



AN ATTEMPT TO DEVELOP BILINGUALISM IN SRI LANKA THROUGH CONTENT AND LANGUAGE INTEGRATED LEARNING (CLIL)

Marie Perera and S.A. Kularatne

University of Colombo, Sri Lanka

In pre independent Sri Lanka only a minority had access to English education. A dual system of education existed with fee levying English medium schools established by the British and free education in vernacular schools without access to English. After gaining independence, and in early 1950 English was made a second language to be taught in all schools. The intension was to reduce inequality of opportunities as English was essential for social mobility. However this objective had not been achieved due to several reasons. Over the years several measures have been implemented to alleviate some of these problems. One of the more recent measures is the introduction of bilingual education.

In most countries where bilingual education is implemented Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) helps the bilingual learners. However, in Sri Lanka such a model is not available. The present study is part of an ongoing study to develop a CLIL model for Sri Lanka. This paper examines how the existing English as a Second language (ESL) textbooks can contribute to such a model. In this predominantly qualitative study data was gathered through content analysis of ESL textbooks, questionnaires administered to teachers, interviews with teachers and students and classroom interaction analysis.

The initial findings of the documentary analysis reveal that although bilingual education was introduced in 2003, it has spread only to 9% of the entire country Present textbooks do not cater to the language needs of the bilingual learners. English language teachers and subject teachers do not work together to help the bilingual learners. Therefore, if bilingualism is to be developed a CLIL model needs to be developed.

Keywords: Bilingualism, Content and Language Integrated Learning, English as a Second Language, Sri Lankan Education system.

1. Introduction

With the influence of various socio economic and socio political changes occurred in Sri Lanka during the recent and remote past, English education has undergone numerous changes since its inception. For instance the expectation in 1950s in Sri Lanka was that English education which was the language of a minority would be available to all. With the implementation of Kannagara education reforms in 1943 which made English the compulsory second language, the English medium education in Sri Lanka began to decline and the first languages, Sinhalese and Tamil became the medium of instruction in education.

Sinhala only act enacted in 1956 too made an impact on the standard of English education in Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya, 1969)

New economic policies introduced to the country in 1970s also created new avenues for English when agriculture oriented mixed economy was transformed into a market oriented free economy where skilled labor force was a strong necessity. Concurrently, rising private enterprises which commenced operation in the country demanded a workforce skilled in many ways. English language proficiency too became essential in order for people to cope with the needs and challenges of the changing world. Responding to this timely need, the Ministry of Education issued a circular (No 5/2001) instructing able schools to teach science in English Medium at General Certificate of Education (Advanced Level) while the rest of the subjects in the curriculum was taught in the first language.

The need for English as a link language was felt when ethnic conflict emerged in Sri Lanka in 1950s grew up to a civil war in 1980s threatening the peaceful existence among people and this, consequently gave rise to a thought that a link language can be used as a catalyst to reestablish endangered peace and harmony in the country.

These factors compelled the government to re think about the language policy in education in Sri Lanka. A possibility of making use of a link language to bring about racial integration was sought. This resulted in the National Amity Project being introduced to the system in 2002. (Circular No 12/2002) recommending English Medium Education for grade 6 onwards to expose the pupil population in Sri Lanka to English by way of teaching a few selected subjects in English medium. The recommended subjects were Mathematics, Environmental studies, Health & Physical Education initially in grade 6. Science was added to the curriculum in the subsequent year widening the scope of subjects. One of the objectives of this introduction was to overcome a major obstacle to the skill development in English; lack of exposure.

2. Objectives of the Paper

This paper is based on an ongoing research on Bilingual Education in Sri Lanka. This research explores one of the vital aspects of Bilingual Education; the impact of English as a Second Language (ESL) curriculum on Bilingual Education at junior secondary Level. One of the expected outcomes of this ongoing research is to suggest a Bilingual model that caters for the Sri Lankan context. Utilizing some of the findings of the ongoing research this paper examines the current status of bi lingual education at secondary level classrooms in Sri Lanka.

3. Theoretical Frame Work of the Paper

Teaching learning process in any Bilingual model of teaching involves two languages, first language and the second language. A preliminary survey reveals that ESL curriculum and Bilingual curriculum at junior secondary level, in Sri Lanka function as two discrete entities. Literature reveals that in other countries ESL curriculum is designed planned and implemented to facilitate Bilingual Education. This partnership is essential in Sri Lanka also in order to realize the objectives of Bilingual education as stated by the National Education Commission report (2003).

