Online English Teacher Training during the COVID-19 Pandemic in the Thai Contexts

Kriengkrai Sakulprasertsri¹, Supong Tangkiengsirisin¹, Supakorn Phoocharoensil¹, Monthon Kanokpermpoon² and Sichon Koowuttayakorn¹

¹ Language Institute, Thammasat University, Rangsit Campus, 99, Moo 18 Paholyothin Rd. Klong Neung, Klong Luang Pathumthani, Bangkok 12120 Thailand
² Language Institute, Thammasat University, Tha Prachan Campus, 2, Prachan Road Phranakhorn, Bangkok 10200, Thailand

*Corresponding author: kriengkrai.s@litu.tu.ac.th; kriengkrai.cu@gmail.com

Abstract: During the disruptive coronavirus pandemic, English Language Teaching (ELT) teachers, among others, encountered dramatic changes and challenges regarding instruction, assessment and research. Due to an abrupt shift from onsite to online modes, they urgently needed digital professional development to enhance their academic performance. A number of webinars were launched to provide information useful for ELT practices. This mixed-methods study was aimed at investigating how three webinars (on online toolkits, research publication and action research) organised by a language institute at a Thai university were perceived in terms of satisfaction and usefulness. Forty-eight participants responded to an online questionnaire, and five of the participants attended online focus-group interviews. Both quantitative and qualitative data revealed that the participants had a high level of satisfaction towards and usefulness of the webinars because of the content, the speakers, as well as the format. Some of them, however, expressed their interest to engage more deeply with the webinars and the speakers through other audience engagement activities than a simple Q&A session in the end. These findings provide insight into how the language institute will be able to organise webinars more effectively for ELT professional development by increasing the level of audience engagement throughout the session to better simulate the face-to-face interaction found in on-site seminars.

Keywords: ELT professional development, ELT webinar, teaching English during COVID-19, teacher training, satisfaction and usefulness