

# **The effect of a bilingual model thematically related to nature and tourism on a group of undergraduates in the transition from the L1 medium to the English medium**

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It has been long observed that the first year undergraduates of Department of Tourism Management, Faculty of Management Studies, Sabaragamuwa University of Sri Lanka are less confident in acquiring English language (L2) in which the degree is offered. They have no choice of selecting the medium of instruction thus, a massive gap could be observed in their transition from the L1: either Sinhala or Tamil medium to the English medium. To discover L2 learning problems; a survey had been carried out among undergraduates and lecturers. Undergraduates identified their weaknesses in relation to communication skills in English whereas lecturers too identified the same linguistic problems but in a more professional way highlighting that the lack of learner autonomy is one major difficulty for the lack of L2 communication skills in the transition from the L1 medium to the English medium. This paper is focused on proposing a bilingual model thematically rich in relation to nature and tourism in par with globally successful bilingual models but carefully outlining the exclusive features which cater to the needs of the target group enhancing learner autonomy; assuming in return it will facilitate the transition; developing undergraduates' communication skills in English. A series of skill based activities will be implemented within a semester with the help of two subject lecturers and an English lecturer, after getting them exposed to a training of handling a bilingual class. A qualitative analysis will be done so that observations and interviews will be systematically recorded to collect data. The findings will be analyzed in detail within the framework of latest and strong bilingual and second language learning theoretical data base to evaluate the research outcomes.

Keywords: Bilingual model, L1 medium, English medium, Nature and tourism