*, *Writing Wrongs: The Cultural Construction of Human Rights*, and *Virtual Worlds: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cybertechnology*. His new book, the *Alzheimer's Disease Memoirs: Poetics of the Forgetting Self,* will be released in six days, on 23rd November, as a Springer publication. Three more to go for a half-century of books, congratulations in advance, sir!

Apart from this, he has also published a range of books popular among undergraduate and postgraduate students in the field of literary and cultural studies and hence serve as textbooks for them. To name a few of them, *From Text to Theory: A Handbook of Literary and Cultural Theory*, *The Postcolonial Studies Dictionary*, *Postcolonialism: A Guide for the Perplexed*, *An Introduction to New Media and Cyber Cultures*, *An Introduction to Cultural Studies*, *Contemporary Literary and Cultural Theory: From Structuralism to Ecocriticism*, *Postcolonial Literature: An Introduction*, and *Reading Culture: Theory, Praxis, Politics.*

Professor Nayar, a dedicated researcher, has also published more than 25 chapters in books and more than 100 journal articles. His work has appeared in *Modern Fiction Studies, English Language Notes, Changing English, Celebrity Studies, CounterText, Journal of Postcolonial Writing, Prose Studies, Journal of Early Modern Cultural Studies, Narrative, Postcolonial Text, Postcolonial Studies, Image and Text, Asiatic, South Asian Review, South Asia, Studies in Travel Writing, Anglo-Saxonica, Studies in Travel Writing, Commonwealth: Essays and Studies, Postcolonial Text, Journeys, Biography, a/b: Auto/biography Studies, Rendezvous, Ariel, Kunapipi, 1650-1850, Westerly, Transnational Literature, ANQ* and other journals.

Professor Pramod K. Nayar has gained recognition as a scholar in the field of Humanities and Social Sciences, who stands as a role model for any scholar in the field. First, his writings cover a wide range of topics from Elizabethan poetry to graphic novels. Second, he is one of the scholars who foresee the upcoming social and cultural phenomena. For example, his books *Virtual Worlds: Culture and Politics in the Age of Cybertechnology* and *Citizenship and Identity in the Age of Surveillance* were published respectively in 2004 and 2015. Both dealt with relatively unrecognized social issues at the time they were published but are prominent in present-day society. Third, he has shown an enormous enthusiasm in sharing knowledge not only with the academic community but also with the general public, which is evident by over 500 essays and journalistic pieces written in newspapers and periodicals in India. He is a regular contributor to the newspapers and magazines such as The *Wire*, *Telangana Today*, *Deccan Chronicle*, and *Deccan Herald*.

Professor Nayar has also engaged in editing books published internationally. These include 05 volumes of *Indian Travel Writing 1830-1947*, *The Postcolonial Studies Anthology*, 05 volumes of *Colonial Education and India*, 05 volumes of *Women in Colonial India: Historical Documents and Sources*, *The Postcolonial Studies Anthology*, *English Poetry: From the Elizabethans to the Restoration: An Anthology*, *The New Media and Cybercultures Anthology*, *Days of the Raj: Life and Leisure in British India*, and *The Penguin 1857 Reader*.

In addition, Professor Nayar serves on the editorial boards of many highly reputed journals. These include, among others, *Indian Journal of Gender Studies*, *Celebrity Studies*, *Journal of Postcolonial Writing*, and *Journeys*.

Professor Pramod K. Nayar serves as a member of various Advisory Boards too: The Critical Posthumanism book series from Brill, the New Directions in Life Narrative series from Routledge, the Academic Board of the Global Posthuman Network, the Linnaeus University Centre for Concurrences in Colonial and Postcolonial Studies and the Memory Studies Research Network (IIT Madras), among others. In April this year, he was appointed as an advisor to the Routledge Historical Resources: Empire Project.

Professor Nayar's significant academic contribution has been awarded as well. In 2018 he received the Visitor's Award for Best Research in the Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences from the Honourable President of India, which cited, in particular, his work on Human Rights, Bhopal and Dalit/subaltern Literature. In 2020, a study conducted by the Centre for Publication Ethics, Pune, showed that Nayar was the 2nd most published researcher in Arts & Humanities in India and South Asia and 7th in South & South-East Asia, in terms of work indexed in the Web of Science. He has appeared regularly in *Year's Work in English Studies*, the standard evaluative work of criticism in English published by Oxford University Press. According to a recent Stanford University study, he occupies the 120th rank in the world's top 200 for literary studies, the only academic from India in the field of literary studies to figure in the top 200.

Today, we have this eminent scholar, Professor Pramod K. Nayar, as the Ruhuna University 7th International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences keynote speaker. Dear sir, as the conference chair, I am grateful to you for accepting our invitation to deliver the keynote speech today. We are highly privileged to have you as our keynote speaker. Today, your presence here will be written in the history of Ruhuna University International Conference on Humanities and Social Sciences as a presence of an academic giant. As the chair of the RUICHSS-2021, I take pride in inviting Professor Pramod K. Nayar to deliver the keynote address of this conference.

Dr. Darshana Liyanage, Chair – RUICHSS, 2021

Keynote Address

"The Covid Normal"[1]

Pramod K. Nayar,
Professor, Department of English, The University of Hyderabad

Abstract

"The Covid Normal" indicates both, how Covid-19 has been normalized and how the normal, as we have understood it, has been affected by Covid-19. In this talk, I outline some of the features of this Covid normal. In section I, "The Health of Others, Information-distrust, and Cold Panic", I argue that it is now assumed that safety is everyone's concern, and we are to take decisions for the greater common good. We are, in the pandemic, even more of information-subjects, our subjectivity – of which social and moral responsibility is a constituent – than before, forged in the crucible of information, and yet we find it difficult to act responsibly on the basis of *information* received because there is no normative 'truth' about Covid that we can agree on. I propose that the panic is *not* from Covid-19, it arises from contradictory data. In section II, "Disease, Democracy and Discrete Tragedies", I propose that the mystery that haunts the Covidian state is generated through disinformation and non-information. Covid 19 is not a historical disaster: it is a set of discrete tragedies (migrants, the urban poor, older people, differently-abled) of small segments of the populations that never cohered into a national subjecthood or victimhood in the ecosystem of misinformation. In section III, "The New Visual Icon", I forward some meanings of being masked.

Post-March 2020, we have entered the age of the Covid Normal. In what follows, I outline some of the features of this "normal".

The Health of Others, Information-distrust, and Cold Panic

In the Covid Normal it is now assumed that safety is everyone's concern. As the medical humanities scholar Lisa Diedrich puts it

> By refusing to wear masks and practice social distancing, people have sought to demonstrate—to show by action and display of feeling—how much they don't care that people are dying in unprecedented numbers.

Commenting on the American refusal to practice Covid protocols, she adds:

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[1] Many of these arguments were first rehearsed in the form of essays in newspapers in India.

> this disregard for the health and care of others has become politicized...
> The mask is a visible sign of regard for others. It communicates an
> understanding that one's body is not autonomous from but interdependent
> with the bodies of others. That some would fixate on the requirement to
> wear a mask as somehow restricting one's bodily freedom is a most cynical
> disregard for the specific practices of public health...

It may be argued that limitations on free will do exist, but communitarian responsibility requires informed consent and informed choice-making. And this is where things go drastically wrong in the current scenario.

Political philosophers such as Alvin Goodman discussing epistemic democracy models have argued that a free press is integral to democracy. It must publish relevant truths and members of the public must *believe* those truths. Our current problem lies here.

Informed choices and decisions are at best a risky venture today. The state's exhortations to be responsible, for oneself and for others, are launched in the midst of the (mis)information deluge around Covid, and citizen responsibility means, now, ignoring the contradictory bits of data that comes our way, and acting with care and concern.

That is, responsibility means being *able* to sift through it to understand fake from authentic, to identify reliable sources from unreliable ones. We are, in the pandemic, even more of information-subjects, our subjectivity – of which social and moral responsibility is a constituent – than before, forged in the crucible of information.

For the citizenry, the worry is compounded by the problem that the political knowledge held by a few becomes the rationale for their holding office – what the political theorist David Estlund in the 1990s termed 'epistemic authoritarianism'. This is clearly the mark of those in power. Their office bestows upon them the authority to make pronouncements: their knowledge of political truths – for e.g., the risks in confirming the numbers of the dead or publicizing the pros and cons of the vaccines, or the (political) reasons for a certain direction in vaccine policy.

Public choice theorists in the field reject the idea of any normative political truth. Even when there is consensus on something – like vaccine efficacy – it is not possible to assume this agreed-upon idea is 'truth'. Estlund puts it this way:

there is no collective standpoint from which the principles could be held to be true. They are accepted by *each* individual as true (or reasonably close), but this cannot be the basis on which they are accepted by *all,* since not all believe them for the same reasons.

In this context, we do not find it possible to act responsibly on the basis of *information* received because there is no normative 'truth' about Covid that we can agree on for the same set of reasons.

In such a context, the panic is *not* from Covid-19, it arises from contradictory data.

Cold panic

The philosopher Isabelle Stengers speaks of 'cold panic': 'a panic that is signalled by the fact that openly contradictory messages are accepted'. She elaborates:

> And this panic is also shared by our guardians. Somewhere they hope that a miracle might save us – which also signifies that only a miracle could save us. It might be a miracle that comes from technology… or the miracle of a massive conversion, after some enormous catastrophe. Whilst waiting, they give their blessing to exhortations that aim to make people feel guilty and propose that everyone thinks about doing their own bit, on their own scale – on condition, of course, that only a small minority of us give up driving or become vegetarian, because otherwise that would be quite a blow to economic growth.

Stengers makes a strong case for cold panic and while her arguments are directed at climate change discourse, it applies just as well to Covid-related panic of 2020-21. Panic-stricken we rush to obey contradictory instructions and try multiple strategies to 'contain' the virus.

Cold panic is accompanied, Stengers notes, by the emphasis on *citizen*-duties. It speaks to our reliance on miracle cures and even accidental cures. If cold panic drives us to behave more responsibly, it also means that we do so in an information-deluge which is no different, oddly, from an information-vacuum because *no one* agrees, or can agree, on the aetiology, prophylactic or therapeutic measures for the pandemic. And yet, we must be both self-reliant and responsible.

Data and the Bioethical Imagination

The Covid 19 Dashboard on the Covid pandemic, hosted by Johns Hopkins University as the Corona Virus Resource Centre, brings the bioethical to the data being collected and displayed for any viewer in the world.

With its 'Covid 19 in Motion', the daily cases reported is available to all. Then there are US and global maps of the rampaging condition. There are also vaccine efforts, US and global, tracking of trends across the world, testing processes and data, vaccine trackers and tools, among others.

Accounts of 'vaccine characteristics' include details of 'vaccinated groups' across countries, revealing, for instance, the prioritisation and principles of vaccination (also politics?) in different nations. The marker for India, for instance, reads 'all adults' under the rubric 'vaccinated groups' under the 'national immunization program'. But Hungary's reads 'Healthcare workers & elderly & adults with comorbidities & essential workers' and Guatemala's as 'Healthcare workers & elderly & adults with comorbidities'. In the case of Libya it says simply 'N/A' (not applicable), leaving us to speculate on exactly how the 'national immunization program' is being operationalized when there are no identified 'vaccinated groups'.

The Covid 19 dashboard lays a great deal of emphasis on the bioethical aspects of the pandemic's progress, consequences and its treatment.

It insists, for instance, on transparency and the 'responsible use of digital public health technologies'. Under VIEW-Hub of the International Vaccine Access Center (IVAC), it provides visualized data on vaccine use and impact, including the most studies per country for the factor, 'Economic Burden of Disease' for various diseases, computing costs per household, of having to deal with specific illnesses.

