

CHALLENGES OF LEARNING ENGLISH AS A MAIN SUBJECT FOR ADVANCED LEVEL ARTS STREAM: A STUDY BASED ON BADULLA DISTRICT, SRI LANKA

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English is a main subject that is offered for Advanced Level students in Sri Lanka under the Arts stream. This subject consists of both English Language and English Literature components which enhance students' language proficiency while broadening their awareness of multiple cultures and social practices. Many studies are done related to the challenges of learning the English language in the Sri Lankan ESL classroom. However, few studies have been conducted to investigate the challenges particular to learning English as a main subject for the Advanced Level examination. To fill this literature gap, this study revealed the challenges of learning English as a main subject of the Advanced Level Arts stream. Utilizing the convenient sampling method, 39 students who have chosen English as one of the subjects for the G.C.E. Advanced Level examination were selected as the sample from a private educational institute in Badulla, Sri Lanka. Data was gathered using a questionnaire that consists of close-ended and open-ended questions and gathered data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and content analysis. This study found numerous challenges as insufficient time to cover the prescribed content, comprehending text with numerous new vocabulary and unfamiliar language use, lack of practice in answering examination questions by following the requirements of the exam paper, and the inability to manage time given to answer the question paper in the examination. However, the majority holds a positive attitude towards the advantages of doing English as a subject. Thus, these findings highlight the necessity of syllabus reformations to reduce the syllabus content appropriately. Also, experimenting with new teaching approaches and methods to increase students' understanding of the texts and encouraging students to practice writing answers can be emphasized.

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