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Acknowledgements

Content

Editorial

The Impact of Internal and External Factors on Student's Learning Process

Fulfilling a long-felt need, the National Education Research and Evaluation Center (NEREC) of the Faculty of Education published its first-ever peer-reviewed journal, Sri Lanka Journal of Education (SLJE) in March 2022. In the current issue of Volume 1 of the SLJE, diverse issues in several ways, yet interconnected in many other ways pertaining to the field of education are presented. The spectrum of topics ranges from content and language-integrated learning (CLIL) in bilingual education through differences in the lexico-grammatical features of legal letters of demand to soft skill development in undergraduate degree programs.

Adding CLIL content into lessons can improve teachers' subject knowledge and they can become broader and more balanced educators. Having CLIL lessons can also help teachers develop their language-teaching skills by adjusting their approaches to meet the needs of teaching various subject contents. Both situations can lead to the professional development of teachers. Expert opinions on using CLIL highlight the fact that while it is very useful for students, it is also quite advantageous for teachers particularly because it can make teaching more enjoyable.

Kularatne Suriya Arachchi explores the status of content and process standards of bilingual education at the junior secondary level of the Sri Lankan national curriculum. His special emphasis is on the English language curriculum in grades 6-11 in facilitating CLIL in bilingual education. His findings show that the content standards and process standards of teaching English as a second language are not rich in facilitating the second language skills of the monolingual and bilingual learners. One of the key reasons for this situation is identified as the absence of partnerships among key stakeholders. Suriya Arachchi suggests that such partnerships are vital to get over this situation.

While CLIL has a noticeable impact on the learning process of students, there are other important factors that affect their learning process. Wijesundara et al. in their study delve into this arduous yet obligatory task of determining internal and external factors influencing students' learning process (SLP). They point out that the attributes under the learning style such as, 'asking questions verbally', 'use of chat box for answers', 'use of video/audio clips', 'checking with individual students if they understand', and 'sharing computer screen' have a positive and significant impact on SLP. 'Asking questions verbally' is, according to them, the most effective attribute of SLP. These are

presented as internal factors affecting SLP in a given tertiary education setting related to the teaching-learning situation. While the 'use of laptops' as a connectivity device significantly and positively impacts SLP, 'background noise' is shown to have a noticeably negative impact on SLP under external factors.

Chamila Kothalawala, in her article, examines yet another pertinent issue in legal education, namely, the writing styles of legal letters of demand of the law students. Her results conclude that the letters of the lawyers and students differed in lexico-grammatical features such as genre-specific formulaic expressions, direct utterances, polite forms, and legal terms. Such differences, according to Kothalawala, decreased the effectiveness in important areas such as choice of formulaic expressions, legal terms, polite forms, and direct expressions as observed by the lawyers interviewed by her. Incorporation of activities that encourage students to compare typical students' informal expressions and formulaic expressions of lawyers into the teaching materials is suggested as remedial action that will enable law students to notice the expert-novice distinction in the use of the lexico-grammatical features. It is highly likely that such remedial measures will strengthen the learning process of law students.

Anxiety plays a deciding effect in learning foreign languages. Language anxiety "encompasses the feelings of worry and negative, fear-related emotions associated with learning or using a language that is not an individual's mother tongue." Such negative feelings strongly affect SLP particularly when they are adults. Susil Manchanayaka, in his case study, examines why a particular student had been silent for a considerable period and the causes of his silence. The findings of this case study indicate that the reason for the silence of the adult student has been tripartite as he was having language, trait, and test anxieties. To enhance the learning process of such students, Manchanayaka suggests that a stress-free class environment, developing an easy, supportive, and friendly demeanor towards correcting errors should be created.

While Manchanayaka's findings are more aligned with the 'soft skills' of the teachers when facilitating the foreign language learner, 'soft skills' is the key theme of the final paper in this issue. The term soft skills originated in the US in the mid-20th century. Hard skills, which traditionally were viewed as more valued, mainly refer to practical skills, while soft skills denote more human-centered abilities, such as communication, ethnic tolerance, critical thinking, problem-solving, teamwork, leadership, professional outlook, work ethics, and higher order thinking. Toward the end of the first quarter of the 21st century, the list got longer. Thus, Lakshi Karunarathne, and Ranthilaka Ariyawansa, in their article, attempt to identify important soft skills for undergraduates and

barriers to teaching and developing soft skills with a focus on the potential of public universities (in Sri Lanka) in developing such skills in undergraduates. Their results indicate that communication, teamwork, work ethics, and professionalism as the most important soft skills for undergraduates from the industry as well as academic perspectives. The study suggests that the universities and the industry should work together to increase students' awareness of the importance of soft skills and guide them in developing these skills. They argue that the university curricula should create scope for implementing and evaluating soft skill development in undergraduates during their study periods.

Therefore, the contributors to the current issue of the SLJE address some key areas which are thought provoking and pertaining to the SLP both at school and tertiary level contexts.

Lakshman Wedikkarage
September 2022

An Investigation into the Status of Content and Process Standards of Bilingual Education Curriculum at Junior Secondary Schools in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

National Education Commission (2003) recommended bilingualism to make the learner proficient in English to cope with higher education and career opportunities. The objective of this study is to investigate into the status of content and process standards of bilingual education at Junior Secondary level of the Sri Lankan national curriculum with special emphasis on the English language curriculum in grades 6-11 in facilitating Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in bilingual education. The study was done in relation to four objectives. The research design is qualitative dominant mixed-mode research design. A purposive sample of schools with high degree of heterogeneity was selected for the   in-depth study into the teaching-learning process of English as a second language and the teaching of content in bilingual education. Statistical methods of analyzing data were used in analyzing quantitative data while open, axial and selective coding were used in analyzing qualitative data. An action research was done as an intervention mechanism to study the impact of collaborative use of CLIL by second language teachers and bilingual teachers. The content standards and process standards of teaching English as a second language curriculum are not rich in facilitating second language skills of the monolingual and bilingual learner to cope with the learning of the content in bilingual education. One of the reasons for this drawback is the absence of partnership among key stake holders involved in English as a second language education and bilingual education. Policies should be formulated and implemented to ensure a partnership among key stake holders.

Keywords: Content standards, Process standards, Content and Language Integrated Leaning, Translanguaging, Bilingualism

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This study aims at investigating into the status of content and process standards of bilingual education at junior secondary level in facilitating Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in bilingual education in Sri Lankan schools.

Introducing bilingual education to Sri Lankan curriculum is not a sudden and spontaneous initiative but an attempt at finding a solution to a long-felt need. The need, apparently, is to revitalize English education in the country. This can be illustrated by tracing a brief history of English education in Sri Lanka.

With the influence of various socio-economic and socio-political changes that occurred in Sri Lanka during the recent and remote past, English education has undergone numerous changes. Implementation of Kannagara education reforms in 1943 which made English the compulsory second language repositioning its position of being the medium of instruction in education in Sri Lanka is a turning point in the history of English education. Sinhala only act, a strong political move, passed in the parliament in 1956, in the meantime, is said to have a negative impact on the quality of English education in Sri Lanka (Jayasuriya, 1969).

By 1960, the medium of instruction in education was *swabhasha* from preschool to university education.

The role of English in the changing economy

Reforms introduced in 1943 and 1956 as observed by Walatara (1965) De Souza (1979) and Kandiah (1984), resulted in a decline in the quality of English education. They attribute this decline to numerous factors. One being the lack of exposure to English with the change of medium of instruction in Education from the second language to the first language.

Liberal economic policies introduced to the country during the 1970s, transforming agriculture-oriented mixed economy into a market-oriented free economy where the skilled labor force was a strong necessity created new avenues for English. Establishing private enterprises suddenly all over the country, for instance, demanded a workforce skilled in many ways, with English language proficiency being crucial for people to cope with the needs and challenges of the changing world.

Responding to this timely need, the Ministry of Education in Sri Lanka issued a circular (No 5/2001) instructing able schools to teach science in English medium at GCE (A/L) while the rest of the subjects in the curriculum was taught in the first language.

Bilingual education

In a preliminary documentary survey done into the mislabeled English medium education in practice, it was noted that there were some salient features of bilingual education in it. One is the use of two media of instruction; first language and the second language in

education; simultaneous bilingual education (Hornberger, 1989a). The pupils, by the time they reach junior secondary level, grade 6 to 9, receive their education in their mother tongue. This process technically is successive or sequential bilingual education. This curriculum implemented in the Sri Lankan context provides opportunities for the pupils to receive education in two languages; learning some prescribed subjects in English while the rest of the subjects in the curriculum are learned in their mother tongue.

The National Education Commission (NEC) aims at providing an enabling environment for the learner to gain English language proficiency ensuring equity in bilingual education. However, achieving this aim has been challenging due to various reasons. For instance, equity in bilingual education which was to be achieved by 2008 (National Education Commission Report, 2003) is not yet achieved as the total number of bilingual schools being 17.5% according to a preliminary observation done by the researcher.

The commission also recommends that bilingual education should be introduced to all secondary and senior secondary schools by 2008 by equipping the schools with the physical and human resources necessary to teach the selected subjects in English medium (NEC Report, 2003). This, even by 2016, remains an unachieved objective. Reasons for this slow progress in bilingual education are many according to the preliminary observations made. One of the foremost reasons for this is the absence of a clearly defined bilingual framework applicable to the Sri Lankan context.

Studying the bilingual teachers' English Language Teaching (ELT) competency is also an area focused in this study as the bilingual teacher should be knowledgeable in areas such as socio, applied and psycholinguistic domains in language teaching order for them to adapt instructional materials in bilingual education to realize both content and language objectives.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)

In other countries where bilingual education is in progress, there is a widely used approach called Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) used extensively in bilingual education (Crandall, 1992). This is a permeable approach that can be adopted to the context where bilingual education is in practice.

The Ministry of Education (MoE) with the collaboration of the National Institute of Education (NIE) is in the process of adapting CLIL in keeping with the socio economic and socio-cultural needs of the country. A CLIL model compatible with the Sri Lankan needs, therefore, is a necessity. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) is a dual focused approach in which an additional language is used for the learning and teaching of both content and language (Marsh, Mehisto, Wolf, Jesus & Martin, 2011. p. 2).

The additional language in the Sri Lankan context is English. This definition explains that the learners' English language competency is a prerequisite in bilingual education. English as a Second Language - ESL curriculum in education is the path that equips the

learner with the necessary second language proficiency enabling the learner to study the subjects specified in bilingual education. English language curriculum scaffolds the learners Basic Inter Personal Communication Skills (BICS) and Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS) that are instrumental in pursuing highly cognitive content in bilingual education (Cummins, (1981a). No study has so far been done to find out the ESL curricular support in content learning in bilingual education in Sri Lanka. As this research focuses on the role of second language in bilingual education in Sri Lanka, findings of which will provide input to form a CLIL model that the Ministry of Education has now undertaken.

Theoretical significance of the study

In this research, the role of the second language curriculum in enriching the teaching learning process in bilingual education will be explored. Presently, ESL curriculum and bilingual curriculum at the junior secondary level, which are integral parts of one continuum, function as two discrete bodies. Garcia (2009) and Cenoz and Gorter (2015) reveal that in other countries ESL curriculum is organized in such a way that it facilitates BICS and CALPS in bilingual education. The significance of this blend can be explained in relation to Cummins's (1984) Common Underlying Hypothesis, Linguistics Interdependence Hypothesis and Threshold Hypothesis. All these hypotheses explain that language skills involving cognitively demanding tasks are transferable from one language to another. When the ESL curriculum supports improving the bilingual learner's second language skills namely BICS and CALPs, a bilingual learner will be able to apply them in learning the prescribed content specified in the syllabus. This can be realized only through a learning teaching approach capable of language transfer through language and content integration. The approach extensively used in the world in this regard is Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL). The findings of this research will provide insights for the researchers to develop a CLIL model, out of many CLIL models available, to suit the Sri Lankan context. This has been essential in Sri Lanka in order to realize the objectives of the Bilingual Education stated in the National Education Commission report (2003) as well. The findings of this research will provide quality input for NEC, the MoE, and the NIE to restructure the existing bilingual education that lacks a clearly defined mode and a framework.

Disciplinary significance of the study

As it is evident in the literature quoted above bilingual education in Sri Lanka has been implemented as a strategy to improve the second language proficiency of the learner. Presently, according to the preliminary observations made, English is taught as a separate subject in the Sri Lankan curriculum where various components of language are treated and taught discreetly. This approach focuses more on language competence of the learner than performance, and skill development (Stern, 1982). The traditional second language teaching syllabi aim at developing the learner's communicative competence. Bilingual education and various other approaches; Content Based Instructions (CBI), Content Based Language Teaching (CBLT), Cognitive Academic Language Learning Approach (CALLA) that involves

two languages in education including a second or a foreign language. Yet another salient feature in the approaches mentioned above is the integration of content and language in varying degrees. These approaches, applied in different forms of bilingual education mentioned above, provide opportunities for the 'learner to use the language' (second language) to learn and 'learn the language (second language) to use' Richards & Rodgers (2001) Larsen & Freeman, (2000) Marsh et al. (2011). Bilingual education, when implemented effectively, with a well-designed learning-teaching process, it is assured, will bring about quality second language learning.

Policy significance of the study

Language policy is defined as "the deliberate choices made by governments or other authorities with regard to the relationship between language and social life" (Djite, 1994, p.63). According to Lambert, (1975) language policy refers to rules set by authorities to govern the acquisition and/ use of languages. No policy framework has so far been designed concerning bilingual education except three cabinet papers.

1. Cabinet paper with the no. 01/0981/11/067 which is related to the National Amity Schools Project and approved on 21.12.2000

2. Cabinet paper with the no. 00/2164/11/016 which is related to Teaching subjects in the Science stream of GCE (A/L) in English and approved on 14.06.2001

3. Cabinet paper with the no. 08/0368/316/026 which is related to teaching selected subjects in all three streams (Science, Commerce, Arts) of GCE (A/L) in English and approved on 27.02.2008

In a preliminary survey done by the researcher it was evident that there has not been coordination among key stake holders in bilingual education. It is, therefore, necessary to have a dialogue among the decision-making bodies. Areas that should be considered when designing macro level and micro level policies are:

1. Designing and implementing bilingual curriculum.
2. Teacher recruitment and deployment.

The outcome of this research is a Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) model catering for Sri Lankan needs. This research can, therefore, make a contribution to the national bilingual curriculum in designing a bilingual policy for Sri Lanka.

Specific objectives

The study will be carried out in relation to the following specific objectives.

Analyze the content standards of the English language curriculum for grades 6 -11 in relation to Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL).

Study the process standards in teaching English in grades 6-11 in relation to CLIL.

Study areas where English Language Teaching (ELT) experts' intervention is necessary in teaching English in grades 6-11 in facilitating CLIL.

Design a second language teaching model suitable for the Sri Lankan context in supporting CLIL in bilingual education.

Literature review

Bilingual education has been an evolving concept. Although bilingual education as a concept was subject to official rejection in 1928 (the Luxemburg conference) and UNESCO (1951, Paris), the bilingual education act of the United States of America (2001) has sanctioned the use of more than one language in education. United Nations Congress Education amendments act 1974 also explains the use of two languages; first language and an additional language as media of instruction in education.

According to Hamers & Blanc (1983) bilingual education is a system of education in which at a given moment of time and for a varying amount of time 'simultaneously' or 'consecutively' instruction is planned and given in at least in two languages. Krashen (1985) illustrating the characteristics of bilingual education claims that the best bilingual programmes include English as a Second Language (ESL) instructions, sheltered subjected matter teaching and instruction in first language where non-English speaking children initially receive instruction in the primary language alone with instructions in ESL. Baker (2006) also claims that bilingual education refers to education in more than one language. Tejkalova (2009) citing (Huguet 2006) claims that there is research evidence to prove the positive impact of bilingual education on language improvement. Bilingual education, as Cummins (2009) observes, is a term which refers to the use of "two (or more) languages of instruction at some point in a student's school career. The languages are used to teach subject matter content rather than just the language itself according to him. In addition, Garcia (2011) recognizes bilingual education to be a programme to teach content through an additional language other than children's home language. (p.17). Fuller (2012) states that 'potential fostered in a' bilingual education programme is that languages other than the languages of instruction gain value, even if they are languages which are not prestigious" (p.115)

All definitions quoted above share one commonality; involvement of two languages, use of first language and an additional language as media of instruction in education.

Models of bilingual education

Studying models of bilingual education being practiced in the world, Heller (1999) and Baker (2006) identify three models of bilingual education namely immersion, developmental and transitional. All these models, implemented all over the world as a strategy to address various socio-political issues particularly, to accommodate two languages in education (Garcia, 2009).

These models also illustrate the use of two languages in education, making it evident that the objective of bilingual education is not to promote mere bilingualism but bi-culturism through bi-literacy; gaining mastery over two languages at the end of the process.

Table 1

Bilingual Models

Type	Model	Outcome
Additive	Developmental, Maintenance, Recursive, Dynamic, Enrichment	Proficiency in both the languages; dominant language and the native language. Preserving the native culture causing acculturation.
Subtractive	Immersion Transitional	Proficiency in the dominant language. Assimilating the target culture. Mainstreaming.

Out of the seven models indicated in the Table 1, maintenance model appears to be an appropriate model for Sri Lanka as its goals are multiple; promoting bilingualism and biliteracy; rather than an assimilationist goal, promoting pluralism, making use of English as a resource to develop of two languages, native and the additional are some of them. The expected outcome here is additive bilingualism associated with positive cognitive benefits. These goals can only be realized through a learning teaching approach capable of supporting the learner to gain mastery over the first language and the second language of the learner. Achieving goals of Bilingual Education in formal education requires a learning teaching process designed to suit the Sri Lankan context sensitive to its socio economic and socio-cultural needs. CLIL handbook (2016) also explains 3 bilingual models. The model that the hand book recommends is a model that and enrich preserves L1 and L2 which is additive in type.

Salient key concepts that are consistently used in discussing the learning teaching process in Bilingual Education are content standards and process standards. First two objectives in the study also examine the content and process standards in bilingual education. It is, therefore, necessary to explain these two areas.

Bilingual education and content standards

Achieving the first objective of the study requires the analysis of content standards of bilingual curriculum.

Tejkalova (2009) citing Asia Pacific Activities Conference (APAC) (2006) presents content as progression in knowledge, skills and understanding related to specific elements of a defined curriculum. Ball, J., & McIvor, O. (2013) identifies two types of content as declarative or conceptual content and procedural content. Declarative content is something

that the learner can declare. In other words, the learner's ability to communicate facts and information incorporated into subjects coherently and accurately. Procedural content, as he explains, is cognitive skills derived from various subjects. Dealing with content requires Higher-Order Thinking skills and different learning procedures. The learner has to interact with texts and find, differentiate, compare and contrast content. Such operations require the use of language as a means.

Following sources were referred to in order to have a comprehensive understanding of the term content standards in education and to assess their use in the learning-teaching process, especially in relation to the content in second language education.

