



Journal Homepage: - www.journalijar.com
**INTERNATIONAL JOURNAL OF
 ADVANCED RESEARCH (IJAR)**

Article DOI: 10.21474/IJAR01/3524
 DOI URL: <http://dx.doi.org/10.21474/IJAR01/3524>



RESEARCH ARTICLE

COOPERATIVE LEARNING AND ETHNIC RECONCILIATION IN ESL CLASSROOM.

Punsisi Pavani Alahakoon

English Language Teaching Unit, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka.

Manuscript Info

Manuscript History

Received: 21 January 2017
 Final Accepted: 22 February 2017
 Published: March 2017

Key words:-

Cooperative Learning, Ethnic reconciliation, ESL, qualitative data

Abstract

This study explores the efficacy of using Cooperative Learning (CL) in enhancing ethnic reconciliation among students while improving their L2 competency. According to Coelho (1994), students learn languages best when they are engaged in real interaction and CL is especially appropriate for multi-cultural classrooms. Sri Lankan education has its partly contribution to linguistic nationalism that gradually led to a disastrous ethnic conflict (Bannon 2003). Having understood that, recent research has found that English as a link language that binds cultures together can support reconciliation and greater economic prosperity throughout the country. Similarly, orienting students towards a new teaching-learning environment and fulfilling the objective of socializing with multicultural and multiethnic communities and respecting diversities, the English Language Teaching Unit of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology too conducts the L2 module of the Orientation 2016/17 for the new intake using cooperative learning activities. Thus, through this case study, it is aimed at providing students' and teachers' perceptions towards feasibility of CL for ethnic reconciliation. The students are divided into groups of 12 irrespective of their ethnicity or competency. The data gathered through questionnaires and interviews from a sample of 48 students and 3 teachers involved in the Orientation program highlight that CL in multiethnic ESL classroom encourages students' participation and promotes positive interactions between students. Further, as per the qualitative data, the interaction among students during cooperative tasks facilitates their L2 competency. In contrary, some groups of students gain attention more than others as some mostly focused on their individual performance despite collaboration among team-mates. However, the results indicate that CL allows each student to play an important role in doing the assigned tasks, resulting in enhancing team-spirit and ethnic reconciliation.

Copy Right, IJAR, 2017,. All rights reserved.

Corresponding Author:- Punsisi Pavani Alahakoon.

Address:- English Language Teaching Unit, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka.

Introduction:-

This paper presents an overall evaluation on the integration of cooperative learning in the ESL classroom with special reference to the Orientation 2016/17 offered by Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology (SLIIT), Malabe, Sri Lanka in order to uplift the ethnic reconciliation among the freshers from diverse backgrounds while improving their L2 competency.

After being exposed to a long period of civil war, the government of Sri Lanka is focusing on ways to develop the school curriculum to integrate multicultural education into its peace education curriculum in order to foster intercultural understandings⁽⁷⁾. In terms of the 2011 Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission Report in Sri Lanka⁽⁶⁾, a National Youth Policy has been presented and one of its goals is to strengthen social interaction among youth. The Ministry of National Languages and Social Integration has taken measures to implement an action plan to recognize diversities in Sri Lanka promoting the Trilingual Sri Lanka National Plan which emphasized the importance of Sinhalese, Tamil and English proficiency to achieve ethnic harmony. As per the UNDP report, youth has been victimized due to the long lasted ethnic conflict and steps should be implemented to make youth not to be ethnic extremists, make wiser non-violent choices, and invest their energy in peace and reconciliation. When the medium of instruction has changed to vernacular languages in 1956, the schools were separated. In order to reverse this division, there is a necessity of promoting a common language among youth and English has been identified as the primary medium which clears ethnic or cultural separations.

As Gnanaseelan⁽⁵⁾ (2011) identifies English language education as a good method which has the potential to help overcome a wide variety of social and cultural tensions despite the controversial opinions emerging time to time. However, realizing the great need for students to be armed with English language proficiency, it has been understood by various studies that English language can empower binding cultures together. Having realized this, corresponding to the necessity of being fluent in two official languages in Sri Lanka (Sinhala and Tamil), English language has also been integrated in the school curriculum as the Second Language (L2) and even the English medium education has been promoted. When it comes to tertiary education, the medium of instruction in most of the modules is L2. Thus, almost all the tertiary educational institutes conduct ESL courses; thereby the students' L2 proficiency is enhanced. However, it is necessary to notice whether the measures taken so far have been complied with the emerging demands in the education in Sri Lanka i.e. to cater a group of students from multiethnic and multicultural backgrounds. Bannon⁽¹⁾ (2003) has identified that any curriculum should consider how diversity is represented in the context of teaching so that the ethnic harmony is spread. Thus, as I mentioned previously, the tool for this is the proper utilization of English language or lessons in ESL classroom where all the students in the institution are gathered despite their respective disciplines.

