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Quest for sustainability of Bilingual Education Programme in Sri Lanka: Lesson from Malaysia

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Bilingual Education Programme (BEP) in Sri Lanka, even after passing almost 15 years of age, still has its own challenges to meet. One of them is sustainability of the programme due to lack of clear and coherent policies. Hence, what factors affect on the sustainability of the BEP in Sri Lanka is the research problem going to be addressed in this paper. The methodology of this research is to compare the local programme with the Malaysian BEP using a document survey. Malaysia has been selected as the country to compare because both countries have similar aspects of implementing the BEP in their respective systems of Education when consider the model of the programme, goals and the target group. Hence, this paper analyses the two programmes based on four areas as purpose, model, relevant policies and strategies and expected outcome of the programme to find out factors of sustainability. One of the main differences between these two programmes is that the Malaysian programme is implemented from the primary level making Science and Mathematics as compulsory subjects while the BEP in Sri Lanka is implemented in the secondary grades commencing from grade 6 providing a strong foundation of first language (L1) of child. Another significant difference is the learning teaching methodology. Different methodologies of BE are applied in Malaysian schools. Sri Lanka has one model of approach as Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in the classroom. This paper argues that policy should be one of the main factors of sustainability in BEP and it should be explicit, comprehensive and public.

Key words: bilingual education, factors, model, policy, sustainability