STUDY ON MEDIUM OF INSTRUCTION, NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL LANGUAGES IN GENERAL EDUCATION IN SRI LANKA

Study on Medium of Instruction, National and International Languages in General Education in Sri Lanka

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Preface

The National Education Commission (NEC) commenced formulating National Education Policy for its third ten year policy reviewing cycle. As a part of the above policy formulating process NEC has commissioned ten research studies in order to identify the important policy issues in General Education System in Sri Lanka. The research teams were asked to recommend changes to the present policies where necessary and suggest new policies to the National Education Commission based on their findings.

The Standing Committee on General Education (SCGE) of NEC has identified ten different study areas in the General Education System and prepared relevant Terms of Reference (TORs) for these studies after several discussions at SCGE meetings. The research reports published in this study series were prepared over a period of around nine months by ten research teams selected for their expertise in the different aspects of General Education. The draft reports of research studies were reviewed by a panel of reviewers before finalizing the research reports.

The National Education Commission appreciates the support given by the World Bank in allocating funds from the Transforming School Education System as the foundation of a knowledge hub Project (TSEP) at Ministry of Local Government and Provincial Councils. The Commission also thanks Sri Lanka Institute of Development Administration (SLIDA) for their services provided in financial administration of the research studies.

It is hoped that the publication of these studies will contribute to the extension of the knowledge base necessary for educational change and will stimulate interest and participation in improving the quality of education in Sri Lanka. These studies can also provide points of departure for future researches.

Prof Lakshman Jayatilleke
Chairman
National Education Commission

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1. Introduction

As a multilingual society, Sri Lanka is undergoing transformation. In this light, it is imperative that our education policy incorporates and envisages sustainable long term goals and objectives. It is also imperative if not essential that continuous studies on language policy and planning are conducted to make effective changes.

The National Education Commission (NEC) initiated a process of formulation of a set of policies on General Education. The Medium of Instruction, National and International languages was one of the research areas identified for study

1.1 Objectives of the Study

The focus of this study is mainly on the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Sri Lanka in relation to actual language use in the classroom, language choice and preference by both teachers and learners. The study will

a. Consider the purposes for which bilingual education has been adopted in different contexts across the world

b. Review the media of instruction adopted in Sri Lanka since colonization by the British and

c. Study the bilingual education that is currently taking place in Sri Lankan schools, assess its strengths and weaknesses and make recommendations for the MOI policy and for teaching the International language as well as the national languages in Sri Lankan schools.

1.2 Overview of Report

The report will begin by considering bilingual education, and particularly the use of the CLIL methodology (content language integrated learning) in different countries, their goals and objectives followed by bilingual education as the medium of instruction in postcolonial countries. It will next present a historical overview of language in education in Sri Lanka since British colonization and go on to examine the reasons that lead to the adoption of a bilingual education policy in Sri Lanka in 2001. In the next section the report will provide a brief summary of some research studies carried out on Bilingual Education in Sri Lanka followed by the study that was undertaken for this report.

Information was obtained for the present study from documents, through Focus Group Discussions and interviews with key stakeholders and through questionnaires. Data was gathered from the Western, Uva, Southern, North Western, Eastern and Northern provinces as well as from Anuradhapura, Kandy, Jaffna, Mullativu and Batticaloa districts.

2. Brief background to bilingual education in the world

The roots of the concept of learning subject matter in a language that is not one's own in order to learn both the subject and another language can be traced back many centuries (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 2003). As far back as 389 A.D., St. Augustine claimed that "once things are known knowledge of words follows… we cannot hope to learn words we do not know unless we have grasped their meaning. This is not achieved by listening to the words, but by getting to know the things signified" (cited by Kelly, 1969:36).

Among the many examples of BE is the fact that for centuries, upper class European families had recognized the utility of direct contact and communication needs in effective language learning by sending their children to live and study in regions where the language of interest is spoken or importing governesses and tutors who would use the language with the children (Brinton *et. al*, 2006).

However, the contemporary notion of BE is often viewed as being quite controversial (Hunt, 2009:291). This is because of the political implications of which language is chosen as the medium of instruction (MOI). Rubin (1983) defines the decision as to what language to use as a medium of instruction as a "language problem" which "organisations …given a mandate to fulfil" purposes of language planning, need to solve by deciding "which variety/language will be used by certain sectors of the polity" (p.4). Sibayan (1983) points out quite pertinently the importance that the language of the school begins to assume, and notes that such an important status is one not usually accorded to other contexts for language use.

Of the many forms of bilingual education, Immersion is perhaps the most well known. Immersion Education is a Second Language Acquisition (SLA) approach whereby the second language is used as the language of instruction at school, and according to Krashen (1985:57) "the most successful language teaching programme ever recorded in the professional language teaching literature". Although Krashen's acceptance of its success was proclaimed 25 years ago, the concept of immersion education is still as popular as it was, if not more popular. Immersion began in 1965 as an experiment influenced by the theories of language acquisition of the day with a classroom full of kindergarteners (Brinton *et al..*, 2006, Baker, 1996) and has now become a mass educational movement in Canada as well as in many other countries. It was designed in accordance with the theories and assumptions related to learner-age (i.e.Lenneberg, 1964), the quality and quantity of input and language acquisition theories based on Krashen's (1982) distinction between learning and acquisition, which influenced the 'natural approach'.

Johnson and Swain (1997) ascertain that there are eight main features of a typical immersion programme:

The L2 is the medium of instruction

The immersion curriculum parallels the local L1 curriculum

Overt support exists for the L1

The programme aims for additive bilingualism

Exposure to L2 is largely confined to the classroom

Students enter with similar (and limited) levels of L2 proficiency

Teachers are bilingual in students' L1 and L2

The classroom culture is that of the local L1 community (p.6).

All eight are valid for the bilingual programme in Sri Lanka (Medawattegedera, 2011), although the seventh point is open to debate if teacher fluency/proficiency in English is taken into account, and the last point is valid only if one assumes a definition of culture which is fluid, dynamic and in transition, being open as it is to the forces of globalization.

Findings from research into BE show quite unambiguously that it has positive effects on students' language and cognitive competence. For example, in a recent study, Lo and Murphy (2010) point out that it is "quite clear … that [Immersion programmes] provide a more favourable context for L2 vocabulary learning" (p. 234). Learning subject matter rather than the target language directly has been found to be more effective in second language acquisition, the reason being that since "school subjects are what children need to talk about in school" learning content in the target language medium "provides the motivation and opportunity for meaningful communication" unlike conventional L2 instruction (Garcia, 2009: 313).