Far more interesting is the linkage of biomedical data with key social issues, indicative of a massive emphasis on the socio-cultural and economic undercurrents that determine how Covid 19 affects the world. Under the rubric 'Immunization Equity', this same VIEW-Hub's data from the GAVI Alliance – which includes UNICEF, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation, World Bank and a large number of civil society organizations from around the world – for the equitable distribution of vaccines, informs us that as of 2019, the number of children in India with *no* access to vaccination stands at 19,192,018, higher many other nations from the Global 'South'. The number should tell us something about the prospects for a Covid vaccination campaign and its

possible inequities. These numbers for various countries also point to the problems in public health policies in these nations.

Covid Data and Social History

The Covid 19 Dashboard is significant for its clear-sighted view of the social histories of disease and medicine, a field popularized by the historian Roy Porter in his mammoth *The Greatest Benefit to Mankind*, and which now has excellent work on biocapital, the social politics of Artificial Reproductive Technologies and surrogacy, the economics of stem cells, gene lines, etc.

Under its 'equity' rubric, the Dashboard has an interesting set of points from Jeffrey Kahn and colleagues of the Berman Institute of Bioethics (Johns Hopkins) and the Center for Health Security at Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health. Cautioning against exacerbating existing inequalities, the note says:

- *Digital public health technologies should be deployed in a manner that does not propagate pre-existing patterns of unfair disadvantage or further distribute harms and risks unfairly throughout the population.*
- *To the extent possible, digital public health technologies should be designed to rectify existing inequities.*
- *Oversight mechanisms must be in place to ensure that the improved public health outcomes are equitable, and to detect and correct any unforeseen resultant injustices attributable to the technology or that can be addressed using the technology.*
- *The incentives and disincentives for adopting new technology must be equitable, not exploitative, and aligned with effective use of the technology.*
- *Disparity-driven technology gaps should be explicitly recognized. To the extent possible, provisions should be made to address the digital divide.*

Acknowledging racial and class-based inequalities across the USA, the above write-up is salutary in pointing to the potential for further unequal measures in the light of the pandemic, which has, as several commentators have noted, produced more 'disposable people'.

There is another fascinating report summary, prepared by Rupali Limaye*, Director of Behavioral and Implementation Science at the International Vaccine Access Center in the Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health, on 'vaccine hesitancy'. The brief report is an eyeopener on how social*

histories of medicine are shaping perceptions, evaluations and processes around Covid 19. It opens thus:

> Among the 41% of US citizens who told researchers last year that they would not receive a COVID-19 vaccine as soon as it was available, African Americans were the least willing. A history of formal medical exploitation and decades of institutional and cultural racism have entrenched that mistrust and fear…

Directly pointing to the systematic injustice to and exploitation of specific races and ethnic groups in US health policies and medical experimentation, the Report is a history itself. The Report goes on to speak of the politicization of vaccination before bringing up the 'number one question' Limaye was asked: 'Are the vaccines safe for Black people?' She also records:

> Many also ask how many African Americans participated in the vaccine trials. How many African Americans who were in the trials have comorbidities like diabetes and high blood pressure, so that they can truly trust the claims of the efficacy and safety.

Noting a similar vaccine hesitancy in Africa and India, Limaye appeals for a responsible role of the social media in the battle against Covid 19.

The Covid Dashboard is evidently not just algorithms or biomedical trials. It is a site that locates contemporary biomedicine in the language of a particular *history* of biomedicine that was racialized, iniquitous and exploitative.

The Johns Hopkins initiative alerts us to the social dimensions of Covid even through an aggregation of data.

From within this data emerges the bioethical imagination.

Disease, Democracy and Discrete Tragedies

Decades ago, Amartya Sen proposed in 'Democracy as Freedom' (1999) that famines do not occur in a functioning democracy. But obviously pandemics do. The question then is: what is the relationship between disease and democracy?

In the new issue of the *Journal of Human Rights Practice*, the Human Rights scholar Paul Gready maps the crisis of the pandemic on to the crisis of democracy itself. Gready makes two significant points: transparency in public decision-making is important in a crisis, the issue of state capacity and the kind of state we want.

The Transparent State

As debates rage furiously about the efficacy (or not) of the vaccine, the 'demos', the public that constitutes the state's beneficiaries (or not), are left uncertain about the various claims around it.

Adding to the befuddled state is the near-frightening reports of 'cooked' scientific studies, inappropriate testing, incomplete trials and others. When we read that the *Lancet* and the *New England Journal of Medicine,* indisputably the leading journals in their field, retracted published work on Covid because the data and related research processes were questionable, then we realize that the absence of transparency around the pandemic's etiology, progress or side-effects is perhaps pervasive.

If a democracy relies on informed consent and informed decision-making, then it stands to reason that the subjects in a democracy need accurate and reliable information. Democracies, argues the philosopher Alvin Goldman, are epistemic:

> a crucial part of a democratic framework, or system, that there be institutions, structures or mechanisms that assist citizens in acquiring and possessing politically relevant information, where by "information possession" I mean true belief and by "politically relevant" information I mean information that is relevant to their political choices.

Two commentators on democracy, Christian List and Robert Goodin, speak of the 'epistemic virtues of information-pooling', which we can see is linked to the Goldman argument about democracy as well.

The mystery and the miasma that haunt the Covidian state – which is what all states around the world are today – is generated through disinformation and non-information. The age of Covid is the age of the information-dark.

The State We Are In

Human Rights scholars such as Supriya Akerkar who works and teaches in the Disaster Risk Reduction program with the Centre for Development and Emergency Practice, Oxford Brookes University, researching the pandemic, has argued in a recent essay that 'The COVID-19 discourse also highlights similar and terrible assumptions made about "weak" and "older" bodies as dispensable objects'. Akerkar notes how such older, weaker subjects

> emerged through regimes of social welfare policies and practices in different countries including care homes, pensions and benefits, with

underlying contradictory narratives of stigma, dependency, risk, and respect of these groups.

It is precisely these regimes that are being eroded through the threat of funding cuts, staff shortages and of course the pandemic as the overarching rationale.

Akerkar's argument sums up the 'state we are in' (to play on the phrase): of disposable weaker/older people.

The link between the transparent state and 'the state we are in' may be elaborated as follows.

The state we are in is defined not by a *free* flow of ideas and reliable opinion around the pandemic, its differently-calibrated effects and clear information about its primary and secondary victims. With insufficient data and mutilated or partial data about the diseases around the virus, the worst hit are those ostensibly at high-risk, who are uncertain about the vaccine and the effects of (not) taking it. Thus, those already handicapped by the potential threat of the disease are further alienated from the state's so-called therapeutic/palliative processes because they *do not know* if they should participate in these processes. Misled, misinformed by the barrage of high-crescendo fake news, propaganda, anxieties driven higher by this barrage, a significant segment of the population – the older people – the disposable people are also the inhabitants of the information-dark spaces that constitute the state we are in today.

A state is defined by the primacy it accords to fundamental human rights. In a time of crisis, such as this, the response of the state to the crisis ought to define for us the nature of the state we are in. Rights are claimed by individuals and groups from the state. To return to Gready once more, 'Human rights are needed not just as a negative shield against government interference, but also as a means to make positive claims on government'. The larger question is: if you are kept in the dark about the information that would determine your course of action, your choices, in the crisis, then what claims can you possibly and rightfully make on the government?

In short, the first claims on the state has to be the right to free information flows, reliable and unredacted information so that the subjects, particularly the most vulnerable, can stake their claims. The crisis of the vulnerable citizens is, essentially, a crisis of *information* about the disease. An epistemic democracy can only occur in a transparent state.

The now-classic formulation of the public sphere, as the space of information sharing and rational debate, needs recoding and rewording. Our public sphere today – the state we are in – is first and foremost a *publicized* sphere (which is devoted to all forms of publicity, propaganda and populism). Second, the public sphere, thanks to the cumulative effect of manipulated information and targeted advertising, which segments the population of customers in order to tailor information released to them, is a fragmented one: we have public sphericals, so to speak, each determined and acting according to the kind of (mis)information it receives, or chooses to receive, so that there cannot be a concerted action – even thinking – as to how we are made quiescent subjects through information. We cannot make claims because segmented social groups with variable information-doses cannot come together. Those working with Human Rights and the older, differently-abled victims of the pandemics are pointing precisely to this segmentation. This is the state we are in.

Covid 19 is not a historical disaster: it is a set of discrete tragedies (migrants, the urban poor, older people, differently-abled) of small segments of the populations that never cohered into a national subjecthood or victimhood in the ecosystem of misinformation. The last word here comes from the justly famous *Pale Rider: The Spanish Flu of 1918 and How it Changed the World* (2017) wherein the historian Laura Spinney noted that after the pandemic waned, there was

> no cenotaph, no monument in London, Moscow or Washington, DC. The Spanish flu is remembered personally, not collectively. Not as a historical disaster, but as millions of discrete, private tragedies.

The New Visual Icon

The newest fashion accessory, doubling up as a safety device – or is it the other way round? – is the face mask. If there is a visual icon that captures our current year, it would be, *tragically*, the mask. Its medical necessity and prophylactic powers notwithstanding – and these are not beyond question either, if reports and advice from the WHO and other organizations are to be believed – the mask is the new frightening trend. What does it say about our world where this apparatus is now life-saving?

If, as Wittgenstein said, 'meaning is a physiognomy', then what are the many meanings of the mask today?

First, it serves as a sign of individual social responsibility and health-protective behaviour. Individuals who mask themselves (!) not only guard against being infected by viral and other pathogens, they ensure that they do

not act as conductors of the pathogen – although, as we know, the transmission is also via touch and surface contact. The mask therefore positions the wearer as an ethical and socially-responsible person.

Second, it marks a huge shift in the very idea of concealment. The world has been debating, often acrimoniously, the face-cover of particular ethnic and religious groups, the risks of face-concealment and the supposed significance of the visible (uncovered) face. The myth of the visible face as embodying a willingness to be identified, and as a surface wherein one could detect ulterior motives (the face being the index of the mind and what not), has been abandoned in favour of a responsibility in covering the face. The older notions of surveillance that demanded a visible face are no longer tenable. Now we surveil people to check if they are masked.

Third, the personal protection device (mask) recalls theatrical masks. In many cases, one observes the medically styled mask has been replaced by coloured cloth and designer masks. The human face is as 'made-up' by the mask as in any theatre! The mask blurs the line, therefore, between the prophylactic device and the decorative addition to the physiognomy.

Fourth, masks move from being symbols of scientific behaviour and necessity to being icons of self-representation. It is no longer simply prophylactic, it is an extension of the dress code, the accessory and the face that I want the world to see. Just as one does not leave home – ideally – without checking to see whether all the appurtenances making up the 'representation of the self in everyday life' (Erving Goffman) are in place, we now check for the mask as well. What once was the province of the superhero (excluding Superman) has been rendered ordinary and commonplace.

Fifth, there is a 'spectacle of masked unity', as Christos Lynteris describes it in his study of plague masks in an essay in *Medical Anthropology*. A democratisation of facial appearance is on with the mask becoming essential face-wear – a process disrupted minimally at least by those who wish to add visual value through their customized masks. The face mask, whether in the form of the ubiquitous handkerchief or the more gauze-and-string object, is a sign of an entire population governed by an anxiety over the air-borne pathogen. The biopolitical regime of today demands its own material culture, and this is the mask. The mask, in other words, is a sign of a population united under the biopolitical regime of protective behaviour and medicalized social responsibility.

