



***THE IMPACT OF TEACHING HISTORY  
IN A LANGUAGE STUDENTS UNDERSTAND BETTER  
IN A  
BILINGUAL SETTING : THEORY AND PRACTICE***

***BY***

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1. Topic:

The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting; Theory and Practice.

2. Introduction to the Problem :

History as a discipline has been playing an important role as a core subject in the school curriculum since 2007 with the objective of producing patriotic, spirited citizens capable of identifying and protecting nations identity.

To attain these aims and to develop many more competencies History should be taught in a way that it creates an interest and motivates students to improve critical thinking. The subject always aims at creating citizens who respect human values. It has become a challenge to reach the above aims in a bilingual curriculum due to the language of instruction as a result of regulations.

3. Objectives of the study:

- ① Identify the language capacity of the students to understand the subject in a bilingual class.
- ② Determine the barriers in attaining the goals.
- ③ Analyze the competencies that could be inculcated by using the language that students understand better.
- ④ Examine how the usage of English language in a bilingual class to explain History could help.

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4 Methodology

Sample

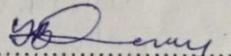
30 students from different schools [Private, Government and Semi Government].  
10 Parents.  
10 Teachers.

Data collection – instruments :

1. Field survey questionnaires.
2. G.C.E O/L results and performances.
3. Term test mark sheets.
4. Interviews.
5. Observing the students in the classroom while teaching, learning takes place.

Analysis of Data:

The data to be obtained from students, teachers and parents will be analysed with the help of both quantitative and qualitative techniques. Data to be obtained from close-ended questions will be analysed using percentage analysis method and content analysis (qualitative analysis) will be used to analyse data obtained from open-ended questions.

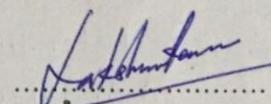
  
Student Signature

Supervisor's Name Dr. L. Wedikkarage

Date 04/01/2020

Approved  
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Two copies of completed plan of your essay should be approved by the supervisor. One copy should be handed over to the supervisor and the other should be included in the essay. If these conditions are not fulfilled, the dissertation will not be accepted for evaluation.

## DECLARATION

I declare that this thesis does not incorporate without acknowledgement any materials previously submitted for a degree or diploma in any university and to the best of my knowledge and believe it does not contain any materials previously published or written by another person except when due reference is made in the text.



Name: Fathima Hussaina Bukhary

*Fathima Hussaina Bukhary*  
22/05/2020

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Signature of the candidate

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## SUMMARY OF THE STUDY

This qualitative research study examined "The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting". This study is carried out to investigate whether the language of instruction as a result of regulation in the bilingual curriculum is impeding to attain set goals and also whether it has any influence on academic achievements of this discipline included as a core subject in the curriculum. Further, the study is determined to gather details with regard to language capability of students who enroll in the bilingual system of education to understand the subject content. The subject is included in the curriculum expecting to inculcate many competencies, this study will also examine whether the language of instruction play an integral part in making this a success. Therefore, This study is carried out to understand if, the language of instruction is a barrier that hinders the acquisition of the goals and competencies expected to be inculcated among students through this discipline.

The population of the study included students, parents and teachers who are directly linked to the bilingual system of education in the urban region. The sample for the study was drawn from the population, it consisted of about 30 students, 10 parents and 10 teachers. The feedback of students, parents and teachers were gathered through a field survey questionnaire to analyze the impact of the language of instruction. The objectives of the study are reached through qualitative techniques mainly. The objective number 01,02 and 04 are addressed using qualitative techniques such as elaboration, comparison, explanation and content analysis. The objective number three is determined using close ended question in the questionnaire. These questionnaires were analyzed using percentage analysis.

The results indicated among the respondents around 30-40 % of the sample agrees to the fact that History should be taught in English for students in the bilingual setting. However, an equal number of respondents strongly believe that history should be taught in the first language to be more effective. The study further found that a

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significant level of academic achievement could be attained if the subject is taught in a language student prefers. The findings of the study, conclusion reached, implications for decision makers and the limitation faced are discussed comprehensively.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction to the Problem

History as a discipline has been playing an important role as a core subject in the school curriculum since 2007 with the objective of producing patriotic , spirited citizens capable of identifying and protecting nations identity.

The subject has been introduced with many national goals such as, Nation building and establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion , national integrity , national unity , harmony, peace and recognizing cultural diversity in Sri Lanka's plural society within a concept of respect for human dignity. Therefore, subject always aims at creating citizens who respect human values.

To attain these aims and to develop many more competencies History should be taught in a way that it creates an interest and motivates students to improve critical thinking. Acquiring the competencies and reaching the said goals expected by undertaking this discipline in the curriculum have become a challenge in a bilingual setup due to the language of instruction as a result of regulations.

Through observations and personal interviews it is intended to carefully analyze the fact whether students in a bilingual curriculum has an issue to grasp the content of the discipline. This study also will help to identify the reason why students have a problem to internalize the expected goals and perform better in public examinations.

The growing importance of English as the language of global communication in an increasingly more globalized world it has become essential to facilitate students to be

more competent in catering the nations pride to the international forum. Therefore , giving them the required history knowledge in a language they understand better we could see successful results.

## **1.2 Background of the Study**

The policy of Bilingual education can be defined in the Sri Lankan context using English as the medium of instruction in a few selected subjects in the secondary level through a methodology of Content and Language Integrated Learning (CLIL) approach without jeopardizing the position of the first language (L1) , as some subjects in the curriculum will continue to be taught either in Sinhala or Tamil.

History, one of the core subject in the curriculum is taught in the first language considering the cultural value and the national identity embedded to the subject. Although, the policy makers intended to protect the cultural integrity of the subject it was noticed that the discipline was in grave danger because of less attention and interest shown by students who enroll in the bilingual educational setup especially in urban areas. This was due to the reason that many who are in the bilingual classes show less affection to learn the subject as a result of the language of instruction. Some students have no involvement as a result they consider the subject to be boring.

The challenge is such that it is complicated for the students to scaffold the content as a result of the language of instruction in a bilingual curriculum. The linguistic capacity of students is an essential fact that determine the level of understanding and interest towards the subject. As a result of regulations the bilingual curriculum compels the study of History in the first language (L1) Sinhala or Tamil, though most students who enroll in the setup especially in urban schools had mastered in English language because they use English to communicate in their homes. Quite a few number of students were noticed of having a lack of proficiency in English language. However, they too had the interest to learn the discipline by building a better

understanding to improve the language since the subject intend to improve the linguistic skill as well.

The Socio-linguistic survey (2010) makes evident that over 90% of all respondents belonging to different ethnic groups and representing different provinces in the country had convincingly supported the need for children to be proficient in English.

### **1.3 Significance of the Study**

This study contribute significantly to our understanding of how language is effectively used to construct historical knowledge when students converse, read, write and learn the subject in a language they understand better in a bilingual setting. The findings of the study certainly may have significant implications for policy makers in making new decisions concerned with regard to teaching history in a bilingual setting.

The subject has been facing a considerable decline in academic performance due to the fact that students show lack of commitment in learning .According to the statistics of the examination department around 16.82% of students had failed history in the 2018 O/L examination. This study will help identify the cause for this negative impact on academic achievement.

History, like any academic discipline, has its own ways of knowing that shape how language is used. Story, explanation, and arguing genres represent three characteristic ways in which historical knowledge is presented to chronicle, explain, or interpret past events (Coffin,2006). Coffin (1997, p. 203) described a continuum of genres in secondary school history as a developmental pathway through which students

progress as they first acquire linguistic resources to construct the past as a story and then later as an argument.

Martin and Rose (2008, pp. 138–139) added the notion that this pathway from storytelling to argumentation could serve as the basis for sequencing curriculum and instruction; in brief, organizational and language features that constitute key history genres, such as recounts, explanations, and arguments.

with the factors mentioned above it is clear that language plays an important role in building a pathway to study the discipline and it creates a great interest to perform better.

This investigation helps to analyze how students learn history in a bilingual setting :theory and practice. Whether the language of instruction has a positive impact as a result of the regulations and to inquire the preferences of the students with regard to it.

This study is also carried out to understand the barriers that hinder the acquisition of the goals and competencies expected to be inculcated among students through this discipline.

The history curriculum in grades 6-11 is implemented with the motive of achieving many important objectives such as,

1. Realizing the changes occurred throughout history while understanding historical evolution and trends.
2. Understanding the present and foreseeing the future through the study of past.
3. To be a loyal citizen while safeguarding the national heritage and keeping the national identity.
4. To deal with national problems with a balanced mind.
5. To respect other cultures.
6. Applying to practical life the rational knowledge and temper brought about through chronology, criticism, sources and cause-effect relationship.

7. To characterize the biographies of important historic characters.
8. To enhance the ability to face the global challenges with an insight into how global and historical trends affected the history of Sri Lanka.

This investigation is mainly carried out to determine whether the language of instruction is a barrier to reach the above objectives.

However, this study will help to determine the willingness of students to learn the subject in either first language (L1) or in English in a bilingual setting. It could also help the researcher to identify the parental contribution towards this in practice because it was observed that many had the intention of improving the proficiency of English through this discipline.