“...introduced in junior secondary classes to provide an enabling environment to ensure that **all students**, irrespective of socio-economic and/ or regional disparities have the opportunity to acquire a level of English proficiency adequate for higher education and career advancement” (NEC, 2003, p, 178)

The commission also recommends that Bilingual education should be introduced to all secondary and senior secondary schools by 2008 by equipping the schools with the teachers necessary to teach the selected subjects in English medium. However, in a documentary survey, it was found that the number of Bilingual schools in Sri Lanka is 17.5 percent of the total number of Junior secondary schools in the

Island. The reason as to why Bilingual education has not spread to the other 82.5 schools in the island is a question worth discussing. Reasons for this slow progress in Bilingual Education are many according to the preliminary findings. One of the foremost reasons for this is the absence of a clearly defined bilingual framework in Sri Lanka catering for the Sri Lankan context. Due to this very reason, contents standards, process standards, and the role of stake holders in Bilingual education cannot clearly be defined. Bilingual education being a new initiative, very few research has been done in this field. Among them no research is done in Sri Lanka on the impact of second language on Bilingual Education. The lack of basic proficiency in English too is a reason for the slow development. In a preliminary study it was found that the dropout rate in bilingual classes is also considerably high. Poor proficiency of English has been one of the foremost reasons for many pupils to drop the class as observed.

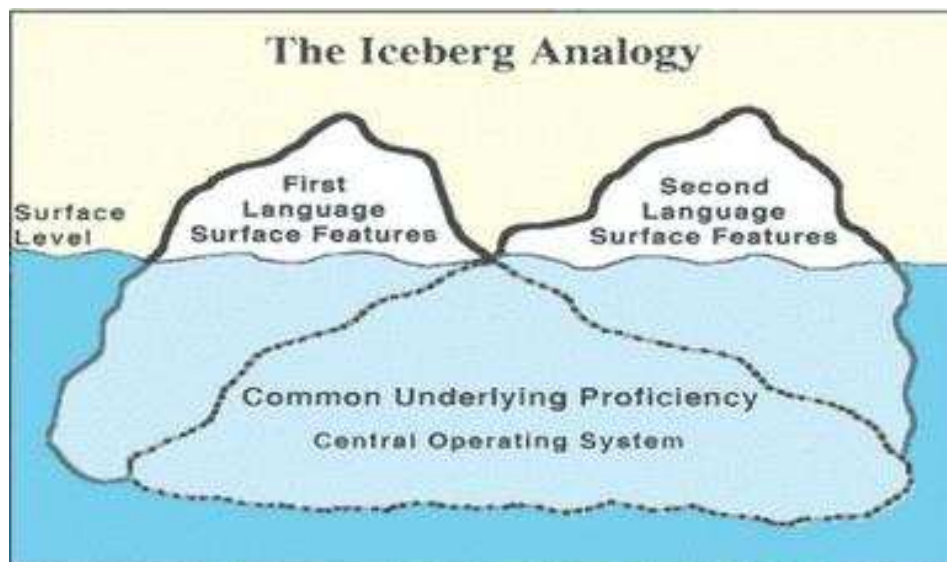
As it is explained in the National Education Reforms (2003) improving the learner's second language competency and performance has been one of the aims of introducing Bilingual Education. In other countries where successful bilingual programmes are conducted a Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach is being used.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual-focused educational approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language. (Coyle, Hood and Marsh 2010,p.1)

The additional language in Sri Lankan context is English. This definition explains that the learners English Language competency is a prerequisite in Bilingual Education. ESL curriculum in education is the path that equips the learner with the necessary second language proficiency enabling the learner to study the subjects specified in Bilingual Education. English language curriculum therefore, has a role in scaffolding the learners Basic Inter Personal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS). According to Cummins (1984) BICS and CALPS are instrumental in pursuing highly cognitive content in Bilingual Education.

3.1 The Iceberg Model of Cummins (1981a)

Cummins' iceberg hypothesis or interdependence hypothesis explains the relationship of the first language to the learning of another language .Learning two language when observed superficially appears as two discreet phenomena .However there is interdependence between the two. In other words language learning skills that the learner gains by learning the first language can be transferred to when learning a second language. Cummins (1981a) also states that this happens vice versa.



In describing Common Underlying Proficiency (CUP) Cummins (1984) Cummins (1999) Garcia (1999) claim that cognitively demanding tasks which involve higher order language skills like problem solving, abstract thinking and literacy development activities are common across languages. This proficiency which enables the learner in successfully dealing with cognitively demanding activities, according to Cummins, is Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills or CALPS.