When students need to improve their second language skills for purposes of study, the situation brings together language instruction and real, functional needs. This is a point where communicative language teaching (CLT; see below for further discussion) and "needs-related, content-based instruction merge in their respective objectives" (Brinton *et. al.*, 2006: 5). Three examples of how content-based language instruction is currently being implemented in programmes around the world, especially in Europe, the USA and the UK are

a) CLIL

b) Language for Specific Purposes

c) Immersion Education

In many countries in Europe, BE takes the form of content and language integrated learning (CLIL) which Gajo (2007: 563) refers to as "experiments in bilingual education". CLIL "encompasses any activity in which a foreign language is used as a tool in the learning of a non-language subject in which both language and subject have a joint role" (Marsh, 2002:58). CLIL has been promoted by the European Union in order to achieve multilingualism. While in some countries it aims to promote learning a vital and dominant second language for socio-economic advancement (e.g. Hong Kong, Malaysia, Sri Lanka) or to promote bilingualism (e.g. Canada), in countries like Germany it is seen as useful to know additional languages. As Wannagat (2007) points out, the educational concepts of CLIL and learning through English as a Medium of Instruction (EMI) both share the same pedagogical objective: they aim to improve students' L2 proficiency by teaching subject matter

through L2 (p. 663). However, there are differences between CLIL and EMI regarding conceptualization as well as actual realization (Wannagat, 2007). Further, the concept of CLIL in Europe and EMI in countries like Sri Lanka are different in terms of wider society. As Evnitskayaa and Morton (2011) point out, although CLIL, as a form of BE does have similar theoretical perspectives as Canadian-style immersion education, "it has its own specific characteristics. For example, in many European countries, the language of instruction in CLIL is English, which has no official role in these societies, and which students may rarely come into contact with outside the classroom" (p. 109). In the Sri Lankan situation, however, the language of instruction, English has no official role enshrined in the constitution, neither is it the lingua franca except among the minority of upper and upper-middle class bilinguals, but is the *de facto* language of business, commerce and social empowerment.

Thus, BE takes many varied forms; Gajo (2007) for example, defines bilingual education as consisting of: "teaching one or several non-linguistic subjects (NLS) *partly or completely* in and L2" (p.564, emphasis added).

The concepts of CLIL and content-based instruction (CBI) both provide definitions for BE rooted in the idea of increased language proficiency. For example, Rodgers (2006) points out that CBI,

> generally refers to the learning of language through the study of a content area, for example, history, geography, or science. In other words, the subject matter is the focus of classroom instruction; the acquisition of language is seen as a natural consequence or by-product of subject matter learning (p. 373).

CBI places the focus on content learning thereby providing a purposeful and meaningful context which is favourable for both content and language learning because of the depth of processing required (Kong, 2009; Grabe & Stoller, 1997; Lyster, 2007; Wolff, 2002). In the United States, bilingual education was originally based on the related premises that English language learners (ELLs) – i.e. children of immigrants with a Spanish background learn best when their home language is the primary medium of instruction and that it is their *right* to do so (Ruiz, 1990, cited in Volk and Angelova, 2007): "The demand for such programmes first emerged from the Civil Rights struggles of the 1960s and reached a peak of popularity in the 1970s and 1980s" (ibid, p. 181).

Based on the assumption that language can be learnt efficiently when it is used to teach subject matter, the target language is viewed largely as the vehicle through which subject matter content is learnt – rather than the immediate object of study - by content-based language teaching approaches (Brinton et. al., 2006). These authors also point out that approaches to language teaching which stress the mastering of informational content as a vital part of second language instruction acknowledge that an increase in language proficiency occurs 'incidentally' because it is language that is used to express meaning and understand concepts. Brinton *et al* (2006) list 3 models of BE programmes that focus on content-based language

education which have been implemented in native, second and foreign language settings across the world: Language Across the curriculum which was a response by North America and Britain in the 1970s, Language for Specific Purposes developed notably in the UK for teaching at university level and in occupational settings, and Immersion education.

Forms of CBI have a wide range and a variety of approaches which Met (1998) describes as being on a continuum which has, at one point a content-driven approach (e.g., immersion programmes in Canada) and at the other end a language driven approach (e.g., theme-based language classes in some ESL contexts).

2.1 Bilingual education situation in other Post-colonial countries

Ha et al (2013) point out that in the past 10 years, Malaysia has introduced two major policies regarding the MOI. The first one involves the sudden change from Bahasa Malaysia to English for Mathematics and Science in 2003, which was reversed in 2012. This reversal has resulted in the introduction of a new language policy, that is, '*To Uphold Bahasa Malaysia & To Strengthen the English Language*' (MBMMBI).

In Hong Kong, a former colony of Britain until 1997 and now the Special Administrative Region of China, has four MOI policies to date, - the laissez-faire MOI policy prior to 1994, the streaming policy during 1994-1998, the compulsory Chinese medium-of-instruction policy during 1998-2010, and the fine-tuning medium-of instruction policy since September 2010. English enjoys a high status in Hong Kong, while Cantonese is the native language of most people in the community. For primary education, Chinese (oral Cantonese and written Chinese) is generally used as the MOI. For secondary education, some schools are English medium instruction (EMI) schools, where late full IM are practised; and others, known as Chinese medium instruction (CMI) schools include English only as a taught subject (Lo and Murphy, 2010).

Studies found that university students who had to study in the Chinese medium after independence in 1997 had lower English language proficiency than those who studied in the English medium So they changed their policy in September **2010** to "*Fine-tuning Medium of Instruction Policy*" permitting schools to have flexibility to offer English-medium classes, partial-English medium classes and/or Chinese-medium classes provided certain criteria are met

If we take a look closer home, at Pakistan, we can see that in 2009 the Government of Punjab (Pakistan's most populous province) introduced English as the medium of instruction in mathematics and science in all Punjab's public schools from Grades 1 to 12. Implementing a policy of English medium at a primary school level supports the education system as Higher Education and the majority of worldwide research and academic knowledge are in English. This policy change was supported by the Punjab's Schools Reform Roadmap, launched in April 2011, which triggered major improvements in both access to school and the quality of instruction. Over a million additional children have enrolled in the province's schools; facilities have improved; thousands of new teachers have been hired; new and improved teaching materials

have been provided and teacher attendance has climbed sharply. However a study undertaken by the British Council (2013) has found that

1. 62% of private school teachers and 56% of government school teachers lack even basic knowledge of English, including the ability to understand and use familiar everyday expressions and simple phrases.

2. Most of the remaining teachers received scores that placed them at beginners' level in English. Even in English medium schools, 44% of teachers scored in the bottom Aptis band. In all, 94% of teachers in English medium schools have only pre-intermediate level English or lower.

3. Younger teachers had a much higher level of English than their older colleagues. 24% of teachers aged 21- 35 scored in the pre-intermediate and intermediate categories, compared with just 7% of those aged 51 and over.

These findings are obviously most relevant to English instruction, and suggest that Punjab's teachers are ill-equipped to deliver the new English medium policy.