Moreover, it has been observed by the Faculty of Computing of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology that the undergraduates tend to form groups who share the same characteristics or perceptions without being mingled with other students from diverse backgrounds. As per the observations made by the researcher, most often, the students tend to form groups or 'clicks' on their own and sometimes, certain minorities are discriminated due to many reasons such as ego, wealth, religions, attitudes or the cultural influences. Yet, in order to achieve the aspirations of the country, the students should grow peace and harmony within them. When it considered the Orientation Program 2015/16, the faculty understood that teaching the students technical context or grammar and writing during their orientation had not generated expected unity among themselves as the students focused only on the lessons rather than making contacts or interactions within a diverse context. It was noticeable that the number of students attending classes dropped towards the end of the program and those who with keen interest in learning English and those who wanted to win the good will or the attention of the teachers came to the lectures and this lead to ruin the intended aim of the ESL unit. Further the ultimate goal of the degree should not be only producing a graduate with good scores but also a quality team-player who can succeed in the competitive markets. Thus, there emerged a necessity of implementing a new orientation program that caters the values and ethics to students while enhancing their soft skills and English language proficiency. The result of this was the introduction of the Orientation 2016/17 – 'Bootstrap', making it a boot to enhance students' achievements. The priority was given to ESL lessons throughout and the ESL work plan was woven around the objective of orienting students towards a new teaching-learning environment and fulfilling the objective of socializing with multicultural and multiethnic communities and respecting diversities while improving their L2 proficiency.

In fulfilling the above requirements, the popular methodology in language classrooms; the cooperative learning method was adopted to the proposed Orientation 2016/17.

The researchers consider cooperative learning as a method to help improve students' academic performance as well as it encourages student connections and promote literacy skills. The basic theory of cooperative learning in ESL classroom is to make them work cooperatively to strengthen language and personal bonds.

As per the Education Research Consumer Guide⁽³⁾ by the U.S. Department of Education, cooperative learning is, 'a successful teaching strategy in which small teams, each with students of different levels of ability, use a variety of learning activities to improve their understanding of a subject. Each member of a team is responsible not only for learning what is taught but also for helping teammates learn, thus creating an atmosphere of achievement'.

This definition is clearly covered by the cooperative learning strategies. Further as Coelho⁽²⁾ (1994) explains the students from different cultural backgrounds learn best through cooperative activities and such activities enhance the learning of all students. The students will be working in groups to achieve the task assigned to them. Felder and Brent⁽⁴⁾ (1996) have conducted in depth research on cooperative learning and proven that CL is effective in a variety of instructional settings. As they describe, when it compared to individualistic tasks, individual performances are better when cooperative methods are utilized in the classroom. It further results in a variety of cognitive and affective outcomes. The cooperative learning methodology has been greatly examined by Coelho (1994, *ibid*) in her book: 'Learning together in the multicultural classroom'. She argues that students learn best when they are in a multicultural setting. As she highlights, students spend a limited time in the ESL classroom within their timetable. Thus the group interaction for ESL students is important. When the students are in heterogeneous groups, it makes them cohesive and cooperative and it leads to better language acquisition. However, an ample of studies pertaining to cooperative learning has been conducted so far. Yet, there is a dearth of research related to achieving ethnic harmony through cooperative learning in tertiary ESL classroom in Sri Lanka.

Considering the above literature, understanding the urge for ethnic reconciliation in the country and realizing the requirements of the Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, the English Language Teaching Unit of SLIIT carried out the Orientation Program 2016/17 in order to fulfill the objective of socializing with multicultural and multiethnic communities and respecting diversities while improving their L2 competency and making it a lifetime experience for them.

This qualitative study is an evaluation of the said Orientation program which answers the research question; Will the utilization of cooperative learning in ESL lessons enhance ethnic reconciliation among students while improving their L2 competency?