3.2 Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS)

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills are language proficiency associated with schooling and the abstract language abilities required for academic work. A more complex, conceptual, linguistic ability that includes analysis, synthesis and evaluation. (Echevarria, Voght, Short 2004,)

CALPS as it is evident in literature is the context-reduced language for academic learning. It takes five to seven years for English language learners to become proficient in the language of the classroom because:

- non-verbal clues are absent;
- there is less face-to-face interaction;
- academic language is often abstract;
- Literacy demands are high (narrative and expository text and textbooks are written beyond the language proficiency of the students); and cultural/linguistic knowledge is often needed to comprehend the texts fully.

Thus Bilingual Education demands CALPS in order for it to be a successful teaching learning process. Texts prescribed for Bilingual Education are subject oriented with full of registers and jargons and therefore are academic in mode. Academic language is context reduced.

3.3 Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills

Another language skill that lays the foundation for CALPS is Basic Inter personal Communication Skills (BICS) BICS according to Cummins (1984) is context embedded language that the pupils acquire from their immediate and familiar environment.

The bilingual teacher's task as a facilitator is to design learning events or to exploit the given learning events so as to develop Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills in the learner. In order to do this effectively, the bilingual teacher should be professionally competent in Teaching English as Second Language skills.

4. Empirical Evidence

There is considerable empirical research evidence to explain the influence of second or additional language on the learner performance in Bilingual Education. Citing research evidence in CLIL based research conducted in Germany with a sample of age group 6-9, Bonnet (2012) claims that learners found it difficult to verbalize their subject related concepts in the additional language. In the same study it was found that the learners need 3 competences to be successful CLIL learners; foreign language competence, subject matter competence and interactive competence.

In another correlative study carried out by Lasagabaster, (2011) the researcher concludes that "Students only reach this level of competence if appropriate teaching methods are used and learning environments are created that provide linguistic and interactional competence"(p.76)

Goredema, (2012) quoting research evidence claims that it is the language element in CLIL that motivates the learners to follow CLIL in the Berlin secondary school in which this study is set, thirty two Year 9 pupils who are studying Biology, Geography and History through the medium of English. In Germany, a strategic drive to improve student competence in languages accelerated the spread of

bilingual teaching programmes that had been cautiously introduced under different socio-political conditions in the late 1960s (Zydatið, 2012)

Bokes,(2012) based on his findings of a longitudinal study carried out in a CLIL classroom points out that traditional second language teaching should take a new phase to support CLIL in Bilingual education. According to him simply using the communicative approach to develop the oral skills of the learners is not sufficient in a CLIL classroom. A “Culture of collaborative learning” should be developed. He claims that, in addition to the formal curriculum being “the hook on which to hang language development” (Clegg, 1996:15 cited in Gibbons, 2002:120) the enacted curriculum in the classroom is where the fundamental negotiation between content and language goals are realized. The talk of the classroom is the location in space and time where learning is happening.(P.43)

The above discussion indicates that research literature supports an “integrative approach” to second language development, with classroom applications focusing on strategies that allow children to receive appropriate input in the second language that supports content learning.. Implications for bilingual teacher preparation, indicates that ESL and content-area instruction cannot be dealt with separately.

5. Objectives of the Paper

- To trace the historical development of Bi lingual education in Sri Lanka
- To identify rationale for introducing bilingual education.
- To analyze the current status of bilingual education in relation to the rationale for introducing it
- To examine how bi lingual education could be improved in relation to Content and Language Integrated Learning.

6. The Sample

One of the provinces out of nine provinces in Sri Lanka was selected to be the source to collect data for the study. The province selected consists of two districts. The population of bilingual teachers in the province was the purposive sample for the study in the first phase of the study. A questionnaire was administered to the population to collect data to measure the Bilingual teachers’ second language competency and the Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL) competency. This is an essential requirement in realizing language objectives Bilingual Education in teaching content subjects in English.

During the second phase of the study a stratified random sample of 32 schools were selected for an in-depth study into the content standard and the process standards of the ESL curriculum for junior secondary level. This selection was determined by two parameters; type and location of schools.

7. Methodology

The research design was a qualitative dominant mixed mode research including both qualitative and quantitative research instruments. For the purpose of this paper a documentary analysis was done to study into the potential of Content standards of English Language Teaching texts books for grades 6-11 in facilitating CLIL. The tool (a checklist) was developed incorporating the BICS & CALPS theory (Cummins 1981a) .Questionnaires were administered to 200 bilingual teachers and 100 English language teachers to find out the partnership between ESL teachers and content teachers.