Singapore's language in education policy is that English, which is called L1, is the medium of instruction whereas the mother tongue is considered the L2 and is taught as either a first or second language depending on the ability grouping of the students. Many of the children in Singapore's schools, especially those from low income families, do not speak English as a dominant home language. However, English is very much part of the linguistic ecology as it is one of the four official languages along with Mandarin, Malay and Tamil and is spoken at varying levels of quantity and quality in nearly every Singaporean home.

> "Singapore's score in international tests remains stellar. It consistently does well in Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) which is conducted every 5 years by the International Evaluation Association. In the results of the 2001 PIRLS test Singapore ranked 15 out of 35 participating countries; with a score of 528 Singapore was above the international average of 500" (Vaish, 2008).

3. Sri Lanka: The Language of Education and the Bilingual Education Policy

Sri Lanka, has been a multilingual nation where different ethnicities and religions have cohabited for centuries. Hence, different traditions of education have also been in existence. Therefore, in order to set the study in context it is necessary to examine briefly the history language of education. This section will trace the different media of instruction which prevailed before colonization by the British, the British period and the changes to the medium of instruction which took place in the post-independence period. It will then examine the origins of the current policy on Bilingual Education followed by a summary of some studies carried out after implementation of the policy.

3.1 Sri Lanka: A Brief History of Language Education

At the outset it may be necessary to look at the language education in the country in retrospect. Before the government schools were established the education of the country was at the hands of religious institutions or of lay-men trained in such institutions. At that time in addition to the mother tongue, students were encouraged to learn classical languages such as Pali, Sanskrit and Arabic. Thus, Buddhist students learned Pali and Sanskrit, Hindu students Sanskrit and Muslim students Arabic. The aim of these studies was to acquire knowledge to understand the scriptures and some other texts related to secular subjects such as Ayurvedic medicine and astrology. Education however was limited to a few. The Pirivena education system was revitalised at the end of the 19th century and consequently, linguistic studies thrived. English also crept into the Pirivena curriculum, though it was not compulsory. In a modern sense, this state of affairs can be considered a multi-lingual education system in a limited sense.

The colonial government under British rule introduced a school system throughout the island. They replaced parish schools established under previous Portuguese and Dutch regimes in the Maritime Provinces. Missionary schools initiated by different sects of the Christian church gradually developed as secular centers of education.

The major aim of the government schools appears to produce an English speaking community so that non-executive jobs of the government sector could be filled. English medium schools served this purpose. But, at the same time the colonial government established Svabhaashaa schools. The medium of instruction of these schools was either Sinhala or Tamil. English was taught as a subject if resources were available.

By the time Sri Lanka became an independent nation the government school system had been developed throughout the country. Missionary schools prevailed and they provided a better education for those who could afford to enter them. The Medium of instruction of these missionary schools was English. Later, following their system,

Sinhala and Tamil high schools were founded to educate indigenous students in the English medium. Both, free government schools in Swabhaashaa medium and fee-levying schools in the English medium existed side by side by the time of independence.

Two historical events during the mid twentieth century affected the medium of instruction in schools. First, the Free Education Act in 1947. Second, the whole education system coming under government control in the 1960s. Concurrently, the demand to switch the medium of instruction into national languages, Sinhala and Tamil, increased. As a result Sinhala or Tamil became the medium of instruction in all government schools.

The Consensus of opinion in the 1950s was to promote the national languages. Primary and secondary education up to the University entrance level switched to the Swabhaashaa medium. Students as well as parents and teachers considered that educating in the Sinhala medium was a special privilege resulting from Independence. English was thought to be the language of colonial rulers and there was a tendency to neglect it. The result of this negligence was apparent after two decades: most of the scholars who filled the higher positions in the government sector did not possess a working knowledge of English.

This was seen as a setback for both individuals and the society at large. The government, educators, and the public felt the vacuum created by the negligence of English. Promotion of English in the recent past resulted from this change of attitude. Nowadays the education system promotes various programs to uplift the working knowledge of English among students. Bi-lingual education programs implemented recently in some government schools is a direct result of this process. Under this program some selected subjects are taught in English at the secondary level.

3.2. Sri Lanka: The Origins and Evolution of the Current Policy on Bilingual Education

"Policy may be defined as a course of action adopted by government "which is laid down in legislation, ordinances and regulations, and implemented through control measures such as financing and administration and inspection, with the general implication that such a course of action is advantageous or expedient for the state. Behind the adoption of a policy is the assumption of power and authority necessary to carry it out" (Hartshorne 1987:62).

The current Bilingual Education (BE) Policy has its official origins in a Ministry of Education (MoE) circular dated February 2001 which makes A/L science stream courses available to students in the English medium. The first reference to BE is in Circular 2001/05 titled *Teaching of A/L Science Subjects in the English Medium*. The Circular directs Principals to start teaching A/L Science Subjects in English for the following reasons:

i) The growing importance of English as the language of global communication in an increasingly more globalized world;

ii)   The need to facilitate the transfer of students to either the world of work or to higher education in the sciences.

The policy at junior secondary level was initiated as a follow up initiative to the one which permitted GCE (Advanced Level) Science stream students to study their subjects in the English medium, beginning in May, 2001. Interestingly, the only 'research' which justified this initiative was that 26% of all students in Type 1AB and Type 2 schools[1] who sat the GCE (Ordinary Level) exam in 2000, expressed their desire to study in the English medium and 50% of Science-graduate teachers in all Type 1AB schools expressed a desire to teach in the English medium[2]. Thus, there is no clear policy regarding bilingual education in the Sri Lankan school system at present, irrespective of the practices of bilingual education itself under the common term, 'English medium education'

The term "bilingual education" in place of "English medium" to characterize the new policy initiative was first used in the year 2003, in connection with a little known project introduced in 2002[3] . This project which was initially called the "national amity schools project" was introduced in 2002 and was later called the "Alternative Bilingual Schools Project" via a circular letter[4] issued in 2003. The purpose of the project is the fostering of national amity and integration through mutual understanding, which will be accomplished through bringing "students from all ethnic groups" together in the same classroom to learn a few subjects in English.

The National Education Commission (NEC), vested with the responsibility of formulating national policy on education reported:

> A Bilingual policy should be 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. The teaching of Science, Mathematics, IT, Health and Physical Education, Environmental studies and Social Studies has been introduced already in Grades 6 and 7 in schools...Some subjects should continue to be taught in Sinhala/Tamil (National Education Commission, 2003a: xviii)[5].

In a later report it states:

> Bilingualism should be promoted by using English as the medium of instruction in selected subjects such as Mathematics, Science, Technology including Computer literacy, Social Science in secondary grades, year by year

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[1] 1 AB - School having Advanced Level Science stream classes , 1 C - School having Advanced Level Arts and /or Commerce streams but no Science stream , Type 2 - Schools having classes only up to grade 11 , Type 3 - Schools having classes only up to grade 8. (http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Newsletters/Education%20Bulletin.pdf)

[2] Ministry of Education (MOE) Circular No: 2001/05 of 23.02.2001 to all zonal and provincial directors of education.
[3] Circular HRD/EQD/2002/12
[4] ED/01/12/01/01/13
[5] It is apparent that here, 'bilingual education' is intended to mean studying some subjects in English and a few others in the mother tongue.

from Grade 6, depending on the availability of teachers. It is expected that students will reach an acceptable level of proficiency in English at the end of junior secondary education without jettisoning Sinhala and Tamil which will continue to be the medium of instruction in selected subjects (National Education Commission, 2003b: 116-117).