Sixth, the face mask as protective gear positions the people as instantiations of what Ruth Rogaski termed 'hygienic modernity'. If science (alongside capitalism and imperialism), with a strong medical component defines modernity worldwide, with varying degrees of intensity, contemporary modernity is defined by the demands and practices of sanitation, cleanliness and personal hygiene. This hygienic modernity also has a vibrant public discourse component as well – from responsible disposal of garbage to recycling, biohazard wastes and, currently, public contact and proximate behaviours. Hygienic modernity is marked by the adoption of a variety of scientific practices that are of course predetermined by class and economic factors – from the economic ability to wall up inside the home by elite classes with assured income, insurance and savings to the millions of poor with *no* economic sustenance. That is, hygienic modernity, like all forms of modernity in history, has a clear class angle to practices of cleaning, cleansing and health-protective behaviour.

Seventh, and continuing the above, the mask cathects onto itself personal and public health and functions as a sign of a national crisis, concern and care-discourse. As national borders are sealed – a geographical assertion of national sovereignty – sovereignty also demands the solidarity, coproduction and mutually assured safety by the people, for the people and to the people. In other words, *national sovereignty is predicated on a nation awakening its conscience in the matter of protecting its people from not only the pathogen, but also from each other*. Hygienic modernity is intrinsic to national sovereignty, even as health-protective behaviour – as speeches by political leaders repeatedly emphasize – defines an individual as a good citizen. A good citizen keeps the correct distance and observes all practices of hygienic modernity.

Finally, the mask must be read as a significant contributor to the new visual iconography of: the nation, the social order and the human face. While the national emblems remain a publicly instituted iconography of national identity and sovereignty, the mask incorporates the unfortunate biomedical into the visual scheme. As the new visual sign of the social order, the mask is an iconography of not just terror (of the pathogen) but of collective behaviour itself. It is thus a visual iconography of a host – I use the term with a full awareness of its etymology 'hostis', meaning both 'guest' and 'enemy' – of affective and political behaviour: terror, care, anxiety and curiosity. As the single most important and visible contributor to the new iconography of the human face, the mask reveals and conceals, it dethrones the *hijab* and the veil, is at once biomedically relevant and aesthetically questionable.

If the superhero wears it to disguise her/his real identity, we now wear it to reveal our true identity: as vulnerable populations. It indexes vigilance as the world mounts a war against the pathogen. To spread the virus through irresponsible acts is a crime, and biomedically masked vigilantes to check these are the order of the day.

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LANGUAGE STUDIES

A Study on the Strategies to Improve French Language Teaching via Zoom: Special Reference to Students in the French Language Institute of Alliance Française de Kotte.

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Abstract

Online distance French language learning via Zoom has become essential in the present day. The research focuses on how French language learning can be improved when teaching via Zoom. Accordingly, this research aims to identify the main challenges that students face when learning via Zoom and find out strategies to improve French language learning. The study was carried out with twenty Sri Lankan students from the pre-intermediate level classes at the French language institute of Alliance Française de Kotte. The data were collected from a questionnaire given at the end of the first term and an interview conducted at the end of the second term. The method used was qualitative research, where the data were analyzed thematically. The study's findings indicated that even though students consider learning via Zoom is efficient in terms of time and the current situation of the world, students face several challenges, such as a lack of improvement in speaking and writing skills. It is found out that these challenges can be overcome by blending with classroom-based approaches. Feedback loops, fly swatter game and screen sharing of the students to improve writing and live discussions, use of break out room, polling feature and online learning platform 'Apolearn' for vocabulary and to improve speaking skills are found to be effective. When the world is trying to cope with the COVID-19 pandemic, the study would be significant in introducing strategies to teach the French language via Zoom effectively.

Keywords: *French language, Learning, Strategies, Teaching, Zoom*

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E-Technology-Based Learning Tools versus Non-Electronic Learning Tools in the ESL Classroom: An Action Research

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Abstract

This is a study of an action research designed to examine the effectiveness of using e-technology in the ESL classroom, e.g.,Vizia for reading, TED talks for listening, Zoom Breakout Rooms for speaking, and Padlet for writing in place of non-electronic learning tools. It involved two tertiary level 20-member ESL classes; one as the experiment group and the other as the control group. The control group used non-electronic learning tools in carrying out classroom activities in writing, reading, listening and speaking, and, in doing the same activities, the experiment group used only the above e-learning tools and applications which are generally used both in asynchronous and synchronous learning. These web tools and applications that address each respective language skill were selected considering learner needs, learner profiles, learning styles and course goals particular to this situation. Thus, this mixed study was conducted for a period of one month and, finally, a summative assessment representing each individual skill area was given to both classes to evaluate the progress they made with the two respective types of learning tools. The order in which the answer scripts were collected indicated that 75% of the experiment group finished the test earlier than the allocated time, whereas 55% of the control group needed even an extra allocation of time (5-10 minutes) to finish it. In addition, the majority of the experiment group scored better than the control group. Thus, it was discovered that the use of e-learning tools and applications facilitated the learners to build competence in all four language skills in a virtual background. Moreover, it was noted that the students had a positive response to e-technology-based learning.

Keywords: *E-learning tools and applications, ESL classroom, Four skills, Students' perception*

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Errors in the Use of Appropriate Verbs in Learning Sinhala as a Second Language - with Reference to Tamil Native Students

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Abstract

The objective of this research is to identify the patterns of errors in the use of appropriate verbs in Sinhala spoken by Tamil native students. Within the field of second language research, a large number of studies have focused on error analysis. One of the most difficult challenges faced by second language learners of Sinhala is mastering the use of appropriate verbs. Error analysis is crucial for evaluating language application. Thus, data for this study were collected from specific speaking activities which were partaken by a random sample of 50 Sinhala language learners. The Sinhala conversation of Tamil native students was directly observed using recording materials. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used to analyze primary data. All the identified errors were classified into two sub-types based on the surface structure taxonomy of errors, namely, substitution, and addition. Further, the findings related to the types of errors were compared with the source of those errors. The result of the study revealed wrong substitution to be the main category where students tend to make most of the errors. Thus, this research hopes to support in preparing appropriate teaching and learning materials for Tamil native students who wish to learn Sinhala as a second language.

Keywords: *Selecting appropriate verbs, Error analysis, Learning Sinhala as a second language, Substitution types of errors*

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Move Analysis of Legal Letters of Demand for Genre-based Writing Instruction in English for Legal Purposes

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Abstract

Numerous studies present employers' dissatisfaction with the English writing competence of law graduates, yet few studies in English for Specific Purposes (ESP) have provided implications for legal genre-based writing instruction. Employing Swales's CARS Model (1990), originally developed for the analysis of the moves in introductions of research articles, this study identified the rhetorical and lexico-grammatical features of five authentic legal letters of demand in order to create a move/step model that would inform legal letter writing pedagogy. The methodology of this study is based on the qualitative move analysis approach, and the five lawyers' letters were coded using QDA Miner Lite software to identify typical communicative purposes of moves and steps and linguistic features pertaining to them. The accuracy of the move/step model created was confirmed with 85% of inter-rater reliability check, and it was also validated by the consent of two lawyers. Further, their views on the discursive practices of the linguistic choices related to the rhetorical organization of the letters were used to supplement the move analysis. The results include the similarities and differences of move/step occurrences in the five letters, linguistic features of the moves, mandatory and optional moves/steps, and the reasons for their presence. The move/step model created, and its linguistic features can be used to develop letters of demand writing lessons to help novice legal practitioners/undergraduates learn the rhetorical structure, linguistic features and discursive practices associated with writing letters of demand.

Keywords: *Discursive practices, Genre analysis, Letters of demand, Move analysis, Steps*

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A Perceived Needs Analysis Study for an English for Specific Purposes (ESP) Course for Sri Lankan Undergraduates in a Bachelor of Architecture Degree Programme

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Abstract

Currently, sound English proficiency has become a vital demand for any student who wants to pursue the immense changes and requirements in the modern complex world. Hence, the goal of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) programmes is to equip students to communicate effectively in English in academic and professional settings. The concept of examining learners' requirements or Needs Analysis, has been viewed as an important component of course design in the field of teaching English for Specific Purposes. Therefore, the purpose of this study is to investigate the perceived English language needs of undergraduates who study in the Bachelor of Architecture degree programme at the University of Moratuva intending to provide recommendations for redesigning the existing course outline and developing an appropriate ESP textbook that acknowledge the language demands reflecting upon real-world necessities. A randomly selected sample of 30 third-year undergraduates who study in the Bachelor of Architecture (B. Arch) degree programme participated in the study as they have to participate in the internships and training programmes during the third year by applying the learnt language skills. A mixed approach was employed as data was collected through a questionnaire and semi-structured interviews. As findings, students highlighted the significance and the requirement to improve sub-skills to be used in realistic contexts they encounter such as giving oral presentations, understanding assignments, telephone and interview etiquette, writing reports and professional CVs/letters and listening to lectures/meetings. In conclusion, it is beneficial to co-operate with language learners in preparation of an ESP curriculum and in fulfilling the learners' requirements.

Keywords: *Architecture, Curriculum development, English for Specific Purposes, Needs Analysis*

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Articulation Timing and Orthographical Representation of Consonant Gemination in Sinhala

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Abstract

Consonant gemination, in general, has two major aspects: a. lengthening b. doubling. This study focuses on articulation and orthography in Sinhala, the two parts of the language where consonant gemination occurs. It examines the pronunciation time ratios of the 16 pairs of singleton and geminated Sinhala consonants in order to analyze the relationship that exists between their articulation and orthography. This study focuses on the problem of whether there is a relationship between orthography and the articulation time ratios of geminated and singleton consonants in Sinhala. Two research questions are posed in order to examine this research problem: 1) What are the articulation time ratios between the geminated and non-geminated consonants in Sinhala? and 2) What relationships exist between orthographic symbolization and those ratios? A group of ten adult participants contributed to the data: five males and five females. Praat.exe was the main technical instrument used to measure pronunciation timings. The data revealed that the ratios lie between a minimum of 1:1.6 and a maximum of 1:2.4 times. Therefore, consonant gemination in Sinhala is a lengthening process. It further exhibits that the alpha-syllabic writing system in Sinhala ignores the length ratios of the geminated consonants.

Keywords: *Consonant gemination, Pronunciation timing, Singleton, Sinhala*

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MODERN LINGUISTICS

The Gamification of Grammar Lessons in the E-learning Setting: A Comparative Study Conducted on ESL Learners

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Abstract

E-learning has been regarded as 'trending' in education since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic. The shift from traditional learning to e-learning has led to exploring strategies to make the e-learning experience more interactive, resourceful, and beneficial. This study explores the efficacy of employing gaming platforms to improve grammar in English as a second language (ESL) learners. This study specifically focused on grammar, as it is considered time-consuming, tedious, and difficult for many learners. In addition, in a virtual environment, it is rather challenging to observe learners; thus, achieving the outcomes becomes challenging. This study was developed as experimental research to observe if the learners found the gamification of grammar lessons more exciting and engaging thus, motivating them to improve their skills. Forty ESL learners were divided into two groups; control and experimental, based on pre-test results. The control group was taught grammar lessons via zoom similar to a talk and chalk method, while the experimental group was taught grammar lessons via zoom using gaming platforms initiated via a Learner Management System (LMS). The post-test results revealed that the experimental group improved better than the control group. Due to time constraints, the researchers only focused on one grammar aspect. Based on the key findings, the study concludes that gamification of grammar lessons successfully improves the learners' grammar skills and has led to a great motivation towards learning grammar.