A rubric was prepared based on Cummins's Framework in Figure 1 in evaluating instructional materials in bilingual education.
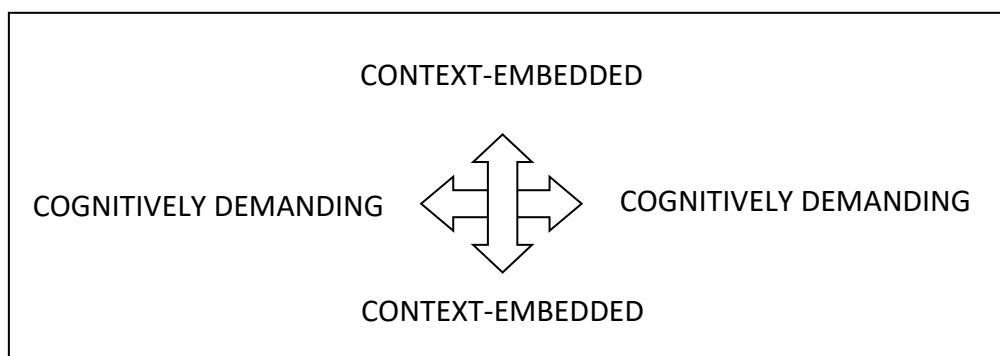
Source: Pearson Education 2009 Cummins's Framework and content standards

Figure 1. Cummins's Framework to Classify Language Activities.

Chamot (2009) identifies the following factors influencing literacy development in the learner.

- Academic oral fluency in the first language and in English
- Difficulties inherent in reading English.
- The role of teachers of English. (p.138)

These potential reading and writing difficulties need to be addressed by all teachers of English including the teachers teaching English as a Second Language, (ESL), English as Foreign Language (EFL), and Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) teachers.

In the Sri Lankan context, however, content standards are laid down and presented in the form of competencies in the national curriculum.

Achieving the second objective requires the analysis of the process standards of the bilingual curriculum. This section of the study examines literature relating to process standards with the aim of formulating an operational definition of process standards.

Louw and Muller (2014) defines process standards to be statements that describe skills students should develop to engage in the process of learning. Process standards are not specific to a particular discipline but are generic skills that are applicable to any discipline. He also points out that content standards and process standards in a curriculum are not rigid but permeable and stretchy.

Chamot's (2009) viewpoint is that process standards can vary depending on the nature of the discipline. She explains how the process standards differ in Mathematics, Science, Social science, and language arts. However, unlike content standards, all the four disciplines share common process standards too.

The status of the process standards in teaching English as a Second Language and teaching content in English in bilingual classes was studied in relation to an observation schedule. This schedule was adapted from the Sheltered Instruction Observation Protocol (SIOP) model, a tested tool (Echevarria & Short, 2010). In adapting the schedule, elements of the CLIL methodology suggested in Mehisto, Marsh, and Frigols (2008) were also incorporated.

SIOP protocol is designed to observe Sheltered Content-Based Instruction. When adapted, it can be used as a tool in observing the teaching-learning process in second language classes and teaching content in bilingual classes too. Some adaptations were done in the protocol to suit the Sri Lankan context. The objective of the National Education Commission (2003) in introducing Bilingual Education, the bilingual model, precisely the maintenance model, that suits the Sri Lankan context and the nature of CLIL model that the Sri Lankan Bilingual Education needs were also critically viewed.

Most of the features in the protocol are applicable to evaluate the learning-teaching process in second language classes and bilingual classes. These features are also in line with second language learning theories. When designing and implementing language lessons in the second language classes facilitating BICS and CALPS, ELT experts can act as facilitators in CLIL in Bilingual Education at all levels; in making policy decisions in designing ESL curriculum and in teacher education. In addition to the major theoretical foundation, teachers need to understand how bilingual learners acquire and learn a second language. Therefore, hypotheses relating to Language Teaching (ELT) are also incorporated into this study to support the major theoretical foundation. Vygotsky's sociocultural theory specially the notion of the Zone of Proximal Development can effectively be related to collaborative language learning.

- Krashan's theory of Second Language Acquisition (SLA) - L2 learning
- Michael Long's Interactional Hypothesis.

- Merrill Swain's Output Hypothesis.
- Lev Vygotsky's socio-cultural theory

The reason why I indent to incorporate these hypotheses into my study is that they all can be related to second language education in many ways. Bilingual education too involves the optimum use of additional, foreign or second language at various dimensions. In addition to that, competence in SLA theories too is essential in making Bilingual Education an effective teaching-learning approach in Sri Lanka especially in realizing language objectives.

Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) as an approach

Goals of bilingual education vary according to multiple needs of the context where it operates. An appropriate learning teaching approach, designed to meet the needs of the Sri Lankan context, therefore, is a prerequisite to realizing the objectives of Sri Lankan bilingual education. Content and Language Integrated Learning is one of the approaches capable of achieving the objectives of Bilingual Education stipulated in the National Education Commission (2003).

> 6"…introduced in junior secondary classes to provide an enabling environment to ensure that <u>all students</u>, irrespective of socio-economic and/ or regional disparities have the opportunity to acquire a level of English proficiency adequate for higher education and career advancement" (NEC, 2003, p, 178).

What is necessary to realize the goals of bilingual education as specified in the commission report is to design a teaching-learning process supporting learners to "acquire a level of English proficiency adequate for higher education and career advancement" (p.178).

The commission report focuses more on the improvement of the second language; functional use of the second language. The challenge lies here is to make use of the content, subjects specified in the curriculum, in order to improve the standard of English of the learner while at the same time improving the learner's content knowledge.

Wijayadharmadasa (2009) citing Darn (2006) CLIL approach is related to modern English Language Teaching in many ways. Brinton, Snow and Wesche (1989) refer to CLIL as "concurrent teaching of academic subject matter and second language skills' (p. iii).

These definitions share unique characteristics;

CLIL is a dual-focused teaching-learning approach aiming at bi-literacy through bilingualism; Sustaining and developing the first language and the additional language; second or foreign language, are also an objective of CLIL.

CLIL as an approach is permeable and adaptable.

There are various models of CLIL available in the literature on bilingual education. This part of the text focuses on four models which can be placed on a CLIL.

Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS)

Describing CALP Echevarria, Vogt, Short (2004) claims that CALPS is a language proficiency associated with schooling and abstract language abilities required for academic work. According to them, it is a more complex, conceptual, linguistic ability that involves Higher Order Thinking (HOT) skills such as analysis, synthesis, and evaluation.

CALPS, as it is evident in literature, is the context-reduced academic language in the classroom. It takes five to seven years for English language learners to become proficient in the language of the classroom due to the fact that non-verbal clues are absent and academic language is abstract.

Literacy demands are high (narrative and expository text and textbooks are written beyond the language proficiency of the students);

The role of Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS) in Bilingual Education

Bilingual education demands CALPS in order for it to be an effective teaching-learning process. Subjects prescribed for bilingual education are full of registers and jargons and therefore are academic in mode. The notion of CALPS is specific to the social context of schooling, hence the term academic language proficiency can thus be defined as "the extent to which an individual has access to and command of the oral and written academic registers of schooling" (Cummins, 2000, p. 67).

Another distinct language skill that can be associated with CALPS is Basic Interpersonal Communication Skills (BICS). BICS according to Cummins (1984) is the language that pupils acquire from their immediate and familiar environment in "context embedded" situations. He terms this language skill as playground language or day-to-day language that the learners need to fulfill their day-to-day requirements. Cummins claims that BICS can be acquired by a learner within 6 months to 3 years Cummins' data setting; research base, however, is Anglophone children whose language environment is contrastingly different from that of the Sri Lankan settings where learners do not have sufficient opportunities to acquire second language skills from their immediate environment. Thus, the status in Sri Lanka in the case of acquiring BICS is different. BICS in Sri Lanka has to be explained in terms of its sociolinguistic environment. English has been a foreign language to many in Sri Lanka and consequently, opportunities for the learner to acquire English in a natural environment are minimal. Formal classroom learning becomes the only source for the majority of the learners to acquire BICS. Even in the classrooms, the observed approaches used in the learning-teaching process are noninteractive. Support that the learners receive by way of scaffolding and underpinning is also minimal. Consequently, learners are deprived of a BBICS-enriching environment. The challenge, therefore, is to invent creative learning events in the learning teaching process to facilitate BICS in the learner.
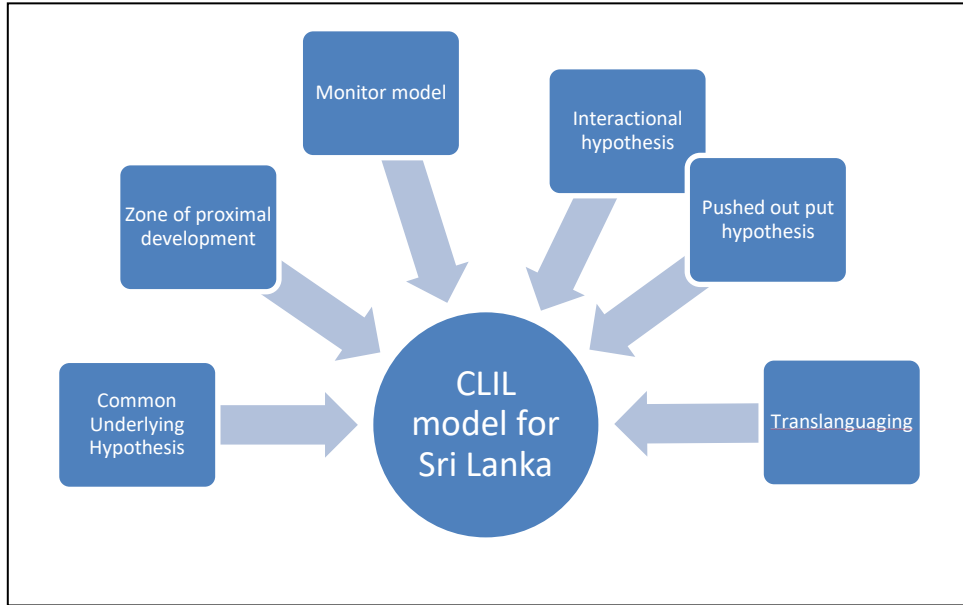
Figure 2. Constituents of a CLIL Model Facilitating Second Language Development.

Theories and hypotheses used in this study are condensed in the diagram given below
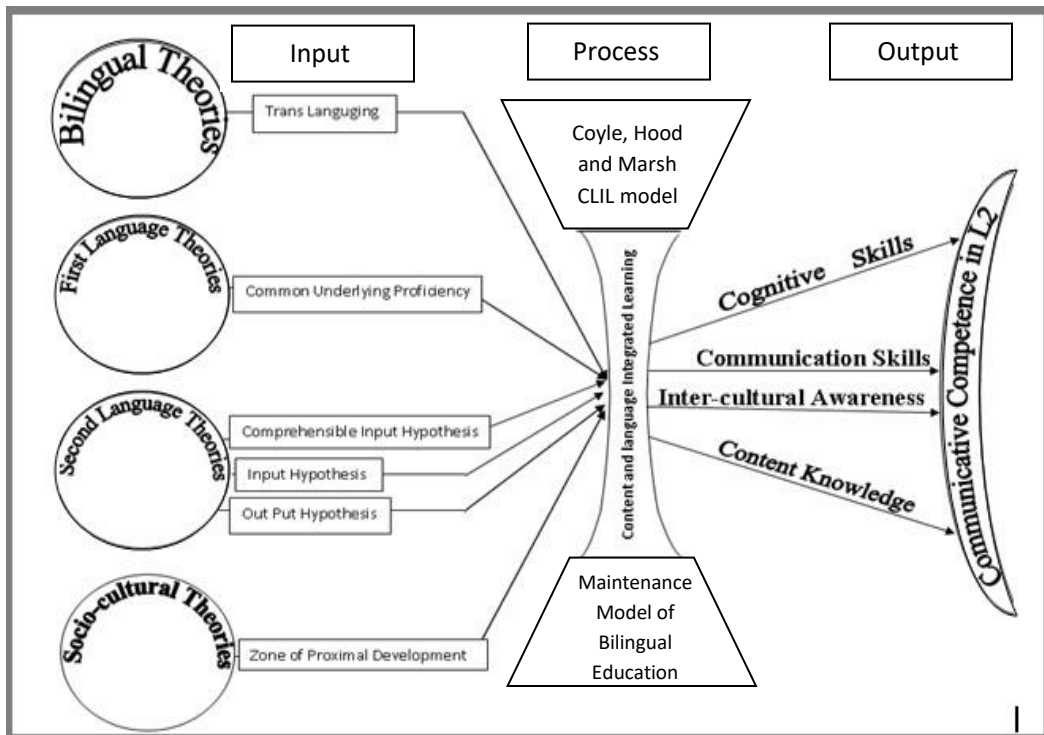

Figure 3. Graphical Presentation of Theoretical Perspective

Empirical evidence

Bilingual Education as a booster in second language development

An experimental study done in a multilingual setting Abu-Rabia and Sanitsky (2010) supports the potential of Bilingual Education in language transfer. The research was an experimental research. The experimental group used in this research was Russian Israeli children for whom Russian was the native language and Hebrew was their second language. The control group consisted of Hebrew students whose native language was Hebrew and they were not exposed to a second language as Russian pupils were. A test was administered to both the groups where cognitive and, meta-cognitive linguistic items were tested including IQ, reading strategies, syntactic judgment, orthographic choice, orthographic knowledge, and phonological awareness. In addition, language knowledge tests; vocabulary, word reading, spelling, and reading comprehension were also tested. Test results indicated that English skills among the native Russian speakers who had exposure to two languages; Russians and Hebrew, were stronger than the native Hebrew speakers on almost all measures. This experimental study shows the effectiveness of learning two languages in developing the second language skills of the learners. In the same study it was found that the learners need 3 competencies to be successful CLIL learners; foreign language competence, subject matter competence, and interactive competence.

Uchikoshi and Maniates (2010) present research evidence to support the effect of language transfer in Bilingual Education. Citing research evidence based on a three-year longitudinal experimental research taking children of 4 elementary bilingual schools who speak languages close in cognate patterns (Cantonese and Spanish) as the experimental group and monolingual pupils as the control group researchers have found that bilingual pupils have performed better.

These experimental researches also support the theoretical base of this research, Common Underlying Hypothesis, explaining the power of the use of two or more languages in education causing language transfer. Studies show that this transfer can happen between languages that are linguistically similar and languages that are quite different linguistically.

Teachers of English in the Sri Lankan bilingual context also can organize their teaching to facilitate the second language skills of the bilingual learner causing language transfer. An interdisciplinary approach where there is thematic compatibility between ESL curriculum and bilingual curriculum is a prerequisite to doing this. Also, the ESL teacher and the bilingual teachers' competency in material adaptation is a necessity. Most importantly, an interactive learning teaching process should be implemented in classrooms so as to have BICS and CALPS that are vehicular in language transfer.

A small-scale research Tejkalaova (2009) done to verify the hypothesis of CLIL being motivating and useful for the learners, shows positive results. The researcher has done a lesson based on Mathematics in four different classroom environments. She has employed numerous CLIL-specific methods to be the teaching-learning approach in teaching the lesson.

Citing research evidence of an experimental study done in a multilingual setting making use of 65 CLIL students and 65 and non CLIL students 15 to 16 in age to examine the status of most frequently implemented receptive vocabulary of CILL students and non CLIL students Alba & Maria (2013) claim that CLIL students outperformed non CLIL students in the following areas of vocabulary: kinship terms and friendly terms. Non-CLIL learners' performance, however, has become better in retrieving vocabulary items on animal terms and sport-related items. Based on this descriptive study Alba and Maria (2013) assert that CLIL learners are better in higher lexical variation and higher lexical richness.

Citing research evidence based on an experimental study Decrane et al. (2007) in a test measuring the pupils' first language skills have found that CLIL students had outperformed their non CLIL peers.

Research setting

Bilingual schools located in the two districts in the North Western Province (NWP); its pupils, bilingual teachers, and teachers of English teaching in bilingual classes, shifters, their parents were my source for the data. Administrative officers, and curriculum developers also became a rich data source.

NWP consists of two districts, Kurunegala and Puttlam. The province is divided into 8 zones for the convenience of administration; implementation and monitoring in education. There are 6 zones in the district of Kurunegala and two other zones in Puttlam.

Selecting the sample

Bilingual education is a recent development in Sri Lanka and, therefore, the number of bilingual schools is a minority being 17.5 of the total number of schools in the island. Bilingual education is in progress mostly in 1AB and 1C schools including a few type 3 schools and are located either in urban or in semi urban localities as shown in the table given below.

Table 2

Bilingual Schools in the North Western Province

Types	District -Puttlam Zones		District –Kurunegala Zones					
	Puttlam	Chilaw	Kurune gala	Ibbaga muwa	Kuliya pitiya	Giriulla	Maho	Nikawe ratiya
1AB	3	13	18	4	6	10	7	3
1C	2	5	5	8	1	3	13	19
Type 3	1	-	2	3	1	1	3	3
	6	18	25	15	8	14	23	25
							Total	134

Source: Department of Education North Western Province

Data gathering instruments

This study is a cross-sectional descriptive survey, exploring the status assigned to the second language component in the teaching-learning process in bilingual education, that can be explored through close observation of teachers and pupils in action. In addition to this, content standards and the process standards of the second language curriculum were analyzed. Both qualitative and quantitative data gathering instruments were used in collecting data to ensure the validity of the findings.
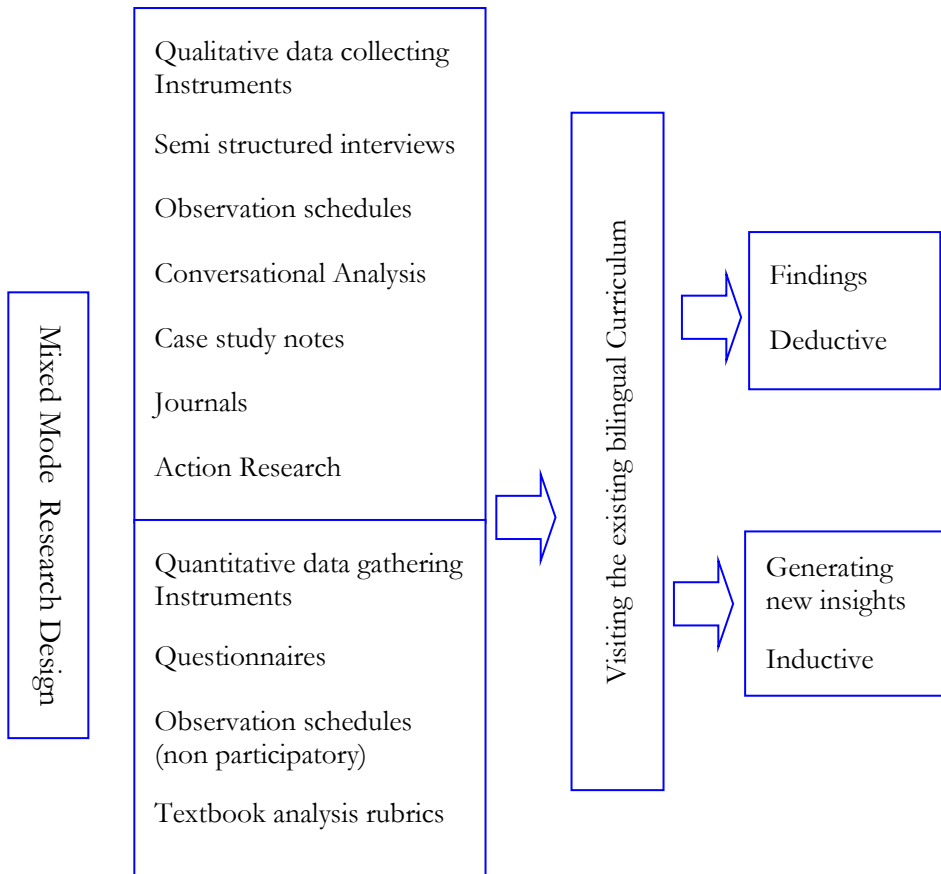
Figure 4. Data Gathering Instruments

Data analysis

Data presentation structure

Data collected in this research were analyzed and presented in relation to three objectives;

- to analyze the content standards of the English language curriculum for grades 6-11 in relation to (Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- to study the process standards in teaching English in grades 6-11 in relation to Content & Language Integrated Learning (CLIL)
- to study areas where English Language Teaching (ELT) experts' intervention is necessary for teaching English in grades 6-11 in facilitating CLIL.