This aim (gaining proficiency in English) is linked to the other aim (equity) frequently mentioned in the discourse of the medium of instruction (MOI) debate, in the sense that it was assumed that more children would now gain access to opportunities to learn in the English medium, more children improving their proficiency in English would mean that they would be competitive in the job market, which favours fluency in English (Medawattegedera, 2011). Ultimately, the outcome would be then, that equity is achieved, with more children from disadvantaged backgrounds gaining meaningful employment with higher incomes. Akin to the language education programmes in places like China and Malaysia (before 2012), the attempt is to use the approaches to, and methodologies of, bilingual education to elevate English to the status of a "strong" second language.

Before the recent re-introduction of EMI, education in the medium of English was confined to middle and upper middle class children who had access to English in their homes or at the many private and 'international schools' (IS) which teach in the English medium. These institutions function as private businesses and the oldest International School, set up in 1982, counts amongst its alumni, the children of two former Presidents of the country. The ISs cater to the richest in Sri Lankan society.

> International Schools are those in which children are educated in the English medium. The first of these was founded in 1982, when the drawing rooms of Colombo woke up to the fact that their children would otherwise suffer (Wijesinha (2003: 369),

The issue of urban elite schools and equality for all was raised by the then Secretary to the Ministry of Education (MoE):

> providing a sound education with quality is also about providing opportunity - not just for the children attending the urban and elite schools in the country, but also for those that trek miles to reach their schools in remote villages. And this demands constant change, as situations and possibilities change. (De Mel, 2002:18)

By introducing these initiatives in government schools it was assumed that all would have equal access to linguistic capital, thus improving equity. In a country where the richest 20 percent receives nearly 55 percent of the total income, while the poorest 20 percent receives only 5 percent (Department of Census and Statistics, 2007), issues of equity abound in educational debates and policy making. Thus, the policy aims are consistent with what Gibbons (2003: 247) points out: "for students who are learning ESL in an English-medium school, English is both a target and a medium of education: they are not only learning English as a subject but are learning through it as well. In these content-based classrooms, the construction of curriculum knowledge needs to progress hand-in-hand with the development of English". The

rationale behind the introduction of EMI was that the ELT project "had failed miserably in this country for more than forty years"[6]. The National Education Commission (2003a) justifies this claim thus:

> While English has been a compulsory second language in all schools from grade 3 since the 1940s, the teaching of English as a subject confined to one period a day has not enabled the vast majority of students to communicate in English effectively or to be equipped with language skills to explore the expanding world of learning, resulting in a decline in the quality of higher education" (p. 115).

Although students spend a great amount of time learning English, they are unable to speak fluently or impress potential employers when they leave school and enter the job market. As Abeywickrema (2008) notes, therefore, "the effectiveness of the school English language programmes has been the research theme of many educationists, linguists and sociologists since the early 1950s. Researchers have pointed out that the programmes are only minimally successful compared to the large investments made on it" (2008:20).

Other empirical evidence for this claim can be found in many studies including the one by Fonseka (2008), which investigated the English proficiency of 350 university entrants in 2006. The bottleneck in the university entrance procedure in Sri Lanka ensures that the candidates who get through are the cream of the GCE Advanced Level cohort they represent. Fonseka found, in an English Language diagnostic test of 350 such students, that these candidates' English language competence reveals "serious shortcomings" despite almost 10 years of studying English language as a subject in school (Fonseka, 2008:19).

Recent research in other nations has shown some reasons why English may not be learnt in traditional English classrooms. For example, Hasan (2006) researched English classroom discourse in Damascus, looking at teachers' and learners' language. He concludes that "spoken discourse in the EFL classroom is artificial and not communicative" and points out that this is associated with the fact that the teacher "controls classroom discourse through the use of a great number of display questions, initiations, and repetitions and expansions of students' utterances", and argues that as a consequence the natural use of language is inhibited. In such classrooms,

> language practice is thus based on the teacher centred interaction in which the teacher assumes and leading role and does not allow learners to take an active role in spontaneous interaction, thus depriving them of the chance to use the target language as a communicative act (2006:16).

As Medawattegdera (2011) points out, research in Sri Lanka has shown that it is spoken English that gets young people employment opportunities (Raheem and Gunasekara, 1996). Interviews conducted with policy makers (in order to ascertain the aims and goals of the EMI policy,) revealed that the belief was that "learning in

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[6] Rajiva Wijesinha, one of the two principal architects of the EMI reforms and member of the Presidential Task Force on Educational Reforms 1997-2002, in interview (Medawattegedera, 2011).

the English medium would result in the development of confidence among students" (Medawattegedera, 2011).

3.3. The Latest Policy Developments in BE in Sri Lanka

The MoE has now recognized the term Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) which incorporates the aim of BE. In the document which outlines a Plan with 3 themes, titled Education Sector Development Framework and Programme (ESDFP) 2013 – 2017 (MoE, 2012) it is specified, under Theme 2 ("Improve the quality of primary and secondary education") that

1. **Mother tongue education should be strengthened** and

2. **The content and language integrated learning framework (CLILF) for the bilingual education should be established in schools.**

3.4. Current Research Findings on BE in Sri Lanka

Wickremagamage et al (2010) conducted research on the implementation and policy of BE in the Central province of the country and concluded that "the socio-economic profile of the school—in terms of the social and economic backgrounds of the students who enter the school—has a strong impact on the understanding and implementation of policy directives".

Their study also found that while circulars and circular letters are among the principal means of communication between the policy-planners located in the national (and sometimes provincial) capital in the multi-tiered structure of the Sri Lankan education system, no communication is transparent, nor is it passively received.

- Bilingual Education = Also known as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

- The MoE in Sri Lanka has now acknowledged the term and uses it in its documents

3.5. The Study

The focus of this study is mainly on the medium of instruction in primary and secondary schools in Sri Lanka in relation to actual language use in the classroom, language choice and preference by both teachers and learners. It will also look at the effectiveness of using English as a medium of instruction at primary and secondary levels by analyzing the responses to the questionnaire and interviews. The surveys carried out will also shed light on the present status of the teaching of all three languages in schools in Sri Lanka and on the rhetoric and practice of bilingual education in Sri Lanka.

3.5.1 The Research Questions

The study will attempt to answer the following research questions:

1. What is the status of the medium of instruction (MOI) in primary and secondary schools in Sri Lanka, particularly in the BE stream?