Keywords: *E-learning, ESL learners, gamification, grammar, pandemic*

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The Impact of Explicit Reading Strategy Instruction in Promoting Literal Reading Comprehension in ESL Learners

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Abstract

Learning English as Second Language (ESL) or Foreign Language (EFL) is considered as a challenging task and out of four skills; reading, listening, speaking and writing, the ability to read in English and extract the meaning of a text has been seen as an essential basic skill for ESL/EFL students. In this regard, most of the students improved their reading comprehension after receiving explicit reading strategy instruction which teaches how to utilize particular strategies in order to improve reading comprehension. Hence, this study investigated the effect of explicit reading strategy instruction on literal reading comprehension as most of the teachers just test the knowledge of reading comprehension of the students rather than giving instructions or teaching or monitoring students to comprehend texts by utilizing reading strategies. The literal reading comprehension has been focused on this study as it the basic step of comprehension levels which emphasis on directly stated ideas in a text and it is necessary for beginner level like grade 10. Moreover, scanning and skimming strategies which help to grasp the meaning of a text easily and quickly were selected, as through those strategies the direct or literal meaning of a text can be comprehended easily. Therefore, the objective of this study was to examine whether explicit reading strategy instruction has an impact on literal reading comprehension. The methodology in gathering information was tests and semi structured interview. The sample compromised of 40 students aged between 14 and 15 years who were in grade 10. The data were analyzed using quantitative and qualitative methods. The results of both quantitative and qualitative data postulated that explicit reading instruction has an impact on reading comprehension and students improved their literal reading comprehension after receiving explicit reading strategy instruction.

Keywords: *Explicit reading strategy instruction, Literal reading comprehension, Reading strategies, Scanning, Skimming*

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Effect of Video Feedback on ESL Learners' Paragraph Writing in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Writing and the provision of feedback in ESL classrooms are essential components. With the continuous evolution of technology, the methods of feedback have also differed and advanced. Studies have been carried out to see the effectiveness of different feedback methods for writing. Considering the dearth of research in exploring the pedagogical and practical appropriateness of video feedback for ESL writings in Sri Lanka, the present study intends to examine the impact of video feedback in ESL undergraduates' paragraph writing and whether the learners who receive video feedback incorporate higher levels of correction into their written work compared to learners who receive written feedback. For this, an experimental quantitative research design was used. The empirical data for the study was gathered through the comparison of 20 participants' multiple drafts of writing paragraphs over a five weeks period. Written feedback was delivered in the form of end notes and side notes in participants' writings itself and video feedback was delivered in the form of videos using Screencast-O-Matic screen capture recorder. The results expressed that the participants in the experimental group incorporated higher levels of correction into their proceeding drafts from two respective video feedbacks more than the participants in the control group who received two written feedbacks in two writings. The findings retrieved manifest that video feedback is a worthwhile practice in ESL writing. Hence, the requirement for more research to recognize cause and effect relationships of video feedback is highlighted in the present study.

Keywords: *ESL learners, ESL undergraduates, Paragraph writing, Video feedback*

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Meeting the Challenges of the 'New Normal' in English as a Second Language (ESL) Learning among Sri Lankan Secondary School Learners

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Abstract

As a result of the COVID-19 pandemic, the period of 'New Normal' learning was commenced. The brief transition from traditional classroom learning to online learning mode was new to many Sri Lankan students. The new learning space becomes disembodied virtual, not actual. Even if online learning creates more opportunities to continue active learning, it sometimes negatively influences the learners' performance and learning outcomes. This study aims exploring and investigating the challenges confronted by Sri Lankan secondary school learners in learning English as a Second Language (ESL) online. The objective of this study is to evaluate the learners' new experiences in online learning and to reevaluate the methods of teaching online. An online survey-based questionnaire was designed to collect data from 60 Sri Lankan secondary school ESL learners (from government and non-government schools). The qualitative and quantitative approaches were used to analyze the data. It is found that the students encountered challenges related to technical, academic and communication aspects of online learning. Further, the results demonstrated that these challenges heavily influence students' 'new normal' learning and most of the students are not satisfied to continue with online learning. The study offers implications to investigate the solutions to minimize the challenges that Sri Lankan ESL learners may face in learning English on digital platforms.

Keywords: *English as a Second Language, Global emergency, Language learners, New normal, Online learning*

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A Study on Using "Kahoot" as a Tool for Teaching Prepositions for Tertiary Level ESL Learners

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Abstract

The present research aims at investigating the use of the '*Kahoot'* online game as a tool for teaching and learning prepositions for ESL learners at tertiary level. The quantitative method was used to gather information. Also, 40 participants who study first-year 'English for Humanities' course at the University of Kelaniya followed a series of lessons on prepositions These participants were divided into two groups as the controlled group and the experimental group, and each group consisted of 20 participants. After each lesson on prepositions, an assessment was conducted by using '*Kahoot'* online platform for the experimental group, whereas the controlled group was given paper-based assessments after each lesson. A pre-test was conducted in the first week in order to evaluate the participants' current knowledge on prepositions and a post-test was conducted in the fourth week to investigate the effectiveness of the usage of *'Kahoot'* to acquire knowledge on prepositions. After this task, a questionnaire was administered in order to examine the perceptions of students about incorporating *'Kahoot'* to the learning process. After that, quantitative data was analyzed using SPSS 25. The 'Likert' scale was used to analyze data in the questionnaire, and a one way ANOVA test was run, followed by the Independence Sample T- test, to observe whether there are significant differences in the performance of those groups discussed above. The results showed that using *'Kahoot'* online game was more effective than the traditional method of teaching prepositions for the ESL learners of University of Kelaniya. Therefore, this study concludes that students can be taught prepositions by using the *'Kahoot'* online game as an innovative teaching technique effectively in ESL contexts.

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The Relationship between Emotional Intelligence and Speaking Skill with Special Reference to ESL Students, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna.

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Abstract

Language learning is emotionally driven. The emotions can optimize the learning experience and contribute to the awareness of learners about their needs, goals and others' emotions. The speaking skill is considered as one of the most challenging skills by language learners. Sometime, students are reluctant to cooperate and actively engage in English speaking activities. Thus, it is the responsibility of teachers to recognize learners' real emotions and how they affect their ability to speak in the classroom. The objective of this study is to find out whether Emotional Intelligence (EI) of the students affects their attitudes in terms of active involvement in speaking in the classroom. The design of the study is descriptive and quantitative where the researcher presented data in numerical and descriptive form. In order to achieve this goal, twenty-three ESL social science students from Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna are randomly selected. The data are collected using EI questionnaire, journal writing and structured interview. The questionnaire focuses on key dimensions of EI: emotional perception, emotional comprehension and emotional regulation. Krashan's monitor hypothesis is used for the analysis. The findings reported in this study highlight that students with low EI constantly compare themselves with their peers and feel shy to express themselves because of mistakes they may make while speaking. And pair works and group works are preferred by the students with low EI to share their ideas, offer alternative suggestions and linguistic feedback. It is observed that the usage of their mother tongue is also an adding factor occasionally to increase their EI in the second language classroom. The implications of the findings may encourage teachers to focus on the activities which will enhance the emotional intelligence of the students.

Keywords: *Attitude, Emotion, Participation, Second language, Speaking*

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A Longitudinal Linguistic Study of Children below Age 4: Challenges Identified at the Level of Data Gathering

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Abstract

This socio-linguistic study documents the real-life challenges experienced by researchers when conducting developmental linguistic research. The study asks: "what are the challenges encountered during the data gathering phase of a monolingual multi-participant longitudinal linguistic study of native speakers of Sinhala, aged between 9 months to 4 years?" Fifty participants were randomly selected from the Matara-Kekanadura MOH area. Home visits were made once in every two weeks over a period of four months, and one-hour audio sessions were recorded focusing on the natural speech of the children. However, this is a parallel study to the main objective of the field visits. The study focuses on two kinds of challenges faced by sociolinguists when conducting research: internal and external challenges. Internals challenges consist of those connected to the researcher and the data collecting team themselves. They are consequences of the degree of dexterity the researcher has to handle and adjust to the fieldwork environment, their expertise, and their capacity to be responsible for their own safety. External challenges emerge when the research team engages with the participant's community. This study discusses four specific types of external challenges: the behaviors of the participants, the behaviors of their family members and neighbors, noise disturbances and the cultural environments of the participating families. The study finds that the choice of the study population, the geographical area and the methods chosen to conduct fieldwork bear significantly on the data and findings. Manipulating these three factors in future research will therefore result in differences in the data and findings.

Keywords: *Challenges, Data gathering, First language acquisition, Longitudinal linguistic research, Sinhala*

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LITERATURE, ART & AESTHETICS

The New Normal: Re-evaluating the Role of Translators

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Abstract

The Coronavirus pandemic capsized the entire world order fracturing the illusion of normalcy projected by individuals, societies, and states. Traversing beyond a mere health hazard, the minuscule virus has compelled humans to rethink their existence; in all its dimensions. With their extensive attachment to communication and linguistic landscape, translators have to re-evaluate their role within the new normal to assure a well-ordered information flow across the man-made borders since information plays a crucial role in the man's quest to adapt to the new normalcy. Hence, the present study attempts to determine the socio-cultural concerns associated with the reshaping of the role of a translator. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with five professional translators, and secondary sources such as publications, internet, and newspaper articles were also employed to gather required data. The gathered data were analyzed using thematic analysis method to perceive the participants' stances. The findings could be outlined under two themes, firstly, translator being a 'social animal'. A translator, as a social animal, has his own standpoint pertaining to any piece of information. Impartiality, personal preferences, and choices of selection determine his behavior during a translation. Hence, with the unprecedented power of recognition relegated to the translators in a fragile and volatile context, the translator ought to reshape his role accordingly. Changes to the linguistic landscape, including the language itself, could be distinguished as the latter concern. Hence, a translator needs to conquer these socio-cultural challenges to unravel the opportunities associated with the new normal.

Keywords: *Communication, Languages, New Normal, Translation, Translators*

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The Transgression of the Existential crisis of Self through Unfathomable Desire – In Relation to the movie Forrest Gump

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Abstract

This study encapsulates Robert Zemeckis' movie 'Forrest Gump' (1994) as a portrayal of the transgression of the existential crisis of being a mentally retarded persona through unfathomable desire. The unfathomable desire of Gump has undertaken him with a plethora of possibilities which locates him as a phenomenon as a mere individual. As a Qualitative study, the study focusses on the movie 'Forrest Gump' (1994) with theoretical interpretations of Jacques Lacan, Sigmund Freud and Martin Heidegger. In data analysis, the researcher employed a literary analysis with selected theories of desire. Gump desires to travel to a novice existential composition and locate himself in a new disposition beyond the physical and psychological differentiations. This desire implanted by his mother, Jenny with different incidents in American history upsized his existential realm to a new spatiality deviated from his identity as a man with a lower IQ level. Parallel to this desire, his oddity serves to upsize scathing criticisms on the coeval discourse. Gump's individuality remained constant in many circumstances where his individual success amalgamated by means of being different from all character portrayals that conform themselves to accepted identity formations. Gump's successful surpassing of his physical and psychological differentiations through irreversible desire offers him countless possibilities to relate his self to the society.

Keywords: *Desire, Existential crisis, Possibilities*, *Unfathomable*

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Oscillating between Extremes: A Study on the Images of Sanity and Hallucinations in Goethe's Erlkönig

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Abstract

The poem "Erlkönig" written by Johann Wolfgang von Goethe exhibits his originality and eccentric style in producing literary works incorporating human life, psychological aspects and mythological beliefs. The plot develops as a dialogue between a father, his child and the Erlkönig (Alder King), a malicious spirit who carries children towards death. Based on the poem and its dramatic plot, the study focused on analyzing the depiction of sane and unstable psychological statuses of mortal beings. Goethe's involvement with natural images, psychological portrayals, and mythological representations were addressed throughout the textual analysis. The findings reveal that the images of sanity and hallucination are particularly depicted by involving human characters in the poem, while the non-human becomes the basis of the conflict. The poet equally involves the child as an individual subject to demonstrate the oscillation between extremes, where the child shifts his mentality from sanity to hallucination. Goethe similarly refers to rationality, maturity and mythology in the portrayal of the two psychological extremes. Rationality and maturity are implicated through the father in contrast to the child's continuous reference to the mythological creature. The engagement of natural elements and mythological allusions are juxtaposed in depicting sanity and mental disparity. Moreover, the ambiguous denouement of the poem's plot presents a vagueness to the reader in deciding whether the child has died because of a physical disorder or of the continuous sinister intrusions of the Erlkönig, laying the foundation for an oscillation in the reader's mind as well: the oscillation between reality and mythology.