Data collected in relation to the three objectives mentioned above are analyzed to invent a CLIL framework capable of facilitating the learner's subject competency and second language competency.

Analysis of content standards

Thematic compatibility between Second language textbooks and bilingual textbooks

Analysis of the textbooks was based on the following rationale.

Instructional materials; syllabuses, prescribed textbooks, and Teacher's Instruction Manuals, in the two areas mentioned above should be specially designed to facilitate CLIL in bilingual education.

Approach/s to deliver the content should be capable of supporting BICS and CALPS.

This potential in textbooks; ESL textbooks and Bilingual textbooks, were studied in relation to specially designed rubrics. The themes of ESL textbooks prescribed for grades 6 to 11 were compared with bilingual textbooks in relation to the rubric. Here the themes in the texts and practice activities like exercises and assignments and projects recommended were also analyzed. Although textbook is introduced as an aid to teaching the syllabi, the common practice in schools, as I observed, is teaching textbooks solely with no adaptation and no supplementary materials.

Table 3

Thematic Compatibility Between Language Textbooks and Bilingual Textbooks

Grades	Number of themes in English	Science	%	Rating	Maths	Rating	Geography	%	Rating	Citizenship Education	%	Rating
6	25	2	8%	1	0	1	3	12%	1	0	0%	1
7	24	7	29%	3	0	1	4	17%	1	1	4%	1
8	30	4	13%	2	2	1	3	10%	1	3	7%	1
9	32	0	0%	1	0	1	5	16%	2	5	16%	2
10	31	6	6%	1	0	1	2	6%	1	5	13%	2
11	48	14	29%	2	0	1	0	0%	1	10	21%	2

When comparing the themes of English language teaching texts with those of the bilingual texts, it was found, that the thematic compatibility in ESL textbooks is minimum in the grades specified above. This incompatibility prevents the ESL teacher from exploiting the texts in language textbooks in enriching the content knowledge and language skills of the bilingual learner.

Table 3 reveals that the ESL textbooks and bilingual textbooks remain discrete as there has not been a partnership among all stakeholders that are centrally and peripherally involved in designing the learning-teaching process in ESL education and in Bilingual education. The absence of a bilingual framework, as revealed in interviews, too is a reason for this incompatibility.

Compatibility of competencies of ESL textbooks and the content in bilingual textbooks

Competencies laid down in second language text from grade 6 to grade 11 were evaluated in relation to a rubric. The objective of this evaluation is to study the effectiveness of competencies in developing BICS and CALP of the learner. Two rubrics (a five-point scale) was prepared incorporating theories where this study was based on. The rubrics were evaluated by 5 experts on Bilingual Education and Teaching English as a Second Language applying the indicators to the textbook grade 6. The ratings of five experts were statistically tested to find the variance among the experts.

Table 4

Analysis of Essential Second Language Learning Competencies in ESL texts

Grades	Competencies	BICS	Rating		CALP	Rating	
6	29	7	Fair	2	22	Good	3
7	31	7	Fair	2	24	Good	3
8	34	7	Fair	2	27	Good	3
9	38	6	Fair	2	32	Good	3
10	41	3	Fair	2	38	V good	4
11	34	6	Fair	2	28	V good	4

Table 5

Analysis of Essential Competencies in Second Language Texts in Terms of Lower Order Thinking Skills (LOT) and Higher Order Thinking skills (HOT)

Grades	Competencies	Higher Order Thinking Skills	Lower Oder Thinking Skills
6	29	2	27
7	31	3	29
8	34	10	24
9	38	9	29
10	41	6	35
11	34	10	28

The potential of competencies in generating Higher Order Thinking (HOT) and Lower Order Thinking (LOT) was looked into in this analysis in relation to a checklist. This checklist was prepared taking Bloom's revised taxonomy, to be the base. As it is indicated in Table 5 textbooks focus more on improving the Cognitive Academic Language Proficiency Skills (CALPS) of the learner. Quite contrastingly, however, completion of activities designed based on the competencies, address Lower Order Thinking skills. An observation of the learning-teaching practice revealed that the learning-teaching process does not address this need adequately. That is why all grades in Table 4 fall into the "fair" category in the rating scale. Although competencies involve characteristics of CALP such as

- Academic Language

- Four language skills
- Reduced Context

Completion of activities, because of the way they are structured, demands less analytical skills. A study into the content standards reveals that bilingual learners need more CALPS in learning subjects specified in the bilingual curriculum. In other words, they need the second language to accomplish tasks demanding Higher Order Thinking skills. Also, as Cummins (1981a, 2004) claims CALP can bring about language transfer in bilingual education.

This facility, ESL textbooks facilitating second language use in Bilingual Education, is found to a lesser extent in language texts.

Analysis of learning outcomes in ESL texts and selected bilingual texts

Fifty-seven learning outcomes of ESL texts in the selected bilingual texts were analyzed using Bloom's Revised Taxonomy as a tool. Action verbs in the taxonomy of learning outcomes enabled the researcher to examine the expected learner performances in relation to content standards. This analysis is also in keeping with the first objective. Analysis of learning outcomes is more appropriate as learning outcomes measure learners' performances discretely in all three domains, cognitive, psychomotor and affective while competencies are broad and generic as performance indicators. Also, competencies are mostly articulated in pedagogical terms than in pragmatic and practical terms. Also learning outcomes, in the case of the second language, focus more on 'use' than 'usage 'in language.

Conclusions and recommendations

Introducing Bilingual Education to the Sri Lankan national curriculum is not based on a research-based study. First, it was English Medium Education for GCE advanced level classes and then the National Amity Project for the Junior Secondary Level. The terminology used to explain this programme was English Medium Education. It took three years (2001-2003) for the system to understand the terminology was inappropriate and the programme implemented was a type of Bilingual Education. Consequently, in 2003, the National Education Commission identified the programme to be Bilingual Education. Even by 2022, a bilingual framework proper including features of a teaching approach has not been designed. These drawbacks are the result of not having a bilingual framework or a model ensuring a partnership among key stakeholders and a rationale for clearly defined content standards and process standards. This arbitrariness has caused a series of problems in the Sri Lankan Bilingual Education curriculum.

It is evident that the instructional materials prescribed for bilingual education are direct translations of the monolingual curriculum. As it was revealed at the interviews held with the curriculum developers and the officers of the Education Publication Department,

the involvement of bilingual experts and second language experts was not sought in designing the curriculum. Consequently, the content standards of the Bilingual curriculum are purely content-focused, focusing only on teaching content.

Thus, both second language curriculum and content-based curriculum are not determined by Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) in Bilingual Education. The reason, obviously, is the absence of partnership among English Language Teaching (ELT) experts content experts, and policy designers.

Consequently, themes in ESL texts fail to support and facilitate the themes in bilingual texts. Classroom observations reveal that teachers lack knowledge and skills in adapting texts in language texts to facilitate BICS and CALP enabling learners to gain language skills and content necessary to engage in studying subjects prescribed in Bilingual Education. Lack of adaptation of materials has made learning English difficult for most of the students and this has increased shifters in bilingual classes.

There has not been a partnership among institutions responsible for making policy level decisions in designing Second Language and bilingual curricular and textbooks and other instructional materials. Interview data confirm this absence of partnership and the lack of collaboration among institutions has delayed designing a bilingual framework with an appropriate leaning teaching approach in Bilingual Education. Lack of collaboration between language teachers and bilingual teachers is also evident at provincial, zonal divisional and school levels.

Determining and designing content standards in the ESL curriculum and in Bilingual Education require a learning-teaching approach. Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) has been a widely used approach in contexts where Bilingual and Multilingual Education is in progress. CLIL as a dual focus approach emphasizes the teaching of content and second language in varying degrees, from "soft CLIL" to "hard CLIL". Although CLIL is discussed in workshops at various levels, and the resource materials published by the National Institute of Education accept this to be a teaching approach in Bilingual Education, so far, no policy level acceptance and authorization have been given to CLIL as an approach in the Sri Lankan Bilingual Education. Analysis of bilingual texts and ESL texts proves the above observation.

Recommendations to improve the status of Bilingual Education

Content standards of the ESL curriculum should be defined in terms of the objective of the National Education Commission in introducing Bilingual Education. Further, the status of English in the country; second or foreign language situation in sociolinguistic terms, in Sri Lanka should be identified. In doing so content standards of the Bilingual curriculum should also be studied. This study should be a collaborative work done by all key stakeholders involved in ESL education. At the institutional level, the Department of English and Foreign

language and Bilingual Education unit of the National Institute of Education, Educational Publication Department and the Bilingual Unit of the Ministry of Education should work collaboratively in deciding the content standards of the ESL curriculum too. An interdisciplinary curriculum should be the outcome of this collaboration. ESL curriculum should contain lessons capable of creating readiness in the learner to study the content prescribed in bilingual texts. Themes of the ESL syllabi should facilitate learning the content in Bilingual education by,

- Familiarizing the ESL learners with the themes of the Bilingual syllabi by way of including texts with exploitable themes corresponding to those of Bilingual Education.
- Introducing high-frequency words relating to subjects' terminology to the learner through second language lessons.
- Exposing the ESL learner to language functions and sentence patterns that are helpful in engaging in interactive activities and in academic use of language in learning content.

An operational definition for process standards should be formulated.

In the case of designing content standards, Education policy designers, and curriculum designers should work collaboratively using second language expertise and Bilingual Education expertise in designing rationale for process standards in the ESL curriculum facilitating Bilingual Education.

Bilingual branch of the Ministry of Education and the Foreign Language and the Bilingual branch of the National Institute of Education have identified CLIL to be the approach to teaching prescribed subjects in the Bilingual Education in Sri Lanka. Designing a CLIL model suitable for Sri Lankan context is essential. It should be a model comprised of Soft and hard CLIL.

A monitoring mechanism comprises of trained professionals to monitor the learning-teaching process in Bilingual Education including the teaching of English should be appointed. The practice is employing available In-Service Advisors who are not professionally qualified to observe the ESL teacher in a Bilingual Education context and then suggest feedback. The Bilingual programme being new, has generated a lot of issues pertaining to the teaching-learning process. These problems remain unattended to as there are no professionals region-wise to address these issues.

Bilingual teachers should identify problems and challenges they encounter in realizing language objectives in teaching the content in Bilingual classes. This can be done by a collaborative textbook analysis and peer evaluation of teaching.

Teachers of English can critically analyze these challenges and think of ways and means of supporting the content teachers. The support can be extended to the content teachers mainly in two ways. One is to do a consultation service for content teachers at the quality circles where teachers meet to discuss their professional issues relating to learning and teaching. Peer evaluation is another possible strategy.

Next step, which is the main focus of this study, is to organize the teaching-learning process collaboratively by the language teacher and the content teacher in teaching English to facilitate BICS and CALP of the second language learner.

Designing a second language teaching model facilitating CLIL in Sri Lankan Bilingual Education is the intended outcome of this research. as stated in the 4th objective of the study.

This study presents the characteristics of a CLIL framework that can be developed into a model subsequently. Developing a model could not be undertaken as it needs time to implement and trial the framework.

Characteristics of the proposed framework will be explained in relation to content standards and process standards and the tentative model suggested in chapter two.

A philosophy, vision and mission should be articulated to reach the aims and objectives of the bilingual curriculum.

Introducing an interdisciplinary curriculum or a cross-curriculum where there is compatibility among the themes in the ESL curriculum and the Bilingual curriculum has been a strong necessity.

Instructional materials for bilingual education, textbooks Teachers' Instructional Manuals and other related materials should specifically be written to suit the pupils those who study English as a second language.

ESL syllabus should be interdisciplinary enabling the second language teacher to exploit the texts easily enriching the content and language skills of the second language enabling him/her to transfer and apply these skills in learning content in Bilingual Education.

A functional syllabus is desirable ensuring communicative language learning.

Grammatical terminology should be labelled to highlight their functions in communication. For instance, instead of using the term degree adverb for the word very, the term intensifier can be used as the word very intensify meaning (semantically).

Process standards should be governed by the following principles.

- Status of English in Sri Lanka, whether it is a foreign language or a second language situation.
- Learner heterogeneity manifested in diverse forms, environmental, psychosocial, and intelligence.

Proposals of the National Education Commission (2003) as proposes bilingualism aiming at developing second language proficiency of the Sri Lankan students at junior and senior secondary levels. This, therefore, is the focus in bilingual education in Sri Lanka. A CLIL model that pays emphasis on improving second language proficiency of the learner is essential in reaching the aims of Sri Lankan bilingual education.

Learners have got to study 'context reduced' abstract content in English full of low frequency words. Abstract concepts are also incorporated into subjects. Pupils need Higher Order Thinking Skills to comprehend internalize and communicate the content. Further, Bilingual teachers are not equipped with required second language proficiency and English Language Teaching skills to enrich the learners' second language proficiency. One of the objectives of this study is to study the potential of Second language teaching in facilitating the bilingual and monolingual learners' second language skills.

Themes in the ESL curriculum should be in compatible with that of the content in the bilingual curriculum. The content, at the same time should be comprehensible to the learner. The vocabulary used in texts, length of the sentences and the style of writing can make content comprehensible. Comprehensible content in the ESL curriculum or the Bilingual curriculum facilitates learners' comprehension. Comprehensible content in learning tasks makes the tasks less challenging. Thus, interdisciplinary curriculum can facilitate language learning. Content in lessons in the action research were prepared based on this insight.

Learning tasks should be designed catering for the age and interests of the learners. Interactive learning should be the principle behind learning tasks. Insights gained from Comprehensible Input, Interactional Hypothesis and Output Hypothesis can be incorporated into the learning tasks.

The bilingual model aligns with the proposed CLIL model is the maintenance bilingual model. Maintenance model accommodates and maintains first language in education in addition to the additional language. This model of bilingual education, thus, has room to use mother tongue judiciously. In the maintenance model, can be effectively used in designing content standards. Use of bilingual strategies, such as displaying visuals in tri or bi lingual media is some of the translanguaging strategies. Such strategies are essential in the Sri Lankan context where exposure to second language is low.

These insights were incorporated into in designing the action research as an intervention mechanism in the study. The objective of the action research was to study the impact of second language teaching in facilitating learning content in bilingual education. Content compatible with the themes in bilingual curriculum was selected to be the content in ESL lessons. Learner centered interactive mode was the learning teaching process adopted in the learning teaching process. Insights in interactional hypothesis, input hypothesis and output hypothesis were incorporated into in designing the learning teaching process. Strategies based on these theories were found to be effective. Hence these theories are used as theoretical underpinnings of the proposed CLIL model.

Learning teaching process has to be planned collaboratively by the content teacher and the second language teacher in the proposed CLIL programme. Second language teachers' assistance is necessary for the content teacher to locate language elements, expressions, structures embedded into content lessons. Second language teachers can also help the content learner to incorporate ELT techniques in teaching content.
Second language teachers can also organize their language teaching lessons facilitating second language skills of both bilingual and monolingual learners. Second language teachers, then become strong elements in the proposed CLIL model.

Some changes in the administrative structure in schools also should be changed to accommodate the proposed CLIL model. Sufficient resources should be made available to the CLIL teachers to organize quality learning teaching sessions sustaining learner interests and motivation and learner engagement. Supplementary materials, audio visual aids necessary to make content comprehensible should be made available to the teachers. There should be enough space in classrooms for the learners to engage in interactive activities. The space can be made use of in displaying charts, graphs etc in bilingual mode.

Evaluation in the proposed CLIL model

Evaluation criteria in Bilingual Education should not be confined only to evaluate content. Criteria should be modified to evaluate language elements also.

The role and responsibility of the ESL curriculum has to be redefined in order to facilitate improving the second language proficiency of the bilingual learner.

Different CLIL models practiced in various contexts were discussed in sections in the study. A CLIL model has to be invented to suit the requirement of Sri Lankan Bilingual Education.

As it was evident in the classroom observations, teacher dominated lecture method is frequented in the learning teaching process. This practice prevents interactive learning in the classroom and therefore the use of BICS and CALP in the ESL classroom and the

bilingual classroom. In order to remedy this, rationale for lesson planning should be suggested in the Teacher Instructional Manual.

There should be a monitoring mechanism to observe the learning teaching process. Monitoring should be done by internal mechanism established by the school and by an external body.

Quality circle meetings that are dormant now should be activated enabling teachers and mentors to discuss findings made in monitoring sessions.

As the teachers observed are not inventive to the maximum, initially interactive model with interactive activities should be suggested in the Teachers' Instructional Manual for the teachers to be guided by.

A specifically designed lesson plan where content and language objectives are equally emphasized should be introduced to content teachers. These lesson plans should be designed collaboratively by the content teachers and language teachers.

Second language teachers are hesitant to use alternative approaches in the teaching learning process due to two reasons. One of the main reasons is the constraints in the exam-oriented syllabus. Teachers are made to take the content in textbook to be the only source in preparing pupils for examinations at zonal, provincial and national levels. There are instances where teachers are instructed to adhere to content lessons in textbooks by the administration. Another reason is that teachers of both categories do not venture to seek alternative materials.

In order to remedy the problems identified in the study, teachers should be allowed to use alternative approaches so long as they are in keeping with the rationale for process standards and content standards suggested in the study. Also, sources that can be made use of teaching should be made available to the teachers those who are not access to alternative texts.