Therefore, it is with great responsibility we could highlight that competencies such as IT proficiency, creativity, divergent thinking, initiative, decision making, problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, and the values such as integrity, tolerance and respect for human dignity is expected to be embedded among students through this subject. The expected results can only be perceived if students dedicate themselves to learn this subject with interest and involvement. Therefore, it is essential to understand the fact that history should be imparted with the language students understand better. Because, it can create a self directive to make students to be a part of the subject.

#### **1.4 Context of the study**

This is mainly a qualitative study that examined the impact of teaching history in a language students understand better. It is carried out among students who are in the secondary level from four different urban schools in a bilingual setting. It is carried out to determine the fact whether the language of instruction used to facilitate the subject in a bilingual setting is creating negative impact or not; if a problem exists among them to what extent it effects the level of understanding and their academic

achievements. Further, it intended to examine how far using a language of instruction could inculcate competencies and whether using English to explain can create positive impact. The present study was not an attempt to confirm that using English is the only way to improve academic achievements of this discipline or it is the only option that will help attain goals. It is an attempt to find out the preferences of the students and the need of using a language of their preference to achieve fruitful results.

### **1.5 Objectives of the study**

1. Identify the language capacity of the students to understand the subject in a bilingual class.

It is to identify the degree of the linguistic ability of students in a bilingual setting in the rural region. Whether teaching the discipline in the first language (L1) : according to regulations, creates a better healthy learning environment or not.

2. Determine the barriers in attaining the goals.

Several national goals are expected to be attained through this discipline

(Eg: Nation building and establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion , national integrity , national unity , harmony, peace and recognizing cultural diversity).This study is expected to determine whether language of instruction is an obstacle in achieving these objectives.

3. Analyze the competencies that could be inculcated by using the language that students understand better.

Analyzing the impact of the role played by the language of instruction that makes the expected competencies ( IT skill, creativity, divergent thinking etc...) to be inculcated among students.

4. Examine how the usage of English language in a bilingual class to explain History could help.

How far using English as the language of instruction to facilitate this discipline may help in a bilingual setting or is it not so that essential. Does language play an important part in imparting knowledge in concern with History as a core subject?

## **1.6 Methodology of the Study**

This qualitative research is designed to understand how language used to facilitate history like any other discipline in a bilingual class will impact. It is to create the necessary impact from "theory and practice" . Accordingly , I randomly selected students who are already in a bilingual setting from private, government and semi government schools in the urban region. Whereas some of them had the experience of learning the subject in English since they were from the private schools. However , most students that were observed under this study were learning the subject in their first language (L1) according to regulations.

30 students were used as the sample selected from different schools in the urban region that had been under the bilingual setting .

10 parents and 10 teachers who have been a part of the bilingual curriculum were also taken as sample to identify the barriers they have had faced in this regard.

The sample of students will be observed in the classroom while teaching and learning takes place, students and few parents from the sample will also be interviewed with a significant set of open ended questions ( five such interviews mainly will be used for data analysis ).

To identify the problem of understanding the subject and the real risk of performance in public exams to be examined several tools such as term mark sheets and G.C.E O/L performance will be analyzed.

A questionnaire with close ended questions will be used for feedback . The questionnaires will be comprising two different sets of questions ,one for students and another for teachers and parents. The responses of the questionnaire will be analyzed using percentage analysis , while the close ended questions from the interviews will be analyzed using content analysis.

### **1.7 Delimitations of the study**

This study is delimited to the students from secondary level who are enrolling in studies in a bilingual setting . It is also delimited to rural region schools where students preference of language essentially varies from one another.

Precisely ,the sample ( n=50 , 30 students, 10 teachers and 10 parents) is picked from those who are directly linked to the bilingual setting. Thus, it is assumed that the academic performance of these students in history is impacted as a result of the language of instruction. It is also carried out to study whether the parents have any obstacle in helping their children in motivating them towards the subject also , it is to identify the language capacity of students and whether the language spoken at home makes any impact on their capacity to understand.

Further , this study is limited to examine whether language acts as a stimuli to create an interest to the subject. Therefore, this study makes language as the only variable that is being examined to bring expected outcomes of the study.

The present study is an attempt to understand the fact whether language of instruction used to facilitate history has impacted in motivating students towards the subject and to attain the expected objectives.

## 1.8 Definitions of Terms

**Bilingual setting :** The term refers to the teaching of academic content in two languages, in a native and second language. Varying amounts of each language are used depending on the outcome goal of the model.

**First language (L1) :** A first language (also mother tongue, native language, arterial language, or L1) often means the language that a person learns first. It helps one understand words and concepts in the style of that language.

**Motivate :** Motivate means to prompt or incite or to give someone the incentive to act in a certain way is to motivate that person.

**Scaffold :** The term scaffold refers to a process in which a model or a structure is designed to support the understanding a subject in the field of education. Psychologist and instructional designer Jerome Bruner first used the term 'scaffolding' in this context back in the 1960.

**Linguistic skill :**It refers to the ability of being well versed in the grammar, structure, phonology, semantics, etc of one or more languages. Language skills simply means having a good command of one or more languages.

**Inculcate :**It refers to instill of knowledge or values in someone, usually by repetition .To inculcate is to instill or impress an idea on someone, so inculcation is the process of instilling or impressing ideas or to instill values .

**Competencies :** The combination of observable and measurable knowledge, skills, abilities and personal attributes that contribute to enhanced performance of any individual and ultimately results in success .

**Regulations :** It refers to a rule or directive made and maintained by an authority.

**Facilitate :** To facilitate means to make something easier.

**Core subject :** The term 'core subjects', are the **subjects** determined as compulsory subjects in the curriculum by the state or by the policy makers.

Ex : First language ( Sinhala , Tamil ) ,English, science, mathematics, history, religion are the six core subjects in the secondary level curriculum according to state policy.

**Stimuli :** Refers to something which causes a response. It is something that arouses activity or energy in someone or something; a spur or incentive. It is also considered as to create an interest towards an activity.

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# CHAPTER TWO

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Bilingual education was introduced to the Sri Lankan system of education in its recent history in 2001 commencing it from GCE (A/L) classes, and then since 2002, the opportunity has been expanded introducing it to the classes from Grade six onwards (secondary level) . By the end of 2009, Education Ministry has been able to implement bilingual education in 601 schools, and it has expanded widely around the Island as a result of the increase of demand for the bilingual education. The main reason for this expansion of demand for bilingual education is recognized as the need of English proficiency for the future work force. According to statistical information it is proven that more than 90% of respondents from any society give more priority for English proficiency which is an important requirement in the current context. Further, bilingual setting of education to become more famous is that many families in the present society has started using English as the language of communication with their children from tender ages .This makes English as their mother tongue or the primary language they get exposed to.

In government schools, primary education is available compulsorily in national languages. Thus two languages are used as media of instruction parallel and consecutively in bilingual learners' education. This situation has provided learners to be multilingual and multi literate or minimum bilingual or bi literate. However, in certain private school primary education also focus in giving more priority for English language unlike National schools. Since this study is also focusing on students who are enrolling in education in private schools based on a bilingual setting , we are bound to study the language capability of the students from private

schools in a bilingual setting and how the regulations are impeding them from learning history as a core subject in a way they understand better to perform well.

Bilingual education program currently implemented in Sri Lanka allows learners from their Grade six onwards to learn a set of subjects (recommended through the circular 2008/12) in learners' L2 (English) and the rest in one of the national languages (either in Sinhala or Tamil). The subjects which read primeval social institutions are read only in national languages Ex: Subjects such as History and Religion. History as a discipline has been playing an important role as a core subject in the school curriculum since 2007, in a bilingual setting this subject is taught in either Sinhala or Tamil (L1) according to regulations .

The study is mainly focusing on the need and necessity of using a language that students understand better to explain History , which is a core subject in the curriculum . It is an attempt to study the fact if regulations are flexible to use a language of choice to facilitate this discipline, can the academic performance be advanced. It is also According to the Three Year Master Plan collaboratively developed on bilingual education by the Education Ministry, the vision of the program in Sri Lanka is 'widening horizons through language diversity to explore the world' with the mission, 'empowering future generations to be multilingual (minimum bilingual) using English as a tool representing Sri Lankan identity'. In this regard I would like to highlight the fact if a subject such as history is taught in English it is more likely to ensure the above vision of the Education Ministry.

The roots of the concept of learning subject matter in a language that is not one's own in order to learn both the subject and another language can be traced back many centuries (Brinton, Snow and Wesche, 2003). As far back as 389 A.D., St. Augustine claimed that "once things are known knowledge of words follows... we cannot hope to learn words we do not know unless we have grasped their meaning. This is not achieved by listening to the words, but by getting to know the things signified" (cited

by Kelly, 1969:36). This gives us an idea that language plays an important role in catering knowledge to learners.

The main reason to take over this study is to disclose the fact whether the regulations with regard to bilingual education is having any impact on teaching history . Following studies are giving relevant information to show how far regulations have impacted bilingual education in different ways.

Johnson and Brandt (2008-09) were not the only researchers to consider how policy affects programs. Menken (2013) found that NCLB has been the impetus behind shutting down bilingual education programs in NYC and claims that NCLB has failed to deliver on its goal to improve education for struggling populations. This is a strong claim and provided incentive to further consider both NYC and education legislation as related to bilingual education programs. Velasco and Cancino (2012) also looked at NYC to conduct a case study of five NYC bilingual education programs, but these programs were doing well in meeting the needs of their diverse students. They found that the key to overcoming legislative hostility was to focus on improving bilingual programs, not to eliminate them. The successful programs focused on components such as flexible curriculum, critical thinking skills, and holding students to high standards. This is an example of a case study in a highly diverse region that has experienced widespread education issues. These programs have survived despite the legislation. Together, these two case studies represent a discontinuity of how much legislation affects bilingual education programs.

