

Challenges Encountered by The Grade Six Students in Learning Health and Physical Education in Bilingual Class Rooms in Selected Schools in The Western Province

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This study is a survey conducted on the 'Challenges Encountered by The Grade Six Students in Learning Health and Physical Education in Bilingual Class Rooms in Selected Schools in The Western Province'. In this survey, the sample is the grade six BEL students, teachers (L2, BELT) of Health Science, parents and principals of the selected three schools belonging to the Maharagama Educational division and Sri Jayawardenapura zone in Sri Lanka. Both qualitative and quantitative methods were used and four different questionnaires were administered among those four sample groups and formal and informal interviews were conducted during a period of three months of this research with thorough classroom observation and data collecting. Final results of this survey's data analysis show that the majority of the BEL s uses their L1 (mainly Sinhala) for meaningful comprehension of the subject based content during their primary education in their L1. It is quite disheartening that in secondary education BEL s inability to pay their attention to English as a subject in formal curriculum is one of the causal factors for not reaching their full capacity in BE. Consequently, they are doubly challenged by the struggle they encounter with the new subject knowledge and their striving hard to improve their L2, which is English, for which they seek help from L1 more than required with over used code switching and code mixing in class rooms. In this regard, they need considerable greater amount of time to adapt to communicate and comprehend the content area. Further, the majority of the bilingual education teachers were identified as having a lack of L2 command, which again challenges the bilingual education pedagogy. Since they do not have adequate opportunities in their domestic and social environment to utilize English, plus their disappointment over this and lack of confidence in their endeavor to continue pursuing their future studies in the same BEL context, the researcher found the following. Firstly, there is a need to recommend more coordination between the English language teachers and bilingual education teachers teaching the relevant subject content. The need for more capacity building programs conducted for these teachers and teacher trainers should be carried out by the Ministry of Education and the National Institute of Education. These programs should cover knowledge, skills, and attitudes and soft skills development along with the English language improvement for these stakeholders. The required physical and physiological resources, such as books, IT equipment and trained teachers should be provided to urban and rural areas to help and promote more avenues in bilingual education across the country. While acknowledging the usage of the L1 as a feasible tool for BEL s, to make them more competent CLIL s, the need of the day is to eliminate the misconceptions and unnecessary fear and obstacles for bilingual education. In this context, where the BEL and the education system demand both the subject knowledge and L2, it is also necessary to ensure there is adequate L2 teaching support.

Key words: Bilingual Education (BE), L1, L2, Bilingual Education Learners (BEL), Bilingual Education Teachers (BET), Content and Language Integrated Learners (CLIL), Code Switching, Code Mixing