The present education system in Sri Lanka also demands teacher involvement in administrative affairs that are distantly relevant to the learning teaching process. Such involvements can sometimes be a hindrance for the teachers to get fully involved in the learning teaching process. One of the reasons for not having an educational dialogue between the second language teachers and content teachers is the tight schedule that the teachers are involved in. Teachers should be immersed in an educational culture where they think leisurely and work collaboratively. This has been essential for the ESL teacher in Bilingual Education and the content teacher in the same position. Additional activities relating to administrative issues assigned to teachers should be reduced. More time should be made available to the teachers for affairs relating to learning and teaching.

Material adaptation should be made a major component in teacher training programmes. Supplementary materials facilitating content in the ESL curriculum and the

Bilingual curriculum should be made available to the pupils. These materials should be taken as a source for the teachers to use as alternative texts.

Role of the ESL teacher in ensuring process standards

ESL teachers should design learning teaching procedure in collaboration with the bilingual teachers setting both content and language objectives in lessons.

The syllabus being statuary, the teacher has no role in altering it. However, the teacher can adapt the content to suit different learner styles. They can exploit the text available to enrich the content and language skills of the learner; to use language to learn it and to learn language to use it. They can also make use of the text to set communicative tasks as a vehicle to improve the learners BICS and CALPS and play the role of an informant, monitor facilitator where necessary in the learning teaching approach.

In this regard, multiple interactions should be the rationale for mode of teaching.

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The Impact of Internal and External Factors of Students on Their Learning Process

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Abstract

This study aims to identify the significant internal and external factors of students on the students' learning process (SLP) in a non-state university in Sri Lanka when lectures are conducted online. Learning style and technology skills were considered as students' internal factors and access to technology, connectivity, and a conducive home environment were considered as students' external factors. Various attributes were considered for each factor. Required data were collected from the selected sample of students through two questionnaires. A new latent variable was developed to measure SLP based on 15 attributes related to the academic motivation of students. The distribution of SLP is skewed to the right with a mean of 72.7 and a median 76.8. The attributes under learning style such as, 'asking questions verbally', 'use of chat box for answers', 'use of video/audio clips', 'checking with individual students if they understand', and 'sharing computer screen' have a positive and significant impact on SLP. Among those attributes, 'asking questions verbally' is the most effective attribute of SLP. Among the attributes under technology skills, 'access to the delivered lecture via Eduscope' (Eduscope is where the registered students can access their recorded lectures online at the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT)) has a positive and significant effect on SLP and 92% of students use Eduscope. Among the attributes under technology, most students prefer Zoom to Microsoft Teams or as the shared platform to have lectures. However, the type of access does not significantly impact SLP. 'Use of laptops' as a connectivity device significantly and positively impacts SLP. Among the attributes of conducive home environment: 'background noise' and 'background not presentable' have a significant negative impact on SLP. These findings can be effectively used to plan an efficient online teaching environment. The new index developed is, a good proxy measure for SLP as the attributes of academic motivation of the lecturers, directly have an impact on SLP. It is recommended to carry out similar studies for programme-wise or subject-wise taking a proper sampling frame.

Keywords: New index for students' learning process, students' internal factors, students' external factors, weighted latent factors

Introduction

The closure of both state and non-state universities due to COVID-19 pandemic continues to have a significant impact on higher education system in Sri Lanka. In response to the significant demand for online teaching, the government provided the Zoom Pro video conferencing facility to all state university staff via the Lanka Education and Research Network (LEARN) for free of charge. The Telecommunication Regulatory Commission of Sri Lanka also introduced several subsidized data packages through various Internet Service Providers (ISPs) to support both academics as well as students in taking part in video conference-based teaching and learning. These facilities and online technologies pose new challenges of technical and non-technical nature to both lecturers and students in the universities. Thus, both state and non-state higher education sectors have taken additional steps to further support the online teaching learning process. Consequently, various studies were carried out by different authors on various aspects of online teaching and learning process in Sri Lanka (Pavithya, et al., 2021; Pinnawala & Hettige, 2021; Pathberiya et al., 2021; Wijesundara et al., 2021) as well as in other countries (Răducu & Stănculescu, 2021; Paul & Jerrerson, 2019; Barrot et al., 2021; Kalimullina, 2020). The study by Wijesundara et al., (2021) has reported that more than 80% of the students have claimed that the online delivery at SLIIT works well, enabling them to continue with studies smoothly.

Engaging learners during this pandemic is a significant challenge for lecturers as they have had no formal training in online teaching. Consequently, lecturers face challenges in adapting themselves to online teaching to support the SLP and enhance teaching with limited time available for communication with students as opposed to face-to-face (F2F) teaching. However, the extent to which lecturers have successfully mastered these techniques and which factors are most relevant to this process have not been adequately investigated. Nevertheless, it can be hypothesized that having a stable technological infrastructure and receiving adequate institutional support are the cornerstones of online learning. Furthermore, subjects which involve laboratory practicals such as engineering, sciences and which involve computer software for mathematics and statistics, etc. create further challenges for online teaching. To tackle those problems, no technology can replace the face-to-face teaching environment because there will be visual as well as verbal discussion which could help to improve students' thinking ability under a homogeneous environment. The learners (students) also have various problems in adjusting to the new environment. Furthermore, no studies have been carried out to compare students' logical thinking during F2F and online learning. Nevertheless, the factors related to intellectual, learning, physical, mental, emotional, social, and personality of teachers may impact the SLP, but no data driven studies were reported to find the impact of specific external and internal factors of both lecturers and students on students' learning process. The objective of this study is therefore to investigate the impact of specific external and internal factors of students on SLP based on a case study from a non-state university. This study can be considered as a continuation of the previous study carried out by Wijesundara et al. (2021).

Materials and methods

Population and sample

SLIIT was purposively selected to represent the non-state universities as it is the biggest non state university in Sri Lanka. It has more than 10,500 undergraduates and postgraduates students (Wijesundara et al., 2021). SLIIT has four faculties; namely Engineering, Computing, Business and Humanities & Sciences and two schools; namely Architecture and Hospitality as well as Culinary. All the undergraduates in SLIIT for the academic year 2001 comprise the population of the study while the students in the Faculty of Humanities and Sciences (FHS) were taken as the sample.

Primary data

The questionnaire that was designed to get the students' feedback under the quality assurance process which consists of 15 attributes (Table 1) for academic motivation of students (AMS) was used for data collection. Responses for each of their subjects were obtained from students who followed different modules for the degrees offered during June to October 2021 by various departments in the FHS. Thus, the sample size was 2064. The questionnaire had a 5-point Likert response scale (1 = strongly disagree, 2 = disagree, 3 = neutral, 4= agree, 5 = strongly agree).

According to past studies, no common factors have been used as external and internal factors for students. In this study, learning style and technology skills were considered as students' internal factors while access to technology, connectivity and conducive home environment were considered as students' external factors. To capture various attributes of the external and internal factors, an additional questionnaire that consists of seven questions was distributed to all 2064 students.

Statistical analysis

Basic exploratory analysis, chi-square analysis and exploratory factor analysis (EFA) were carried out using SPSS software. A novel indicator was developed as a Proxy Indicator for students' learning process based on the data collected on Academic Motivation of Students (AMS) (Table 1).

Results and discussion

Proxy variable for students learning process (SLP)

Academic motivation of students (AMS) means motivation of students towards academic activities by the lecturers. It is defined as the enthusiasm of students to participate in online classes, learning activities, and the extent of attention and effort the student puts

into different engagements (Cave, 2003). The fifteen attributes considered for AMS and the mean score for each attribute based on the students' response (ignoring the neutral cases) are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Mean Score for 15 Attributes Related to AMS

Code	Attributes used for AMS	mean score
S1	Learning objectives are clear	4.56
S2	Explanation is clear and understandable	4.54
S3	Presentation is interesting	4.48
S4	Friendly with students	4.60
S5	High degree of commitment	4.63
S6	Well prepared on each day	4.67
S7	Use practical examples	4.54
S8	Punctual & reliable	4.65
S9	Knowledgeable of subjects	4.71
S10	Helpful in subject matter	4.67
S11	Different learning styles	4.26
S12	Stimulates my interest	4.25
S13	Teaching materials are very helpful	4.57
S14	Lecturer has motivated me	4.32
S15	Uploaded all the teaching material on time	4.53

The results in Table 1 clearly indicate that the mean scores for almost all the 15 attributes are very high (> 4.5) with the exception of (i) "stimulate my interest", (ii) "different learning style" and (iii) "lecturer has motivated" confirming high level of student satisfaction for the online lectures conducted by lecturers in FHS. There's no doubt that these attributes directly influence SLP. Thus, a common factor can be developed based on those 15 attributes, as a proxy variable for SLP.

To identify such common factors (latent variables), exploratry factor analysis (EFA) was carried out via principal component factor extraction method with varimax orthogonal transformation after confirming that the observed data satisfied the precondition of factor analysis (Peiris, 2020). It was found that the initial system of 15 variables can be reduced to

a system of two independent factors and the corresponding eigen values are 9.37 and 1.08. Based on the size of the eigen scores, two factors were named as academic motivation of student factor 1 (AMS1) and factor 2 (AMS2) and defined as:

AMS1 = 0.103*S1 + 0.097*S2+0.023*S3 + 0.125*S4+0.206*S5 + 0.225*S6 +.

.257*S7+0.251*S8 + 0.273*S9+0.212*S10   (1)

AMS2 = 0.406*S11 +0.389*S12 +0.179*S13 + 0.319*S14 + 0.112*S15   (2)

By weighing the factors with respect to eigenvalues (Peiris, 2020) the proxy variable was defined as SLP = 9.37*AMS1 + 1.08*AMS2.

Distribution of SLP

The distribution of SLP is skewed to right (Fig. 1). The values of SLP varies from 19.3 (minimum) to 81.2 (maximum) with a mean of 72.7 and median 76.8. The first and third quartiles are 67.1 and 80.5, indicating that 25% of students got scores less than 67.1 for SLP while 25% of students got scores higher than 80.5 for SLP. Based on the scores of SLP, students were grouped in to two categories on the median value in order to find the association between different attributes and SLP.
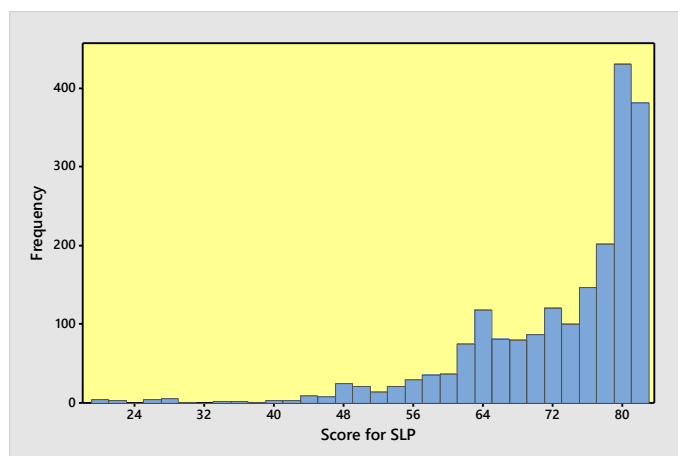
Figure 1. Distribution of SLP

Students' Internal Factors

Impact of learning style on SLP

The percentage scores for the various attributes are shown in Table 2.

Table 2

Students' Response (%) to Different Attributes Under Two Factors of Learning Style

Type of attributes	Percentage
1. Methods through which lecturer interacts with the students	
• Asking questions verbally	83.7
• Chat box for answers	63.5
• Video clips / Audio clips	48.5
• Checking with individual students if they understand	37.4
2. Extra methods through which the lecturer used to give more explanation to the student	
• Shared computer screen	92.2
• Writing pad /Tablet	23.9
• White board on camera	14.9

According to the results in Table 2, the most frequently used method by the lecturers to interact with students is, "asking questions verbally" (84%) followed by "chat box" (64%). The percentage of asking questions verbally is significantly higher than ($p < 0.5$) that of other three attributes.   Further, it shows that, "shared computer screen" is the most popular tool used by the lecturers for additional explanation and it is also significantly higher than ($p < 0.05$) that of the other three attributes. The null hypothesis: there is no significant association between the status of use of these attributes and level of SLP was carried out using chi-square analysis. The summary results are shown in Table 3.

Table 3

Status of Significance Association Between Attributes of Learning Styles and the Levels of SLP

Attributes related to type of approach for interaction	P value	Attributes related to extra method used	P value
• Asking questions verbally	0.000	• Shared computer screen	0.000
• Chat box for answers	0.000	• Writing pad /Tablet	0.102
• Video /Audio clips	0.000	• White board on camera	0.175
• Checking with individual students if they understand	0.000		

As all the p-values are less than 5% under type of approaches for interaction, it can be concluded with 95% confidence that the four attributes of which lecturers interact with students are positive and significantly affect the SLP. Similarly, among the extra methods used by the lecturers, the shared computer screen has a positive and significant impact on SLP. Results in Table 4 clearly indicate that percentages of students above the median value of SLP among the students who use such attributes is significantly higher than that of students who do not use such attributes. Furthermore, the difference between percentages in column 2 and column 3 in Table 4 is the highest for the attribute, "asking questions verbally"; which confirms that asking questions verbally is the most effective attribute among the attributes under internal factors.

Table 4

The Percentage of Students Who Obtained SLP Higher Than Median

Attribute	Yes	No
Asking questions verbally	58.8%	27.6%
Use of chat box for answers	59.7%	43.2%
Use of Video /Audio clips	66.2%	46.2%
Checking with individual students if they understand	61.4%	46.4%
Shared computer screen	55.7%	38.8%

Impact of technology skills on SLP

The technology skills were judged by the percentage score (%) obtained for different methods which students used to access delivered lectures (Table 5).

Table 5

Percentage Score (%) for the Attributes (methods) of Access to Delivered Lectures

Method of access	Percentage use (%)
Eduscope (E) alone	64.6
Google Drive or one drive (G) alone	0.6
YouTube (Y) alone	2.5
Microsoft Stream Video (M) alone	2.3
E+G	12.2
E+Y	15.6
E+M	2.2

Table 5 indicates that the Eduscope alone is used by 64.6%. The use of other three methods alone is extremely low compared to the use of Eduscope. Furthermore, Eduscope with Google Drive / one drive, Eduscope with YouTube and Eduscope with Microsoft Stream Video were used by 12.2%, 15.6% and 2.2% respectively. These results confirm that Educsope is used by at least 94.6%. It was also found that all these methods have positive impact on SLP and the highest impact was found among the students who use both Eduscope and the percentage of students having SLP above median is more than 50% for all seven cases in Table 5.

Students' External Factors (SEF)

Online teaching platforms are education portals that enable teachers to deliver lectures online in ensuring continuity in education. Thus, digital devices like laptops, tablets, etc. are essential items for students to access information for online learning. . If students can not access their classes, lectures, or assignments online; it puts them at a steep disadvantage. Thus, one of the biggest challenges that online education faces is the connectivity of digital devices. Unfamiliar environments will also cause the students to feel stressed, which can affect the students' learning. Moreover, the smooth conductive home environment is also essential for better online delivery. Therefore, three attributes namely (i) access to technology, (ii) connectivity and (iii) conducive home environment were considered for students' external factors.

Impact of access to technology (ACCTECH) on SLP

Internet access opens doorways to a wealth of information, knowledge, and educational resources. Access to technology is influenced by many controllable and uncontrollable factors. In this study, the access to technology was judged by the rate of use of the platforms of which students prefer most to have the lectures. The students' preference for the three main platforms for online teaching can be ranked as zoom (80.8%) > teams (6.0%) > share power point - SPP (1.1%). This is an interesting study to investigate why students do not prefer Teams. However, no significant association was found between SLP category and different online platforms ($\chi_1^2 = 1.146 \, p = 0.284$) .

Impact of connectivity on SLP

One of the biggest challenges that online teaching faces is the connectivity via digital devices, which leaves many students without access to broadband connectivity. The three ways in which online links for the lecture is received are CourseWeb (CW), Emails (EM) and WhatsApp (WA). The CW is the Learning Management System at SLIIT. It is customized to suit SLIIT. The most popular device used to join online lectures by the students is the laptop. Laptops alone is used by 62.2%. The percentages using desktop alone and smart phones alone are 5.3% and 1.5% respectively. The balance 31% of students uses more than one device. Results in Table 6 indicate that the type of device used is significantly associated

with the level of SLP ($\chi^2_3 = 21.757, \; p = 0.000$). Among the laptop users, the percentage of students getting higher than the median of SLP (53.6%) is significantly higher than the percentage of students getting higher than the median of SLP when desktops or smartphones are used.

Table 6

The Percentage of Students Who Obtained SLP Higher Than Median

Method of joining online lectures	Yes
Laptops	53.6%
Desktops	36.4%
Smartphones	48.4%

Impact of conducive home environment (CHE)

In order to get information on CHE, the students were asked to specify whether they came across the following difficulties: namely connection issues, power failure, lack of data, background noise, background not presentable and device not suitable. The percentage scores for the above six attributes under CHE are shown in Table 7.

Table 7

Difficulties Faced by Students in Online Learning (in %)

Attributes under COHE	Percentage *
Connection issues (CI)	82.6
Power failure (PF)	75.4
Lack of data (LD)	44.7
Background noise	17.4
Background not presentable	6.9
Device not suitable	3.9
None	5.4

 * Sum is not 100 due to multiple response

Results in Table 7 indicate that among the six attributes considered under CHE, main difficulties faced by the students are connection issues (82.6%) followed by power failures (75.4%). However, the Chi-square analyses found that only 'background noise', 'background not presentable' and 'power failure' are significant factors (p < 0.05) on the level of SLP.

The percentage of students that obtained SLP higher than median when background noise is not present (55.7%) is significantly higher than that of when background noise is present (44.3%). Similar results were obtained for background not presentable. Background noise can exist due to various reasons depending on the environment of the place where you use internet. Unlike face-to-face delivery, the environment under online learning is significantly varied among students which can be considered as an uncontrollable variability.

Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

When there are no direct measurements to measure students' learning process (SLP), the weighted latent factor developed in this study based on 15 attributes related to the students' academic motivation can be used as a good proxy indicator to measure SLP. The indicator: $SLP = 9.37*AMS1 + 1.08*AMS2$ was defined as a linear function of two latent factors: (i) academic motivation of students factor 1 (AMS1) and (ii) academic motivation of students factor 2 (AMS2); identified using exploratory factor analysis.

Different attributes of students related to internal and external factors have significantly positive and negative effects on SLP. Among the attributes of which lecturers used to interact with students, 'asking questions verbally', 'use of chat box for answer's, 'use of video/audio clips', 'checking with individual students if they understand', and 'use of shared computer screen' have a significant and positive impact on SLP. Among the attributes , the lecturer giving more explanations, and 'shared computer screen' have a significant and positive effect on SLP. The percentage of students having high SLP among those who practise the above internal attributes is significantly higher than that of students who do not practise above attributes. Access to technology, connectivity and conducive home environment were considered for students' external factors. There is no significant association between SLP and different online platforms used by the students. Among the conducive home environment, 'background noise' and 'background not presentable' have a significant and negative impact on SLP. Though this study was based on a sample based on a non-state university, results derived can be effectively used to improve the students' learning process under any environment.