My research sought to look deeper in to bilingual setting and find how far regulations are impacting the academic performance of students in history which is included as a core subject in the curriculum. Also considering education policy, Bali (2003) conducted a case study to research compliance with policy and found that local influence overcame global initiatives. Policy cannot be implemented if local decision makers are not supportive, such as the programs in the Velasco and Cancino (2012) case studies. Bali (2003) provided another reason to look at legislation relevant to

bilingual education. The principles of the study applied to San Francisco Unified School District (SFUSD). This helped explain how SFUSD overcame Prop 227 by creating bilingual programs that were well supported by research and supported the parents' decision for their child to receive bilingual education. The district supported the waiver and then backed up their support with well-designed programs. Put together, these case studies showed that further consideration of the correlation between legislation and bilingual education programs was warranted. Other case studies considered the internal components of bilingual education programs. Stipek, Ryan, and Alarcon (2001) provide an example of a case study of a program that combined research with program implementation. This informed the direction of examining how programs use research. The researchers examined a program and had several interesting findings. Using several different proficiency tests, he found that there was no significant difference in the academic achievement gains between English speakers and non-English speakers. He also promotes the consideration of "local context," in my research I wish to promote the necessity of catering the subject matters of history to students in a language they understand better may impact the academic achievement.

## **2.2 Teaching History In a Bilingual Setting**

Although research on effective history instruction for adolescent students in a bilingual setting is limited, some practices can be gleaned from available studies and teaching manuals. For instance, learners in a bilingual setting are more engaged by personally meaningful, socially relevant history instruction (Salinas, Franquiz, & Reidel, 2008). In addition, language and content instruction should be integrated in secondary history or social studies classes (Short, 2002; Short, Vogt, & Echevarria, 2011; Zwiers, 2006). Further, structured opportunities for interaction enable bilingual learners to develop language skills specific to history (Bunch, 2006; Short, 2002; Zwiers, 2006). Finally, instructional scaffolds and assessments should drive teaching practices and, more specifically, how teachers plan opportunities for bilingual

learners to develop language, content, and analytical thinking skills in history classes (Zwiers, 2006). In my study I do not wish to embark into teaching strategies and methodologies that is concerned with history education .The study points out the importance of language of instruction that enables to enhance teaching and learning activities .

Applied linguists recommend that content teachers teach language demands of instructional activities to promote academic literacy skills (Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Schleppegrell, 2004). Accordingly, significantly prior work has articulated language demands of history and how to teach them (De Oliveira, 2010; Fang & Schleppegrell, 2008; Schleppegrell & De Oliveira, 2006). Nonetheless, novice history teachers in this study needed more guidance to do so.

In essence, a gap seems to persist between current research and practice regarding teaching the language of history even for teachers who have completed targeted pre service preparation. Building on existing genre based pedagogical practice (Gibbons, 2009; Martin & Rose, 2008, Schleppegrell, 2005) and how history genres manifested in Cammie and Sarah's classroom instruction, I propose a framework for teaching key history genres (Coffin, 1997, 2006) that can be adopted by novice and experienced history teachers.

According to my research I intend to bring out the fact that teaching history can be made more meaningful and attractive to students if it is carried out in a language students are willing to learn, giving the priority for their preference rather than restricting it with regulations .

While observing the classroom behavior and pedagogical practices during the time history lessons were being conducted in a bilingual setting (both being taught in first language or in English ) there are several conclusion we could arrive at with regard to the attention span of students and how far they grasp the facts.

In Sydney, Australia, researchers from the 'Write It Right project' produced a teaching manual intended to assist history teachers in teaching language associated with text types. Its use never became widespread, according to Rose and Martin (2012), because “successful implementation..depended upon [educational linguists] working alongside teachers” (p. 65). According to this statement the researcher had highlighted the fact the teachers of history can deliver a successful lesson with the linguistic ability . In my research I too wish to emphasize the importance of language and flexibility of regulation can bring successful academic achievements and the competencies that are expected to be inculcated in them without fail.

Of all the academic content areas, history is especially challenging for students who speak a language other than standardized English because its texts are construed in abstract, complex terms quite different from everyday language (Schleppegrell, Greer, & Taylor, 2008). Nonetheless, learning literacy skills associated with history to interpret texts, debate ideas, and present a compelling story or argument can prepare students for school achievement, professional employment, and engaged citizenship (Schall-Leckrone & McQuillan, 2012). Indeed, national standards in the United States, the Common Core State Standards, recommend that students analyze complex informational texts and justify their views with evidence from texts for college and career readiness (Santos, Darling-Hammond, & Cheuk, 2012), literacy skills that can be taught and learned in history classes. Accordingly, this qualitative study examined how language can impact this discipline history in secondary level in a bilingual setting to enhance academic performance, improve literacyskills, achieve expected goals and to inculcate competencies to bilingual learners in urban schools whose English language proficiency is higher and of a very high demand for English medium education or bilingual curriculum is available. I sought to determine the extent to which participants demand English as the language of instruction to be used to facilitate history in a bilingual setting and the reasons why they do so.

History is an important discipline that builds national cohesion , inculcate tolerance policy and creates patriotic citizens who would preserve the national identity . This discipline can influence in upgrading the future generation. However, for all these to be successfully achieved history knowledge has to be imparted without making it as a boring subject as many students use to comment. According my study I wish to emphasize the fact that it is considered to be boring not only because of the way it is taught but also the language used in teaching history in a bilingual setting too makes the interest of the student to be increased.

### **2.3 Summary**

English has been in use in Sri Lanka for centuries and the country has its own variety Sri Lankan English that has been given its due recognition in the recent times (Gunasekera, 2005). While bilingual education is popular mainly among the urban population, and they are mostly vulnerable to any influence that results due to decisions taken by policy makers in the field of education.

This paper will analyze the linguistic capacity of students who enroll in the bilingual setting from the urban region and their language preference to learn history. This study will also help to identify the impact of using English to explain history and how far it contributes to improve academic achievements . Therefore, this study is carried out to determine significance of the language of instruction and how far it influences the learning of history.

"History is a discipline that produces patriotic citizens that caters the country's pride to International forum. Therefore , the subject has to be taught in a way that it interests them".

## **CHAPTER THREE**

### **RESEARCH METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

The research methodology is the essential part of any thesis or dissertation . It helps readers not only to identify the methodology and procedures employed in a study but also to assess the reliability of the data and results of a given research. Hence the purpose of this chapter is to describe the methods employed in attaining the objectives stated in the first chapter of the dissertation. This chapter explains sampling procedure , research type , data collection tools and data analysis methods.

#### **3.2 Sample**

The population of the study was all those who were directly linked to the secondary level bilingual education in the urban region. The population consisted of students , parents , and teachers who had been experiencing the curriculum changes as a result of regulations. Therefore, the target population can be connected to National , Private or Semi Government schools in the urban region in the country. Precisely from a greater number the sample was selected for the study.

The sample of the study was drawn from the population giving more priority for students those who are connected to the national curriculum in a bilingual setting. They were randomly picked from the population. Therefore ,the sample population (n=50 , 30 students, 10 teachers and 10 parents) is picked from those who are directly linked to the bilingual setting. Thus, the study examines the academic performance of these students in history and whether there is any impact on the performance as a result of the language of instruction.

The sample of 30 students are randomly picked giving priority to the variables such as ,

1. Should be engaging in studies in the secondary level in a bilingual setting .
2. Should follow the national curriculum.
3. Should be located in the urban region.

The sample for the study was picked from National, private or semi government schools. Some schools from which samples were selected, carries out the teaching and learning activities related to History in the first language(L1) and some in English.

Around 100 questionnaires were distributed to evaluate the feedback from students and 50 questionnaires among parents and teachers. Questionnaires were not distributed only among the students who studied history in the first language. It was done with the intention of getting a comparison of ideas and feedback with regard to language preference to learn history and how far language of instruction has made impact over the academic achievements.

Sample includes 10 parents who had been influenced by the system and have their share of information to this study. When it comes academic achievements of students, parents too have a major part of involvement. Therefore, parents who are directly experiencing the impact of having their children admitted to the bilingual education system prevalent in the country are selected to the sample. I intend to collect the personal views of these parents with regard to helping their children to learn history, and how far the language of instruction is impeding them in coaching their children.

Teachers (n=10) who have similar involvement in a bilingual setting also are taken into the study as sample. Some are history teachers who have the experience of teaching the students in the bilingual curriculum both in the first language and in English . Teachers were also observed while teaching and learning activities were

carried out to determine the obstacles they face when the subject matters are disseminated among students who engage in a bilingual curriculum. However, the most important reason for the teachers to be included in the sample is to understand the fact whether the language of instruction makes any impact over teaching history and if teachers have any other suggestions with regard to the regulations that is in effect in the bilingual setting with regard to teaching this discipline as a core subject.

### **3.3 Research design**

This qualitative research is focused on synthesizing information and data from various studies and sources to answer the question of what are the barriers that exist in attaining goals and inculcating competencies expected by teaching history in a bilingual setting as a result of regulation . The study also contributes to emphasize the fact, if History is taught in a language student understand better could academic success be brought about .