2. What is the status of the languages (Sinhala, Tamil and English) in the context of teaching and learning?

3. What is the way forward, given the present status and challenges faced in teaching the national languages and bi- medium education

Based on the responses and data collected from the surveys as well as a look at the history of language policy and policies implemented by selected countries in the region, with a similar historical and political background to Sri Lanka, this study attempts to make suitable recommendations with regard to the medium of instruction policy and language teaching in schools in Sri Lanka.

3.5.2 Methodology

As the study aimed at establishing the current status of the medium of instruction in schools and the languages in Sri Lanka, the research technique involved the use of questionnaires[7], interviews and discussions with in-focus groups. The following techniques were used to collect data:

- Document Analysis (Scrutiny of Ministry of Education Memos on the implementation of Bilingual Education)

- Interview with the Director of the Bilingual Education Programme, Ministry of Education

- Questionnaires administered to and Interviews with primary stakeholders

- In-depth Interviews with teachers, parents, students, principals

- Focus group discussions with ISAs, Principals, subject teachers language teachers and bilingual education teachers

Participants / Respondents:

1. Teachers – Subject teachers teaching in bilingual classes, and Sinhala and English and Tamil language teachers

2. Principals

3. Deputy Principals

4. In service Advisors

5. Subject coordinators, bilingual coordinators

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[7] Language surveys (questionnaires) are essential as they provide crucial information to make informed decisions on language policy and planning in a country. However, it is important to note that they provide a synchronic view of what can be described as the result of a diachronic process.

6. Parents

7. Students

Scope:

Data were collected in the following provinces

Western

Uva

Southern

North Western

Eastern

Northern

And additionally in the following districts

Anuradhapura, Kandy, Jaffna, Mullativu, Batticaloa.

3.5.3 The Questionnaire

The overall aim of the questionnaires (circulated amongst teachers, students, and the general public) was to obtain information on the medium of instruction used in the teaching of English and teaching other subjects in English to secondary school students with a view to making necessary recommendations for a bilingual policy and to raising awareness amongst teachers, students, parents, education authorities and other officials in the education sector.

Three separate questionnaires were used by the research team for data collection. Each set consisted of different questions The questionnaires were also translated into Sinhala and Tamil.

The teachers' questionnaire

The teacher's questionnaire aimed at obtaining information on (a) the actual language used in the classroom when teaching English or Tamil, (b) the self-assessed proficiency levels of the teachers, (c) the preferred medium of instruction (d) professional qualifications, experience and subject knowledge.

The students' questionnaire

The students' questionnaire[8] aimed to discover whether there was a mismatch in the home language use and the medium of instruction in school. Since the research team could not access classrooms, the questionnaires were given to the respective teachers. They were filled and sent by post to the research team.

The general questionnaire

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[8] See Appendix 1

The questionnaire for the general public[9] (educators, policy makers) aimed at obtaining opinions on the current policy with regard to the medium of instruction in schools. It was generally an attitudinal survey on Sinhala, Tamil and English as mediums of instruction. The questionnaire was distributed among professionals, adult students, private sector officials, government sector officials and colleagues known to the research team.

The questionnaires focused on gathering data from the respondents in the following areas:

Questionnaire for teachers included questions to investigate the following:

a) Students' knowledge in their mother tongue and English,

b) Steps which should to be taken to improve their language skills,

c) Opinions about the medium of instruction, especially the bi-lingual method.

The questionnaire for students was meant to investigate the following:

a) Preferable medium of instruction in the secondary level,

b) Opinions about the newly introduced bi-lingual education system,

c) Possible problems that students would encounter in persuing the bi-lingual method.

The questionnaire for parents was prepared to investigate the following aspects:

a) Parents' opinions on their children's language education,

b) Steps suggested to enhance language proficiency of students,

c) Effects of mono-lingual or bi-lingual medium of instruction.

3.5.4 In-Depth Interviews:

In addition to the distribution of questionnaires semi structured and open ended interviews were conducted to capture an overall perception of bilingual and monolingual instruction in school as well as the teaching of English, Sinhala and Tamil in schools. They were conducted with teachers, parents, students and principals as well as zonal education officers. Some telephone interviews also took place, after the field visits to the districts and provinces mentioned above.

3.5.5 Focus Group Discussions:

Focus group discussions were conducted with the in-service sector, teachers and principals in the districts. Data collected from focus group discussions are provided in Appendix 4.

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[9] See Appendix 2

3.5.6. General Findings from Field Visits

This section includes the findings of the field research. These are discussed under the following headings:

1. Ground situation in schools

2. Opinions on language education in general

3. Opinions on the medium of instruction

3.5.4.1. Ground situation in schools:

Schools that were visited can mainly be divided into two categories:

a) Urban schools which have resources and facilities

b) Rural schools which have less resources and minimum facilities.

Some urban schools we visited have started the bi-lingual method. It is operated in the secondary level from grade 6. This system was introduced in 2001 and by now it shows certain development. Some problems have also been discovered. The number of students and the number of classes has increased.

Teachers in these schools indicated that students in bi-lingual classes have increased their language competencies with regard to English. They show high performance in examinations, related to English medium subjects. However, they do not use English in day to day speech. It appears that they have developed reading and writing skills only. Besides, they show lower performance in Sinhala medium classes as far as examination results are concerned. This state of affairs creates a problem because it is an accepted fact that linguistic skills gained through one language can easily be transferred to another language. If students have developed language skills they would easily be transferred to the other language. Perhaps, good performance in exams may not be the criteria to measure students' language skills, or, the teaching methods, evaluation system or the attitude of students may have some effect in this contradictory performance.

It was observed that some teachers who took English medium classes were not competent enough to perform their duties. On the one hand their competency in English is inadequate. They are unable to explain subject matter in simple language. Instead, they just read out the explanations found in the teachers' guide. Or, sometimes, they read the English text before the class and are apt to explain the subject matter in the mother tongue. On the other hand, in some cases, it is the English teacher who teaches the subjects. Their subject knowledge may not be sufficient. We were informed that some students in the English medium classes took Sinhala medium tuitions to enhance their subject knowledge.

According to some teachers there is a division between mono-lingual and bi-lingual students. The latter group seems to have a superiority complex; they put mono-lingual students down and show off they are superiority. They want to appear as a

separate group. In this way they not only put their classmates down, but pretend that mono-lingual medium is of a lower quality.

Some principals have taken positive steps to eradicate this attitude. For example, both groups are seated in the same classroom. They will be separated only in the relevant periods. Mono-lingual students remain in the class while bi-lingual students go to a separate class-room for their lesson. Another measure is to mix them in extracurricular activities, especially in cultural events.

Regarding rural schools, some have physical resources, but lack human resources. Some schools do not have an English teacher and where a teacher is available he or she does not have necessary training to perform teaching duties. It is unfortunate that some schools cannot afford to have English teachers, because they are reluctant to stay. They take the very first opportunity to get a transfer to another school which has facilities.

