

FROM BELIEFS TO IDEOLOGIES: ANALYSIS OF TEACHER PERSPECTIVES ON BILINGUAL EDUCATION PROGRAMME

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The Bilingual Education (BE) teacher has to play a vital role in facilitating meaningful learning in the classroom. Here, meaningful learning means knowledge building and application through concept actualisation. Thus, what the beliefs among the BE teachers are and how they connect to language ideologies was the research problem of this study. The study sought to address two research questions: what are the beliefs of the BE teachers about the BEP and the potentials of BE students and how those beliefs can connect to language ideologies like monoglossic and heteroglossic. The objectives were to analyse the teacher perceptions in order to identify the main beliefs and foregrounding the connection between these beliefs and the above-mentioned ideologies. A qualitative study was done with a purposely selected sample of 32 BE teachers representing the Science, Mathematics, English, Social Sciences, Health and Physical Education streams. All of them were eligible to follow a Postgraduate Diploma course at a higher education institute. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews before commencing the programme. The narrations were audio recorded, transcribed and analysed using the thematic analysis technique. It was found that the beliefs of the teachers align with monoglossic language ideologies, which means that the student's first language and the target language should strictly be separated. Six main beliefs were identified in this study. Some teachers in the sample refer to BE as 'English medium,' while other teachers also believe that it is a kind of English education though they refer to it as 'BE'. The other beliefs include that BE students should be competent in the target language and the teachers should teach only in the target language. This monolingualism perspective of the teachers acts as an invisible wall between the teacher and the students, which prevents the teacher from identifying the subject potential of the students and also prevents the teacher from selecting suitable methods for teaching. Instead of understanding the root cause of the problem, the teachers believe that if they equip themselves with strong methodologies and methods they could enable the students to overcome the 'language barrier'. Such practices encourage the artificial combination of two languages instead of natural integration of language and the content. Hence, this paper argues that the beliefs of BE teachers in this sample align with 'double monolingualism' of monoglossic ideologies rather than heteroglossic ideologies, which could be used to promote multiple variations of languages, ideas and perspectives within these languages. Even with the limitation of the sample size, it could be said that there is a need for well-planned continuous training for BE teachers in the country.

Keywords: Monoglossic, Heteroglossic, Beliefs