The data was collected from different sources. At the beginning of the study an analysis of prior research on bilingual education programs was done in order to determine which programs and conditions merited further study. This was accomplished by identifying and analyzing commonalities between programs to determine the programs and features to be reviewed. Then, began to collect data relevant to the study by observations, interviews and feedback questionnaires. The collected data were examined to identify the impact of language on teaching history in order to draw conclusions about favorable and unfavorable conditions .

### **3.4 Data collection instruments and procedures**

Data for the study was collected using different instruments that are considered to be tools which were to provide reliable findings and that could determine the appropriateness of the research.

# Data collection tools:

1. Observations to determine the level of student understanding and involvement in the subject.
2. Interviews with open ended questions to gather personal opinion of the students , parents and teachers with regard to the language of instruction used in the bilingual setting to facilitate history.
3. Field survey questionnaires will be used to gather feedback to decide the language preference for the teaching and learning history in a bilingual curriculum .
4. Documents such as term mark sheets and G.C.E Ordinary level performance will be analyzed to evaluate the achievements of students in history and are factors that impact the performance .

As the *initial stage* of this qualitative research , Observations will be done while teaching learning activities being carried out . The factors expected to be revealed from observations are;

1. Does the interest and involvement of students to learn history vary as a result of the language of instruction.
2. Identify the language capacity of the students to understand the subject in a bilingual class.
3. How far students grasp the facts disseminated as a result of the language of instruction.
4. Does the usage of English instead of the first language in a bilingual class make any impact.

Expected to carry out observations of sample students in the urban region. Basic information on students also will be gathered. One observation in a class where

regular teaching is done in the first language and one in a class where the teaching and learning being conducted in English in a bilingual setting.

Interviews are going to be used as an important tool to gather personal views of students as well as parents . The interviews will be conducted using open ended questions. Therefore , five interviews will be done all together three with students and two with parents .

Interviews can be considered as the most appropriate method to arrive at a conclusion with regard to the language choice of majority students who enroll in the bilingual setting . Though the research cannot cover a large number of interviews as a result of time constrain. With the help of the interviews conducted, an analysis could be done to determine the will of the students and parent preferences comparatively.

As the next important instrument field survey questionnaires will be used to analyze the field back of the majority students preferences . The questionnaire has been constructed with the view of taking a review from the sample. The questionnaire will be analyzed using percentage analysis.

The performance of the students are the reliable way to determine the barriers in attaining the expected goals through this subject for this purpose a document analysis is to be carried out . The details collected from mark sheets of the students and the performance in the G.C.E O/L examination will help analyze the reason that obstructed the achievements of students .A comparison could be done with the performance in history as a result of language of instruction.

### **3.5 Data Analysis**

Since this paper is a qualitative research . The objectives of the study are reached through qualitative techniques mainly. The objective number 01,02 and 04 are addressed using qualitative techniques such as elaboration ,comparison, explanation

and content analysis. The objective number three is determined using close ended question in the questionnaire . These questionnaires will be analyzed using percentage analysis to determine personal views and preferences of students ,parents and teachers who are directly linked with the bilingual setting.

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# CHAPTER FOUR

## DATA ANALYSIS

### 4.1 Introduction

This chapter presents the results of the data analysis to attain the objectives of the study as indicated in chapter one. The data obtained were processed using both qualitative and quantitative techniques. Data obtained from close ended questions were analyzed using percentage analysis method.

The results of the study were reported in two categories .They are descriptive analysis (content analysis) of the interviews and observations as results of objective 1,2 and 4. Finally, the percentage analysis results of the academic performance of students and questionnaires can help derive an understanding to the third objective.

### 4.2 Descriptive analysis of data

The study was under taken among a sample (n=50 comprised of 30 students, 10 parents and 10 teachers) who are connected to education system in a bilingual setting from the urban region . The students were observed while conducting the ordinary teaching learning activities of the discipline. However, before the observations were done the required information about the students linguistic capacity to understand the subject as a result of the communicative language used at home, their preference of language used for teaching and learning activities were collected. The paper also was completed using interviews to gather personal view with regard to teaching and learning history in a bilingual setting with a language student understand better . Therefore , two parents and three students from the sample were interviewed for this purpose.

The 'Appendix C and D' denote the request letter composed to school authority to receive the permission and acceptance by the authorities to observe the classes and select the sample of students from a leading school in Colombo district.

The grade 9 class in the bilingual curriculum comprised of 38 students were chosen for the observation . The general demographic details were collected . The following chart resemble the communicative language used by the students at home. This helps us to understand the language capability of students other than the First language (L1) used in their curriculum setting.

Class : Grade 9 ( Bilingual curriculum)

Total number of students : 38

First language (L1) : Sinhala

History is taught in Sinhala language

# Language used by them to communicate at home regardless of the ethnicity.

1. Sinhala : 20
2. English : 14
3. Tamil : 4

With the above investigation, I built a back ground knowledge on the language capacity of the students and their preferences with regard to grasping the subject knowledge of history in a language they understand better.

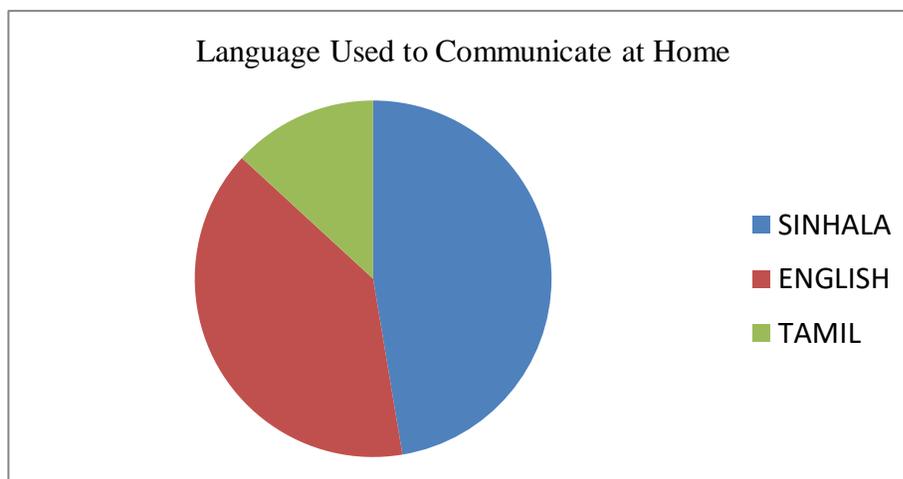


Figure 4. 1 - Language used to communicate at home

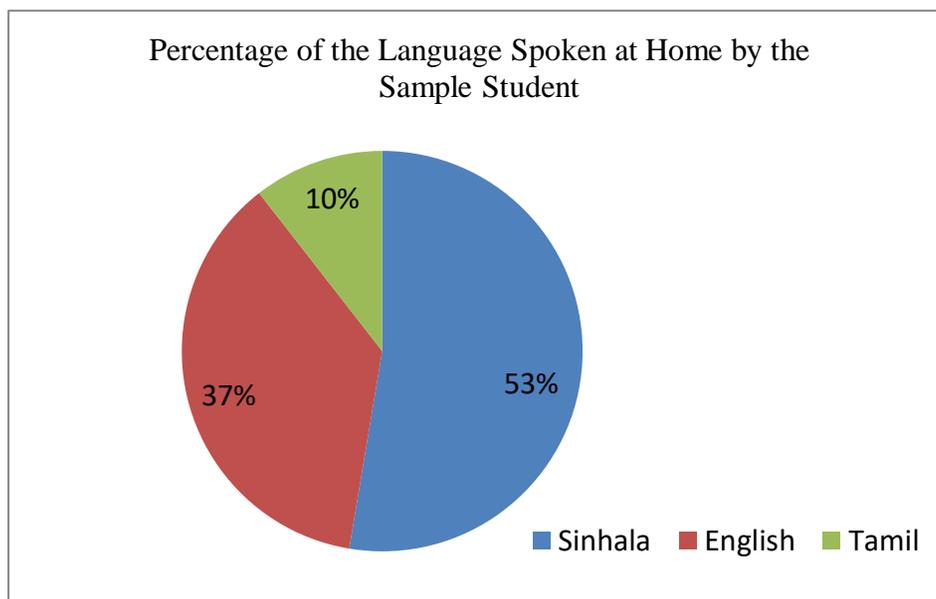


Figure 4. 2 - Percentage of the Language Spoken at Home by the Sample Student

With the above details it is identified that 37% of the students use English to communicate. This has become a trend in the modern day community. They are capable of speaking and understanding in English from their tender age also according to statistics its proven that around 90% of people prefer to enhance their English proficiency regardless of the ethnicity.

The above information also give us a mild thought that these student will have quite a good level of English and also may understand any subject matter put forward to them in English . Though 37% does not resemble the majority student population in the class but they reflect a fine number of students that strongly agree to the fact that if History is taught in English is more convenient to understand than in the first language.

It is true that learning a language other than the mother tongue in the school curriculum has been in practice. However, learning a subject such as history can be

learnt with more involvement and interest if it is taught in a language that students are capable of having a better understanding.

