



A STUDY ON THE ISSUE OF CHANGING THE MEDIUM
OF INSTRUCTION TO ENGLISH AT JUNIOR
SECONDARY LEVEL AND THE PROBLEMS THAT
STUDENTS ENCOUNTER IN RELATION TO PSYCHO
SOCIOLOGICAL FACTORS

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Abstract

Kannangara report (1943) shows how English language became the Second Language when vernacular languages were made the medium of instruction. From 1956, an antagonism towards English began to grow when Sinhala was made the official language. Since then, English language has been neglected till 1997, the year in which educational reports suggested that English be reintroduced as a medium of instruction. Somehow in 2003, English as a medium of instruction was introduced in a formal way in certain schools. Many psycho-sociological problems have arisen for the students in English medium. The research is based on the following objectives;

- Identify theories that relate to socio-cultural aspects of learning English as a Second Language. Analyze different social backgrounds of children involved in bi-lingual learning in relation to the theories.
- Examine the different psycho-sociological problems that students face in learning in the English medium.
- Find out how the students' socio cultural backgrounds influence their learning in the English medium.
- Suggest remedies to minimize the effects of psycho-sociological problems.

Questionnaires were administered to teachers and students and a survey was conducted in four schools in Negombo. A case study was conducted taking six low ability students and six clever students as the sample. Descriptive and statistical data analysis method was used. Special attention was given to Schumann's (1978a) *acculturation model* that discusses the social and psychological problems. The researcher suggests that English should be exposed at the early stages like grade 01. ABOE in the school system could be strengthened in this regard. College of Education should give more attention to their English language training of the subject teachers (those who teach subjects other than English in English medium classes). To mitigate the psychological problems of the students, the curriculum designers as well as the teachers have a responsibility. Reading ability of the students should be improved, exposing them to an English friendly environment. Subject teachers involved in English medium should be advised to interact in classrooms and even outside the classrooms in English. Parents must pay more attention to the English language of their children.