Methodology;-

The students were divided into groups of 12 irrespective of their language proficiency, discipline, ethnic or cultural diversities. This division is done by the institution. Due to the large number of students enrolled in the first year batch and having considered the limited number of classrooms and time slots to occupy all the students, the number of members per group was made 12. The sample of this study was consisted of 4 groups (48 students) and 3 teachers who have experienced teaching in the previous Orientation program as well. The diversity of the student sample was as follows.

Ethnicity	Religion
Sinhala – 28	Buddhist – 22
Muslim – 11	Islam – 11
Tamil – 8	Hindu – 5
Other – 1	Catholic – 9
	Other – 1
Total – 48	Total – 48

Unlike the Orientation 2015/16 which focused on enhancing all four language skills through more individual tasks and classroom teaching, the new program was consisted of group activities improving social/ethnic interactions and active team-wise participation that would equally result in the improvement of four language skills.

It is vital to emphasize that the cooperative learning techniques presented by the researchers had been adopted and amended to suit the said Orientation program. The LOs were communicated to students properly at the beginning: socializing with multicultural and multiethnic communities and respecting diversities and enhancing L2 proficiency, so that they would know the expected outcome of the program and how the program was run.

This study focused on the data gathered based on four main activities conducted throughout the program. It is necessary to highlight that apart from the list below, mini cooperative learning activities were constantly conducted in the classroom leading to the following major activities.

Food Festival:-

The aim of this activity was to improve students' day-to-day conversational skills, negotiation skills and unity across different cultures. The student groups were supposed to put up a food stall selling both oriental and western food. There were sellers, buyers and students to welcome and greet the visitors to the stall. They were in costumes which reflect different cultures.

Tasks and skills: Practicing dialogues/ conversations – Speaking Writing invitations and posters – writing Searching and discussing about different food and reading recipes – reading and speaking

Post-activity (in-class) – Students were asked to discuss about the variety of food they consumed, different costumes/cultural symbols witnessed and their overall experience with their group members. The students were guided and observed by the relevant facilitator.

Literary Carnival of SLIIT:-

The aim of this activity was to improve students' presentation skills, ability to describe people, places or things using relevant vocabulary and sentence structures and also to make them carryout some research on various cultural/literary icons/figures to be demonstrated at the carnival. As a group, the students were asked to pick a cultural or literary figure and read about his/her background. Then they were asked to demonstrate the figures and do a presentation explaining them in a creative way with the participation of all the team-mates.

Tasks and skills: Searching and discussing about different costumes – speaking and reading Role-play – speaking Doing presentations – presentation skills Watching a video clip and answer the questions on the worksheet – listening, writing Post-activity (In-class) – Students were instructed to talk about different figures/icons they witnessed and to explain why they are unique. It made them to realize that every culture has its own uniqueness so that we should respect them. Further they were encouraged to actively participate in group discussions based on the demonstrations of figures at the carnival and raise their own thoughts. The students were guided and observed by the relevant facilitator.

The four corners:-

The aim of this activity was to enhance students' skills in giving opinions using relevant vocabulary and phrases and supporting and opposing ideas in an appropriate manner. The students were asked to listen to the statements on diversity, peace and tolerance read by the respective facilitator and run to the corners of the class which were labeled as Strongly agree, Agree, Disagree and Strongly disagree. Next they had to build up an argument justifying their point of view. All the group members were given a chance to present thoughts in front of the task and the cooperative effort is observed.

Tasks and skills: Listening to the statements – listening, comprehension Giving opinions using appropriate language – speaking, vocabulary Building up arguments – conversations, questioning and answering

Waving Flag:-

The aim of this activity was to prepare themselves for explaining and justifying facts while promoting the importance of unity and harmony among people. They were encouraged to discuss and correct their grammar and sentence structures in writing. The student groups were provided with stationary and asked to design a flag and write a poem or a prose for each group based on one of the themes: Peace, Tolerance and Diversity.

Tasks and skills: Discussing about each student's culture – speaking Poem, prose – writing, reading, comprehension Presentation of the flag and role-play – speaking, presentation skills.

Post-activity – the groups presented their flags to the class explaining its specific symbols and the theme. Further they recited the poem or read the prose and explained why they selected such a theme and a set of vocabulary. The facilitators guided the students so that each group member was not neglected.

