

ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE CURRICULUM (ESL) IN STRENGTHENING BILINGUAL EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

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It is ten years since Bilingual Education, a process where formal curriculum in education is disseminated to the recipients in two languages, native and an additional language, has been introduced to the Sri Lankan national curriculum. The teaching-learning process capable of realizing aims of Bilingual Education is Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The main objective of this initiative, according to the National Education Commission (2003), is to enable all students to acquire proficiency in second language facilitating them to pursue higher education and then to achieve career advancements. Even after ten years the percentage of Bilingual schools in the island is 9.3

A mixed mode qualitative dominant research was conducted to investigate into the reasons for the slow development and to analyze the role of ESL curriculum in facilitating the learning teaching process (CLIL) in Bilingual Education. The instruments used in this study were a questionnaire, a classroom observation schedule and a checklist. The sample was a stratified sample of 21 schools where bilingual education is in practice.

It was evident that there had not been a partnership between the ESL teacher and the Bilingual teacher in determining content standards and process standards in the teaching learning process. Hence the potentiality of ESL curriculum in supporting the Bilingual curriculum is not utilized to the optimum. One of the prime objectives of bilingual education, improving the second language competency of the learners, has not been adequately emphasized in the system. The curriculum design and implementation should be done collaboratively by the ESL experts and the experts in Bilingual Education. This partnership is indispensable in realizing the aims of bilingual education stated in the national education commission. One of the strategies in doing so is to revise and modify the ESL curriculum in line with the objectives of Bilingual Education. Keywords: Basic interpersonal communication skills, cognitive academic language proficiency skills, English as a second language.