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**THE UNSUCCESSFUL STORY OF LANGUAGE TEACHING: AN  
INVESTIGATION INTO THE CONSTANT STRUGGLE TO TEACH  
ENGLISH AT UNIVERSITY WITH SPECIAL FOCUS TO THE  
UNIVERSITY OF RUHUNA**

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This study explores the factors that have made ELT at university level a struggle. It cannot be forgotten that the knowledge of English among undergraduates varies at entry and exit due to varied socio-economic problems. However, it is the responsibility of university lecturers to cater to their desires throughout their studies at the university. Since the majority of the ELTUs of the Sri Lankan government universities were unsuccessful in achieving the required objectives, this study was conducted to identify the reasons behind this failure and to recommend remedial measures that can be taken. The study was qualitative in nature and gathered data from fifty-five lecturers in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences of the University of Ruhuna who were interviewed. The interviews were semi-structured. In addition, classroom observations were carried out during language learning sessions. The research followed a thematic approach in an inductive manner. Poor knowledge of English at entry, low attendance, less participation in learning, ragging, students' and non-language teachers' attitudes towards English, the priority given to core-course units, lack of motivation, and compartmentalization were reported as the challenges and factors which made teaching English a struggle. Thus, it is argued that there should be considerable changes in the system to equip undergraduates with the knowledge of English. Novel and innovative teaching methods with the use of advanced technology will hopefully help create a passionate language learning environment.

Keywords: Challenges, Socio-economic, Struggle, Undergraduate, University

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