Several teachers pointed out that the problem is not having resource persons. It is the unequal distribution. In some schools there are several English teachers but in some others there is none.

Generally, unlike urban areas, students in rural areas have no interest in learning languages. On the one hand, they do not find any use for it and on the other hand, the environment does not encourage them to learn languages. Neither in school nor at home, do they have anybody to persuade them. Introducing the bi-lingual system in such places will create problems. However, in a remote area in the Anuradhapura District we heard about a devoted teacher who has created the atmosphere to motivate students to learn English. Time did not permit us to visit that school. Although this is an exception, it points out that well-trained, enthusiastic teachers are necessary to enhance language education.

3.5.5 Opinions on Language Education in General:

Discussions with teachers emphasized one important fact regarding the medium of instruction. It is necessary to take steps to develop language skills on the basis of mother tongue. Once such skills were developed they would easily be transferred to a second language. But unfortunately, much attention is focused on developing English education, but Sinhala (and in that case Tamil) is almost completely neglected.

They pointed out two key areas to develop. First is the area of language teaching. The system has recognized a person called 'English teacher.' He or she is given a training to execute his or her duties. But a person such as 'Sinhala (or Tamil) teacher' has not been recognized. As a result, the first language teacher is deprived of obtaining a systematic training in language teaching. Under present circumstances, awareness of grammatical points of a language alone will not suffice to create a competent language teacher. Awareness of language in general, that is the nature, structure and function of language is necessary. A systematic, scientific training is

wanting because the main objective of teaching a language is to develop communicative skills in writing as well as in oral communication.

The second area to develop is text books. It was pointed out that text books for the first language and the second national language are not systematic. Mostly, they are a sporadic collection of lessons. There is no link of the text book from one level to another. In one text book, the language is found to be more advanced, but the next one is easier than the first. The text books in current use have failed to develop student language knowledge systematically, step by step, let alone language skills.

In addition, there is a mismatch between texts and evaluation. The text does not give a proper idea of what is to be tested at the end of the lesson. Instead, some ad hoc exercises have been added.

What the teachers emphasized was that whether the medium of instruction is mono-lingual or bi-lingual, necessary weight should be given to train language teachers and to prepare systematic text books.

3.5.5.1. Opinions on the Medium of Instruction

The central issue of the research was the medium of instruction. Questions were asked, directly or indirectly, to elicit opinions on this issue. One question in the questionnaire for teachers has raised the issue directly. The question was,

(What is) your opinion on the medium of instruction in school?

Three options were given and teachers were asked to select the most appropriate answer. The options were as follows:

i) All the subjects are necessary to teach only in the mother tongue.

ii) While the mother tongue being the medium of instruction, steps should be taken to develop English as a subject.

iii) Bi-lingual education should be introduced in every school at the secondary level.

Very few selected the first option. Those who selected justified their answer in different ways. Justifications can be summarized as,

a) Concepts are developed through the mother tongue.

b) Culture can be acquired through the mother tongue.

c) Personal and group identify is established through the mother tongue.

d) Subject matter is easily grasped through the mother tongue.

There are, of course, arguments for or against these justifications. Therefore, these alone would not facilitate the selection of the medium of instruction.

A considerable number of in formants preferred the second option. They pointed out that the bi-lingual medium cannot be implemented in all schools in the near future. There are a number of causes obstructing such a procedure. Lack of resource persons, lack of other necessary facilities, environmental obstacles, lack of motivation on the part of students are some of them. Field visits also proved the

ground situation does not support such a hasty move. In addition, parents and students pointed out that such an attempt would affect the student population in rural areas where there aren't enough facilities to improve English knowledge. Therefore measures should be taken to enhance the English teaching-learning process island wide, while continuing the mono-lingual medium of instruction.

Again, a considerable number of informants agreed with the last option with some caution. They preferred the bi-lingual method of education in the secondary level but pointed out that the present conditions would not allow implementing it islandwide.   There are certain unavoidable challenges.   Before accepting the bi-lingual medium of instruction as a national policy these challenges should be addressed

3.6 Summary of Findings

Language at the primary level

The majority of the respondents prefer all three languages – Sinhala, English and Tamil - to be introduced and taught from Grade 1 itself. Currently English is taught as a subject from Grade 3 but since students at the primary level are only exposed primarily to one language (their mother tongue or LI) it makes it difficult for them to follow subjects in English at the Junior Secondary level. (Grade 6).

Language at the secondary level

Schools that offer the English medium / Bilingual medium find it difficult to offer more than two subjects in English due to the lack of competent teachers. The research team found that teachers who are teaching in the English medium opt to use both languages in instruction. The reasons behind the use of two languages in instruction were to teach vocabulary, to explain and discuss meaning. In a majority of cases, due to the severe lack of capable and suitably qualified BE teachers to teach subjects in English, school principals have appointed English language teachers to teach other subjects such as Geography, Science etc in English. In the Eastern Province, for example, it was found that English teachers teach Religion in the English medium classes

Language preference

A majority of respondents prefer English as the language in the classroom for teaching and learning purposes from the secondary grades upwards. The popularity of English as a second language (English as a subject and as a medium of instruction) reveals its powerful position in Sri Lankan society today. There is an undeniable desire to learn it, to acquire it and to speak it by both teachers and learners respectively. It is also reported that students who are conversant with English have higher levels of confidence. Their ability to interact, take part in competitions, work in teams and perform at competitive exams was highlighted.

Language proficiency and language teachers

It is evident that there is considerable dissatisfaction with regard to the competency of teachers in all three languages. In many instances, the research team found the Tamil teacher to be a non-native speaker of Tamil. A majority of teachers also believe that the Sinhala teachers are not proficient enough to teach the language. It is evident therefore that a recommendation should be made to enhance and upgrade the proficiency and competency levels of teachers of all three languages in Sri Lanka.

While there were enough English language teachers in the districts in which data were collected, there was a severe lack of Tamil language teachers to teach Tamil in predominantly Sinhalese populated districts. The existing Tamil teachers are hardly capable even of producing an accurate spoken sentence.

Discrepancies in implementing Language policy via MoE circulars

While some schools were following the directives given in the MoE circulars, it was found that other schools were not. For example, in some schools, bilingual medium education was being carried out from the primary level. While some schools had the students all together in bi medium classrooms (students studying some subjects bilingually and students studying all subjects in the mother tongue), other schools had separated students into monolingual and bilingual classrooms.

4. Recommendations for Policy and Policy Implementation

Taking into account the above findings, this study lists the following as recommendations. While it is acknowledged that some recommendations are for policy and the others for policy implementation, it is believed that making recommendations for both aspects is necessary, given the important link between policy and its implementation.