Keywords: *Erlkönig, Depiction, German poetry, Goethe, Sanity and hallucination*

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My Body, My Right: Abortion as a Female Choice in *Sara's* and *Revolutionary Road*

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Abstract

The female body is considered a medium for procreation and nurturance, and femininity often gets gauged in terms of a woman's fecundity. A vital constituent of a conjugal relationship, procreation seldom becomes a woman's choice, for the male partner colonizes her body. By denying women's reproductive freedom, society confiscates the right to their bodies and compels them to live through the arduous phases of parturition, nurturance, and child care. The idea of abortion has been a contentious discourse; it questions and destabilizes male partners' grip on women's bodies. Films portraying the women's choice of pregnancy and their right to abortion as reproductive emancipation have been a trope in recent times. Dwelling on the denial of women's reproductive freedom in *Revolutionary Road* (2018) by Sam Mendes and *Sara's* (2021) by Jude Anthany Joseph, this study deliberates on women's bodily autonomy. The right to abortion decolonizes women's bodies from the fetters of marital hegemony, allowing women to decide upon motherhood. Films under study portray the accomplishment of the aspirations of women that are ensued through abortion. By delineating the politics of body and reproduction, the study reckons on the right to one's own body.

Keywords: *Bodily autonomy, Body politics, Decolonizing female body, Reproductive emancipation, Right to abortion*

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A Psychoanalytic Study of Desire through the Plight of Kamini and Lal in 'Giraya'

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Abstract

This study illustrates the depiction of desire in Kamini and Lal in *Giraya* (1971) by Punyakante Wijenaike, and exemplifies their submissive roles which are constrained by the contemporary society. These social restrictions obstruct their freedom while their actual desire for equal respect is disregarded. The objective of the study is to explore the victimization and marginalization of Kamini and Lal which enforce them to satisfy conventional social expectations in the institution of marriage for their survival. The scope of the study is limited to a Sri Lankan novel since there are less empirical data which explore the desire in both male and female characters together in a novel. Unlike other novels of Wijenaike, *Giraya* deconstructs the conservative social dogmas expounding the darker realities of the society. The existing literature explores the womanhood, female oppression, marriage and female sexuality. Yet this study deploys a psychoanalytical exemplification on both Kamini and Lal regardless of their gender disparities. As a qualitative study, a textual analysis was conducted utilizing the Freudian psychoanalytic conceptualization of Id, Ego and Super Ego, to excavate the unconscious mind. It reinforces the psychological struggle which obstruct their emancipation, neutralising them in the presence of the societal gaze. Further, this study strives to demonstrate the inner psyche of the two characters portraying their suffocation in the absence of freedom for them to elevate their individual desire. In conclusion, the alienated discontinuity of the characters lead to a more dilapidated relationship, suppressing their actual identities as stagnated individuals.

Keywords*: Desire, Freedom, Oppression, Psychoanalysis, Victimization*

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SOCIETY AND SOCIAL ISSUES

To Recognize the Sub-culture of Cannabis Addicted Three-wheel Drivers. (Western Province, Gampaha District, Nittabuwa Divisional Sectarian)

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Abstract

This article reviews the sociological analysis of cannabis addicted three-wheel drivers. Research problem of the study was what are the impacts of cannabis use by three-wheeler drivers on their families? The family is the basic unit of society, yet many changes can be identified in the family background. Based on drug arrests in 2019, highest numbers of cases were reported for cannabis (45,923) (Handbook, 2019). According to (2004) traffic police reports, three-wheeler drivers have committed offenses related to road accidents, such as driving after consuming drug and distracting drivers with smoking.The main objective of this study was the impact of cannabis use by three-wheeler drivers on their families and sub-objective of this study was sub-culture of three-wheel drivers addicted to cannabis. The qualitative data was collected through in-depth interviews via case studies and 10 case studies were used. The purposive technique was used for selecting interviewees. This study used thematic analysis as the data analysis method. Results of the findings revealed that some of the money earned by three-wheel drivers was used for their drug needs and small amount of money was used to fulfill needs of the family. According to the observation revealed that their behavior, language, style and clothing take on a different face. It could be concluded that these behaviors of the cannabis addicted three-wheel drivers have a negative effect on their families and they show sub-cultural characteristics that are different from the main culture in the society.

Keywords: *Economical and social impact, Family, Sub-culture, Three-wheel drivers*

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Socio-economic Conditions of War Widows in North-East Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Sri Lanka had faced war for three decades. It affected people's lifestyles and created vulnerability in society, such as war widows, women-headed families, disabled, missing people, and displacements. The main objective of the research was to identify the socio-economic situations of the war widows, and the sub-objective was to find out the relations between war and widows in the Northern and Eastern provinces of Sri Lanka. This study was used secondary data collection methods. There were 15 pieces of literature used for this research for data collection. SPSS and thematic analysis were used for data analysis, and the women in development (WID) theory was applied. War widows face problems every day, as well as socio-economic conditions in society. Poverty, young age and fewer experience women, lack of safety, children's educational related issues, health issues, future generation issues, gender inequality, socio-cultural problems and disrespect, remarriage, double day employment or work, no employment, risk work, no land ownership, lack of income and savings, lack of loan facilities, basic needs issue, illegal sexual relationships were findings of the research. War widows face a double burden in the society where they have responsibilities to care for the family. Giving educational opportunities to their children, empowering war widows, improving their personalities, implementing model planning, and motivating them are recommendations for reducing the socio-economic conditions of the war widows in the North East, Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Conditions, Socio-economic, Vulnerable, War, Widows*

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The Power Dynamics and Anonymous Communication in Sri Lankan Universities

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Abstract

This study is a psycho-sociological inquiry into anonymous communication/letters (*Kellapattara* in Sinhala) circulated in Sri Lankan state universities which has recently become an increasingly common phenomenon. The research question of this study: 'What are the power dynamics of anonymous communication in Sri Lankan universities?' is also the knowledge gap in the literature. The research was principally guided by the inductive approach and both primary and secondary data were examined using thematic and explanatory analysis methods. Based on the text content, anonymous letters were categorized into 15, yet interrelated themes and two main thematic clusters were clearly identified: (1) Role of sexuality in new recruitments to academic staff by administrative body; (2) Corruption and fraud in research publishing, and financial matters. An integrated model incorporating both social and psychobiological approaches was used to carry out the psycho-sociological inquiry into the text. In pure sociological terms, anonymous letter writing could be identified as a product of writer/s' hatred towards the object of others' desire: the desire of the writer for the desire of what s/he fantasizes the other desires for, such as 'sexual pleasure', 'power', 'rank', 'promotion' 'status', or 'income'. Capitalism which promotes individualism and competition leads to social jealousy in feudal-capitalist bourgeois in which many Sri Lankan university academics are members. Social jealousy generated by comparison and desire for upward mobility motivates an individual to write anonymous letters to defile the public image of 'the other'. A bio-evolutionary analysis of this particular use of language indicates an attempt to increase one's fitness by a dissocial use of language as an informational warfare to shock the system to obtain access or prevent others getting access to limited resources.

Keywords: *Anonymous communication, Psycho-sociological inquiry, Social jealousy, Sri Lankan state universities*

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Determinants of Fertility Preferences among Married Women in Vavuniya District

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of demographic, socio-economic and cultural factors on the fertility preferences among the married women in Vavuniya South Divisional Secretariat in Vavuniya district of Sri Lanka. One hundred and fifty married women aged between 15 and 49 years who have children were selected by a convenience sampling method. The relevant information was gathered through the structured questionnaires during the period from November 2020 to January 2021 in the study area. The data were analyzed using statistical methods such as descriptive statistics, probit models, and marginal effects. In the study, a probit model was used to identify the factors behind the determinants of fertility preferences among married women. The results of probit model show that among the personal factors except age at marriage, all others negatively impact on the preferences for fertility while all other socio-economic factors have a statistically negative impact on it except household monthly earning. However, all cultural factors had positive effect on the fertility preferences among married women in the study. These findings of the study may help policy makers to implement the appropriate family planning programmes in the future in Sri Lanka, and they will help the government to promote women's labor force participation in the economy.

Keywords: *Child bearing, Demographic, Fertility preferences, Probit model, Socio-economic and cultural factors,*

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The Role of New Media to Promote the Folklore in Jaffna Fisherfolk Communities: Special Reference to Jaffna Christian Fisherfolk Communities

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Abstract

Jaffna Christian fisherfolk communities are ardent Christians, and they have many folklore within them related to their work, religion and culture. The Jaffna Christian fisher folk have a long history with their traditional folk forms which are incorporated with unique dance, song and theatre settings. The main objective of this study is to identify the role of new media in promoting the unique culture of Jaffna Christian fisherfolk communities. This research hypothesises that fishing communities are poor in finance and education. But, they are rich in their culture. They are unpopular around the world. Five villages have been chosen from the coastal areas of the Jaffna peninsula. The researcher has used recipient analysis for this study. Interviews, focus group discussions and questionnaires have been used as research tools for this study. Findings suggest that the old generations of fisherfolk communities have their own identities and they used manuscripts for the documentation of folklore. Only a few aged artists are competent in the documentation of this fork lore. But, due to the lack of patronage resulting from three decades of war, and economical barriers, they are unable to reach the mass audience. New media are doing its part to realize the vitalization of folklore culture. But there are both positive and negative sides. New media lead to the loss of unique identities of this particular community to some extent. So, the purpose of this research is to probe the ways in which media can expose the folklore of Jaffna Christian fisherfolk communities to the globe without diminishing its unique identity.

Keywords: *Communication, Fisherfolk, Folklore, Globalization, New media*

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CULTURE AND FOLKLORE

Legal Implications for Tourism Impacts on Physical Cultural Heritage in Mihintale

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Abstract

Sri Lanka is one of the best and popular heritage tourism destinations in the world. Many of the heritage tourists admire the cultural and heritage values at destinations. However, the adverse effects of tourism on cultural heritage sites are commonly noted. Therefore, a systematic investigation is much needed to discover the repercussions of heritage tourism and the associated laws and regulations to safeguard the cultural heritage properties in Sri Lanka. The main aim of this study was to determine the detrimental effects of tourism on cultural heritage and to assess the state of regulations aimed at protecting cultural heritage properties. By adopting a qualitative research approach, this study focuses on implementing laws governing the conservation of tangible cultural heritage resources in Mihintale, one of Sri Lanka's most important heritage sites. Face-to-face interviews with government officers at the Mihintale archaeological site and the police station, participant observations, images taken by the researcher, and examining the rules and regulations in Acts were among the sources of data used in this research. Thematic, content, picture, and descriptive analysis methodologies were used to analyze the data manually. According to the findings, it was discovered that the applied Acts were effective in safeguarding heritage properties, but the operationalization of the laws of the topic had flaws. The findings provide a thorough understanding of the context legislation governing tourism's effects on cultural heritage sites. It is also worth noting that the conservation and preservation of significant cultural heritage resources are critical to promoting sustainable heritage tourism.