Initially, the details with regard to the language capacity of the students were collected. It helped us to determine the language used widely by the students to communicate with other students and the home environment. This helped the researcher to develop an idea about the ability of students with regard to the influence of language to understand history as a core subject in the curriculum. Several studies suggest that language can affect thinking. One study examined the memories of Russians who moved to the United States and achieved fluency in Russian and English. These participants recalled events that happened in Russia more accurately when speaking Russian, and recalled events that happened in the United States more accurately when speaking English (Marian & Neisser, 2000).

According to these findings it emphasizes the fact that language plays an immense part of thinking and memory. People could recall events easily with the language they are more comfortable with.

In my paper too I particularly made an effort to collect information with regard to the language spoken at home, to highlight the fact that the language used more frequently will impact students ability to think and increase the memory capacity.

### **4.3 Observations**

This paper was completed using two observations, One in a bilingual class where history taught in the first language (for this the leading national school in the urban region where the above details were collected was used), while the second one was in a bilingual setting where history is taught in English (private school). The observations were analyzed in two phases. Two systematic phases of observations and data analysis enabled me to move more finely to focus on my research objectives. A soft form of analysis began as I entered participants' classrooms, collected basic information with regard to their language fluency and began to take field notes while the teaching and learning activities were conducted.

After each observation, I wrote an analytic description with three components: an inventory of data from the observation, a brief narrative description of the lesson, and initial impressions of the students and post-observation feedback .

#### # Observation 1

In this study I observed the classroom of students while history was being taught in the bilingual setup in the first language (L1), to understand the extent to which they show involvement in the history lesson . Whether students are gaining what is expected to be inculcated through the discipline in a fruitful manner.

Observation was scheduled on the convenient lesson period of 40 minutes. Before the teaching learning activity began the above mentioned information with regard to the language spoken at home was gathered .

It was expected to determine the following facts mentioned below.

1. Inspecting the language capacity of the students in the bilingual class and their willingness to learn history .
2. The reasons that motivate them to learn history . Whether the language of instruction has any impact towards the attainment of objectives.
3. Examine how the level of interest of students vary if the subject matters are disseminated in English for the same class .

Observation done in a leading national school.

Date of observation : 24th February 2020

Third lesson period .

With the permission on my request the observation was conducted .

Was able to get the feedback of students in the last five minutes of the lesson.

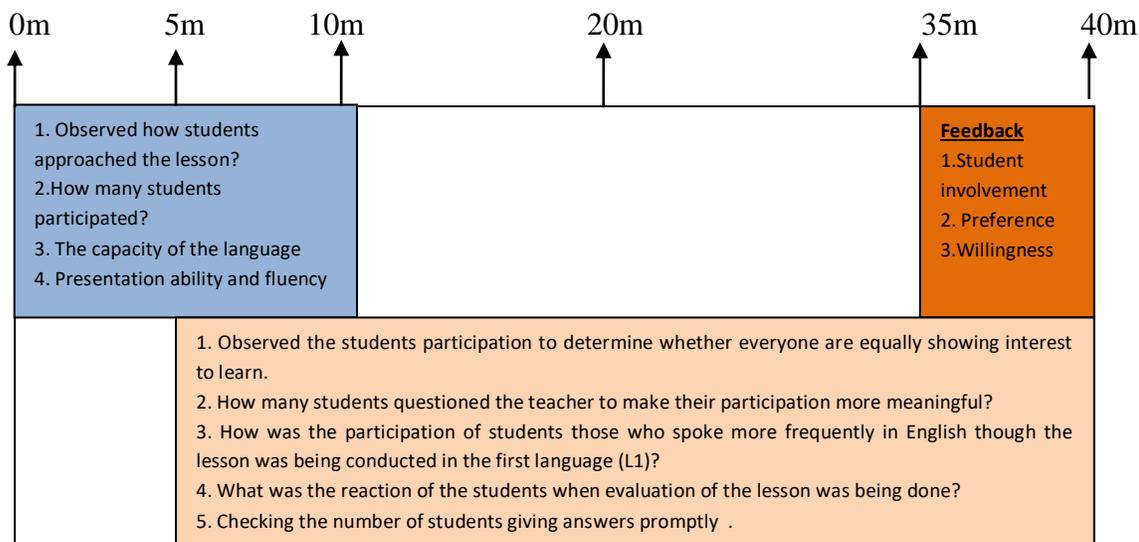


Figure 4. 3-The observation chart within 40 minutes.

### # Observation 2

Students from Grade 10 class in a private school where national curriculum is followed in a bilingual setting was observed while a history lesson was being conducted in English.

Observation done in a private school.

Date : 26.02.2020

No. of students : 32

Lesson period: 4<sup>th</sup>

History in a bilingual setting taught in English.

First Language (L1) : Sinhala

Language used by the students to communicate at home:

English - 18

Sinhala- 9

Tamil - 5

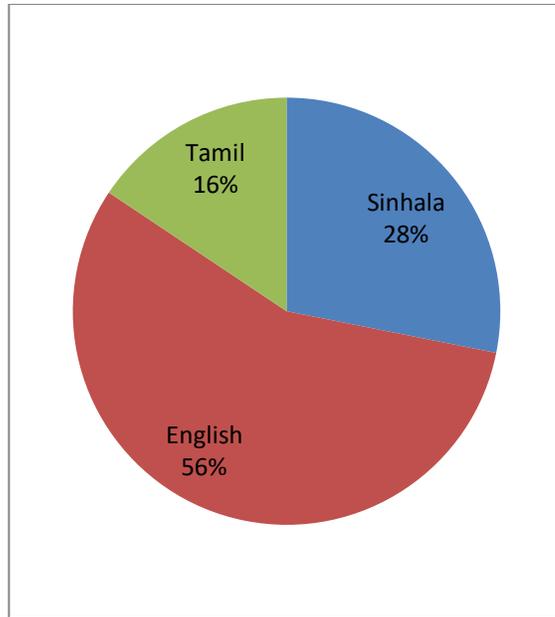


Figure 4. 4 -Percentage analysis of communicative language of students in the home environment.

# Fairly higher level of English language usage.

# The majority of the class had the intention to master the discipline since they had a very high amount of interest to the subject.

# Compared to the level of English language fluency, the first language knowledge is fairly low .

Table 4. 2 -Observation Data from the National school in a bilingual setting.

	Lesson Approach & student participation	Student involvement in the lesson	Feedback
Observation 1	<p>1. Around 40-50% student involvement.</p> <p>2. Some students who were not fluent in the first language(L1) showed reluctance.</p> <p>3. The lesson approach was carried out mainly by students who had a capacity to present in the first language (L1)</p> <p>4. Presentation skill was excellent of those who got involved it was clearly visible that they had high amount of interest in the lesson.</p> <p>5. It was clear that those who played the major role liked history being taught in the first language(L1).</p>		<p>1. 10-15% strongly agreed that the discipline should be taught in English.</p> <p>2. More than 30% of students believed that learning history in the first language has a great impact.</p>

Table 4. 3 -Observation Data from the Private school in a bilingual setting.

	Lesson Approach & student participation	Student involvement in the lesson	Feedback
Observation 2	<p>1. Almost 75-80% student involvement.</p> <p>2. Everyone had equally divided the task among themselves.</p> <p>3. Lesson approach was highly student centered.</p> <p>4. Historical events were presented by students with great interest.</p> <p>5. The class was not comprised of passive listeners.</p>	<p>1. Student involvement in the class was very visible .</p> <p>2. They showed interest in the lesson and participated actively in the lesson .</p> <p>3. Many students questioned the teacher to clear doubts which was a positive sign of guided discovery.</p> <p>4. Teacher questioned the class equally pointing out at students from every corner.</p> <p>5. The class was ready to give answers promptly during the evaluation.</p>	<p>1. Since the majority of the class higher degree of fluency in English many strongly disagreed to the regulations of having history being taught in the first language (L1).</p> <p>2. Many had the interest to the subject .</p> <p>3. Some felt positive about the idea of learning the subject in the first language (L1) to improve their language ability.</p> <p>4. It was opposed by some with the fact they needed their English language to improve by learning the subject in English.</p>

#### 4.4 Analysis of Interviews

History is a subject that has been included in the curriculum with several objectives and competencies to be inculcated among students as mentioned in chapter one. In this particular chapter we are analyzing data from different sources to determine the fact whether language of instruction has any impact on catering the subject to the students who are enrolling in a bilingual setting. For this purpose interviews were also used as a data collection tool. Interviews can be considered as the most appropriate tool that gives genuine information with regard to personal ideas of a respondent.

Interviews were conducted in two phases . The first phase was to determine the preferences of the students, how far they show interest to learn the subject, whether they agree with the regulation that emphasizes them to learn history in the first language (L1) in a bilingual setting and if they have any difference of opinion what are the factors that influence them.

The second phase was carried out to collect information from the parents who were a part of our sample and it is mandatory to collect their view points since they share a huge part of the burden by choosing the bilingual education for their children.

A total of five interviews were used for the analysis( n= 5 , three students and two parents were interviewed).Although, more students were giving their views personally .

Three students from a leading national school was interviewed for the purpose of data collection. The records of the interviews are as follows. The responses to the questions are stated in the following tables given below.

Table 4. 4 - Interview with the first student.