After two months of activities, the students were given a semi-structured questionnaire as some students would not convey genuine feelings when they are interviewed in person. Some students and three teachers were interviewed in order to seek in depth views and attitudes of them towards the new Orientation program. The next section of this paper presents the feedback gained from the students and teachers and some data have been presented verbatim.

Discussion:-

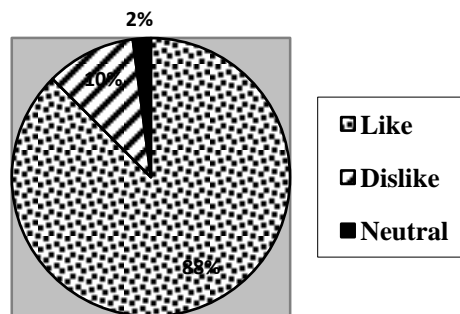
The cooperative Learning has been a popular learning technique among many teaching/learning settings and the first part of this research discussion will focus on the effectiveness of cooperative learning towards ethnic reconciliation among students as it is the primary objective of this study. Next the students’ and teachers’ feedback on improving L2 will be discussed.

As per the questionnaire data, the students had indicated their level of agreement or disagreement with the statements as follows.

Statements	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neutral	Agree	Strongly Agree
1. When I work together in a mixed ethnic group I achieve L2 proficiency more than when I work individually.	10.41%	6.2%	12.5%	27%	41.6%
2. When I work with the group, it prevents me from demonstrating personal abilities in activities.	27%	25%	20.8%	10.41%	16.6%
3. Even though the students’ cooperativeness is expected when doing activities, some students do not help each other.	27%	27%	14.5%	14.5%	14.5%
4. Cooperative learning helps me to socialise more and encourage me to take part in lessons.	10.41%	12.5%	12.5%	29.1%	35.4%
5. Some students always try to be mingled with their own ethnic groups only.	20.8%	22.9%	22.9%	14.5%	18.7%
6. Cooperative learning improves my attitude towards ethnic reconciliation.	12.5%	10.4%	6.2%	31.2%	39.5%

Moreover, most students have shown a positive attitude towards the new learning system they experienced after the school time as shown in Figure 1 below. .

Figure 1: Students' overall attitude towards the new Orientation Program



It is noticeable that 86% of the sample drew positive attitudes towards the new Orientation program which was consisted of cooperative learning activities. 10% of the students did not like the program and 4% of the students didn't either like or dislike the program.

The students who liked the program admitted that this was a new system than what they experienced in school. As per the qualitative data, the positive feedback gained was that they were so curious to follow the program as new and exciting activities had been arranged for them. For most of them it was the first time that they engaged in cooperative learning in the English class with a specific objective of enhancing ethnic reconciliation and enhancing English proficiency. Further, they have been impressed by the four main activities I mentioned in the methodology. They appreciated the fact that they were in mixed cultural groups so that they could make friends from different backgrounds and those friendships were seem to be everlasting.

Response 1: "I could build up many good relationships with my other ethnic friends."

Response 2: "I thought Sinhala people are proud. I didn't like them earlier."

The students admitted that the Waving Flag activity gave them a chance to get to know each other. As the final product of the making of Flag activity was followed by a series of cooperative learning tasks such as getting to know each other, discussing and understanding similarities between them, discussing and reading about their different cultures paved them the way to be exposed to a range of vocabulary and different speaking patterns which improved their desire to use English. One Tamil student emphasized that even though he didn't know English much, English was the only language that could be used as the medium of communication between each other and he was forced to do so. Finally it has taken off his fear of speaking English and now he does his best to speak in English as much as possible.

Response 3: "This is the first time I am working with friends from other races. It is a nice experience"

As observed by the teachers, initially the students had tried to get together with the same race, yet eventually they had mingled with the other students as well.

Response 4: "I didn't like Tamil people at all. But now I think I have found a best friend. He is Tamil."

This is a key response by a student in the sample as the expected outcome of ethnic reconciliation has been a success due to the fact that he has found his best from another ethnicity.

Response 5: "We are waiting to eat 'Watalappan' prepared by our Muslim friends. They made delicious Watalappan for the food fiesta. We want them to make more again."