Keywords: *Adverse tourism impacts, Cultural Heritage, Legal background, Legal Implications*

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Role of Colonial Gaze in the Construction of Present-day Cultural Practices Related to the Elephant in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Diverse discursive practices related to the elephant have created diverse emotions such as respect, fear, empathy, hate, devotion, and joy among the people of Sri Lanka. Often, it is being said that these discursive practices have been in operation since antiquity. It is a common fact that the most of present day discursive practices and their manifestations are heavily influenced by our colonial legacy. Therefore, the objective of this study is to explore the impact of colonial legacy on the nuances of the representations of elephants in contemporary Sri Lankan culture. With this objective in mind, a genealogy of representation of elephants in Sri Lankan culture from colonial period to this date is explored using secondary qualitative data. Colonial representations of elephants are explored using official colonial documents, documents published by colonial officers, Western travelogues, and colonial iconography (symbols, architecture and artifacts). Representations of elephants in contemporary Sri Lankan culture (beliefs, imagery, art, iconography and every-day-practices embedded in rituals, beliefs, media, public speeches and religious sermons) are also explored. A genealogy of representation of elephants in Sri Lankan culture reveals how the colonial knowledge production has shaped our understanding of the elephant. Many contemporary cultural practices related to the elephant clearly portray the legacy of the colonial gaze towards the orient, although today they are often perceived as traditions which have evolved for thousands of years in this land.

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Causes and Consequences of Cultural Change: A Review on the Contemporary Culture of the Henanigala Indigenous People in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The island of Sri Lanka is populated by diverse ethnic groups. Among them are the Veddas: the indigenous people (IP) of the country considered specific due to their cultural and biological uniqueness. At present, these people have been limited to a few villages of the country with less than 10,000 population. They seemed to have adopted a new cultural system as a consequence of the cultural change taken place in the past few decades. This study was carried out to find out the causes and consequences of cultural change based on the IP living in Henanigala. Data were gathered through a questionnaire survey in which 193 individuals participated, and through in-depth interviews conducted with purposively selected 10 individuals, representing both genders, ages ranged from 18 to 75 years. The main factors identified as the causes of the cultural change were resettlement and assimilation. These factors have consequences in increasing poverty, cultural loss, minor marriages, alcoholism, land loss, and unemployment, among others. Still, their traditional culture is preserved among the older generation, through which initial measures can be taken to preserve their culture for the future.

Keywords: *Cultural Change, Henanigala, Indigenous People, Resettlement, Vedda*

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'Kaman Koothu' Performances Based on Upcountry Tamil Cultural Dynamics

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Abstract

The study is based on the upcountry cultural dynamics in "*Kamaan Koothu" performance*. "*Kamaan koothu"* comes first when looking at the art forms that have been preserved as the identity of the hill-country Tamils. Various perspectives on traditional art in contemporary times are significant in contributing to the development of traditional arts. Cultural dynamics can be described as a leap in the development of brain waves. Culture is not one thing. It is different in every social group in the world lives with its own culture. The dynamics of a culture can be referred to as the dynamics of the culture. The migration of a particular culture from one place to another causes it to be influenced by the culture of the native environment, and eventually both cultures form a new culture. Off cultures and thoughts make more changes, and it is natural for the movement of cultural dynamics to occur directly and indirectly. Cultural features are found in all the social groups living in the world as one that is intertwined with their lives. Similarly, during the British rule, Indian Tamils were taken to various countries as mercenaries. Subsequently, Indian Tamils were brought to Sri Lanka after 1815. Those who were brought from villages in Tamil Nadu in India are identified as upcountry Tamils today. They have also been carrying their cultural art forms. Thus, the role of *"Kamaan koothu"* in the cultural movement of upcountry Tamils is notable.

Keywords: *Culture, Culturalism, folklore, Koothu, Performance*

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Issues Faced while Translating Folkloric Material from the English into Tamil

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Abstract

Translation is not merely an inter-linguistics activity but also an inter-cultural activity. Folklore is a vital part in literary texts to institute a cultural system, and its complexity poses several challenges to the translators. This study aims to investigate the linguistic and cultural issues faced by the undergraduates of the Department of Translation Studies, Faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna, while translating folklore material from English to Tamil. The objective of the study was to identify the techniques and strategies used by the translator to overcome the problems. The cultural problems were categorized as problems in translating idioms, proverbs and cultural bound terms. The linguistic problems were categorized as complex sentence structure, terminological problems and problems caused due to punctuation marks. In order to overcome the problems, several translation procedures were used by the students. Accordingly, qualitative methodology and quantitative methodology were used for the study. Quantitative methodology was used to collect data. In qualitative methodology, comparative method was used to compare the source text and the translation whereas descriptive method was used to describe the outcomes of the study. As the focus was on folkloric material, it draws attention to the requirement of observing the ethnography of language in trying to reproduce the most exact approximation of the nuances in the original. The findings of the study could help the students in translation studies and researches who deal with issues in translating Folkloric Material from English to Tamil and support finding appropriate ways to handle such problems.

Keywords: *Cultural problem, Folkloric Material, Linguistic problem, Translation, Undergraduates*

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MENTAL HEALTH AND SPIRITUALITY

A Sociological Study of the Relationship Between Depression and Family Conflict
(Western Province, Kaluthara District, Horana Divisional Secretariat)

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Abstract

This article reviews the sociological factors leading to family conflicts. Research problem of the study was: How do effects of depression lead to conflicts in family? The main objective of this study was to determine whether there is a relationship between family conflicts and depression. The family is the basic unit of any society, however, currently many changes are identified in family in relation to family background. Additionally, if one of the family members suffers from depression, the whole family would suffer a great setback and stressful environment. According to the WHO (2006), almost 400,000 Sri Lankans experience serious mental disorders due to family conflicts. This study used a purposive sampling method based on the severity of problems and nature of the needs. The primary and the secondary method used in the research to collect information were in-depth interviews carried out via case studies. Accordingly, 12 case studies were used in this study. These case studies were taken from selected unique people, who are experiencing family conflicts and suffering from depression. This study was guided by thematic analysis and it exposes that people, regardless of gender or age, are more likely to be depressed, which has resulted in economic, social and psychological stress. This pressure has accelerated conflict in family. Accordingly, a relationship between depression and family conflict is identified, thus, research highlights the importance of the intervention of a social worker to minimize these conflicts in oppressive situations.

Keywords: *Depression, Family, Gender, Psychological stress, Relationship*

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A Review on the Programme Development of Guidance and Counseling Based on Badulla District, Welimada Administrational Zone

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Abstract

There are some societal concerns, such as drug misuse, strippers, and street children that require counseling services outside of the educational context. Counseling programmes in social communities have yet to be implemented. The major objective of this research was to help counselors to solve problems when providing counseling services in the community. Information was collected through questionnaires, focus groups and interviews. Surveys were used to gather quantitative data, which was then analysed with descriptive statistics and percentage analysis. Interactive analysis which has four stages: data collection, reduction, display, and conclusions, was used to look at qualitative data. The community-based approach for counseling programme creation was ready to be implemented to improve the quality of counseling services in the community. In collaboration with the Ministry of Health and the Base Hospital-Welimada, an NGO has been providing HIV counseling. Counseling, spiritual activities, and other activities were provided to help people feel better. By analyzing students' developments about their spirituality, the evaluation could be done on their daily actions. Based on the findings, community counselors required a model of a guidance and counseling programme in the community as a guidance and counseling service. The research was divided into four stages: basic research, conceptualization and creation of a community-based guidance and counseling model, validation by experts and practitioners through focus groups, and programme improvement and development. The recommendations were made by the researcher to detail the operational research stages so that the model was more applicable and understandable; and for community counselors to develop guidance and counseling programmes based on community needs that are appropriate to provide the best guidance and counseling services.

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Buddhism and Japanese Culture

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Abstract

One of the great scholars, **Matsuo** mentioned in his book *'A History of Japanese Buddhism',* religion has a healing effect like morphine for the sick, for those who face distress and difficulty in their lives and have been hurt. Among Asian countries, particularly in Japan, Buddhism is practiced in their own way with a culture of their own. Buddhism has influenced Japanese culture in many ways. Most of the existing literature that deal with the subject are either too concentrated and descriptive or too superficial and concise on the importance of historical facts related to religious and cultural history in Japan and a historical study on how Buddhism developed in each era in Japan. This study attempts to recognize how Buddhism and other various philosophies impacted the culture of Japan, and how Buddhism shaped people's lives to make a change in their attitudes, behavior, and character. The research gap is from the Nara Period (A.D. 710-784) to the Kamakura Period (A.D.1185-1333). The enquiry is based on primary and secondary data, and the primary data is collected through the primary sources, the *Kojiki*. Secondary data is obtained from both published sources and articles. Conclusive evidence brings to light that Buddhism and other philosophies, including Confucianism and Zen, have greatly contributed to the progress of Japanese people's attitudes, behavior patterns, personality and characters which one can still see in the remnants of Buddhist influence seeping through many practices in the modern Japan. Hence, the available data strongly indicates that Buddhism and other philosophies introduced from China have remarkably influenced Japan socially, economically, religiously, and culturally.

Keywords: *Buddhism, Confucianism, Culture, Japan, Zen*

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Psychological Problems Faced by University Undergraduates during
COVID - 19 Pandemic Situation

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Abstract

COVID 19, a worldwide catastrophe that brought about significant changes in the lives of people around the world. These changes have long-lasting effects on the economic, social, educational, physical, and mental well-being of individuals. Like other countries affected by COVID-19, Sri Lanka has taken steps to provide many services online, including education. This research attempts to identify psychological problems faced by undergraduates during the lock down period and its long-lasting impact on future career goals. Case study methodology was adopted for 10 undergraduates of final year of the faculty of Management and Finance and the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of University of Ruhuna. The research is qualitative and aims to gain an insight into undergraduates' psychological problems during the lock down period. Interviews were conducted over the phone using pre-prepared structured interviews. All responses were gathered for the sections: Personal life-Physical and Mental, Academic life, Career Goals, Social Life, Family Life, and Spiritual Life. Data was analyzed based on thematic analysis, and themes will be based on the aforesaid six areas. According to responses, they faced financial hardship, concerns about infection, dread of mortality, and a sense of hopelessness. Participants were concerned about the unpredictable length of time it would take to return to "regular life". Psychological studies of COVID 19 can help ensure psychological interventions at various stages of public health emergency management to mitigate mental and social unrest. It has the potential to assist society in returning to normalcy with the fewest possible losses, according to experts.

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Utility of Linguistic Designations (*paññatti*) in Dhamma Communication: An analytical study with respect to the Theravada

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Abstract

The concept of *paññatti* discussed in the Theravada Abhidhamma can be identified as an attempt to explain the relationship between language and reality. In the sutta literature, the value of *niruttipaṭisambhidhā* is given emphasis as a method of figuring out the issue of the relationship between language and reality in the Dhamma Communication. It directs a person to understand the difference between *vijjamāna paññatti* and *avijjamāna paññatti*. A person equipped with the knowledge of particulars has the potentiality of conceptualizing the experienced particulars subsuming them under universals. This research examines the utility of *paññatti* as a means of understanding the role of universals taking into consideration the various philosophical solutions so far proposed such as realism, nominalism and conceptualism. The research analyzes the utility of *paññatti* in communicating individual experience at the universal level and the functional value of the concept of *paññatti* in understanding the objective world and spiritual phenomena. The concept of *paññatti* and its features are analyzed referring to relevant secondary sources on the particular subject. The research depends mainly on library survey and textual analysis. Dictionaries and encyclopedias were also referred when a detailed account on terminology and subject matter was essential. Linguistic designations are used in Abhidhammic philosophy to explain the ontological and epistemological issues related to the communication of Dhamma. The word functions as a vocal signifier. This vocal signifier possesses the ability of reiterating particular individual experiences at the universal level. This reiteration is connected within the power of conceptualizing and understanding.