# 1	Question and answers	Theme
<i>Interviewer</i>	Good morning . We are carrying out a research on "The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting : Theory and practice". In this regard I would like to ask a few questions from you. First and foremost you are studying in grade 9 and in a bilingual setting. Do you enjoy it?	Discuss -ion
<i>Student1 (Respondent)</i>	Pause.... I am really enjoying because, I'm able to learn two languages . Also I really want to become proficient in English because it is the fashion. I like to improve my first language too.	
<i>Interviewer</i>	In this setting ,I mean in the bilingual curriculum how many subjects are you learning in English language and what are they can you just brief them.	
<i>Student1 (Respondent)</i>	Our first language(L1) is Sinhala , and we learn Mathematics , Science, and the basket subjects Business studies , Health taught in English. But.... the other two compulsory subjects History and Religion is taught in our first language.	
<i>Interviewer</i>	Why do you think history and religion is taught in the first language(L1) ? Is it good?	
<i>Student1 (Respondent)</i>	Teacher used to tell , its' done by the policy maker because both the subjects have cultural values and it should be felt by us . For this purpose only..... . I think .	
<i>Interviewer -</i>	So, you also feel the same. Don't you ? . What I meant to ask was, Is there any impact such by explaining history in the first language (L1) ?	
<i>Student1 (Respondent)</i>	Mmm..... I didn't understand. We learn history in our first language (L1) and answer our exam papers also in the same . So, it is a good impact ...	
<i>Interviewer</i>	My question was , learning history in the first language (L1) is better for you or in English will you understand better.	
<i>Student1 (Respondent)</i>	Pause..... well I have no such difference of opinion because even in the first language (L1) I, understand the subject but sometimes I feel if it is taught in English I can improve my English fluency.	

# 2	Questions and answers	Theme
<b>Interviewer</b>	You are learning in a bilingual setting and learn some subjects in the first language Don't you? According to this regulations you learn history in the first language.  Do you agree with this or do you like to learn history in English?	
<b>Student 2 (respondent)</b>	I really feel history should be taught in the first language . Because, only then we will be able to actually feel from our hearts and pride of our history can be protected.	
<b>Interviewer</b>	Don't you think learning history in English can help improve your fluency and you will be able to take Lankan history and pride to the world?	
<b>Student 2 (respondent)</b>	Ah ...mm. We learn English through other subject,..so I feel that's enough . With that we can protect and take our historical pride to the outside world.	

Table 4. 5 - Interview with the second student

# 3	Questions and answers	Theme
<b>Interviewer</b>	What do you feel , do you like history being taught in English or in the first language (L1) as they are doing right now?	
<b>Student 3 (respondent)</b>	I like if it is taught in English.	
<b>Interviewer</b>	Why do you feel like that?	
<b>Student 3 (respondent)</b>	I ..pause.. think it will improve my English knowledge . Also sometimes its' easier to understand when the lesson is explained in English.	

Table 4. 6 - Interview with the third student.

The above tables (4.3, 4.4 & 4.5) indicate a summary of a few important questions put forward to the students during interviews conducted as a data collection tool. When we analyze the answers of our respondents, we could understand that students possessed different opinions with regard to the regulation which emphasize the language of instruction for history in a bilingual setting.

According to # student 1, has no specific opinion on the language of instruction . However , the student feels learning the subject in English may help improve the fluency of the language proficiency which is a current requirement. The student also has a very good capacity of the first language (L1) . But # Student 2 strongly agrees to the fact that history should be taught in the first language (L1) . Further, # student 2 also emphasizes the fact that learning the subject in the first language (L1) creates a very good impact and an understanding to preserve cultural values. However, # student 3 holds completely a different opinion with regard to this. The student feels that in a bilingual setting this core subject should definitely taught in English . Because , students who enroll in this system from the rural regions has a good command of English language. They can further improve while increasing the interest towards the subject. The student also had stated if the subject is learnt in English a lot of competencies connected to the subject could be inculcated so that the country's pride could be carried to an international forum.

Other than the interviews conducted with students , two parents from the sample too were interviewed . Parents could also be considered as the stake holders in the system because they are the ones who will be directly facing any positive or negative impacts. Interviews conducted were unstructured and were conducted using open ended questions mainly to find out their opinion on teaching history in the first language to bilingual students. After the responses were recorded , the records were used as an instrument to find out the opinion and the degree to which parents agree with the regulation. These helped the researcher to examine the involvement of parents in helping their children to learn history and whether they have any issues in

helping them cope up with the subject . Though we cannot decide the majority preference of parents based on these two interviews but we could understand the fact everyone in the system do not hold the same opinion in this regard.

# Question for the parent by the interviewer.

What do you think about the regulation that emphasizes your children who are enrolling in the bilingual setting to learn history in the first language?

# Respondent 1 :

We as parents selected the bilingual system of education to make our children more fluent in English and also we have been using English to communicate at home. But , the system caters only some subjects in English language, especially you asked about teaching and learning history . Yeah .. I strongly feel if the subject is taught in English is better you know why I'm saying this I strongly believe that students in a bilingual education system will definitely develop an interest to learn history more if it is taught in English language . They can also search for more information online that will enhance their competencies rather than only sticking to the text book.

# Respondent 2 :

I do not have any difference of opinion because any child who had been learning the first language from primary grades will have a very high capacity of the first language. Also a subject like history has to be taught in their mother tongue, only then they will have an involvement in the culture and develop a tolerance policy. I personally think history has to be taught in the first language (L1) it is more comfortable for me to give a helping hand to my child to understand the subject. We

can produce patriotic citizens by giving a good understanding about our country's history .

#### 4.5 Document Analysis

Many researchers have conducted study on different issues related to bilingual system of education locally and internationally. However , studies pertaining to the impact of the medium of instruction on the learning outcomes in a bilingual setting are limited. However, bilingual system of education has been enhancing as a result of the demand placed on it . This demand for the bilingual education system can be considered as a success indicator of the program . The main reason for the demand for the bilingual education program to widen is the interest shown by people to enhance their English speaking capacity. Following table illustrates the data of school senses which can be taken as evidence in this regard . In the existing system, an increasing pattern can be observed.

Year	Student Population in the bilingual setting
2010	57,340
2011	61,770
2012	63,358
2013	67,061
2014	71,015
2015	76,161
2016	80,993

Table 4. 7 -Data denoting the increase of Student population in the bilingual setting.

The above data gives us a positive indicator with regard to the demand placed on the bilingual setting by the people. The trend of demanding for English proficient work force is the major reason for this . Though , many issues and limitations are there in the system none prevented its' rise.

As it was mentioned earlier since the time of introduction of bilingual education , many predicted that medium of instruction (using English language) may result in a decline in performance for certain subjects.

English language is used for teaching and learning activities of certain subjects such as Science, Mathematics, Business studies and accounting , Geography( basket subject). Even though , it was expected that students may struggle to perform well in these subjects. The students enrolling in the system were showing a significant performance. One such example is results of National level examinations.

The following table indicates the results of General Certificate of Examination ( Ordinary Level) from 2008 to 2011 for some subjects taught in English language in the system.

Subject	2008	2009	2010	2011
Mathematics	94.82	93.73	95.67	94.15
Science	90.95	90.49	92.83	91.78
Business studies and Accounting	96.10	94.66	95.36	94.38
Geography	95.20	90.67	97.78	97.66

Table 4. 8-G.C.E (O/L) results of the students in the bilingual setting from 2008 to 2011

According to the above results we can see a significant level performance from the inception of the bilingual system of education in Sri Lanka.

With this I would like to approach to my paper which is teaching and learning history in the first language in a bilingual setting . For this we will have to make a comparative analysis of the G.C.E (O/L) results for history. Following table indicates the overall performance of students in history (including bilingual students) from 2011 to 2014.

Year	Pass percentage in history
2011	66.44%
2012	67.17%
2013	70.15%
2014	79.10%

Table 4. 9 -G.C.E O/L performance for History.

The result comparison for the year 2011 is shown in the figure given below.

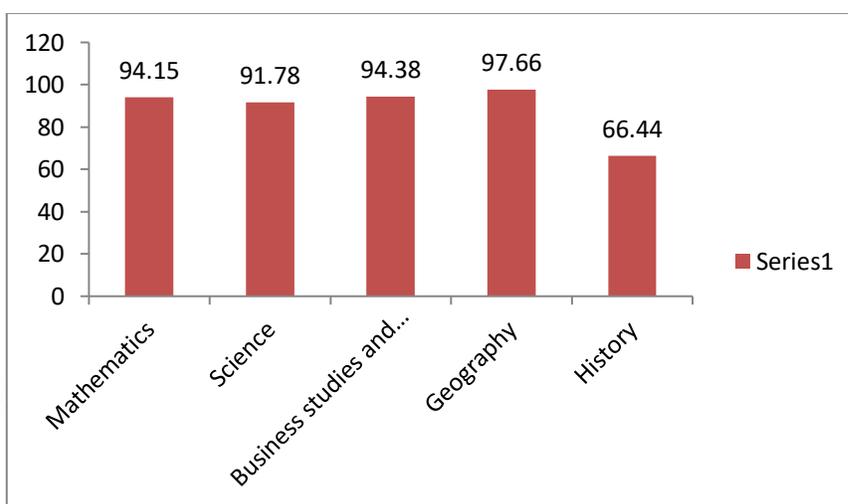


Figure 4. 5 -The result comparison for the year 2011

According to the above data we could understand the fact that the subjects that are taught in English for the bilingual students have a very high successful rate from the beginning of the program. While the success rate for history, inclusive of bilingual students who had answered the paper in the first language has no significant pass percentage. This may have been due to the cause that level of interest shown towards the subject lacks compared to the other subjects as a result of the language of instruction for the students in the bilingual setting.