Recommendations

The above results were applied irrespective of the subjects and programs. Thus, it is recommended to carry out similar studies subject-wise or programme-wise in order to find with-in-variability of internal and external factors. As no marks of the students were obtained, a proxy indicator was developed using marks given by the students for the 15 attributes related to academic motivation. Thus, it is suggested to test the relationship between actual SLP and the new index.

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Differences in the Lexico-grammatical Features of Legal Letters of Demand Written by Lawyers and Students

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Abstract

Though many law students need improvement in terms of the effective use of language features in professional legal letter writing, the language use of professional legal genres has not been adequately explored. Therefore, this study compared the lexico-grammatical features of 60 legal letters of demand written by lawyers and law students to identify differences that are useful for the writing pedagogy of legal letters of demand. The analysis was supplemented with the perspectives of the lawyers and students on their choices of the types of lexico-grammatical features. English for Specific Purposes (ESP) move analysis and the constructivist grounded theory (CGT) methods were intersected for data collection and analysis of the letters and views of the lawyers and students in order to analyze the interaction of lexico-grammatical features, their functions, and the writers' rationales for the choice of those lexico-grammatical features. The results included that the letters of the lawyers and students differed in lexico-grammatical features such as genre-specific formulaic expressions, direct utterances, polite forms, and legal terms. These differences decreased the effectiveness in such important areas as choice of formulaic expressions, legal terms, polite forms, and direct expressions according to the lawyers interviewed. The students' views were related to the necessity of improving the formulaic expressions in writing legal letters of demand. Activities that encourage students to compare their informal expressions and equivalent formulaic expressions in the lawyers' letters of demand should be incorporated into the teaching materials of legal letters of demand.

Keywords: letters of demand, lexico-grammatical features, formulaic expressions, legal terms, politeness

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Introduction

Law students should be advised and assisted in writing effective legal letters since they should have the rhetorical consciousness and abilities necessary to do so in their prospective workplaces. Clarence et al., (2014) claim that legal professionals throughout the world are lamenting how poorly many graduates can properly express their opinions and expertise once they reach the professional field (p. 839). In Sri Lanka, after the successful completion of the final year exams at the Sri Lanka Law College, law students are required to complete an apprenticeship programme with a senior attorney-at-law for at least six months. Consequently, a trainee is admitted to the legal profession as an attorney-at-law once he or she has acquired the necessary skills, under the supervision of a senior attorney (The Sri Lanka Law College, 2018).

The teaching of English for Specific Purposes (ESP) should introduce students the concerns of practitioners/professionals (Conrad et.al. 2015). Most of the legal scholars who teach in legal writing courses have addressed the necessity of enabling law undergraduates to recognize the expert/novice distinction in genre-based reading and writing tasks. 'While our students cannot realistically expect to achieve the level of expertise now that they will later in their careers, understanding the expert/novice distinction can help them 'move further along the continuum toward expertise' (Webb, 2017, p. 320).

It is identified that many law students need improvements in terms of the effective use of lexico-grammatical features in writing legal letters of demand. This is one of the most essential skills for a practicing lawyer. Rappaport (2008) defines a letter of demand as "a letter written on behalf of a client in which the attorney demands that the recipient take or cease taking a certain action" (p. 34). Legal letters of demand are an important genre for lawyers, serving a vital communicative function by influencing the other party to fulfil a demand to resolve the conflict prior to litigation.

Most law students are required to work with a senior lawyer towards the end of their degree program, and they are likely to do a lot of drafting, including letters of demand. By the time they give oaths and start practicing, they want to improve their writing skills to produce well-conversed legal genres. During their apprenticeship, they are given the responsibility of drafting legal letters of demand for their seniors, who instruct and provide them with templates for writing. Therefore, the proper use of lexico-grammatical features and having awareness of the rhetorical patterns of a letter of demand are of vital importance to meet the requirements in writing legal letters of demand.

English language teaching programmes should meet workplace demands by equipping law students with the necessary competence in the use of rhetorical patterns in legal genres. To become effective members of the legal discourse, law students must learn how to read and produce genres shared by lawyers. Learning to write is inextricably linked to learning the legal discourse valued and invested in by the legal community one is attempting

to join (Candlin et al. 2002, cited in Clarance et al., 2014, p. 849). As such, writing legal genres involves using the accepted genre conventions of lawyers, which tends to be a demanding task for many law students. They have to follow the writing norms of a discourse community and conventions of genres, and fulfil expectations of their audience (Hadavi & Moghaddam 2015, p. 588). Law students should be instructed about the necessity of the lexico-grammatical features needed to write letters of demand. Therefore, this study analysed the lexico-grammatical features of 30 authentic legal letters of demand written by lawyers and 30 scenario letters of demand written by law students to identify the students' weaknesses in the use of lexico-grammatical features in comparison to the lawyers' lexico-grammatical choices.

Literature review

Genre analysts have paid attention to the impact of lexico-grammatical features on the communicative purposes that they serve in a text. Swales (1990) classified typical expressions that are used to realize a step into further categories, which are 'typical examples of the linguistic exponents and signals' (p. 144). In his 'Create a Research Space' (CARS) model (Swales, 1990), each move is realized through several steps that have typical lexico-grammatical features. For instance, 'Step 1 Claiming Centrality' presents the significance of a study. "Centrality claims are appeals to the discourse community whereby members are asked to accept that the research about to be reported is part of a lively, significant, or well-established research area" (Swales, 1990, p. 141). Swales's analysis of the centrality claims consists of the following typical expressions.

'Recently, there has been a spate of interest in how to . . .'

'In recent years, applied researchers have become increasingly interested in . . .'

'The possibility . . . has generated interest in . . .'

'Recently, there has been wide interest in . . .' (Swales, ibid).

Swales (1990) classifies these typical lexico-grammatical expressions that are used to claim centrality (Step 1 of Move 1 of the CARS Model) into three types of communicative purposes (i.e., claiming interest or importance, referring to the central character of the issue, or claiming that other researchers are interested in the issue).

Following Swales's analysis of the lexico-grammatical features in the CARS model, the subsequent move analysts have examined the typical expressions used in many professional genres. For instance, Flowerdew and Wan (2006) conducted a micro-linguistic analysis of politeness strategies used by a group of writers of tax computational letters. They claimed that 'politeness is based on […] how speakers attempt to establish, maintain, and save face during interaction' (p.145). Further, Bhatia (2012) identified a very high incidence of the present perfect tense, nominals associated with positive attributes (e.g., a world-class management team), and verb forms for future expectations in the lexico-grammatical analysis of the letters of organizational achievements written by chairpersons to shareholders of a

company. He remarked that those typical lexico-grammatical realizations help corporate writers project a positive image of organizational achievements, which depicts the relationship between the lexico-grammatical features and communicative purposes (Bhatia, 2012, p. 243). Bhatia (2012) insists on the rationale for the inclusion of positivity in such a letter, as businesses tend to downplay indications of negative performance (ibid.).

Few studies in the ESP literature have analysed authentic legal documents of lawyers in order to understand the genetic characteristics of the legal profession, i.e., the structure of law reports (Durrant & Leung (2016). Studies by Bhatia (1993), Maley (1987), Ahmad (2009), Rasmussen and Engberg (1999), Derahvasht (2011), and Albi (2013) have examined the textual, lexico-grammatical, and discoursal features of the legal genres. Few ESP genre analysts, such as Nguyen & Miller (2012), Conrad (2017), and Conrad et.al. (2015), have investigated the weaknesses in the rhetorical features of ESP learners' corpora in relation to the writings of professionals. Few corpus linguists (i.e., Conrad, 2017; Conrad et al., 2015) have investigated the differences between engineering practitioner and student writing in large collections of texts and identified the most serious student weaknesses in rhetorical features in relation to practitioner writing. In the same tradition, Nguyen & Miller (2012) compared scenarios of English business letters written by Vietnamese English as a Foreign Language (EFL) students with authentic business letters written by business professionals.

It is identified that in the tradition of ESP genre analysis, there is a paucity of legal genre analyses that focus on expert and novice distinctions and intend to bridge the gap between learner and practitioner writing to raise learners' rhetorical consciousness of the necessary discursive practices. The reason may be that the genre is "typically hidden, 'out of sight' or occluded' from the public gaze" (Swales, 1990, p.46), and it is mostly difficult to obtain samples due to the confidential information in such letters. This is due to the fact that lawyers write in everyday practice largely from 'occluded genres' that are not easily accessible as student texts or published documents (Swales, 1996, p.88). Most material developers can easily adopt online resources, as collecting authentic samples is difficult due to the occluded nature of the genre. Therefore, to fill the gap, this study explored the differences between the lexico-grammatical features of 60 letters of demand written by a group of lawyers and students (30 letters from each group) to identify students' weaknesses.

Methodology

This study is a qualitative genre analysis that intersected the move analysis approach (Swales, 1990) and the CGT methods. The lawyers' letters of demand were collected from 15 lawyers, and 10 of them participated in the subsequent interviews. They had been writing letters of demand in both English and Sinhala and were specialized in civil law (i.e., land matters, testamentary-related issues, divorce, and matrimonial), and commercial law (i.e., company contract matters, contractual obligations, intellectual property matters, and writs (orders from superior courts). They worked in district courts, appeal courts, or higher courts in Colombo. All of them had more than five years of experience in the profession, which was

one of the criteria for selecting them for the subsequent discourse-based interviews. Seven of them had their own templates for writing letters of demand, which were also used to guide their apprentices. The majority had been writing them in both Sinhala and English.

The 30 letters of demand written by the students were collected from 67 letters sent by a group of second-year law students who followed a four-year Bachelor of Law Degree program in a Sri Lankan university. They were contacted through an e-mail invitation, requesting them to provide the scenario letter of demand they had written for a homework assignment in the English module. In the scenario letter, the students were expected to imagine themselves as a lawyer who demanded an unsettled payment for a supply of medical equipment.

The data collection process of this study was initially driven by purposeful sampling (based on criteria decided) and later by the theoretical sampling used in the CGT methodology: sampling for data that informs their categories (Charmaz & Thronberg, 2020). The inclusion criteria for the letters of demand were based on the following two typical communicative purposes of the two types of letters.

a) Inclusion of a demand statement (i.e., the exact sum of money due and owing or compliance with another legal obligation)

b) Consequences for non-compliance (taking legal actions)

The present study targeted the lawyers who had been writing letters of demand in English and a group of law students who had practiced writing them in the university's legal English teaching program. The lawyers were contacted through known contacts based on snowball sampling. Similarly, a few students who provided letters were contacted, and they were requested to help the researcher recruit other students for interviews. Ten law students (6 females, and 4 males) whose letters were analysed were requested to participate in discourse-based interviews. They were between 23-24 years of age and were expected to obtain the required qualifications to be an attorney-at-law, which would provide them the ability to practice in all Sri Lankan courts.

In the current study, theoretical sampling was based on a further understanding of the constructed categories of lexico-grammatical features. Charmaz (2006) emphasizes that theoretical sampling pertains only to conceptual and theoretical development, and it is not about representing a population or increasing the statistical generalizability of your results" (p.106). Thus, the sample size for both lawyers and students was decided as per the point of theoretical saturation of the categories of data (Charmaz, 2006, 2014). Initially, the total number of letters to be collected was estimated as 25 from each category and 8 interviews from the participants. However, in the second stage of coding the data, theoretical sampling was used to determine the saturation point of the data: 30 letters (from each type of letters)

and 10 interviews (from each group of participants). Once in this stage, categories of data were strengthened, the analysis had exhausted, and no new data emerged.

Results

The analysis of the differences between the lexico-grammatical features in the letters written by the lawyers and students is presented in the following categories of data. The differences analyzed were also supplemented with an analysis of the perspectives of the lawyers and students.

Formulaic expressions

A major difference between the lexico-grammatical features of the letters written by the lawyers and students was related to the use of formulaic expressions. Formulaic expressions are genre-specific expressions that have consistency in their form, meaning, and use among users of a genre. For example, the formulaic expression 'I write on the instructions of my client...' that was used to introduce the client in lawyer's letter of demand was consistent across all 30 lawyers' letters (LLs). In contrast, the typical expressions used to introduce a client (in *Move 1: Opening*) varied across the students' letters (SLs), as presented in bold type in the following sentences.

    (1)   **I act on behalf of** SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd, who has engaged our firm Themis and Associates… (SL25)

    (2)   **We write for** SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd, Colombo 3 who has agreed to supply medical equipment value of Rs.39, 552,397/- to your company. (SL3)

    (3)   **We take actions on behalf of** SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd, (SL16)

In addition, in *Move 1: Opening*, the use of continuous forms was also prevalent in the students' letters, and they are listed below.

    (1)   **I am writing** this letter on behalf of SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd… (SL9)

    (2)   **We are representing** SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd which is located in Colombo 03 and who has engaged Themis and Associates to assist for this matter. (SL28)

    (3)   **This letter is being sent** on behalf of our client SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt.) Ltd (SL14)

These variations in the use of expressions in *Move 1: Opening* in the students' letters are a weakness in the students' letters in comparison to the consistent use of formulaic expressions in the lawyers' letters. Similarly, the use of lexico-grammatical features of *Step 1*

of Move 2: Informing the role of the client (M2S1) of the lawyers' letters were also consistent and it informs that all instructions are provided by the clients:

(1) "**I am instructed that my client** has in the year 1983, purchased Lot No. 2 of Plan No. … (LL2)

(2) "**I am further instructed that […] my clients** made arrangements to sell the said property to a prospective buyer. (LL2)

The above examples are from the same letter (LL2), and they depict that the lawyer repeatedly insisted on the fact that he followed the instructions given by the client in step *M2S1: Informing the role of the client.* However, the formulaic expression 'I am instructed that…' was not prevalent in the majority of students' letters. Instead, the students often referred to the contract and other sources (i.e., 'According to the contract…', 'As stated in SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt.) Ltd. account statements…') to inform the role of the client.

Direct expressions

The lawyers used direct speech or active voice in stating the unlawful act or breach of contract of the opponent:

'…**you have breached your promise and failed to honour** the Lease Agreement and provide with the necessary licenses/infrastructure to my client' (LL5)

In the majority of the lawyers' letters, active voice verb phrases (i.e., is due and owing, have uttered, and discouraged, has commenced) were mostly used to mention the breach of contract, which are more explicit than the use of passive constructions prevalent in presenting the breach of contract. The examples below are typical uses of passive verb forms in the students' letters, and they are more indirect than the lawyers' expressions.

(1) '**…the credit purchase made by Rick and Morty Labs (Pvt) Ltd has not yet been settled**.' (SL23)

(2) 'According to the invoice present in hand at SMS (Pvt) Ltd. **a credit sale of Rs. 27,092,147/- has been made to your company which is yet to be settled**.'(SL8)

With the use of active voice, the lawyers' focus was always on the unlawful actions of the opponent, whereas the students mostly emphasized on the unsettled amount of money.

Specific expressions

The lawyers' letters mostly included specific expressions. For example, the choice of vocabulary in Move 1 Step 1: Mentioning the topic in the lawyers' letters was more specific than the choice of vocabulary in the topics of the 30 letters of the students. Except 2 student letters, all the topics began with the term 'Regarding' as in the following examples.

(1) 'Regarding the Outstanding Payment' (LL16)
(2) 'Regarding with an unjustly defaulted transaction' (LL24)

However, the topics of the lawyer letters varied with the expressions related to their specific demand:

(1) 'DAMAGES – WRONGFUL INCLUSION OF NAME IN CRIB DATABASE' (LL7)

(2) 'RE- UNAUTHORISED STRUCTURE –APP.NO. –BA/82/2022'(LL11)

Specific numbers (i.e., application numbers/deed numbers/policy numbers) were included in the majority of the topics of the lawyers' letters in contrast to more general terms (i.e., 'outstanding payment', 'unjustly defaulted transaction') in the topics of the majority of the students' letters.

Formal expressions

When the expressions used to inform the reader of the loss or damage in the two types of letters were compared, the students' expressions seemed to be less formal than the expressions in the lawyers' letters. The following are formal expressions used by lawyers to indicate loss or damage.

'…my client **has suffered immense hardships and damages** due to rejection of application…'(LL25)

(1) '…my client **had incurred a sum of Rs. 30,700.00** as repair costs for the vehicle…'(LL4)

(2) '…In the above circumstances **my client reasonably estimates the damages he suffered done to your breach of trust and wrongful conduct** violating his economic rights estimated at …'(LL25)

In contrast, the students' letters consisted of the following less formal expressions to inform the loss or damage.

(1) 'SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd, **has faced severe problems**.' (SL6)

(2) '…SMS (Pvt) Ltd Company had **to face some troubles** because they have monetary difficulties.'(SL11)

(3) '…my client **had to bear Rs. 150,000 as of the interest to the Bank**.' (SL19)

The above examples depict the students' use of informal expressions, which was more apparent in Move 4: Demanding, which is the most important communicative purpose of a letter of demand. In contrast, the formal expressions used by the lawyers to state the specific demand are presented below.

(1) 'In the premises aforesaid, I am instructed **to demand of you and I do hereby demand that you pay my client the sum of**…' (LL15)

(2) 'Under the aforesaid circumstances, **I am hereby instructed to demand** from you that you take immediate measures to obtain the necessary licenses' (LL4)

Particularly, the expression "I am hereby instructed to demand" is used to state the specific demand in all the lawyers' letters, whereas the students' letters often included the following verb forms in *Move 4: Demanding* as in the following examples.

(1)   '…we **request** that you settle the remaining balance from the credit purchase…' (SL2)

(2)   'Please **try to settle** the full amount of value...' (SL11)

(3)   'You **are requested to settle** the due amount of LKR 27,092,147…' (SL12)

In the students' expressions, the verb 'request' is used to state the demand, which is contrary to the use of the verb 'demand' in the lawyers' letters. Further, the students had used polite forms in *Move 4: Demanding* as in the following examples, which is contrary to the expressions in the lawyers' letters.

(1) 'So **please settle** the pending payment with the interest before the given time expires…' (SL13)

(2) 'So **please pay** debt as the given time expires...' (SL8)

The use of genre specific expressions seemed to be challenging for most of the students.

The above-discussed differences between the lexico-grammatical features were supplemented with data collected from the interviews with the lawyers and students, which are presented below.

Use of legal terms

Expressions that included legal terms such as 'breach of promises', 'actions have caused severe losses', 'an act of criminal breach of trust', and 'criminal charges' were an inevitable part of the lawyers' letters of demand. Though a letter of demand is sent to a layman, lawyers have to include legal terms to avoid ambiguity and vagueness in their expressions. Further, since the letters are used in court proceedings, the majority of the lawyers considered that the inclusion of legal terms was an important aspect. Lawyer 3 expressed the way he used legal terms in a letter of demand in the following manner.

> 'You can't make the letter too complicated as you are sending it to a client. If you are sending it to a lawyer you can use jargon. Keep it in a simple manner.' (Lawyer 3)

Also, the majority of lawyers provided the reason for using legal terms in a letter of demand. Lawyer 6 mentioned that the inclusion of legal terms is a requirement of legalese or the language of law.