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ECONOMY AND CONTEMPORARY CHALLENGES

An Analysis of the Uneven Impacts of COVID-19 on Women-Owned Small Businesses in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

The COVID-19 pandemic has created varying degrees of social and economic consequences across different social groups in Sri Lanka. The government of Sri Lanka took several steps to reduce the spread of the virus by imposing travel restrictions and strict health guidelines. However, the threat of the virus continues to affect the economic activities of certain vulnerable groups in the country. In the face of this life-threatening pandemic, women-owned small businesses have experienced varying effects. This research examines the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on women-owned small businesses. The objectives of the study are to find out which factors cause uneven impacts to these women-owned small businesses during the third phase of the pandemic and to find out solutions to revive the businesses of the most vulnerable women business owners. This study is based on qualitative data, collected through semi-structured in-depth interviews from a target sample of 15 women who run their own business within the Kandy municipal area. Findings of the study include the factors which cause uneven impacts, such as, the level of human capital of the target group, use and access to digital technology in the business, marital status and the socio-economic background of the women business owners. With the identification of these factors, the study also highlights the need for effective policies to revive and support women-owned small businesses by providing them with the knowledge to manage businesses at times of crisis, and also by providing them effective financial assistance.

Keywords: *COVID-19, Gender, Human-Capital, Uneven Impacts*, *Women-owned small businesses*

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Evaluation of Potential Resources to Develop Ecotourism: A Study of Paalameenmadu and Surrounding Areas in Batticaloa

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Abstract

Though tremendous economic progress has been recorded through mass tourism, it does indeed give rise to environmental and socio-economic issues. It has legitimated the formation of sustainable forms of tourism as Ecotourism. It is a widely recognized type of tourism with low impact on the environment with the mechanism to diversify local economies. In order to establish a sustainable form of tourism aimed at long-term benefits, it is necessary to study the regions, identify the tourism potential, and propose an appropriate way of developing it. In that perspective, the study has identified the eco-touristic potential of Paalameenmadu in Batticaloa, intended to raise awareness of tourism development among local communities, stakeholders, administrators, and policymakers for future considerations. The study was designed as a mixed approach carried out using both primary and secondary data. Furthermore, a SWOT analysis is also used to assess the eco touristic potential of the area. The study's findings indicate that the destination's beautiful landscapes, rich fauna and flora, locational importance along the bird migration route, historical significance, and rich cultural diversity are significant potentials for developing ecotourism. Contrarily, there are challenges such as inadequate promotion, lack of entrepreneurs and staff exceptionally trained with the knowledge and skills of alternate tourism, poor awareness, segregation of the local community, inadequate coordination among various stakeholders etc. Although Sri Lanka has strategic development plans, it is recommended to carry out studies to understand the region based destination resources and to propose and promote alternative tourism mechanisms and practices to achieve sustainable development.

Keywords: A*lternative tourism, Eco touristic potentials, Local communities, Paalameenmadu, Socio-economic issues*

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Challenges of Developing Rubber Cultivation: Case Study Base on Warakapola Divisional Secretariat

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Abstract

Rubber is the second most crucial plantation crop in Sri Lanka regarding export earnings and job creation. The purpose of this study is to identify the challenges of developing rubber cultivation in the Warakapola Divisional Secretariat as the rubber industry in Sri Lanka is currently facing a burning problem. The survey was conducted to identify challenges related to the rubber production process and marketing. The survey was conducted using a questionnaire for growers in Pallepalpita Grama Niladhari Division, and 20 rubber growers were used for random sampling for this study. The survey identified several key factors influencing the challenges of the rubber manufacturing industry, including social, economic, institutional, and environmental factors. Although production and marketing problems and complications in the field of study are easily corrected errors in the management of rubber estates, cultivation seems to be deteriorating due to lack of attention and care. Accordingly, it is a big challenge for small rubber estate owners to get the maximum benefit from a unit area. However, in the face of active government intervention and the formal activities of growers, sustainable rubber is not a difficult task, minimizing the problems faced by small rubber plantation owners in the study area. It is also essential for the development of both the physical and human aspects of the area.

Keywords: *Challenges, Cultivation, Production, Rubber, Warakapola*

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Importance of the Ecotourism and Historical Tourism for Rural Economic Development:
A Study on Thalawa Divisional Secretariat Division

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Abstract

Tourism plays a major role in the Sri Lankan economy. It has been recorded that the last revenue of Sri Lanka from the tourism sector is 386 million US dollars. The majority of the population of Sri Lanka lives in rural areas and engages in agriculture as their main source of livelihood. Rural tourism is not just farm-based tourism. It not only includes farm-based holidays but also comprises special interest nature holidays and eco-tourism, walking, climbing and riding holidays, adventure, etc. There are special opportunities in rural areas that can be identified based on eco-tourism and historical tourism. The objective of this study was to identify the tourism potential of the area as an additional source of income for the rural community and to explore the potential for improving eco and historical tourism. Data was collected through questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 40 randomly selected farmers, officials, and youth, and the data was analyzed and interpreted using a thematic approach under qualitative analysis. If tourism is promoted in rural areas, it will be possible to start small businesses such as providing local food and beverages and businesses based on cultural activities, and these businesses will gradually reach a higher level of economic growth. Through SWOT analysis, the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and threats linked to the rural tourism industry were identified. It would be effective to provide opportunities such as awareness programs, training, and guidance that can be implemented at the village level with the intervention of the government. Relevant officials and the public should be given a basic understanding of how the development of such an industry in rural areas will affect the economy of the community.
Keywords: *Economic, Eco-tourism, Historical tourism, Rural Community, Rural Tourism Industry*
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Impacts of COVID-19 on Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Businesses around the globe are experiencing serious adverse impacts due to COVID-19 global crisis. One of the main victims of the COVID-19 outbreak is Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises (MSME's) as this sector is highly vulnerable to hazardous situations owing to its nature. The objective of this study is to find out the problems faced by the MSME sector in Sri Lanka due to COVID-19. A sample of 200 MSMEs from different industries and regions of Sri Lanka participated in this survey. The study revealed that 95 percent of the enterprises have been negatively affected by the outbreak. The most severe damage was found in the tourism and travel related businesses followed by the entertainment industry. The top five identified major problems were financial shortages, supply chain disruption, logistics, reduction of production, and demand. It was found that workers were unable to attend work properly due to travel restrictions, lockdowns, and fear of the disease. However, some new business opportunities are emerging due to Covid-19. There is a significant demand for online retail and food industry, and home delivery services due to behavioral changes of the community. This study concludes that many of the economic and operational activities were brutally disturbed causing businesses to undergo severe hardships and threatening their survival.

Keywords: *Adverse Impacts, Covid-19, Micro, Small and Medium-Sized Enterprises, Sri Lanka*

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DEVELOPMENT AND FUTURE GOALS

Behavioral Characteristics of Backpackers to Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Backpacker tourism has been rapidly expanding and diversifying as a tourism submarket globally. Sri Lanka is also a popular destination among foreign backpackers. However, there are few research conducted in Sri Lanka that look at the behavioral aspects of the backpackers. The current study focuses on the behavioral characteristics of backpackers visiting Sri Lanka. With a qualitative research approach, face-to-face in-depth interviews with backpackers were conducted at Sigiriya and Minneriya national parks to collect data. Data generated from eleven interviews was analyzed applying a thematic analysis technique manually. The findings generated the themes such as cultural and historical uniqueness, glamorous nature and climate, dream realization, and physical and mental relaxation as the motives to visit Sri Lanka as a backpacker destination. In addition to that, themes such as to be educated, explore new things, enjoy food and drinks, and unique transportation and accommodation facilities in Sri Lanka were emerged as the things admired by the foreign backpackers to Sri Lanka. These findings have strong implications in both theoretical and managerial perspectives. On one hand, the travel motives and the activities of backpackers to Sri Lanka adds existing body of knowledge of backpacker travel motivation and activities. On the other hand, the tourism practitioners and professions interested in the field of backpacker tourism can also use the findings in their strategy formulation and implementation process in tourism business. The research also suggests to promote new destinations favorable to backpackers, promote Tuk Tuk service, and to develop the facilities for adventure activities to uplift the backpacker tourism in Sri Lanka.

Keywords: *Backpackers, Historical uniqueness, Sigiriya, Tourism, Travel motives*

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Impact of Entrepreneurial Motivation on Self-employment Intention among Youth with Special Reference to Advanced Technological Institutes (ATIs) in Jaffna and Trincomalee

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Abstract

The entrepreneurship is considered as a key to the ever growing problem of unemployment, especially in developing countries. The purpose of this study is to examine the impact of entrepreneurial motivation on self-employment intention. Entrepreneurship is the second or the last choice of employability among younger people in Sri Lanka. Contemporary researches have highlighted that the skills of Sri Lankan graduates are not suited to industrial requirements, and it is imperative to analyze the lacking part of entrepreneurial motivation. This study is limited to Jaffna and Trincomalee ATIs with a sample of 270 students. 10% of the population from each institute was selected using the stratified proportionate sampling method. To achieve the objective of the study, a quantitative approach was used, and data was collected through a structured questionnaire and were analyzed using reliability test, descriptive statistics, correlation analysis and regression analysis. Results of this study indicated that the entrepreneurial motivation has a significant influence on self-employment intention by 48.7%. Results also confirmed that the self-employment intention of male and female are significantly different at 5% significant level and average self-employment intention of male is higher than the average intention of female. Further, the intention of seeking a job in government and private sectors is significantly different at 5% significant level and average intention of seeking a job in private sector is higher than seeking a job in government sector. This study concluded that the motivation towards self-employment will encourage and stimulate the students to step into entrepreneurial zone rather than searching for alternatives.

Keywords: *Advanced Technological Institutes, Entrepreneurial Motivation, Private sector, Self-employment Intention, Sri Lankan graduates*

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The Determinants of Choosing MABTS during the COVID -19 Era in Sri Lanka.

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Abstract

Transportation has undergone disruptive evolutions since the prehistoric era. Currently, in-vehicle information systems (IVIS) or mobile app-based taxi services (MABTS) have become a trending mode of transportation worldwide. In Sri Lanka, it has showcased phenomenal growth over the last 4-5 years. The study appraises the impact of age and income on selecting MABTS as the traveling mode in the COVID span. Additionally, the study evaluates the Key Performance Indicators (KPI) of MABTS replacing the conventional modes for the inevitable traveling needs. Simple random sampling is the method used in sampling and a structured online questionnaire acted as the primary data collector. Correlation and regression are the data-analytical models adopted. Spearman's interpretation was applied to testify the correlation and contingency of the dependent variable, number of bookings, and age and time of independent variables. The simple linear regression verifies the effect of each explanatory variable on the dependent. The study consisted of the customers from MABTS services such as UBER (55%), Pickme (29%), YOGO, Kangaroo cabs (1%), and others (9%) established within Sri Lanka. According to the responses, customers value the efficiency, reliability, effectiveness, and all-in-one service rendered by the MABTS. The final output of the study conveys that the age of the Sri Lankan community has a weak negative relationship with the usage of the MABTS and the income of a person is not accountable for the MABTS usage upliftment. The research delivers insightful implications for Sri Lankan MABTS to enhance their contribution to safe traveling demands during the pandemic.

Keywords: *COVID 19, Information Systems, IVIS, KPI, MABTS*

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University to Work Transition: Tracer Survey of Employability with Special Reference to Humanities and Social Science Graduates in a State University in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Graduate employability emerged in the twentieth century with the systematic development of higher education institutes (HEI). The study was conducted at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Sri Jayewardenepura aiming to trace the graduate employability in two attempts. Both Bachelors/ Honours degree holders eligible for the general convocation of 2017 were counted in. During the first phase, an interviewee-administered questionnaire was used and in the second phase, telephone conversations were used referring to the database developed earlier. Out of 808, 522 and 463 students have responded in both attempts. The number of employed graduates after six months of final examination was 22% (193) and increased up to 44% (214) in one year. The level of employability was increased by 24% of honors degree holders and 19% of general degree holders. The majority were working in the private sector. While the majority work on temporary basis (55% and 64%), engagement of permanent jobs has increased by 7%. The education sector earned the largest contribution (39%). 49% of the English medium graduates were employed at first 6 months, and 76% after twelve months. Gender, the language of study and the type of degree (General/ Honors) seemed the significant factors for graduate employability. Relativeness of the first job with the field of education and reaching a graduate-level job was neglected. Capability to obtain work and entering the world of work is considered a vital skill. We propose HEI to track graduate employability to assure the quality of our education systems.

