

Examining the Perceptions and Learning Experiences of TESL Undergraduates in Online and On-site Assessments of English Syntax and Semantic Course

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The Covid-19 pandemic has prompted reforms in education, particularly in tertiary institutions. The shift from conventional to online classrooms presented challenges for both lecturers and undergraduates. However, despite these difficulties, Sri Lankan local universities successfully conducted all teaching, learning, assessments, and evaluations online during the pandemic. This study aimed to uncover the perceptions and learning experiences of the second-year TESL undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya regarding online and on-site assessments of the course, English syntax, and semantics. A mix method approach was adopted for data collection. The study draws on the theoretical framework of constructivism, which emphasizes the active role of learners in constructing their knowledge and understanding through interactions with the learning environment. A survey (Online questionnaire) is used to collect quantitative data (Likert scale questions) and qualitative (open-ended questions) data from twenty-nine TESL second-year undergraduates, which provided data for the analysis to determine common students' perceptions and learning experiences regarding online and on-site assessments. According to the findings of the study, the challenges of online assessments are notable rather than on-site assessments, such as increasing learners' anxiety, low interaction between the lecturer and the student (100% strongly agreed), hard to work as a team, difficulty in time management, inactive participation of colleagues, refusal to turn on the camera and academic integrity. According to the students' perception, on-site assessments enhance the quality of learning and provide more opportunities such as immediate feedback, building a good rapport between the lecturer and the student, increasing learners' confidence and effective communication, and more opportunities for discussion. The results allow concluding that the students are satisfied with on-site assessments rather than online assessments.

Keywords: Learning Experiences, Online Assessments, On-Site Assessments, Perceptions, TESL Students