4.1.**Medium of Instruction (MOI) in the Primary school (Grades 1-5) should be the students' mother tongue (L1). Primary education in mother tongue alone will not produce expected results, unless the primary teachers are given necessary training.** Their training should necessarily include the following components:

i) **Proficiency in the mother tongue.** This includes both grammatical and communicative competence. At present only the grammatical competence is taken into consideration and other important aspects are ignored.

ii) **Awareness of language.** This refers to the knowledge of language in general. Applied linguistics insists that this is essential in language teaching.

iii) **General understanding of the second national language.** This can perhaps be enhanced through in-service training and incentives to the teachers. This can be made compulsory for new recruits.

iv) **Speaking and reading ability in English to a certain extent**. This will facilitate students to improve English in natural settings through interaction with their teachers.

4.2 The Second national language and English language should be introduced at the level of the Primary school

4.3. Mother tongue should be made compulsory from Grade I in International Schools, where the MOI is English

4.4 Recognize a special professional category of "language teachers" and provide them with specific training- Competence in mother tongue. This category should have:

   a) **Working knowledge of English – (For English teachers Competence in English)**

   b) **Willingness to learn the second national language and prove working knowledge**

   c) **Awareness of language and language education in general (Applied linguistics)**

3.5. **The Bilingual system of education to be introduced at the secondary level by teaching selected subjects in English and others in the mother tongue/first language** However it is recommended that it commences when students are more cognitively mature – e.g. at Grade 7 or 8 rather than at Grade 6. Some subjects (e.g. Science is taught for the first time in Grade 6. Therefore it is necessary that concepts should be taught in the students' mother tongue. At the initial stage, one or two subjects should be taught in English, and it is recommended that the number of subjects taught in English be increased gradually (e.g. one or two subjects in Grade 7, two or three subjects in Grade 8, etc). Choose descriptive language-rich subjects such as Geography, History and Environment studies to be taught first in English and theoretical/concept-driven subjects such as Science and Mathematics later on in Secondary School

3.6. There is overwhelming evidence to show that the English teachers are the once who are called upon to teach subjects in the bilingual classes. e.g. English teacher teaching Science, Geography, etc, even though s/he is not trained in this subject. **It is strongly recommended that the practice of appointing English language teachers to teach subjects in English is stopped and teachers who have competency and qualifications in the subject matter as well as fluency in English and one national language be recruited to teach selected subjects in English. However** in the light of the prevailing situation where there is a severe shortage of subject-teachers who are proficient in English and trained to teach bilingually, it is strongly recommended that the English teacher and subject teacher (in the mother tongue medium classroom) work together in planning the lesson as well as evaluation procedures. While this is not an ideal situation, until such time as an adequate number of teachers is trained and recruited, it is recommended that the English teacher and subject teacher collaborate to teach the bilingual medium classes.

3.7. **Bilingual text books should have the text in the students' first language as well as English. (English AND either Sinhala OR Tamil)** This will enable the schools to use the same textbook in both monolingual and bilingual classes, without any discrimination

3.8. **Revise English language textbooks to reflect the content of other subjects such as Science, Environmental Studies, Geography and History, using a CLIL approach. This will enable Mother-tongue medium (monolingual) students also be exposed to English language that is motivating and meaningful to their context and decrease the gap between students' learning in bilingual classes and their monolingual-medium counterparts. It is also recommended that** listening and speech tasks be incorporated into English language textbooks.

3.9. All three languages should be introduced at the primary level so that there is no leap but a consistent transition in education, so promoting the teaching of all three languages from Grade 1 is recommended. English and the Second national language (i.e. Tamil or Sinhala) can be taught using the approach of the current ABOE (Activity based Oral English)

3.10. Careful monitoring of schools' implementation of the bilingual education policy is needed to control the starting of bilingual medium teaching before the secondary level, as prescribed by government policy. In some schools, regardless of the availability of qualified resource persons and resources, 'English medium' classes are started to either please the parents or to increase the 'prestige' of the school.

3.11. A systematic and effective teacher training programme in bilingual education for all bilingual subject teachers is recommended, including the provision of language proficiency related development for teachers

3.12. Providing effective teacher guides to facilitate the teaching and learning process is also recommended.

3.13. Providing incentives to schools in the form of financial rewards, generous staff allocations based on merit and better promotion prospects based on merit

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Appendix 1

Student questionnaire (English)

This is a survey on the medium of instruction and bilingual/monolingual teaching in Sri Lanka. We would appreciate it very much if you take some time to complete this questionnaire and return it to us. Your answers will be used for research purposes only, and all participants in this survey will remain anonymous. Thank you for your cooperation!

    a. Name (optional)

    b. First language (L1):

    c. Grade in school

    d. Male/female

    e. Province

    f. District

1. I am a fluent speaker of

    a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

2. Rate your proficiency of English

0	1	2	3	4	5

3. Rate your proficiency of Sinhala

0	1	2	3	4	5

4. Rate your proficiency of Tamil

0	1	2	3	4	5

5. I can write well in

a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

6. I can read best in

a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

7. My language at home is

a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

8. The medium of instruction in my school is

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

9. Most of my subjects are taught in

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

10. What are the languages you learn at school?

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala/ Tamil and English

11. What other languages do you like to learn in school?

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala/Tamil and English

12. In which language do you like your subjects to be taught in school?

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

13. In which language do you write answers?

   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

14. My English teacher speaks in

a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala or Tamil and English

15. My teacher teaches English

     a. Using only English

     b. Using both English and Sinhala or Tamil

     c. ………………

16. I want to learn

     a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. All 3 languages e. ……….

17.   My preferred language of learning is

     a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. All 3 languages e. ……

18. My preferred language of exams is

     a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. All 3 languages e. ……

19. What are the problems you face when learning in English medium/English class

     a. I cant understand what the teacher is saying

     b. My English is poor

     c. My teacher's English is not good

     d. No one to speak English with

     e. I can't understand the text books

     f. Anything else……………………………………………………..

20. Do you attend tuition classes for the English medium subjects? Yes   No

21.   Give reasons………………………………………………………………………

22. What is the medium of instruction in the tuition class? ----------------------------

Thank you!

Appendix 2

General questionnaire

This is a survey on the medium of instruction and bilingual/monolingual teaching in Sri Lanka.

A: Background

1. Age: (Optional)   ---------------------------
2. Profession: ---------------------------
3. Educational background: (pl tick) secondary school/ A/L/ graduate/post graduate/etc
4. Did you study in the English medium (EM) at any point in your career. If so when?
   ----
5. Professional qualifications if any...............................
6. Male/Female   (pl tick)
7. Mother tongue   : ----------------------------------
8. In your opinion, please tick the most successful medium/media of instruction in government schools in Sri Lanka at present.