Keywords: *Employability, Humanities and Social Science Graduates, Sri Lanka, Tracer study, World of work*

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Driving Toward a Food Sovereignty in Rural Sri Lanka through Constructing Symbolic Capital

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Abstract

Food sovereignty refers to people's right to healthy and culturally appropriate food and their ability to define their own food systems. However, as an unexpected result of the green revolution and agricultural change in Sri Lanka, the peasants' right to food has been declined. Now some youth groups in Sri Lankan peasantries have started agricultural revitalization movements to reclaim their right to define their own food systems. Therefore, this research has focused on how potential job seekers in their young adulthood in Sri Lankan peasantries claim food sovereignty while strengthening the social capital. Using a constructing grounded theory, four case studies were conducted alongside in-depth interviews with seventeen participants, in addition to the empirical observations. The analysis indicates that despite the positive changes in the cognitive orientation among young adults on authentic food production that can enhance their capacity to claim the right to food sovereignty, sustenance of the revitalization movement is heavily reliant on their ability to ensure both bridging and bonding social capital, that is established through constructed symbolic capital facilitated by effective and appropriate use of social media platforms. The endeavour to build food sovereignty in rural communities in Sri Lanka is challenging because of the difficulty of creating a positive image of '*farmer*s', an essential element of valuing food producers. In conclusion, this study has found that symbolic capital (constructed through engaging in social media platforms) has the potential to transform negatively conditioned thoughts on '*farming and food producers*' into positive thoughts, so that farming and food producers are socially honoured and reputed to move forward establishing food sovereignty in Sri Lankan peasantries.

Keywords: *Agricultural revitalization, Food sovereignty, Social capital, Symbolic capital, Youth involvement*

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NEW NORMAL CONDITION AND EDUCATION

Is Online Learning a Curse in Disguise? A Thematic Analysis of Undergraduates' Perceptions on Learning English as a Second Language Online with Special Reference to Faculty of Science, University of Ruhuna

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Abstract

Online teaching that is considered an effective platform to disseminate instructional content won the attention of the educators with the outbreak of the COVID – 19 pandemic. The DELT (Department of English Language Teaching) of the University of Ruhuna was also compelled to conduct teaching English online owing to the decision of the government to close all the universities in Sri Lanka. With no prior experience in teaching online, the lectures were carried out using ZOOM, making it a novel experience for both the teachers and the students. Therefore, this study was carried out with the objective of ascertaining the perceptions of the undergraduates on their exposure to learning English online, which could bring about many insights. Following the course work of a semester, a questionnaire, comprised of open-ended questions was administered to 215 second-year students. In order to validate the implications, semi-structured interviews were conducted with 09 English lecturers of the DELT face-to-face. The data that emerged from the discussions were qualitatively analyzed, employing the thematic qualitative analysis method. It was revealed that the interaction not only between the lecturers and the students but also among students was low, making the students rather passive listeners. Another major finding was teacher-centeredness as in the case of a more traditional instructional approach to language teaching. Moreover, poor reception in remote areas and the preconceived notions regarding online teaching also had a negative impression on learning ESL online. Thus it was deduced that teaching ESL online can only be utilized as a strategic tool but not as a replacement to physical classrooms.

Keywords: *English language, Online teaching, Perceptions, Undergraduates, Strategies*

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A Survey on Identifying the Challenges of Online Learning for Students in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences, University of Ruhuna

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Abstract

The COVID19 pandemic has motivated the education system to find alternatives to the traditional teaching-learning methods. As a result, online teaching and learning have been used on an unprecedented scale. The objectives of this study were to examine the effectiveness of online learning activities for Humanities and Social Sciences undergraduates in University of Ruhuna and identify the challenges that lay ahead. Data from a questionnaire given to all students in the 1000 and 2000 levels who came from 19 districts were analyzed using descriptive statistical methods. The research found that signal strength with the inadequate internet facilities, bad weather conditions, and power cuts in the areas are affecting online learning. 76% stay at home, and 16% stay outside to get a better internet connection to their devices. Also, it was identified that 95.8% of them had not taken any online classes earlier. Regarding internet usage, it was found that 90% use mobile devices while 21% use computers and 80% use mobile data connection, while 84% use prepaid connections. Moreover, it was identified that students prefer a combination of traditional lectures and online lectures. Also, they like live classes rather than the recorded lectures because of the opportunity given to ask questions, getting to answer polls and breakout room activities. However, online learning is faced with challenges such as the equality and accessibility of technology, improved performance, delivery value and affordability, literacy, and self-discipline requirements. It is necessary to solve minimum social interaction, adequate teacher training and motivation to improve sustainability.

Keywords: Covid 19, ICT, Online education, Online learning, University education

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Development of a Conceptual Framework to Evaluate the Effectiveness of Library Services

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Abstract

It is important to have a method to continuously assess library services' effectiveness for an insightful planning towards a reliable service to the community. Building on this need, this paper first discusses the identification of criteria and their measuring indicators which are useful in assessing the effectiveness of library services and then development of a conceptual framework to evaluate the effectiveness of library services by reviewing related existing literature. Thus, the study includes a comprehensive literature review related to library services' effectiveness in which it identifies, determines and suggests criteria to evaluate the effectiveness of library services. After analyzing the names and definitions of identified key criteria, the study identifies ten significant key criteria that diverse authors use to evaluate the effectiveness of library-related services. Further, the formal and informal discussions were conducted with ten subject experts, including librarians and library science academics, to ensure that the content validity fulfills the identified criteria and its measurement items. The study identified top five evaluation criteria used or cited in the related works, namely, user satisfaction, management and staff contributions, service efficiency, accessibility, and collection development. Additionally, three or more indicator categories for each criterion have been identified, and the measurable indicators consisted of Likert-type questions on a five-point rating scale that can be used to measure indicator categories. Finally, the conceptual framework for assessing library services' effectiveness has been built up based on these criteria and their measurement indicators. The next phase of this research is to build a multi-criteria decision-making model based on the findings to scientifically measure and evaluate the quality of library services.

Keywords: *Effectiveness, Library, Likert-type, Service evaluation, Service quality*

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ESL Undergraduates' Perceptions on Online Vocabulary Testing Practices

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Abstract

Vocabulary serves as one of the most necessary skills required by undergraduates in using English effectively. Utilizing online learning platforms to deliver and test vocabulary has been challenging given the shift of traditional classroom practices into virtual mode. Thus, the present study examined the effectiveness of online vocabulary testing practices in the undergraduate second language classroom based on the perceptions of forty voluntary participants studying in a local university. Three vocabulary testing approaches; quizzes, game based activities and tasks that require providing short answers were practiced over the period of ten lecture hours. Online tools that enable vocabulary testing such as Kahoot, Padlet and LMS were adopted. The students' perspectives towards the aforementioned learning methods and tools were examined through a questionnaire consisting of open and close-ended questions. Descriptive analysis method was used to evaluate the results accordingly. As per the findings, online vocabulary based games were identified as the most preferred source of vocabulary development of the participants whereas online tools that aided providing short answers to questions were found to be the most productive vocabulary testing method. Answering online quizzes was an effective source of memory retention and language revision in the students' point of view. This study only focused on utilizing three online tools which limited the testing of other forms of tools. The study recommends incorporating game based vocabulary activities as a must practice throughout the course of virtual language teaching as the students' responses revealed online vocabulary activities to be learner-friendly which can alleviate the monotony of learning whilst enhancing their interaction and participation.

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The Impact of Online Education on Children during the COVID 19 Pandemic

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Abstract

Covid - 19 is a global health crisis that has had a profound impact on the whole world. Children are at risk of becoming the biggest victims because of the dramatic changes that have occurred in the education system and social process, occurred with the replacement of online education for school education. Hence, this study examines, these changes have the impacts of online education what are on children as a result of the Covid - 19 pandemic? This is qualitative research. 20 semi-structured interviews with parents of grade 6-11 students have been conducted by using the purposive sampling method. The collected data was analyzed by using thematic analysis. However, this study is limited examining parents' perceptions of the impact of online education on children during the pandemic. Findings show that, the emerging digital education environment impacts children's education, development, and behavior. Online education changed the traditional educational system and gave new experience in utilizing new technology, digital equipment, and learning techniques and practiced facing new situations for children. Despite that, it seems children are being overused and abused by these technologies and digital tools. It became the reason for reducing the child's tendency towards learning. Accordingly, the digitalization of social interactions has made an impact on a child's Socialization process and social development. Behavioral changes have also occurred in the child. In this way, although online education has given children new experiences and knowledge, a child's social development is at risk. Thus, online education has had positive as well as negative impacts on children during the COVID -19 pandemic.

Keywords: *Children, COVID-19, Digitalization, Impact, Online Education*

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Teaching English in the Primary Grades:
A Case Study Conducted in the Vavuniya District

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Abstract

This is a case study focused on teaching English in the primary grades in randomly selected group of five government schools from north and south zones in the Vavuniya District. Based on Flesch's (2008) premise that, educational opportunities of children vary depending on the location, performance record, teacher competence, and leadership traits of the schools they attend. This study investigates how these factors affect the students' performance in public examinations. In the process of collecting qualitative data, classroom observations, questionnaires, interviews, and focus group discussions were used and, in order to validate the data quantitatively, annual reports on the students' performance results were used. Finally, the data were analyzed using descriptive and argumentative methods. The findings reveal that, the majority of teachers test the English language skills of the students in the event of their admission to grade one, and more than 80% of the teachers start teaching English from Grade 3 onwards to correlate with the prevailing government education policy. While the order of introducing the English language skills varies from teacher to teacher, the classroom management has been identified as a challenge for most of the teachers who participated in the research. As such, the primary school English language teaching program in the Vavuniya district has a number of potentials as well as an equal number of limitations. Therefore, this study recommends that the teachers should be trained further in order to provide equal opportunities for the beginner level English language learners in the region.

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Online Education and the Independence of the Literacy Practices of Visually Impaired Sinhala Language Learners: A Sociolinguistic Study

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Abstract

Informal interviews with Visually Impaired Sinhala Language Learners (VISLLs) have revealed that the academic dependence of them due to visual-centric practices of Sinhala language instruction and gaps in technology, has deteriorated with Sri Lanka's momentary shift to online tertiary education due to the onset of COVID - 19 pandemic. However, the local research literature still remains silence regarding this. On the other hand, Sociolinguists have reported that literacy practices have been patterned by social institutions and power relationships. Thus, this study aimed to explore how online education contributes to the independence of the literacy practices of VISLLs in the literacy events related to participating in the lectures. Phenomenological research paradigm along with an exploratory - qualitative research design was adopted in order to allow for an in-depth investigation. The results indicate that online education, in which the vision and technology play leading roles, has largely contributed to the dependence of the literacy practices of VISLLs with regard to the studied literacy events. It is also evident that inadequate technology literacy of VISLLs as well as frequent use of visual-centric language and visual aids in online teaching has prevented VISLLs from enjoying the independence in online learning. Further, the study suggests that it is indispensable to technologically empower the VISLLs who do not have sufficient technology literacy, and make necessary changes to the visual centric practices of online teaching in order to make the literacy practices of VISLLs more independent and make the online education environment more inclusive.

Keywords: *Literacy practices, Online education, Sinhala language learners, Sociolinguistics, Visually impaired*

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