> 'We have to use the language of the court proceedings. We have interpretations for word to word. By using exact legal words you can limit different interpretations.'(Lawyer 6)

According to the views of many lawyers, they have to use the language of the court proceedings precisely in letters of demand. The majority of the lawyers were of the opinion that their letters should have legal terms and they emphasized that such terms should not be complicated. Lawyer 9 and Lawyer 7 expressed the reasons for the inclusion of legal terms.

> 'The letter should have some weight. The vocabulary should have some weight.' (Lawyer 9)

> 'Better to be formal but not too formal, the message to be carried to the other person in the simplest form. You can't use too much legal jargon.' (Lawyer 7)

The intention of many lawyers using legal terms was to make the letters formal:

> 'We have to use formal language, we have to use legal terms, so that the nature of a letter of demand… It may be difficult for the persons, but we have to use legal terms.' (Lawyer 10)

Legal letters of demand are written in a distinctive language in an efficient and concise manner since the recipient should contact a lawyer to reply to the letter. Lawyer 4 mentioned the reason for it:

'Every person can contact a legal officer to understand what it is. They have to answer. The ordinary people can get assistance from a legal officer" which means a letter of demand is a unique format. Lawyers use legal terms uniquely.' (Lawyer 4)

Similarly, Lawyer 3 stated that the language of a letter of demand is different because a recipient has to contact a lawyer to respond to a letter of demand.

'A letter of demand is very often used in civil matters. Every person contacts an attorney at law to hand over his or her case to represent them. A letter of demand is rarely used in criminal matters. It is only used in civil matters. Any person has to follow the instructions of the lawyer.' (Lawyer 3)

Lawyer 8 had a different opinion on the inclusion of legal terms in a letter of demand. According to her view, knowing the law is a fundamental responsibility for every citizen.

'There is the idea that every person should know the law. There are no excuses; they should get knowledge of the law. They have to know some legal words.'(Lawyer 8)

As a whole, the lawyers' views on the writing of the letters of demand revealed that the genre of legal letters of demand is unique as they are written in a distinctive language in an efficient and concise manner.

Politeness

Demanding firmly, yet politely was a typical strategy used by the majority of the lawyers interviewed to get the demand fulfilled. Few of them had included the expression 'Please furnish your observations on the above matters at your earliest convenience' in *Move 5: Closing*. Lawyer 8 and 4 stated the reason for being polite.

'We do not make a very harsh influence. Not harshly.' (Lawyer 8)

'I know some lawyers are harsh in the letter, but I follow my senior's way and be polite. Most of my letters get a reply.' (Lawyer 4)

Correspondingly, the majority of the lawyers did not criticize a breach of contract impolitely, yet they tend to be rational in their demands.

'…it must be firm as an official document it has be to firm…' (Lawyer 5)

Being firm in demanding was also practiced by Lawyer 10:

'You have to have some weight in. It is better to have 70% on the arrogant side of writing a letter. Since you are demanding something from the person who has violated a contract.' (Lawyer 10)

As presented above, the lawyers' views on the use of lexico-grammatical features were characterized by the inclusion of legal terms to reduce ambiguity and avoid different interpretations. Legal terms are also helpful to rationalize the demand. Few others mentioned that since letters of demand are written and read by lawyers, the use of legal terms is an inevitable aspect. In addition, criticizing a breach of contract with impolite expressions was not advocated by the majority of lawyers. However, few lawyers mentioned that as per clients' influence, they had to criticize the opponent's breach of contract impolitely.

Perspectives of the law students

The perspectives of the law students on their use of lexico-grammatical features in writing the scenario letters of demand were related to their awareness of improvement in the letters of demand, and the challenges they faced in the use of genre-specific lexico-grammatical features. The majority of law students mentioned the improvement in the use of language features in letters of demand writing. According to the students' view, with more writing practice, they became more competent in writing letters of demand and developed an understanding of the lexico-grammatical features used. Student 3 mentioned how she improved her competence with exposure and practice:

> 'When we started to write a letter of demand, like in the first letter, there were many errors, but when we were writing the second and then the fourth one, I got an improvement compared with the first letter.' (Student 3)

Both Student 4 and Student 2 mentioned about the use of legal terms in letters of demand in the following manner.

> 'There are different words like legal terms, totally different from other writings.' (Student 4).

> 'We have to understand the formal way of writing. English we have to use academic language and legal words.'(Student 2)

In the interviews, the majority of students mentioned that they had written 3 or 4 letters of demand prior to the assignment. By drafting the letters, the students gained an understanding of the correct use of grammar and vocabulary. The majority of students stated their need to learn the language of letters of demand. Student 4 expressed her need to improve her language when writing letters of demand.

> 'This is one of the most important documents for any lawyer, we cannot make mistakes, and we need to learn the language.' (Student 4)

The students also spoke about their gradual improvement in the use of the language in letters of demand.

'It is not difficult now. But in the beginning, it was a little bit difficult because we are not familiar with those legal words, jargon, and all those things.'(Student 2)

It is identified that more exposure to formulaic expressions and legal terms is required to enable the law students to make their expressions more formal. *Student 1* stated her experience in legal letters of demand writing.

'The language of the law is distinct and logical. In legal documents, language is precise and carefully chosen, so that all parties understand the intent of the text.' (Student 1)

As presented above, the majority of the students expressed that the appropriate use of language in the letter of demand was challenging to them at first, and they gradually improved their accuracy of language expressions. Most students seemed to be aware of the inclusion of legal terms, formulaic expressions, and the formality of the language. Many students expressed that they need to use legal terms to ensure the formality of the genre and required more awareness of the legal terms and formal expressions specific to the genre.

Discussion

This section discusses the major differences in the lexico-grammatical features in the letters of demand written by the lawyers and students. Each move in a letter was realized through several steps that had typical lexico-grammatical features. The identification of the typical lexico-grammatical features was based on Swales's (1990) analysis of lexico-grammatical features in the introductions to research articles. It was identified that the formulaic expressions that were used to introduce the client (e.g., 'I write on the instructions of my client…' was consistent across all 30 letters of the lawyers. In contrast, the students' letters included various forms to introduce the client (e.g., 'We are representing SMS Medical Supplies (Pvt) Ltd. to assist with this case…' -SL9). Similarly, in Move 2, Providing Background Details, the typical expression 'As I am instructed…' was consistent in the lawyers' letters. In contrast, various expressions occurred in the students' letters (e.g., 'According to the contract details…'SL15, 'As a part of the first agreement…'-SL29). Swales (1990) also illustrated the contrast between expert and novice writing with the research article introduction of a Japanese master's student. He considers a typical introduction written by an expert to be 'a crafted rhetorical artifact' and a manifestation of rhetorical maneuver'. Similarly, Bhatia (2012) claims that established members of a particular professional community seem to have a much greater knowledge and understanding of the use and exploitation of genres than those who are apprentices, new members, or outsiders (p. 241).

The choice of words in 'M1S1: Mentioning the topic' of the lawyers' letters was more specific than the expressions in the students' letters. In contrast, informal expressions were prevalent in the students' letters mostly in 'M3S4: Informing the loss or damage' and in

'M4S1: Stating the specific demand' in contrast to the formal expressions in the lawyers' letters. Further, in 'M3S1: Informing the breach of contract', the lawyers used direct speech with active voice verb phrases. In contrast, passive verb forms were prevalent in the students' letters to present the breach of contract. Similar to the directness in stating the breach of contract in the current study, Conrad (2017) found that engineering practitioners valued the language 'to be direct and clear, especially in addressing audience concerns, asking or answering questions, and making recommendations' (p.194). Conciseness and directness in engineering practitioners' writing were realized with simple sentence structures and precise word choices (Conrad, 2017, p.209).

The use of polite forms is a preference of some of the lawyers in *Move 5: Closing* (e.g., 'Please furnish your observations'). However, the majority agreed that they stated their demand firmly and rationally, which was also noted in the *Move 4: Demanding* in the lawyers' letters. However, the lawyers' letters did not include polite forms in the move *Demanding* (e.g., 'I am instructed to demand from you to refrain…'). In contrast, the students' expressions included polite forms in *Move 4 Demanding* (e.g., 'Please try to settle the full amount of value…'-SL11). In the analysis of lexico-grammatical features, the analysis of strategies used to build politeness has been a major concern of many genre analyses. For instance, Flowerdew and Wan (2006) in a micro-linguistic analysis of politeness strategies used by the writers of tax computational letters claim that 'politeness is based on the notion of how speakers attempt to establish, maintain and save face during interaction' (p.145). Similarly, Safi (2005) and Mortezapour (2008) in the analyses of lexico-grammatical features of the business letters claimed that they should have frankness, explicitness, brevity, coherence, and politeness (cited in Jalilifar & Beitsayyah, 2011, p.311). The letters of demand are written in a distinctive language in an efficient and concise manner. In the interviews, the majority of the lawyers mentioned that the use of polite expressions depends on their senior lawyers' influence and how each lawyer was trained to write letters of demand by a senior lawyer.

The differences in the use of the lexico-grammatical features depicted the areas in the students need improvement (i.e., using genre-specific formulaic expressions, legal terms, and polite forms). The majority of the students mentioned their improvement in language use through exposure and practice. They stated the necessity of using typical lexico-grammatical features of legal letters of demand. Similar to the analysis of the students' letters in the current study, Conrad (2017) identified that students' writing in engineering 'had more complicated sentence structures, less accurate word choice, more errors in grammar and punctuation' (p.191).

Conclusion

This study intersected the move analysis approach (Swales, 1990) and grounded theory methods (Charmaz, 2006) to provide a context-specific perspective on the differences between the lexico-grammatical features of the letters of demand written by the lawyers and students to identify the student's deficiencies. It was identified that the formulaic expressions

were consistent across the 30 letters of the lawyers. In contrast, the students' letters included inconsistent expressions. In the interviews, the lawyers stated that since the letters are used in court proceedings, the majority of the lawyers considered that the inclusion of legal terms was an important aspect. Further, the choice of vocabulary in the topics of the lawyers' letters was more specific than the expressions in the students' letters. Similarly, informal expressions were prevalent in the students' letters in contrast to the formal expressions in the lawyers' letters. Further, the lawyers used direct speech with active voice verb phrases when they informed the breach of contract by the opponent; in contrast, passive verb forms were prevalent in the students' letters. The students' expressions included polite forms in stating the specific demand; however, the lawyers' letters did not include polite forms in demanding. Only some lawyers mentioned using politeness as a strategy to get the demand fulfilled, and the majority agreed they stated their demand firmly and rationally. The lawyers' reasons for the use of polite expressions depend on how each lawyer was trained to write letters of demand by a senior lawyer. The majority of the students mentioned their improvement in language use through exposure and practice. They stated the necessity of using legal terms and formulaic expressions as their use in lawyers' letters of demand.

The results of this study better define the gap between the lexico-grammatical features of the letters of demand written by lawyers and students. The differences can be used as a basis for developing remedial teaching. Activities that encourage students to compare typical students' informal expressions and formulaic expressions of lawyers should be incorporated into the teaching materials to enable law students to notice the expert-novice distinction in the use of the lexico-grammatical features. Sample students' letters of demand should be given to groups of students to identify the weaknesses in lexico-grammatical features and to discuss improvements needed. Lawyers should be invited to a panel discussion on the languages used in legal letters of demand and the factors that affect their choices. The students should be given the opportunity to interact with lawyers to get the awareness of the genre expectations.

In conclusion, the lawyers interviewed in this study did not expect new graduates to be perfectly prepared for writing legal letters of demand. However, they recognized that writing letters of demand requires experience and guidance, and they wished that the new graduates would be better prepared for legal letters of demand writing in the future. This study presented the differences between the lexico-grammatical features of the legal letters of demand written by lawyers and students to inform the pedagogy of writing letters of demand in a selected university ELP program. With the lawyers' input on the genre conventions and the assistance of the lecturers of legal English, the English programs can increase the law students' rhetorical consciousness in the lexico-grammatical features of the writing of legal letters of demand.

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Language Anxiety in Adult Second Language Learners: A Case Study

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Abstract

This paper reports the findings of a study of language anxiety of an adult second language (L2) learner. The investigation aimed at exploring the *latent constructs* in anxiety in a case study research design of an adult L2 learner who learnt English as an L2. The problem investigated was to examine why the student had been silent for eight months and the causes for his silence. The objectives were to identify the role of anxiety in learning English and assess its impact on learning English. This 'single case' case study research design explored the silence of the student and the causes behind it. An interview schedule and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) of Horwitz et al. (1986) were used to collect data. Findings indicated that the student had language anxiety, trait anxiety and test anxiety. The recommendations included creating a stress-free class environment, developing an easy, supportive, and friendly demeanour towards correcting errors and desensitising the learner to the class and English language. Any classroom activity that leads to anxiety should be avoided, and in place of such activities, personalised and individualised activities may be provided.

Keywords: Anxiety, nervousness, performance, trait, variable.

Introduction

Anxiety is a feeling of apprehension, nervousness, tension, and worry associated with quick arousal of the autonomic nervous system. Three types of anxiety: trait, state, and situation-specific are concerns of interest in L2 learning research. Test anxiety is another variation of anxiety researchers are interested in.

Xenoglossophobia is the term used (in psychiatry and psychology) to refer to anxiety. It is the feeling of apprehension, nervousness, worry and unease. Anxiety is a learner-specific endogenous variable. If a learner feels anxious, he develops some noticeable physical and psychological discomforts. These feelings are experienced in learning an L2 or foreign language (FL). These feelings are likely to be experienced in any L2 context, with productive or receptive skills. Xenoglossophobia affects many L2 learners, and if learners have passed *puberty*, they are likely to show more discomfort. MacIntyre and Gardner (1991) are two leading researchers of foreign language anxiety (FLA), who theoretically advanced three approaches to studying anxiety: trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety.

A psychological construct

Language anxiety, as a learner variable, has gained attention, and research has shown different views. Anxiety is a psychological construct, and it is a normal stress reaction, and it may be beneficial to some learners on some occasions. FLA[1] differs from normal feelings of nervousness.

Trait anxiety

Trait anxiety is a debilitating psychological condition that refers to a strong, stable tendency to experience and report negative emotions—fear, worry, and anxiety. Trait anxiety, for example, is manifested by repeated concerns about and reporting symptoms (usually physical). Trait anxiety is characterised by a stable perception of environmental stimuli (events, statements of others) as threatening. Trait-anxious[2] learners often experience and express state anxiety in situations in which most people do not experience such responses.

State anxiety

Behaviour is usually motivated by emotions—in an L2 context, emotions impact the health and psychological well-being of L2 learners. Language anxiety is an organic response of an individual; anxiety entails apprehension and surveillance in situations where learners see danger or potential threats to their integrity. Anxiety experienced in language learning is a

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[1] FLA involves excessive anxiety or fear when learners are required to participate in activities that expose them to contexts in which they are required to perform linguistic tasks (language-related tasks). This state is a predicament for some L2 learners, and they undergo severe mental and physical discomfort.

[2] Trait anxiety seems person-specific and may affect some learners more seriously than others.

common condition—chronicity, distress, and functional impairment may lead to low L2 performance; not only those but also physical, psychological, emotional, and behavioural symptoms are also noted in learners who have anxiety.

Situation-specific anxiety

Situation-specific anxiety, which builds on state anxiety, is when a particular situation induces anxiety only when specific conditions (E.g., an L2) are at play.

Review of literature

Trait anxiety may be termed 'endogenous' while situation-specific anxiety may be called 'exogenous' as situations are peripheral and not internal to an individual. These terms are intended to indicate whether anxiety comes from an internal cause (genetics) or external causes, or situations. Research conducted on xenoglossophobia has produced mixed results. Recent and latest developments in research into the nature of anxiety in language learning show that language anxiety is a determinant of language proficiency. Javed, Eng, Mohamed and Sam (2013) reported that "it is a permanent mental disorder whereas 'the state and situation-specific anxiety generally are associated with any particular occasion or happening" (p. 1564).

Huang and Liu (2011) concluded that "meanwhile, (over) emphasising learning English for a utilitarian purpose may result in (extra) pressure and anxiety in learners, which may ultimately debilitate their performance in English" (p. 6). Levin's (2003) view was that "research also indicates that teachers' perception of students' language anxiety may sometimes be incongruent with students' perception" (p. 346). Motivation and anxiety have a causal effect. Huang and Liu (2011) confirmed that "as such, to better students' performance in English, it is necessary for any language teacher and learner to take preventive measures to reduce the level of anxiety, since anxiety turned out to be the most powerful and negative predictor for the student's performance in English" (p. 6). Research has been conducted on how negative, and positive anxiety affect/facilitate language learning. Shih and Chang (2018) concluded that "negative L2 experiences resulted in a high level of language learning anxiety, whereas positive experiences lowered the levels of anxiety associated with L2 learning" (p. 155).

Chen and Liu (2014) concluded that "students tended to be anxious when (1) feeling that their peers had better performance in English than they did, (2) being called to speak in the target language in front of the class, and (3) worrying about being left behind the English class" (p. 9). García-Santillán, Santana, and Escalera-Chávez (2017) added that "one final decisive affective factor is language anxiety which is the object of several studies" (p. 140).

Anxiety may be reduced through intervention plans conducted in the teaching and learning process. Cheng and Zheng (2018) concluded that "the findings showed that the

teachers' anxiety-reducing strategy intervention plan led to a decreased level of learners' foreign language anxiety (p. 3)". However, their study was limited to "the cyclical relationship between anxiety and performance, as students experience repeated failure, their anxiety levels tend to increase gradually, was not confirmed in this study" (ibid. p. 14). Salehi (2014) concluded that "the findings of this study reveal that both language anxiety and test anxiety have a debilitative role in language learning, at least in settings similar to those in this study" (p. 937). His research insight suggests that anxiety has a debilitative effect on learners.

Research has also been done to explore a relationship between personality type and language learning anxiety. "A further subject requiring examination is the relation between the learner's personality type and language acquisition anxiety" (Abu-Rabia, Peleg & Shakkour, 2013, p. 11). Gregersen and Horwitz (2002) investigated the connection between L2 anxiety and perfectionist traits and concluded that "perfectionists set standards of performance that are accompanied by a high self-criticism level, expecting themselves to achieve L2 fluency without mistakes or mispronunciation" (p. 126). The relationship between gender and anxiety has also been researched. Sung and Li (2019) concluded that "inconsistent results have been found with the variable of gender in anxiety research" (p. 4).

Research problem

Language production involves complex psycholinguistic processes. Some L2 students remain silent in L2 classes. L2 learners are likely to experience xenoglossophobia when required to use a target language such as the English language. Trait anxiety, state anxiety, and situation-specific anxiety are variables that are attributed to learners' silence. The inability to produce language concerns ELT practitioners. Remaining silent when L2 learners are required to speak is a concern and the reasons for remaining silent in an L2 context need extensive research investigations.