## 4.6 Feedback

Appendix A and B are the questionnaires used to collect feedback on the study from students, parents and teachers. The field survey questionnaires consisted of close ended questions to determine the preference of the population . Around 100 questionnaires were distributed ( 60 for students and 40 questionnaires for both parents and teachers). The feedback was analyzed using percentage analysis. The main questions were taken into consideration to determine the language preference of students , parents and teachers in this regard.

Therefore, question no 4, 5, 6 , 8 & 9 of the questionnaire in the appendix A were used to determine the language preferences of students and the percentage was taken into account.

Out of 60 questionnaires filled by students following responses were collected as feedback.

Qu: no		1	2	3	4	5
4	Bilingual students understand history well when learning the subject in the first language (according to regulations).	15%	8.3%	25%	16.7%	35%
5	History should be taught in English for bilingual students to improve interest and understanding.	21.7%	10%	16.7%	13.3%	38%
6	Learning history only in the first language can improve patriotism.	21.7%	22%	26.7%	11.7%	18%
8	The goals (producing patriotic, spirited citizens) expected to achieve by learning History can only be successfully achieved if the subject is taught in a language student understand better.	5%	8.3%	15%	18.3%	53.3%
9	Bilingual students learning history in English can search for more information online and improve many competencies	8.3%	3.3%	13.3%	16.7%	58.8%

Table 4. 10 -Data gathered by analyzing the questionnaires distributed among students.

The values are assigned in scale as 1 - 5 ranging from "**Strongly disagree to Strongly agree**"

When the above responses are analyzed we could understand that around 35% respondents strongly agree to the fact History should be taught to bilingual students in their first language (L1), while 38 % of the respondents have strongly agreed that the discipline should be taught in English language. However, many students (53.3%) strongly agreed to the fact that if history is taught in a language of their preference they can achieve the goals expected by including the subject in the curriculum. Also they had the idea that they can become fluent in the language used to explain the subject ( question no:9 in the questionnaire had a 58.8 % students strongly agreed)

# Feedback from parents and teachers.

The questionnaire annexed in the Appendix B was used to collect the view points of the parents and teachers with regard to language preference to explain history for students who learn in a bilingual setting. The responses to question no 2,3,5 & 6 were used to analyze the views. 40 questionnaires were distributed and collected .

Q: no	Question	1	2	3	4	5
2	Teaching history in the first language for bilingual students is very effective.	22.5%	20%	7.5%	12.5%	37.5%
3	History should be taught in English language for bilingual students for better understanding.	27.5%	5%	10%	12.5%	45%
5	Parents will be able to provide their support if history is taught only in the first language.	32.5%	10%	5%	7.5%	45%
6	Many skills could be developed if history if it is taught in English language for bilingual students	17%	18%	14.5%	11%	39.5%

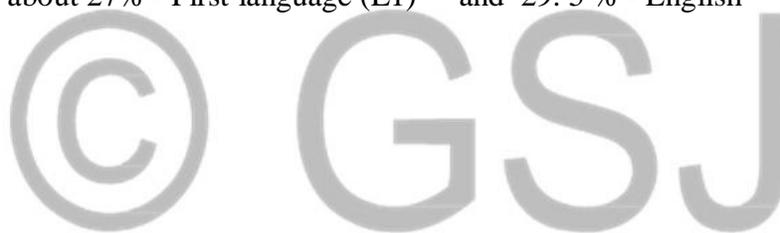
The values are assigned in scale as 1 - 5 ranging from "**Strongly disagree to Strongly agree**"

Table 4. 11 -Data gathered by analyzing the questionnaires distributed among parents and teachers.

According to above findings we understand that even the parents and teachers, are considering that language has some amount of impact on the goal attainment and competence building. Many of the respondents have strongly agreed to the fact that, history should be taught in English (45%) it is clear that parents rely on developing the English language proficiency. Also since the study was carried out among the urban population, a positive correlation can be determined between the language of instruction and subject achievement. The finding also have shown that there is considerable number of parents in the sample holds the view that this discipline has to be taught in the first language so, that they will be able to find resources and provide their support to their children .

In case of skill and competence building, the respondents have held a similar point of view with both languages used to facilitate the subject content.

Which is about 27% - First language (L1) and 29.5 % - English



## CHAPTER FIVE

### CONCLUSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This chapter discusses the findings of this study and consequently conclusions are drawn based on those findings. In addition, the implications of the findings for decision makers and recommendations for future studies too are discussed .

This study investigated how far language of instruction impacts the students in a bilingual setting from urban region, for their academic achievements, goal attainment, inculcate competencies and improve many other skills related with history as a core subject in the curriculum.

#### 5.2 Findings and Discussions

##### Objective One :

**Identify the language capacity of the students to understand the subject in a bilingual class.**

The study was focusing on determining the language capacity (Eg: English or the First language) of students . Therefore, information with regard to their communicative language was gathered . The sample was questioned prior to the general class room observations were conducted .The linguistic ability of the students were determined by the language commonly used by each student sample . The sample was drawn from two different schools in the urban region and observed, One was a national school and the other was a private school in the bilingual setting . According to the findings, the language that majority students used to communicate in the National school was Sinhala which is about 53% and the students enrolled in the private school had a fairly higher level of English since they had been using English to communicate at home too . The percentage of English speaking students were 56% in the private school. Further, around 37% of students in the national

school had English as their communicative language and they were more comfortable in understanding subject matters in English. This gives us the implication that linguistic capacity of students differ and more successful academic achievements could be attained if history is facilitated with a language students are more comfortable with. According to Rose and Martin (2012), teachers of history can deliver a successful lesson with the linguistic ability. As per findings of the language capacity of students differ from one another and the capacity to understand the subject matter also may not be the same. Coffin (1997, p. 203) described a continuum of genres in secondary school history as a developmental pathway through which students progress as they first acquire linguistic resources to construct the past as a story and then later as an argument.

However, Martin and Rose (2008, pp. 138–139) has added the notion in brief, organizational and language features that constitute key history genres, such as recounts, explanations, and argument. Also according to the study conducted by Marian & Neisser ( 2000 ) , that language can affect thinking.

These references and findings have an implication that language plays a major role in disseminating history knowledge.

## **Objective Two**

### **Determine the barriers in attaining the goals.**

History as a core subject has been introduced with many national goals such as, Nation building and establishment of a Sri Lankan identity through the promotion of national cohesion , national integrity , national unity , harmony, peace and recognizing cultural diversity in Sri Lanka's plural society within a concept of respect for human dignity. Therefore, subject always aims at creating citizens who respect human values. Further, Realizing the changes occurred throughout history while understanding historical evolution and trends.

The student interest and involvement towards a subject is an essential requirement to achieve expected goals . However, in case of history it is really challenging.

The study gathered the initial findings through observations. These observations were carried out while a history lesson being conducted in a bilingual setting. Two observations were conducted, one in a national school and another in a private school in the bilingual setting . The lesson in the National school was conducted in the first language (L1) and in the Private school while being conducted in the English language. Observations were used to investigate the involvement of students to grasp the subject knowledge.

The findings of the observations are as follows;

While the lesson was conducted in the first language in the National school ,there was around 40-50% of student involvement at the approach of the lesson. . 10-15% strongly agreed that the discipline should be taught in English. However, More than 30% of students believed that learning history in the first language has a great impact. . It was clear that those who played the major role liked history being taught in the first language(L1).

The findings of the observations of the private school was quite different from the above. It had almost 75-80% student involvement from the lesson approach. The lesson was being conducted in English. Had no passive listeners , Since the majority of the class had a higher degree of fluency in English many strongly disagreed to the regulations of having history being taught in the first language . They showed interest in the lesson and participated actively in the lesson, Historical events were presented by students with great interest.

According to the responses of the questionnaire shown in table 4.9 & 4.10 we could find out some of the views that students, parents and teachers hold with regard to teaching history in a preferred language without any compulsion to attain expected objectives of the subject.

Out of the students respondents 38% held the view that if history is taught in English for bilingual students is better to increase interest and understanding, 53.3% held the view that if the subject is taught in a language they prefer only the expected goals could be attained.

The parents' feedback too was gathered , out of the respondents 45% strongly agreed that the students who enroll in the bilingual setting should be taught in English to improve their understanding to perform better academically , but around 37.5% strongly agreed it should be taught in the first language (L1) to be more effective, 45% of them also strongly agreed to the fact that they can provide their support to their children if only it is taught in the first language (L1).

### **Objective Three**

**Analyze the competencies that could be inculcated by using the language that students understand better.**

According to the feedback collected through the questionnaire , 58.8% of the student respondent strongly agreed to the point that, if those who enroll in a bilingual setting learn history in English will develop the IT skill and many other competencies, 39.5% of parents' too agree on this fact.

Findings from interviews , confirmed that the proficiency of language can be developed by learning history in English.

According to Salinas, Franquiz, & Reidel, 2008 stated that learners in a bilingual setting are more engaged by personally meaningful, socially relevant history instruction. Further, according to Bunch, 2006; Short, 2002; Zwiers, 2006, structured opportunities for interaction enable bilingual learners to develop language skills specific to history.

