'Working in a Fish Bowl' on an Online Platform: An Exploration of Insecurities Faced by Novice Lecturers in English Language

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Abstract − After the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic, Sri Lankan universities have made a serious attempt to conduct their academic activities on virtual platforms. In this context, uploading lecture recordings and pre-recorded lectures has been a common practice in order to facilitate the students who are unable to participate in real-time lectures. This study was conducted to examine the perceptions of novice English lecturers with regard to making their lecture recordings available on online educational platforms. This study adopted a qualitative case study approach. Three novice university lecturers attached to the Department of English Language Teaching of a state university were selected as participants. The data collection was carried out using semi-structured interviews while the data analysis involved the thematic approach. The findings of this study showed that the novice English lecturers perceive making lecture recordings available on online platforms as a way of making their activities exposed to a larger community. For them, it gives rise to feelings of insecurity as if they were 'working in a fishbowl' (Blase,1988) which invites observation and criticism of their language teaching practices. As a result, the novice lecturers find it a daunting task to deliver error-free lectures which requires practice time. The study recommends building confidence in the novice English language lecturers in relation to the use of online platforms to increase their efficacy.

Keywords: Online teaching, Novice English lecturer, Teacher visibility

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