

## **The importance of context sensitivity of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Bilingual Education.**

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National Education Commission proposed Bilingual Education to the national curriculum in 2003. One of the main objectives of this introduction is to improve the second Language proficiency of learners. The Ministry of Education in collaboration with the National Institute of Education is designing a model based on CLIL; a widely used learning teaching approach in bilingual education, to suit the Sri Lankan context. Cummins (1981) claims two language proficiencies that are necessary in improving the bilingual learner's second language proficiency; BICS (Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP). BICS is an informal day today language that learners acquire when exposed to an acquisition rich environment while CALP refers to the use of academic language in formal learning teaching contexts. Cummins claim that BICS lays the foundation for CALP. The objective of this paper is to examine Cummins' BICS in relation to Bilingual Education in Sri Lankan context. This analysis is based on interviews held with a purposive sample of bilingual teachers and teachers of English and observation of classrooms and content analysis of pupils textbooks. Literature relating to CLIL too was studied. Cummins' interpretation of BICS has to be modified if it is to be applied to Sri Lanka. Opportunities for the pupils to acquire BICS are not adequately available in Sri Lanka as the teachers are not well equipped with learning teaching strategies facilitating BICS .Therefore BICS should be facilitated in the formal classroom context. Text books prescribed to teach bilingually are the direct translation of monolingual textbooks designed for monolingual learners .It is recommended that teachers be trained in CLIL pedagogy and textbooks be revised. Teachers should be equipped with knowledge and skills to adapt available textbooks to facilitate BICS.

*Key words: Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency (CALP) Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) Reference:*