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## **DIVERSE DIRECTIONS: SOME CONTEMPORARY DEVELOPMENTS IN UNIVERSITY ELT**

*S.A. Schubert\* , V.V. Medawattegedera*

*Department of Language Studies, The Open University of Sri Lanka*

This paper examines a few of the tensions, considerations, and implications of a recent decision made by Sri Lanka's University Grants Commission (UGC) to upgrade existing English Language Teaching Units (ELTU) and English Language Teaching Centers (ELTCs) to Departments of English Language Teaching (DELT). Furthermore, nine of the fifteen ELTUs in State Universities have been upgraded to DELTs since 2016, the majority of them following the adoption of this policy decision by the UGC. Based on the first stage of a much larger research into contemporary developments in English Language Teaching (ELT) in state universities, the data for this paper is drawn from publicly available information and data relating to the need for and funding available to improve ELT at tertiary level as well as proposals made by five of the nine ELTUs to request upgrades to Departmental status. Utilizing a qualitative content analysis methodological approach, this paper explores the approaches to ELT as well as the construction of both the learner and the ELT institution through these documents. The study finds that funders such as the World Bank and policy makers such as the UGC articulate the value of ELT within the context of the "world of work". In contrast, the DELT proposals analysed for this study highlight a far more complex articulation of the concerns and priorities for ELT in State Universities. This paper identifies tensions relating to professional focus, course delivery, final product, and aim of ELT at university level. It also highlights the tensions between the needs of globalization and the concerns about local contexts. It concludes by pointing to the diverse approaches to ELT across state universities and notes the need to pay attention to how these varying approaches navigate the tensions highlighted in this paper as DELTs are further institutionalized within the State University system in Sri Lanka.

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*\*Corresponding author: sasch@ou.ac.lk*