Research question

In conducting the research study, the research questions that guided the study were: Why do some L2 learners remain silent in an L2 classroom, what causes them to remain silent; why and how anxiety affects L2 learners, what is the role of anxiety in learning an L2 and why should teachers be concerned about them.

Aims and objectives

This investigation aimed at examining what type of anxiety influences learning English or affects learning English. These aims are achieved through the attainment of the following objectives.

Objectives

1. To investigate the causes of anxiety
2. To identify the role of anxiety that affects learning English
3. To examine the relationship between learning styles and anxiety
4. To outline the types of anxiety: trait, state, and situation-specific anxiety
5. To formulate a new perspective on how anxiety affects adult learners of English

Significance

There are several research studies done on the impact of anxiety on adult language learning; however, the research studies conducted are far from consistent in their conclusions on the detrimental effects of anxiety on adults. Hence, this case study aimed at validating the detrimental effects of anxiety.

Materials and methods

I used a 'single case' case study research design. The student was selected after careful observation in the class. A researcher-designed interview schedule and the Foreign Language Classroom Anxiety Scale (FLCAS) developed by Horwitz et al. (1986) were the instruments. The FLCAS is a 33-item, five-point Likert scale questionnaire; the instruments were researcher-administered. The student was observed for eight months, and after eight months, he was asked to answer the questionnaire. I obtained informed consent from the student after explaining the reason behind investigating his anxiety. A rider to the questionnaire was attached, and it contained all the necessary conditions and how he could answer/withdraw responses to any question if he felt that his privacy was compromised or intruded upon. The data were subjected to some statistical analysis to present findings.

The case

In this case study, only one L2 learner participated in the study. This learner is an adult L2 learner who has passed his Ordinary Level Examination in the Sinhala medium. He has failed the English language. He is 36 years, single and started learning English late in life. He has attended thirteen (13) English classes but could not master English from them. He has had unpleasant memories of every English class he attended, and he has even taken a course at a leading higher education institute. The case showed signs of *hypersensitivity*; he starts perspiring, his palms get wet, he rubs his palms against his handkerchief, and he becomes silent. Socio-economically, he belongs to a middle-class family. Though he is weak in English, he is ambitious, and later, he did an advanced diploma in engineering. He is employed and works for a company where he is a data associate. The student is currently reading for a master's degree though he has limited proficiency in English.

Findings

Nuwan[3] mentioned that he felt anxious in class and felt anxious in any similar classroom settings where he was required to use the English language. Also, he said that he began shivering even at the very prospect of hearing that he was required to stand up and use the English language. Furthermore, according to him, he was scared to stand up in front of the class and speak in English. This made him tremble and perspire heavily. He was uneasy. He was anxious and scared when he was asked to talk to the class on a topic or requested to make a presentation. These points bring us to the assumption that he had trait anxiety.

Table 1

Descriptive Statistics, Reliabilities, and Zero-order Correlations of Anxiety Variables

Factor	No. of Variables	Mean	SD	Reliability	Correlation F1	F2	F3
Class anxiety (F1)	30	42.36	8.61	.64			
Test confidence (F2)	10	13.54	5.28	.67	-.35		
Test anxiety (F3)	13	11.31	7.04	.53	.48	-.41	

F=factor

In addition, he showed situation-specific anxiety on several occasions. He stammered when he was asked to introduce his company manager in a classroom presentation. As it was a classroom assessment, he was anxious and could not express his ideas. He was speechless, looked at me for some seconds and started speaking in a low tone inaudible to the class. This behaviour is also related to test anxiety; however, more than test anxiety, he showed situation-specific anxiety because it was a situation in which he had to perform so that his performance could be evaluated. Test anxiety was also noted in his performance. He was anxious, started perspiring, his face became reddish, and he began wiping off the sweat on his face. He was scared to make the presentation.

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[3] I used a fictitious name instead of his actual name.

Table 2

Predicting Compulsive Exercise Test 3 - Performance

	Unstandardized		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig
	B	**Std. error**	**Beta**		
Test confidence	3.31	.58	.25	5.31	.00
Test anxiety	⁻1.22	.26	⁻.19	⁻4.964	.00

Dependent Variable: CET - 3

Class anxiety was severe, as noted in the above table. Significantly, he was anxious when it was time to perform in class. He had high situation-specific class anxiety, and he almost struggled to speak English. Time brought him some ease, but his performance was below the expected level in the class.

Recommendations

As the study findings showed, anxiogenic classrooms cause anxiety; L2 learners with anxiety tend to avoid anxiety-causing situations, hence, the teacher can take preventive measures and create a supportive classroom culture. As per the findings of this case study, I recommend that those teachers who have learners with anxiety, use personalised and individualised lessons that may help such learners feel secure in the class. As the study further reported, it is good if the teacher creates a stress-free classroom where the stress is low, and the learner experiences no stress at all. Further, as revealed in the study findings, a supportive and friendly classroom culture may also be recommended. While it is hard to create anxiolytic classrooms due to several factors external to the learner and teacher, it is good if the teacher has some insight into the nature, causes, remedial measures, and behaviour of L2 learners experiencing anxiety.

The learning environment

As research insight showed, in helping any student with anxiety, care should be taken if the learning environment leads to treatment-refractory anxiety. Any activity that provokes anxiety should be avoided, and in place of such activities, personalised and individualised activities may help learners perform. The use of progressive exposure methods (linguistic and pedagogic) and techniques in desensitising learners to decrease the avoidance of what anxious students fear most may be implemented in class. Choosing different teaching modalities may be determined by a combination of learner preferences and time availability with the teacher.

Recognising learners with anxiety

Recognising L2 learners with anxiety, as the research findings indicated, can also be recommended. Further, the teacher can learn the unease, nervousness, apprehension, and disquietude of learners, and this identification may be a clue to spot students with anxiety—if the teacher is observant, she can recognise learners with anxiety. Even using FLCAS may help the teacher remedy anxiety, and she can create an anxiolytic classroom environment.

The teacher's role

As it was indicated in the research findings, FLA is low in an anxiolytic class environment where the teacher and learners are supportive, and mistakes (or errors) are tolerated; reducing anxiety, desensitising learners, and creating a conducive learning environment is the teacher's task. The teacher can maintain a friendly classroom ambience may also be a good classroom management technique; in a more relaxed classroom, learning is optimal, and learners enjoy being at a school where there is low anxiety and stress and where a learner's strengths are valued.

Further research

A study of how female adult L2 learners experience anxiety should also be conducted, and if it is possible, employed female learners should be selected as the sample.

Conclusion

A learner with foreign language anxiety does not become less anxious over time, and he continues to feel anxious because his anxiety is related to several factors. A learner with state language anxiety will be less anxious over time and will be more comfortable with the L2. In the case of the student that I observed, it was noted that after the student became motivated to learn English, his anxiety started decreasing noticeably; however, his trait anxiety did not decrease. Some gender-related influences and causes lead to foreign language anxiety.

This 'single case' case study reported findings based on the data gathered from a male L2 learner. To document the three types of anxiety, trait, state and situation-specific—further research studies are needed, especially how female adult L2 learners experience anxiety should be investigated. As this is a 'single case' case study, a survey or an ethnographic study involving a large sample is required for comprehensive documentation.

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Soft Skill Development in Undergraduate Degree Programs in Sri Lankan Public Universities: General Trends, Potential, and Barriers

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Abstract

The study aims to identify important soft skills for undergraduates, barriers to teaching soft skills, and the potential of public universities in developing soft skills in undergraduates. A mixed-method approach was used in this study. The purposive sampling method was used, and data of the quantitative phase were collected from academics and industry representatives via an online questionnaire survey. Interviews were conducted with industrial personnel via semi-structured telephone as well as face-to-face interviews. Descriptive statistics and content analysis were used to analyze the data. Results indicate that communication, teamwork, ethic, and professionalism as the most important soft skills for undergraduates from both academic and industry perspectives. Time constraints, the largeness of student number in classrooms, and a lower level of student awareness of the importance of soft skills were found to be the barriers to developing soft skills in undergraduates. Identifying the presence of skilled lecturers, and infrastructure to develop soft skills in undergraduates were seen as part of the university potential to develop the soft skills in undergraduates. The study suggests that universities and employers should work together to increase students' awareness of the importance of soft skills and guide them in developing the same. The university curricula should create scope for implementing and evaluating soft skill development in undergraduates.

Keywords: Soft skills, Sri Lankan Public Universities, undergraduates

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Introduction

The significance of soft skills is well recognized in the literature. Different disciplines such as management, information system, accounting, project management, leadership and many more have identified the importance of soft skills for undergraduates in rapidly changing work and life environments (Ahmad et al., 2021; Dolce et al., 2020; Levasseur, 2013). Soft skills are different from hard/technical skills; they are difficult to teach even though they play a vital role in improving employability, finding innovative solutions to problems, and adapting to changing environments. Soft skills are a must and programs/courses need to be developed with the combination of hard skills and soft skills (Dolce et al., 2020; Yan et al., 2019).

Soft skills are generally thought to be difficult to be defined and classified. Definitions and classifications change in different disciplines and scenarios (Ahmad et al., 2021; Dolce et al., 2020; Gibb, 2014; Levasseur, 2013; Yan et al., 2019). 'Soft skills are cross-disciplinary, independent of job or industry…' Yan et al. (2019, p.243). Dixon et al. (2010) as cited in Levasseur (2013) describe soft skills as 'a combination of interpersonal and social skills…'(p.566). Gibb (2014) describes soft skills as intra-personal skills and interpersonal skills that are essential for personal development, and career success. Further, soft skills are identified as attitude to work, personal attributes, and individual qualities (Grugulis et al., 2009).

Teaching soft skills through courses and training programs are debatable in the literature. Some soft skills are unteachable. These include human qualities such as integrity, self-esteem, leadership … etc. that can be achieved through self-realization (Yan et al., 2019). However, it is possible to make a positive impact by inculcating unteachable human qualities through transforming basic knowledge, understanding and providing opportunities to practice them within and outside the classroom. Soft skill development should be a continuous process of lifelong learning and it requires personal motivation to learn, and a conducive environment to support the interaction with others. Thus the development of soft skills is harder than that of hard skills (Levasseur, 2013). Educational influence is one that can be used to develop soft skills in addition to the family, societal norms, life experiences, and spiritual influences (Yan et al., 2019).

As opposed to soft skills, graduates focus mainly on hard skills such as discipline and knowledge (Gibb, 2014; Ahmad et al., 2021; Gunaratne et al., 2018). However, as highlighted in the literature, hard skills themselves are not sufficient to secure a job and effectively perform in a work environment (Dolce et al., 2020; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Soft skills are essential in the job market and to increase the employability of graduates (Dolce et al., 2020; Succi & Canovi, 2020). Meanwhile, employers continually criticize higher educational institutions for the absence of soft skills in the degree holders and for not adequately preparing them for the labor market (Succi & Canovi, 2020).

This situation is predominantly seen in Sri Lanka too, especially in the areas of Art, Social Sciences and Humanities Education (Ariyawansa, 2008). According to Gunaratne et al. (2018), 74% of the employers stated that it is a huge challenge to find graduates with relevant soft skills. According to Ariyawansa (2008), one of the main objectives of higher education should be to prepare undergraduates for the ever changing labor market. To this end, the development of soft skills is a vital aspect that needs to be expanded within the higher education institutes in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, universities need to complement hard skills with soft skills which will allow undergraduates to manage their personal and career life successfully contributing to finding innovative solutions for personal, organizational, and social problems.

With this purview, this article seeks answers to the following questions.

What is the general view of academics regarding soft skills in the university system?

What type of soft skills are important?

What potential do the Sri Lankan public universities have in developing soft skills of their undergraduates and what are the barriers for initiating such programs?

Research questions are addressed from both academic and industry perspectives. The rest of the paper is organized as follows. First, the paper discusses the literature related to definitions and categorization of soft skills, the importance of soft skill development for undergraduates, different types of soft skills discussed in the literature and study conceptualization. Secondly, the study materials and methods are accordingly outlined. And finally, the empirical results of the study are discussed and analyzed.

Literature review

In this increasingly competitive and changing world, undergraduates must improve their abilities systematically and progressively in accordance with the global society's direction in an effective manner. Despite the technical abilities, it also necessitates a variety of soft skill development (Kyllonen, 2013; Junrat et al., 2014). Therefore, it has been recognized the connection between soft skill development and the overall success and professionalism, education, and leadership (Dixon et al., 2010; Ahmad et al., 2021), demonstrating the importance of soft skills for individuals in the twenty-first century. Soft skills have also been recognized as employability skills, key skills, life skills, generic skills, essential skills, core skills, transferable skills, key competencies, and necessary skills (Cleary et al., 2007; Esa et al., 2014).

The literature confirms that the phrase "soft skill" is widely used, yet poorly defined. Unlike academic or disciplinary education, which is content-specific, subject-based, and officially tested, soft skills are a set of abilities that are independent of formal curricula, though they are frequently acquired by the people on their own, and are seldom explicitly examined.

Accordingly, soft skills are commonly described as talents, abilities, and personal characteristics that may be employed in the vast range of professional contexts in which function throughout their personal and career lives (Fraser, 2001; Chamorro-Preemuzic et al., 2010; Rainsburry et al*.,* 2002).

In today's competitive labor market, recruiters are more interested in job-related experts who have soft or non-technical abilities in addition to academic knowledge (technical competence) (Mansour & Dean, 2016; Nusrat & Sultana, 2019). According to Finch et al. (2013), soft skills are the most important employability skills whereas academic reputation is the least important. Soft skills including personal qualities and interpersonal skills increase the employability of individuals and enhance their performances in their careers (Tsirkas et al*.,* 2020). Soft skills are important in the workplace because they are used when employees communicate and interact with one another, collaborate to complete tasks, and engage in dialogues to offer feedback, solve problems, and resolve work-related difficulties (Adnan et al*.,* 2014).

Soft skills would be a requirement for academic learning (Chamorro-Premuzic et al., 2010). Consequently, in the education system, most of the universities and higher educational institutions are taking the need seriously and looking for innovative methods to improve their graduates' employability through soft skill development (Nusrat & Sultana, 2019). As a means for contributing to the total graduate employability, higher education institutions must re-evaluate their approaches to successful teaching techniques for soft skill development and assistance for university students' transition to the workplace (Tran, 2013; Yao & Tulia, 2019). Wheeler (2016) mentioned that soft skills enable business graduates to put their technical talents and theoretical knowledge to good use in the workplace. Soft skills are being integrated into leadership development programs, internships, and coaching opportunities at several institutions and business schools because it is important to shape up and form the person's personality (AbuJbara & Worley, 2018).

Significance of developing soft skills is further reinforced in the concept of 21st century skills. It is understood that students need new set of skills to face complex and continuously evolving future (Craig, 2012 as cited in Erdem (2019)). Existing literature reveals that different researchers have put these skills into different categories (Wagner, 2008; Jacinto, 2016 as cited in Erdem (2019)). These 21st century skills range from survival skills and critical thinking through problem solving ability to decision-making and skills (Wagner, 2008; Jacinto, 2016 as cited in Erdem (2019)).

The literature further reveals a dynamic combination of soft skills such as cognitive skills, interpersonal skills, intellectual skills, and social skills and qualities (Ministry of Higher Education Malaysia, 2006; Beard et al., 2007; Rao, 2014; Jameson et al., 2016: Ellis et al., 2014). These soft skills have been classified differently by scholars. Table 1 shows a few such examples.

Table 1

Classification of Soft Skills

Source	Main Classification	Soft Skills
Yao & Tuliao (2019)	Independent skills	life skill, working independently, research skill, critical thinking,
	Interpersonal relationships	interpersonal communication, working in teams, cooperation, negotiation,
		and understanding others from different cultures
	Perceived employability	communication in English and cultural competence
Bak, Jordan & Midgley (2019)	Decision-Making skills	problem-solving, flexibility, planning skills
	Behavioral Skills	time management, organizational skills, motivation and enthusiasm, communication skills, stress management, initiatives
	Management skills	collaborative learning, leadership skills, people management, teamwork
	Negotiation skills	negotiation, management of complexity and change,
Samkin, & Keevy (2019)	Ethical behavior and professionalism	avoiding conflict of interest; acting with honesty and integrity; protecting the public interest; exercising due care; remaining objective and independent; protecting the confidentiality of information; enhancing the profession's reputation, and adhering to professional conduct
	Personal attributes	managing change; self manages; treating others in a professional manner; initiative and competence; leadership ability; adding value in an innovative manner; being a team member, and managing time; understands the national and international environment; being a life-long learner;
	Professional skills	managing and supervising others; obtaining information; solving problems; making decisions; critically interpreting information; communicating effectively; using technology, and understanding basic legal concepts

Source	Main Classification	Soft Skills
Robles (2012)	Communication	written, oral, speaking capability, listening, presenting
	Courtesy	manners, etiquette, business etiquette, gracious, says please and thank you, respectful
	Flexibility	adjusts, adaptability, lifelong learner, willing to change, accepts new things, teachable
	Integrity	honest, high morals, has personal values, ethical, does what's right
	Interpersonal Skills	nice, friendly, sense of humor, personable, has self-control, nurturing, empathetic, patient, social skills, sociability, warmth
	Positive Attitude	confident, optimistic, enthusiastic, happy, encouraging
	Professionalism	businesslike, poised, well-dressed, appearance,
	Responsibility	gets the job done, accountable, self-disciplined, reliable, resourceful, common sense, wants to do well, conscientious
	Teamwork	agreeable, cooperative, supportive, gets along with others, helpful, collaborative
	Work Ethic	loyal, hard-working, self-motivated, willing to work, good attendance, initiative, on time
Ellis et al. (2014)	Resource Competencies	allocate time, allocate human resources, allocate money,
	Information Competencies	interpret information
	Interpersonal Competencies	negotiate a decision, serve clients & customers, work with diversity, participate as a team member, exercise leadership
	Basic Skills	listening, speaking
	Thinking Skills	self-management, decision making, problem-solving, self-esteem, knowing how to learn, creative thinking personal qualities: integrity, reasoning, responsibility, social skills,
	Problem-solving	implementation planning, idea evaluating, critical thinking, identifying key causes,

Source	Main Classification	Soft Skills
Trung, & Swierczek, (2009)	Learning	self-esteem, active learning and growth, self-confidence, creative thinking,
	Information processing	information organizing, basic software use, synthesizing
	Communication:	teamwork, written communication, information gathering, understanding cultural differences
Varela (2020)	Oral presentation	credibility content and structure clarity, aid support, delivery
	Teamwork	mission analysis, backing up, coordinating, conflict management, motivating others
	Critical thinking	the stating problem, showing alternatives, using concepts, stating assumption
Haselberger et al. (2012); Succi (2018)	Personal	being tolerant to stress, learning skills, being committed to work, being professionally ethical, self-awareness skills, creativity/innovation skills, life balance skills,
	Social	teamwork skills, communication skills, leadership skills, conflict management & negotiation skills, culture adaptability skills, contact network skills
	Methodological	results orientation skills, adaptability to change skills, customer/user orientation skills, decision-making skills, continuous improvement skills, analysis skills, management skills
Jacinto (2016) as cited in Erdem (2019)	Ways of thinking	creativity, problem-solving, decision-making and learning, critical thinking,
	Ways of working	communication and collaboration
	Tools for working	information and communications technology [ICT] and information literacy
	Skills for living in the world	citizenship, life and career, and personal and social responsibility