	Sinhala Medium	Tamil Medium	English Medium	Sinhala and English	Tamil and English	Sinhala, Tamil and English
Grade 1 – 5						
Grade 5 – 10						
Grade 10 – 13						

9. What is the reason for your answer?

   _____

10. In your opinion, please tick the most successful medium/media of instruction in private schools in Sri Lanka at present. (ob 2)

	Sinhala Medium	Tamil Medium	English Medium	Sinhala and English	Tamil and English	Sinhala, Tamil and English

Grade 1 – 5						
Grade 5 – 10						
Grade 10 – 13						

11. What is the reason for your answer?

   _____

12. Do you have children studying in English medium?

   a. Yes   No
13. Do you have children studying in Sinhala or Tamil medium?
   a. Yes   b. No
14. What is the language/ languages you use mostly at work
   a. English   b. Sinhala   c. Tamil   d. Sinhala
      or Tamil and English

B: Current Situation with English medium (EM)

15. What is your opinion about bilingual teaching in Sri Lanka?
   ----

16. What is your opinion about monolingual teaching in Sri Lanka?
   ----

17. In your opinion, what are the challenges of EM education.
   ----

18. What are the benefits to students who opt to study in the EM?
   ----

19. What's the aim of the policy of EM education?
   ----

20. When English is the second language for both student and teacher, what kind
   of difficulties might there be regarding covering the syllabus?
   ----

21. According to you, what is the objective of the current national policy on
   education:

C: Beliefs about learning and teaching in general

22. Do you support bilingual education or do you prefer monolingual education which strengthens English teaching education?
   a.   Yes   b. No   c. Anything else..

Open Questions:

23. Is there any other comment you would like to make on teaching and learning in the English medium in Sri Lanka?

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24. Is there any other comment you would like to make on teaching and learning in the Sinhala or Tamil medium in Sri Lanka?

Appendix 3

The teacher's questionnaire

A: About the teacher: Background

Age:

Years of Experience as a teacher

Years of Experience as an EMI teacher

How long have you been teaching this class?

1. How would you describe your proficiency in English?
2. Is it your L1 or L2, what is the language you speak at home, what is the language you spoke at home with your parents
3. What is your highest English qualification
4. did you study in the English medium (EM) at any point in your career. If so when?

B: Current Situation with English medium

5. Did you opt to teach English medium?
6. If so, why? Any special reason?
7. what do you feel about teaching in EM?
8. What kind of training did you get for teaching in EM?
9. Do you feel it was adequate? To what degree do you think it is adequate?
10. What are some of the challenges of teaching in EM, that you face, personally
11. What are the benefits to you?
12. What are the benefits to students who opt to study in the EM?
13. What's the aim of the policy of EMI?
14. What is your role in implementing that aim?
15. What do you think of the use of mother tongue and switching between mother tongue and English in the classroom
16. How would you explain a concept and build on it when students already know it in their mother tongue
17. If there are significant groups of students from both Sinhala speaking and Tamil speaking communities, how would you use mother tongue (MT), would you use it at all?

18. When and where would you use MT? During instruction for instructional purposes or for other exchanges in the class (related to classroom management or administration)?
19. Would you be ok with students initiating talk in the MT?
20. How far is teaching / learning in a language that's not your mother tongue (and and L2 for both teacher and learner) an obstacle to practical considerations like covering the syllabus and getting students prepared for exams?
21. What kind of measures do you take to deal with this, if it is a problem?

C: Beliefs about learning and teaching in general

22. Do you see yourself as a transmitter of knowledge to students? Or a facilitator?
23. How do students learn problem solving?
24. How important is peer and group activity in your classroom?
25. How important is covering the syllabus?
26. What do you think of group work and pair work?
27. To what purpose do you use group and pair work?
28. How do you think students learn? Is it a process? Is it a product that you have and give to them?
29. How far do students need to talk / discuss / participate in whole class discussion to learn?

D: Beliefs about their students

30. What do you think about the students who have opted / been selected to study in the English medium in this class?
31. Are they bright? Perceptive?
32. Capable of studying in the English medium?
33. How would their success rate change if they were studying in the MT?
34. Do you see a wide range of language proficiency among your students?
35. If you do see that many (or even a few) students are struggling with the language, what are the strategies you use to help them?
36. How do you go about helping students who are less proficient in English to study science in the English medium?

E: Focus on language

37. Would you explain a word or phrase that you think the students don't understand?
38. How do you know if they would have difficulty with a word or phrase?
39. Do you guess it ahead or do you wait until they ask?
40. How far do you see your role as both a teacher of science AND a teacher of language?
41. What kind of collaboration is there between you and the ESL teacher?

Open Question:

Is there any other comment you would like to make on teaching and learning in the English medium in Sri Lanka?

Appendix 4
NEC Field visit data

(Sinhala and English teachers only)

School	Information
Kappetigoda MMV	a. District = Gampaha b. Students = 135 for O/Ls c. No English medium offered d. English is offered as a subject in school (Name of English teacher = Ms Inoka Ekanayake 071 4479112)
Anura MMV	a. District = Gampaha b. Students = 23in the A/L class c. English medium offered at the A/L d. Subjects = Health Science, Maths and Science (Name of teacher = Hansini 071 3111148) e. English teacher is teaching Health science (Shammi de Silva 033 223 4325) f. Extremely qualified teacher as English teacher (GAQ at SJP and entered University of Colombo to do degree) g. Commenced English Medium in 2013

Informants	Issues and concerns raised
Teachers	a. Positive approach to bilingual education b. Extremely positive attitudes towards English medium c. Difficulties in teaching vocabulary, technical jargon related to the subjects d. Need effective teachers' guides e. Need teacher training in bilingual education f. Need training to teach weaker students g. Always resorts to L1 when teaching in the English medium h. Students are extremely keen to follow English medium classes i. However, parents are a bit vary of the grades when following English medium classes
Principals and Vice principals	a. Commence bilingual education from Grade One b. If not from Grade 6 onwards c. No teachers for Geography and Civics (English medium) d. No teachers for History. History is better taught in the Sinhala medium e. At the moment, the English teachers are teaching these

	subjects. They have no knowledge of the subject matter.
	f. As students don't come from English speaking background, it prevents them from opting to learn in English
	g. If bilingual education is introduced, it will increase students' potential in other subjects as well.
	h. Students skills will be developed by learning in English
	i. Bilingual education will create room for the need and use of English
In service sector	a. Positive approach to bilingual education
	b. Even if not introduced at the primary level should be introduced at Grade 6. After a foundation course
	c. The language can be acquired through the content
	d. The learning process grows in both the student and the teacher
	e. Instructions can be given in both languages for clarity at evaluations
	f. The English medium classes are competitive, students have enormous potential to grow because of exposure to the language unlike in the Sinhala medium classes
	g. There is classism due to the English medium streams
	h. Negative attitudes towards their Sinhala medium counterparts
	i. Better salaries for teachers will help in improving teaching in schools
	j. The Tamil teacher is usually a Sinhala L1 speaker. Prefers L1 speakers of Tamil as Tamil teachers
	k. The time allocated for English is not enough. If bilingual instruction is introduced, the time given for the English subject should be increased. In some schools, only one period is given for English in the entire week.