8. Data Analysis

8.1 Analysis of Content Standards

Sri Lankan English language curriculum follows a competency based thematic approach. In the secondary grades from grades 6 -11 eight competencies have been identified in relation to listening, speaking,

reading, writing, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. These competencies are divided into competency levels and these are assigned to be achieved from grade 6 -11 in a hierarchical order. Using a check list the competency levels pertaining to each grade were analyzed to find out how far they cater to BICS and CALPS. The analysis is given in Table 1

Table 1. Analysis of content standards of ESL texts in relation to BICS & CALPS.

Grades	Competency Levels	BICS	CALPS
6	21	19	02
7	27	25	02
8	17	12	05
9	19	15	04
10	19	11	08
11	18	13	05

According to Table 1, there is an imbalance of provision for the development of BICS and CALPS. There is a heavy emphasis on BICS and less emphasis on CAPLS. Focusing more on developing BICS at the initial stage of junior secondary level is justifiable as BICS is necessary to develop CALPS. However it can be seen that even in the higher grades the provision for the development of CALPS is minimal. Inadequate focus on CALPS may retard the development of higher order language skills that are essential for the learner to study content specific subjects in Bilingual Education.

However, a further content analysis revealed that there is opportunity to develop the CALPS of the students by exploiting the given texts.

At present the subjects taught through the second language medium at the secondary level are Science, Mathematics, Geography and Citizenship Education. As already stated the English language curriculum is theme based. Therefore, Table 2, illustrates the analysis of the English language curriculum in relation to the four subjects.

Table 2. Subject wise analysis of themes in the English Language.

Grades	No of lessons	Science	%	Mathematics	%	Geography	%	Citizenship Education	%
6	25	2	8	0	0	3	12	0	0
7	24	7	29.1	0	0	4	16.6	1	4.1
8	30	4	13.3	2	6.6	3	10	3	10
9	32	0	0	0	0	5	15.6	5	15.6
10	31	6	19.35	0	0	2	6.4	4	12.9
11	48	14	29.1	0	0	0	0	0	0

The themes in language teaching texts in relation to the themes of subjects; Science, Mathematics, Geography and Citizenship Education in Bilingual texts were analyzed. As can be seen there is once again an imbalance in the subject wise spread of themes.

Therefore, it could be concluded that at present the content standards of the ESL curriculum does not facilitating Content & Language Integrated Learning.

Further analysis of the activities provided indicate that most of the activities facilitate language development and rarely content knowledge. However, there is opportunity to exploit the text to facilitate content knowledge.

8.2 Collaboration between ESL Teachers and Bilingual Teachers

Analysis of some of the questionnaire data also confirms that there is no collaboration between content teachers and subject teachers.

Figure 1 gives percentage of responses received from the bilingual teachers when they were asked if they had any collaboration with the ESL teachers in teaching bilingual students..

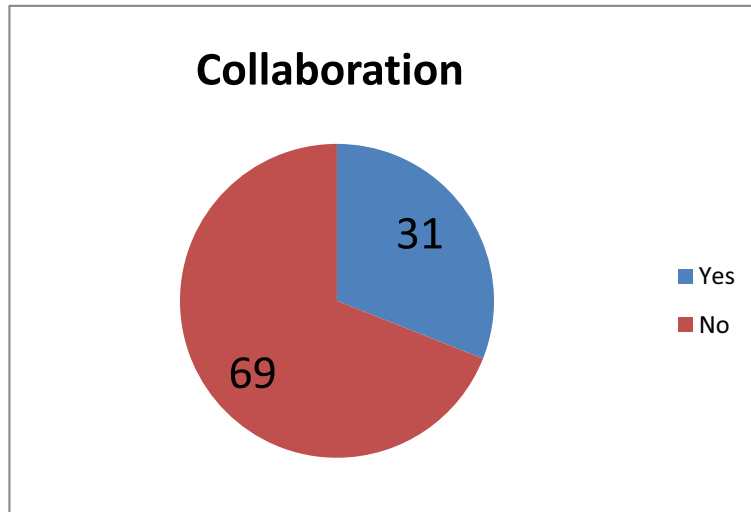


Figure 1. Collaboration between ESL and BE teachers

However, when the teachers were asked for the activities they collaborate with the ESL teachers their responses were “ for extracurricular activities” Similarly when the ESL teachers were asked whether they help the bilingual teachers in preparing lessons the percentage of responses was as follows.

