



*The Issue of Change of Medium to English and the problems encountered by
Students in learning at the G.C.E Advanced Level Classes*

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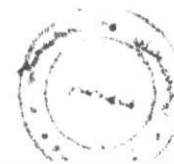


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ABSTRACT

It is claimed that the teaching of English as a second language, in the post-independent era of Sri Lanka, even with the adoption of four methodologies – Grammar translation, Direct method, Audio-lingual method and Communicating language teaching – in succession, could not make any difference in the standard of English of the school goers.

In the backdrop of these developments, the introduction of content based instruction, in the science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes, is a paradigm shift, for it not only changed the medium of instruction, but also charged the subject specialist with the mission of improving the standard of English of the student population, hitherto confined to professional English teachers.

The research study on the Issue of Change of Medium to English and the Problems Encountered by the Students in Learning at the G.C.E. Advanced Level classes was, therefore, undertaken with the main objective of identifying the problems that the students currently face in their pursuit.

The research methodology adopted was purposive sampling, for the content based instruction, in the science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes is largely confined to Colombo schools. Moreover, the purposive sampling ensured the representation of all ethnic groups and both genders in the sample.

The study brought out three major shortcomings in the practice of content based instruction, in the science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes: the lack of scaffolding in overcoming students' difficulties in transition from mother tongue medium to the medium of English; the lop-sided nature of in-service teacher training programme and its *implications* in the classroom practices; and the non availability of an officially declared criterion profile to evaluate the answer scripts of the student, in the science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes, in the medium of English.

The study suggests an institutionalization of a mechanism of scaffolding to assist the students in transition from mother tongue medium to the medium of English in the Science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes; the streamlining of the in-service teacher training programme, with a suitable curriculum on the theories and practice of content based instruction, and with a suitable follow up to monitor the benefit of the in-service teacher training programme at school level; and the declaration of an officially proclaimed criterion profile, in order to guide the teachers of content based instruction to evaluate the answer scripts of their students in the science stream of the G.C.E. A/L classes, in keeping with the aims and the objectives of content based instruction.