Source: Authors (2021)

As per the literature review based on the list of soft skills categorization in the studies of Haselberger et al. (2012) and Succi (2018) as well as the above categorization (Table 1), fifteen (15) soft skills are identified as significant skills for undergraduates. These fifteen are classified into three categories: social, personal and organizational as given below.
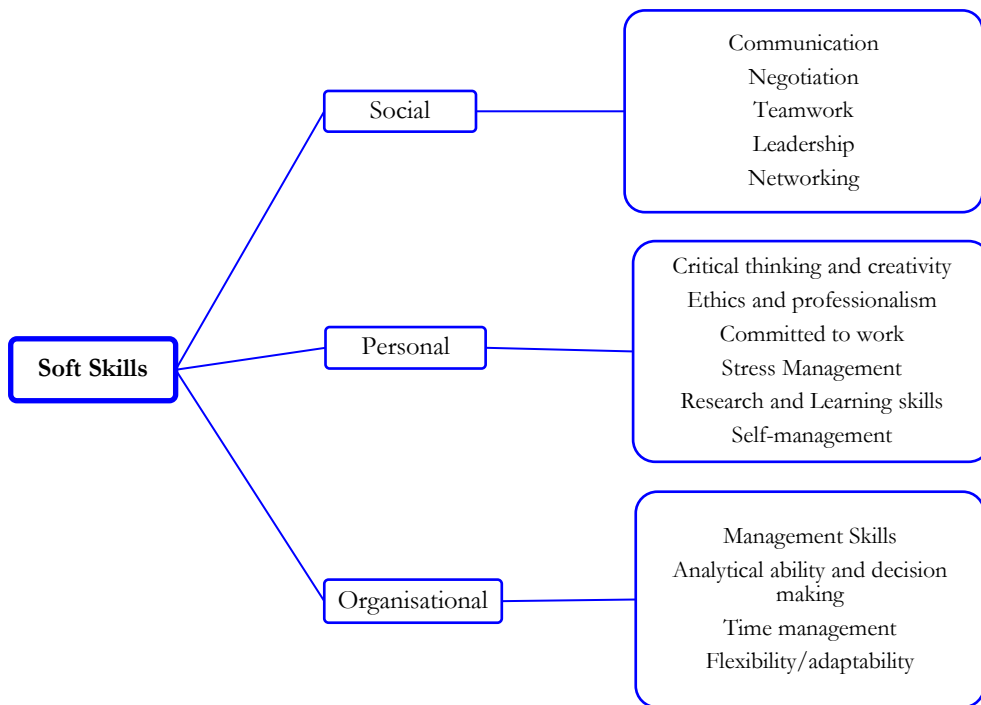
Figure 1. Conceptual Framework
Source: Authors (2021)

Materials and methods

This is a pragmatism research and use mixed method approach for the triangulation of the results and for more clarification as well as elaboration of the results (Greene et al. 1989 as cited by Johnson and Onwuegbuzie, 2004). Further, mixed method approach provides a better understanding of research problems and complex phenomena than quantitative and qualitative approaches alone (Creswell & Clark, 2007). Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire survey administrated through a google form from the academics. Semi-structured telephone calls and face-to-face interviews were used to collect data from the employers. The purposive sampling method was adopted to select respondents from academics of public universities and employers from the industry. The sample size of the questionnaire survey is 64 academics and 20 industry representatives. Respond rate of the questionnaire is 50.8% (the questionnaire was mailed to126 academics) and the survey was conducted within a period of two weeks.

The questionnaire was developed after a thorough literature review and piloted with several academics before the distribution. The study explores the participants' perception of fifteen (15) soft skills (Figure 1). Respondents were asked to rank those soft skills and also evaluate the importance in Seven (7) point Likert scale (Extremely important to Not important at all). Additionally, open-ended questions were included to gather information on potentials and barriers of having the soft skill development programs for undergraduates in Sri Lankan public universities.

The demography of the sample of the questionnaire survey is shown below in Table 2 (Sample is 64). The majority of the respondents are female (61%) and 39% of the respondents are in the ages between 25-34 years. Thirty percent is in the category of 45-54 years. The PhD holders constitute 52% of the sample. Fifty two percent of the academia is from the management background.

Table 2

Demographic Information of the Sample

Category	Subcategory	Respond Rate (%)
Gender	Male	39
	Female	61
Age	25-34 years	39
	35-44 years	23
	45-54 years	30
	Above 55 years	8
Highest Education Qualification	Bachelors degree	19
	Masters degree	25
	Mphil	4
	PhD	52
Specialized Field	Management	52
	Applied sciences	9
	Architecture	2
	Engineering	9
	Humanities and Social sciences	11
	Medical sciences	6
	Technology	11
Designation	Visiting Lecturer	2

Category	Subcategory	Respond Rate (%)
	Temporary Assistant Lecturer	14
	Temporary Lecturer	3
	Lecturer Probationary	14
	Senior Lecturer (Grade I)	22
	Senior Lecturer (Grade II)	33
	Professor	12

Source: Authors (2021)

The qualitative phase of the interview was also used to answer the three research questions of the study. Interviews were conducted with twenty (20) industrial personals. The sample consists of 12 persons who are in the middle-level managerial positions and the others are from the top-level management. All the interviewees hold master's degrees as the highest educational qualification. All of them are in the age category of 35-55 years. They hold positions as company directors, senior managers, and senior professionals.

Quantitative data are processed using descriptive statistics such as mean, standard deviation, percentages in the IBM SPSS package and qualitative data gathered through the interviews are analyzed using content analysis.

Results & discussion

Academics view on soft skills in general

As per Table 3, academic respondents are of the view that soft skills are very important for undergraduates which shows a higher mean value (6.77) and they are confident that they have enough awareness of the soft skills required for undergraduates and teaching them. However, 'entire university community need the soft skill development at various levels' is a comment given by some respondents.

Further, it was revealed that some degree programs have separate subjects/modules to teach soft skills to undergraduates. In this regard, most respondents believe that a separate subject is required to teach soft skills in the degree curriculum. On the contrary, some opinions differed as in the following quote.

> " … it is very difficult to transfer soft skills from a separate subject, and therefore, what should be done is to encourage students to engage in extra-curricular activities like sports, work with clubs and societies, engage in events organized by students' unions which would be fun for them and lead them towards active social life and that could automatically nurture soft skills in them".

Furthermore, as per the analysis, motivation shown at the university and departmental level to upgrade soft skills is not highly significant.

Table 3

Views about Soft Skills Required for Undergraduates in General

Views	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Yes (%)	No (%)
Soft skills are very important for undergraduates	2	7	6.77	.707		
Lecturer's awareness of required Soft Skills for undergraduates	5	7	6.30	.659		
Lecturer has enough soft skills to teach and deal with students	3	7	5.91	.750		
There is a separate Soft Skills component in the degree programme	1	7	5.75	1.222		
Soft skills should be a separate subject in the course structure	1	7	5.59	1.509		
University has the motivation to develop undergraduates' Soft skills	1	7	5.25	1.285		
Degree programmes have adequate steps to upgrade Soft Skills	1	7	5.00	1.321		
Soft Skills can be improved via teaching subjects					80	20
Present graduates have a lower level of soft skills					67	33

Source: Authors (2021)

Further, Table 3 shows that 67% of the respondents are of the view that present graduates have lower levels of soft skills and the reasons for having lower levels of soft skills are perceived as negative relationship between students and lecturers, weak education practices since school level such as 'focus on competitive examinations', 'not improving soft skills', 'lack of understanding of the importance of soft skills among undergraduates', …. etc.

In addition, 80% of respondents agree that the soft skills of undergraduates can be improved within the scope of teaching subjects by including assignment activities such as case studies, group and individual discussions, role plays. Skills such as communication, leadership, teamwork, critical thinking, time management problem solving, networking can

be improved through these activities, they observed. Further, lectures should be diverted from traditional one-way knowledge delivery mechanisms and increase student-centered learning activities such as reflective responses, think-pair-share, jigsaw discussions, fishbowl discussions and problem-based learning etc. Meanwhile, there are 20% who didn't agree with the above claim with the views that,

> "To some extend, it is possible to provide a guide to students to improve their soft skills within a scope of a subject. Actually, self-motivation and neediness are key factors that influence soft skill development".

> "Semester system has compelled the lecturers to finish the syllabus somehow. Further common program requires a panel of lecturers to maintain consistency in delivering the lecture and sometimes that restricts the ability to be flexible and use of creativity in delivering the lectures".

> "What I teach is highly technical. And, I believe inside those modules, students must focus on their technical and analytical skills rather than soft skills. I don't believe that soft skills can be integrated into those modules which are highly technology-related".

Important soft skills for undergraduates

Table 4 demonstrates the ranking of 15 soft skills, the respondent were asked to select soft skills they like best in order of their preference in each category. Accordingly, it can be observed that communication, teamwork, leadership (under the category of social), critical thinking and creativity, committed to work, research and learning skills (under the category of personal), and under the third category, analytical ability and decision making has been selected as 1st or 2nd choices. The skill of time management can be seen as 3rd choice.

Table 4

Ranking of Soft Skills Under Three Categories (Academics Perspective)

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice
Social						
Communication	27	0.5	0.3	0.3	0.3	
Negotiation	0.1	5.1	4.6	10	8.3	
Teamwork	2.1	17.7	6.7	1.7	0.3	Not Applicable
Leadership	1.2	2.2	9.3	5.2	4.6	
Networking	0.4	1.2	2.5	7.2	14	

	1st Choice	2nd Choice	3rd Choice	4th Choice	5th Choice	6th Choice
Personal						
Critical thinking and creativity	16.8	6.4	0.3	2.8	0.7	0.3
Ethics and professionalism	5.3	9.3	8.3	11.2	3.6	1.6
Committed to work	7.3	12.4	5.9	1.1	0.2	0.3
Stress Management	0.2	0.2	1.8	4.5	11.6	9.3
Research and Learning skills	0.8	1.4	13.2	8.3	8.3	6.7
Self-management	1.4	1.4	0.8	1.1	5.3	14
Organizational						
Management skills	5.8	5.6	1.5	0.7	Not Applicable	
Analytical ability and decision making	10.9	9.3	0.7	0.7		
Time management	2.9	3.1	14.7	4.6		
Flexibility/adaptability	0.5	0.9	4.8	17.9		

In addition to the above ranking under each category conceptualized in the study, 15 skills are also evaluated and ranked according to the importance on a 7-point Likert scale (Table 5). Similar to Table 4 with slight differences, it emerged that communication, teamwork, critical thinking and creativity, ethics and professionalism and committed to work are the most important soft skills for undergraduates as per the academic perspective. On the other hand, negotiation, management skills and research and learning skills are ranked as the lowest important skills.

Table 5

Evaluating and Ranking of 15 Soft Skills (Academics Perspective)

Rank Order	Soft Skills	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Communication	6	7	6.88	0.333
2	Teamwork	5	7	6.83	0.42
3 or 4	Critical thinking and creativity	4	7	6.73	0.597
	Ethics and professionalism	2	7	6.73	0.761
5	Committed to work	5	7	6.7	0.582
6	Time management	5	7	6.69	0.56
7	Networking	5	7	6.67	0.536
8	Self-management	4	7	6.66	0.597
9 or 10 or 11	Stress Management	3	7	6.64	0.698
	Analytical ability and decision making	3	7	6.64	0.784
	Flexibility/adaptability	5	7	6.64	0.574
12	Leadership	4	7	6.59	0.66
13	Negotiation	5	7	6.58	0.612
14	Management Skills	4	7	6.5	0.69
15	Research and Learning skills	3	7	6.44	0.753

Tables 4 and 5 indicate academic perspectives on the important soft skills for undergraduates and Table 6 below indicates the industry perspective on the given 15 soft skills. Accordingly, communication, teamwork, ethics and professionalism, committed to work, analytical ability and decision making can be identified as the most important soft skills. The least important skills that can be seen are 'stress management' and 'research and learning skills'.

Table 6

Evaluating and Ranking of 15 Soft Skills (Industry Perspective)

Rank Order	Soft Skills	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
1	Communication	6	7	6.86	.350
2	Teamwork	5	7	6.80	.443
3	Ethics and professionalism	2	7	6.72	.766
4	Committed to work	5	7	6.70	.582
5	Analytical ability and decision making	5	7	6.69	.560
6	Critical thinking and creativity	4	7	6.67	.644
7	Management Skills	3	7	6.66	.695
8 or 9 or 10	Networking	5	7	6.64	.574
	Leadership	4	7	6.64	.601
	Flexibility/adaptability	5	7	6.64	.574
11	Time management	3	7	6.61	.789
12 or 13	Negotiation	5	7	6.53	.642
	Self-management	4	7	6.53	.734
14	Stress Management	4	7	6.47	.712
15	Research and Learning skills	3	7	6.38	.826

Table 7 given below compares the ranking order of 15 soft skills from the academic and industry perspectives. Highlights show similar ranks in both perspectives and it is interesting to see that the most important three soft skills are the same in both academic and industry perspectives, namely, communication, teamwork and ethics and professionalism. Similar situation can be seen for the least important skills as well. Both parties agree that it is research and learning skills that are least liked. Some skills have very slight changes in the ranking such as 'committed to work' is in 5th place in academic perspective and it is the 4th in the industrial perspective. Further, time management, self-management and stress management take higher places in academic perspective, but they get lower ranks in the industry perspective. Moreover, management skills and leadership take lower ranks in academic perspective, and they take a higher rank in the industrial perspective.

Table 7

Comparison of Academic and Industry Perspectives on 15 Soft Skills

Rank Order	Academic Perspective	Industry Perspective
1	Communication	Communication
2	Teamwork	Teamwork
3	Critical thinking and creativity; Ethics and professionalism	Ethics and professionalism
4	Critical thinking and creativity; Ethics and professionalism	Committed to work
5	Committed to work	Analytical ability and decision making
6	Time management	Critical thinking and creativity
7	Networking	Management Skills
8	Self-management	Networking; Leadership; Flexibility/adaptability
9	Stress Management; Analytical ability and decision making; Flexibility/adaptability	Networking; Leadership; Flexibility/adaptability
10	Stress Management; Analytical ability and decision making; Flexibility/adaptability	Networking; Leadership; Flexibility/adaptability
11	Stress Management; Analytical ability and decision making; Flexibility/adaptability	Time Management
12	Leadership	Negotiation; Self-Management
13	Negotiation	Negotiation; Self-Management
14	Management Skills	Stress management
15	Research and Learning skills	Research and Learning skills

Barriers to teach soft skills in the university system

Table 8 demonstrates addressing the next research question of barriers to teaching soft skills in the university system.

Table 8

Barriers to Teach Soft Skills in the University System

Barriers	Comments given by academia
Time constraints in Semester based system	Students are overloaded with technical subjects and content, mainly focusing on passing the end semester examinations. Therefore, time allocated and the weightage given for technical subjects is higher and students hardly have time to engage in activities that improve their soft skills.
Evaluation of soft skills are not included in the student evaluation procedures	Student Evaluation procedures should be reviewed to adhere to soft skills as there is no guideline in the university system to address these issues (For example no common guideline for marks deduction for late submission).
Largeness of student number hinder the opportunity to improve soft skills	Lack of teacher training on student-centered teaching to a large group of students
Lack of awareness and self-motivation of undergraduates toward soft skill development	In the competitive environment, students are more focused on getting higher results for technical/hard skills and less attentive to developing their soft skills

Potential to improve soft skills of the undergraduates in the public university system

Despite the barriers, there is potential in the state university system to develop soft skills among the undergraduates. Curriculum and syllabus development should encourage soft skill development. For example, adopting Student-Centered Learning (SCL), Garcia et al. (2020) mentions that one of the goals of higher education institutions is to produce graduates with soft skills to face the challenges of the 21st century and to this end, the academics should flip themselves 360 degrees from traditional chalk and talk method to SCL which can take students out of their comfort zones and empower them with soft skills to be lifelong learners. Weimer (2002) makes the point that in the student-centered classroom the roles of the teacher must necessarily change, so that the teacher changes from the "sage on the stage" to the "guide on the side" who views the students not as empty vessels to be filled

with knowledge but as seekers of knowledge to be guided along their intellectual developmental journey" as cited in Wright (2011, p. 93). In such an environment, students learn by doing and involving in learning activities such as problem solving, presentations, communication, critical thinking etc. (Yao & Tuliao, 2018). This approach is currently promoted by the University Grants Commission (UGC) in Sri Lanka and to some extent is implemented in Sri Lanka by the curriculum development process which includes and promotes the necessary aspects of knowledge, skills, attitudes and mindset. Moreover, one of the interviewees reveal that "learner centered teaching is all about learning, in this regard, assessments should not focus on producing grades but assessment should more importantly promote learning, so evaluation should focus on that". In addition, some of the degree programs include soft skills as a compulsory noncredit subject.

Furthermore, possibilities are available to hire professionals from other universities or from the industry to teach or inculcate soft skills. There are volunteers who are ready to help students. Furthermore, there are clubs like Gavel, Rotaract club, societies, sports and career guidance units in universities. Integrating internship programs into degree programs will also provide opportunities for students to improve their soft skill development.

As per the analysis, the following four factors were identified as significant factors that can have a positive impact on the development of undergraduates' soft skills. These significant factors are, namely, 'the awareness and preference for soft skills of the undergraduates', 'self-motivation of the undergraduates', 'SCL', and 'infrastructure and technologies in the university system to support the enhancing of the acquisition of soft skills'.

Conclusion

The purpose of this study was to examine the increased relevance of soft skill development in undergraduates in public universities in Sri Lanka. Thus, this article explored the general view of the academics regarding soft skills in the university system, important soft skills for undergraduates from the academic and industrial perspectives, and the potential and barriers of having soft skill development programs for undergraduates in the Sri Lankan public university system.

All the 15 soft skills that were studied showed as very important skills and no major differences of importance/ rank were visible either in the industry or in the academic perspectives. Communication, teamwork and ethics and professionalism have the highest relative weight. Further results indicate that time constraints, largeness of student number in classrooms, and a lower level of awareness of students about the importance of soft skills are major barriers to teaching soft skills in the university system. Further, there is potential in the university system, such as promotion of SCL, skilled and motivated lecturers and other

relevant infrastructure facilities like clubs, sports events, can enhance undergraduates' soft skills.

The study suggests that universities and industry need to work together to increase students' awareness of the importance of soft skills and guide them in developing these skills continuously throughout their university life. Moreover, the university curricular should create scope for implementing and evaluating soft skill development in undergraduates while minimizing the barriers and enhancing the potential in the university system.

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