

Improving English Language Proficiency of the Students Following Bilingual Education in Vavuniya: A Culture Based Approach

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The English medium education which was a boon for communication among communities was abandoned in favour of mother-tongue education in the 1960s. In the face of ethnic tension, the government planned to reintroduce the English medium education in Sri Lanka in 2002 after a lapse of forty years in order to find possible ways for communication among communities. The present study was carried out with a group of thirty-nine students following English medium education from six various schools in the Vavuniya North Zone, Sri Lanka. It has become an uphill task for the teachers and the principals as the students were from very difficult areas which were affected by the ethnic war. Therefore, a culture-based approach was adopted to make the students proficient in the English language. Theatre, a transmitter of cultural patterns and values acts as a mirror of all aspects of life. An ethnographical methodology was adopted to do the research in order to understand the students' socio, economic and other related issues. The study was conducted using questionnaires, interviews with the students, teachers, principals and education administrators, workshop sessions six in number at different intervals and three school visits. The researcher was able to record the students' involvement in the learning process from their written performance, audio and video recordings of their oral and group performance. Having analysed the performance it is realised that the cultural aspects through theatre techniques made students motivated to learn English and their proficiency improved to a certain extent. The paper analyses and proves qualitatively how the students improved in their proficiency through cultural aspects.

Key words: *Community Learning, Cultural Shock, Theatre-Based Approach.*