

M. A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

**PROBLEMS IN SPEAKING SKILLS OF
THE STUDENTS IN BILINGUAL
CLASSROOMS
(FOCUSSED ON GRADE SEVEN CLASSES
IN WP /KE/ST.ANTHONY'S COLLEGE ,
WATTALA)**

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ABSTRACT

In this thesis , the first chapter describes the problem of lack of English speaking environment in the Bilingual classrooms in kelaniya zone in Sri Lanka. The research focused on grade seven students in bilingual classes in WP/KE/St. Anthony's school in Wattala. These students are selected for the research because they have been studying for one year in bilingual class and they had been studying in Sinhala medium in the their primary education . The number of students selected for the research is 35. Second chapter mainly focuses on the theories on how language environment influences on speaking ability of a language. The exposure to the target language is pointed out here. Moreover , this chapter pays attention on the first and second language acquisition, as English is learnt as a second language in Sri Lanka. Under second language acquisition especially the five main hypothesis of Stephen Krashen are discussed in detail. Furthermore , this chapter mentions that there is variety of methods to improve English skills and the role of the teacher regarding creating an English speaking environment in the classroom is also discussed. The following methods such as speech tests , questionnaires for the students in grade seven class in Bilingual class, questionnaires for the teachers who teach in Bilingual class , observations and impromptu speech are used to collect data from the children. According to the chapter 4 ' Data Analysis' , it is revealed that lack of comprehensible input and lack of exposure to the target language occur in Bilingual classes and that is the most important reason the students not speaking in English in the Bilingual classes. Furthermore , most of the parents are doing blue collar jobs and therefore it is difficult to create an English speaking environment at home. Therefore school or the classroom is the only place where they are exposed to English speaking environment . It is the responsible of teachers , educators and policy makers, parents and other relevant authorities to become aware of this problem and pay more attention on improving English speaking environment in bilingual classroom. Therefore, suggestions and recommendations to solve the problems are introduced.