

Learning English as a second language in school: Practices, issues, and challenges in Nuwara-Eliya Education Zone

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The emergence of English as a global language has brought many changes to the ways in which this language is perceived and used. With a rapidly evolving globalised landscape, proficiency in English is essential for professionals across diverse industries. This study embarks on how schoolteachers utilise educational tools, pedagogical methods, and content knowledge to optimise English learning skill acquisition, and focuses on challenges faced by learners in learning English as a second language. This study aims to provide insights into the adaptation of pedagogical practices to meet the evolving needs of learners. Adopting a mixed-methods research approach, the study draws on both quantitative and qualitative data collected from a purposive sample of 50 participants, including 30 teachers and 20 students. Data collection involved the administration of pre-tests and post-tests for teachers, questionnaires, and semi-structured interviews. A series of structured skill share sessions was conducted with teachers over ten days to promote the implementation of learner-centred educational practices and to enhance pedagogical effectiveness. Quantitative data were analysed using IBM SPSS software, while qualitative data were examined through thematic analysis. The findings highlight several critical insights. Although the use of innovative pedagogical methods and digital tools contribute positively to English language learning, substantial challenges persist. These include insufficient physical resources, limited access to English learning opportunities, and a lack of comprehensive teacher training in adaptive and socio-economic barriers. Additionally, many classrooms continue to operate under traditional teacher-centred models, limiting student engagement and language use. The study concludes emphasising the need for increased investment in teacher professional development, the provision of adequate instructional resources, and the adoption of learner-centred pedagogical frameworks. Addressing these areas is essential for improving English language learning outcomes and aligning instructional practices with the demands of the current situation.

Keywords: *Content knowledge, Education practices, English communication skills, Learning challenges, Pedagogical knowledge*