Also according to Lucas & Villegas, 2011; Schleppegrell, 2004; has stated the fact that language demands of instructional activities of the subject promote academic literacy skills.

It was observed that the students participation was, almost 75-80% student in bilingual class when history was being taught . This was a positive sign for inculcating expected competencies such as, IT proficiency, creativity, divergent thinking , initiative, decision making , problem solving, critical and analytical thinking, and the values such as integrity, tolerance and respect for human dignity is expected to be embedded among students through this subject (Department of Education).

### **Objective Four**

**Examine how the usage of English language in a bilingual class to explain history could help.**

The growing importance of English as the language of global communication in an increasingly more globalized world. Also the Socio-linguistic survey (2010) makes evident that over 90% of all respondents belonging to different ethnic groups and representing different provinces in the country had convincingly supported the need for children to be proficient in English.

The data collected for the research has been evident to this. It shows an enormous growing trend in the bilingual education in Sri Lanka. A few statistical data from table 4.6 student population in the bilingual setting in year 2010 was **57,340** by year 2016 it has grown up to **80,993**

with this positive growth it has become essential to facilitate students to be more competent in English language to match its' demand.

Further, findings revealed that the subjects taught in English for bilingual students have shown remarkable achievements. As per reference to table 4.7 Pass percentage

of Mathematics from Year 2008 to 2011 is 94.82, 93.73, 95.67&94.15 also its observed with other subjects as well ( Department of examinations analysis).

However , the academic achievements in History is in an alarming state. The table 4.8 had denoted the findings as given below (including bilingual students);

Year	Pass percentage in history
2011	66.44%
2012	67.17%
2013	70.15%
2014	79.10%

Further according to the statistics of the examination department around 16.82% of students had failed history in the 2018 O/L examination .

Therefore , it implies if the required history knowledge is facilitated for bilingual students we could see successful results. Also we could create competent citizens to cater the nations pride to the international forum.

It was revealed by Schleppegrell, Greer, & Taylor, 2008 that English language that is learnt through history is abstract, complex terms quite different from everyday language. It was further elaborated in their finding that learning literacy skills associated with history to interpret texts, debate ideas, and present a compelling story or argument can prepare students for school achievement, professional employment, and engaged citizens.

I would like to add further to this investigation , data gathered from the performance of the bilingual students from Zahira College, Colombo for G.C.E.O/L 2018 pass percentage 96% and in 2019 is 93 % . These students learn history in English and has shown remarkable performance.

### 5.3 Conclusion

This study was aimed at investigating how far language of instruction can make an impact on teaching history for bilingual students. It was mainly taken in to investigation since the regulation emphasizes the students who enroll in the bilingual setting to learn the subject in the first language (L1) . When we consider the data

analysis of this paper it could be clearly observed that more than 30-40 % of the sample agrees to the fact that History should be taught in English for students in the bilingual setting. While an equal percentage opposes and insists that the discipline should be facilitated in the first language (L1) for the creation of patriotic, spirited citizens with cultural values as expected by the policy makers. However, it is worth mentioning the fact that the expected goals can only be achieved if the discipline is disseminated in a manner that students learn with interest and involvement. Therefore, it would be fair if an option of choice is given to students to decide the language of instruction they prefer to learn the subject. Hence, students unwillingly learning might not benefit neither the students nor the policy makers expectations. To motivate students to learn the Historical values with understanding and dedication, it is with great responsibility I mention the fact that this important discipline in the curriculum should be taught in a language students understand better and achieve higher academic achievements.

#### **5.4 Implications for Educators & Decision Makers**

The findings of the study emphasizes the fact that flexibility of the regulation with regard to the language of instruction used to facilitate history could bring positive results. Also the decision makers should provide necessary resources for training bilingual history teachers who are competent in both first language (L1) and English. The policy makers should rethink of being flexible on the rigid regulation for the bilingual program to be more successful and also to create more competent citizens who are proficient in English language to face the future requirements.

According to Velasco and Cancino (2012) , looked at NYC to conduct a case study of five NYC bilingual education programs and denoted the fact that successful programs focused on components such as flexible curriculum, critical thinking skills, and holding students to high standards.

Menken (2013) found that NCLB has been the impetus behind shutting down bilingual education programs in NYC and claims that NCLB has failed to deliver on

its goal to improve education. Johnson and Brandt (2008-09) are also researchers to consider how policy affects programs.

## **5.5 Limitations of the Study**

- It was quite challenging to make the general observations since the teachers who conducted the lesson had to be convinced that this research focuses on the language of instruction not the delivery.
- Since the study focused mainly the students from the urban region the data gathered and the findings cannot be generalized to all students who engage in secondary level education in the bilingual setting.
- Even though studies related to bilingual system of education had been carried out extensively , there were limited studies that are connected with teaching of history in a bilingual setting that was accessible.
- It was expected to gather feedback through questionnaires from more than 100 students to identify the preference, as a result of the sudden closure of schools due to the covid 19 pandemic, only 60 questionnaires were collected from students while 40 were collected from parents and teachers.

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## APPENDICES

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~ III ~

## APPENDIX A

### RESEARCH INSTRUMENT

#### FIELD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

For Students.

Part 1 : Please tick the appropriate box below.

1. Gender :

Male

Female

2. Your age :

10 - 13

13 - 16

16 - 19

3. Are you studying in a ..... School ?

Private

Government

Semi Government

4. What is the medium in which you are enrolling in studies ?

English

Sinhala

Tamil

Bilingual

**Note :**

Please respond to the following questions given in part 2

The values are assigned in scale as 1 - 5 ranging from "**Strongly disagree to Strongly agree**"

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**Part - 2**

<b>The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting : Theory and Practice.</b>		<b>1</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>
1	English proficiency is an essential requirement in education.					
2	As a result Bilingual system of education is very popular in the country.					
3	History is an important and an interesting subject included in the curriculum.					
4	Bilingual students understand history well when learning the subject in the first language (according to regulations).					
5	History should be taught in English for bilingual students to improve interest and understanding.					
6	Learning history only in the first language can improve patriotism.					
7	English language proficiency will improve if history is taught in English for bilingual students.					
8	The goals (producing patriotic, spirited citizens) expected to achieve by learning History can only be successfully achieved if the subject is taught in a language student understand better.					
9	Bilingual students learning history in English can search for more information online and improve many competencies.					
10	The language of choice to learn history should be given to students in the bilingual setting.					

## APPENDIX B

### FIELD SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE

FOR TEACHERS AND PARENTS.

**Part 1: Please tick the appropriate box below**

1. Gender

Male

Female

2. Your highest education level

O/L  A/L  Professional  Degree  Master's  Doctoral

3. Are you a teacher  or a parent  connected to the bilingual setting.

**Part 2 :Please respond to the following questions.**

The values are assigned in scale as 1 - 5 ranging from "Strongly disagree to Strongly agree"

<b>The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting : Theory and Practice</b>		1	2	3	4	5
1	History is an interesting subject that helps create patriotic citizen.					
2	Teaching history in the first language for bilingual students is very effective.					
3	History should be taught in English language for bilingual students for better understanding.					
4	Teaching history in English language can help students in the bilingual setting to find related information online and develop many competencies.					
5	Parents will be able to provide their support if history is taught only in the first language.					
6	Many skills could be developed if history if it is taught in English language for bilingual students.					
7	The language capacity improves by learning history (any language used for teaching learning activity)					
8	The goals (producing patriotic, spirited citizens) expected to achieve by learning History can only be successfully achieved if the subject is taught in a language student understand better.					

## APPENDIX C

### LETTER OF REQUEST FORWARDED THROUGH EMAIL

Ms Hussaina Bukhary ,  
Reg .No. 18/PGDE/WE(EM)/16  
31,Clifton Lane ,  
Colombo-9.  
17.02.2020.

The Principal,

Dear Sir,

Re : Request the permission to observe a (grade -9 )history lesson period in the bilingual setting.

I Ms Hussaina Bukhary (reading PGDE at the University of Colombo) would be grateful to you if you could grant me the permission to observe a history lesson being conducted in the bilingual curriculum as I am conducting a research on " The impact of teaching history in a language students understand better in a bilingual setting: Theory and practice" . This research is carried out as a requirement for the completion of PGDE. It would be highly appreciated if you could also grant the permission to get feedback questionnaires to be filled from students and teachers.

Awaiting a favourable reply.

Thanking You.

Ms Hussaina Bukhary.  
A teacher of History,  
Zahira College , Colombo.

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## APPENDIX D

THE REQUEST LETTER SENT WAS ACKNOWLEDGED THROUGH AN EMAIL

Riyaz Auher

Feb 18, 2020, 3:25 PM (20 hours ago)

to me

18th February, 2020

Ms Hussaina Bukhary.

Teacher of History,

Zahira College , Colombo.

Dear Ms Bukhary ,

With request to your letter dated 17th February ,2020 I would like to grant you permission to observe a History lesson in English Medium grade 9 class.

As our unit tests are in progress and the big match season is on we can only allocate you a date between 16th March to 20th March.

You are herewith granted permission to get the feedback

questionnaires filled by the students and teachers.

For further information you may contact the sectional head of grade 8/9.

For Principal

M.A.M.Riyaz

Assistant Principal  
Senior Games Master  
(Prefect Of Games)  
0777431597

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