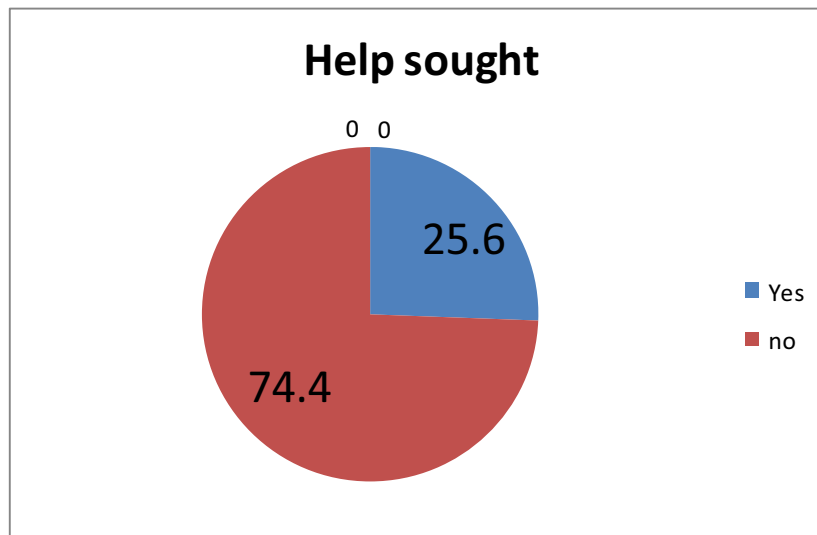


Figure 1 Help Sought

Figure 2. ESL teachers’ response regarding collaboration in lesson planning.

Based on the above data it could be concluded that there is very little collaboration between the ESL teachers and Bilingual teachers.

8.3 Language Competency of the Bilingual Learners

Another aspect on which data was gathered through the questionnaire was the learners' second language competency. The teachers were asked to rate their understanding of the students' second language competency on a rating scale. The analysis of some of the relevant data is given in Table 3.

Table 3. Students' second language proficiency.

Theme	Excellent	Very good	Good	Fair	Weak
Use of second language by the learners.	8	5	42	39	11

The above analysis seems to indicate that students' knowledge of BICS and CALPS is low and that it is hindering their learning of the content.

8.4 Bilingual Teachers' Language Competency

On the other hand, the bilingual teachers' knowledge of the language also appears to be low, Hence they are unable to help the learners to develop the learners language competency. According to CLIL methodology Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka is adopting the bilingual teachers are asked to write lesson plans identifying both language outcomes as well as content outcomes.

However, according to the questionnaire data given in Table 4 they are unable to do so due to their inadequate competency in the language.

Table 4. Language Competency of the Bilingual teachers.

Statement	%
Write language related learning outcomes	4
Have attended language improvement in service workshops	22
Have followed the first degree course in the English medium	18

There for it could be concluded that at present majority of the bilingual teachers find it difficult to implement the CLIL methodology.

9. The Way Forward

This inability as the Table 4 indicates is due to inadequate professional development as well as low proficiency in the language. Proficiency in Teaching English as a Second Language is something that cannot be expected from the Bilingual teacher. The reasons for this are many. In Sri Lanka, Bilingual teachers are trained to teach the subjects prescribed and they gain expertise in subject teaching approaches and methodologies. English language has been a minor component in their curriculum. Even the teachers who gain subject teaching competency in English medium in Colleges of Education or Universities are

not exposed to second or foreign language teaching. This explains that ELT experts has a major role in facilitating CLIL in Bilingual Education at all levels; in making policy decisions ,in designing ESL curriculum, in teaching English as Second language and in teacher education . Therefore, there is a need for the Bilingual teachers to work closely with the ESL teacher in planning lessons and helping the learners to develop both BICS and CALPS. Further, the ESL teacher needs to provide the necessary scaffold for the Bilingual learner.

Some of the suggestions in this regard are as follows:

- ESL teachers and Bilingual teachers need to work in collaboration
- ESL teachers need to be trained in exploiting the text book to help the bilingual learners and teachers.
- Use material from the subject text as supplementary material in the ESL class
- Revise textbooks in line with the content

10 Conclusion

The main focus of this paper was to examine the rationale for introducing bilingual education in Sri Lanka, its current status and how it could be improved in order to achieve its objectives.

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