One student explained that the Food Festival was a wonderful experience as he learnt many things engaging in cooperative learning activities such as searching about different food from different cultures which enhanced reading skills while growing respect towards different cultures, activities to practice small dialogues which drew him to use language, and writing posters and invitations for the Food Festival which enhanced their writing skills.

It is clear that certain misperceptions grew in students' minds had been changed due to the fact that that they experienced working with people with other religions or races. They seemed to have had certain prejudices and misconceptions on working together and being together with people from different ethnicities and the program has let them mould their attitudes and grow awareness on peace and harmony. Thus, when it considered the qualitative data, it is clear that overall the learning context and the cooperative learning integrated had been impressed those 88% of students.

However there were 10% of students who did not like the program. The major reason for this was that they were from different ethnic contexts and mingling together was a bit difficult task at the very beginning. Some said that they preferred to be with a group of students who speak the same language or who belong to the same ethnicity so that they would not feel uncomfortable or insecure.

Response 6: "I feel so insecure... I don't like others. They always talk in Sinhala."

Response 7: "I don't have anything to do with them. I like my friends only."

Response 8: "Whenever teacher gives an activity, only they do. I don't know what's happening. I have only two more Sinhala Speaking friends in the groups. Others always talk in Tamil. So we skip the lecture sometimes."

As per the above statements made by the students, some still have the idea that they should work with people who belong to the same category. The cooperative activities are a burden to them as they have to be socialized with other ethnicities in the group. This marginalization has created a gap between them. As per Table 1, it is evident that about 42% of students acknowledge that students tend to befriend with people from their own ethnicities and other students are neglected.

Response 9: “Sometimes one specific ethnic group only take the decisions and don’t give chance to do to activities to others.”

Response 10: “They make decisions. We do nothing. Just listening to them. And I am ok with it. But not always.”

Response 11: “Some people want to show-off. Or over act. A headache.”

As the sample suggested there were students who tried to draw attraction of the others towards themselves so that the expected LOs were not achieved. As it should be a cooperative learning task, other students found such actions to be unpleasant and a burden.

Response 12: “I learnt nothing from the program.”

Response 13: “I am not social. I don’t want to be. I like lonely...”

Response 14: “I don’t mind group works. But I like to work on my own.”

It is noticeable that there is an average of 15% of students (see Table 1) has neutral attitudes towards working in cooperative activities in ESL classroom and achieving expected outcomes. In further interview it is indicated that they are the students who are able to adjust themselves to any situation and remain unnoticed and unattended to a certain extent when any discrimination occurred or any cooperative task is assigned to them. They simply let others to be shown off and wear neutral attitude towards the tasks or objectives. This has been clearly stated by the teachers too at their interview. In addition, the teachers suggested there were certain students who make troubles and cause disciplinary problems. Yet, the teachers strongly acknowledged that such behavior can be settled if this cooperative learning system had been continued for some more time.

As per the teachers’ view, the integration of cooperative learning in the orientation program was an overall success even though there are minor shortcomings. The key responses made by the teachers have been presented in Table 2 below.

Table 2:- Responses of the teachers on Cooperative learning in ESL classroom

Positive comments	Negative comments
<p>The students are happy to be with diverse people.</p> <p>Students improve their social skills when engaged in cooperative learning.</p> <p>It enhances long lasting friendship among students</p> <p>It helps to improve their English language usage.</p> <p>The students build up ethnic harmony through cooperative learning.</p>	<p>Sometimes, cooperative tasks make disciplinary problems.</p> <p>Some students tend to use their vernacular language when doing cooperative tasks which make certain minorities uncomfortable.</p> <p>Some students try to draw attraction than others when doing activities.</p> <p>Some students do not actively engage in activities and sometimes skip lectures.</p> <p>Some students’ attitudes cannot be changed within a short period in the cooperative learning setting.</p> <p>Content is too big to be covered with a limited time.</p>

According to the teachers, the main positivity they had identified was that the energy and willingness of the majority of students to take part in cooperative learning activities designed for them. As per the first main activity of designing a flag and a poem, the students were enthusiastically speaking and discussing about their cultures in order to find one particular aspect or an agreement in common. On the contrary, certain students have tried to use either Tamil or Sinhala to communicate with each other from the same race which made others uncomfortable.

Response 15: “Students actively took part in the role play activities and four corners which made introverts to be turned into extroverts.”

This is important that the students have become more socialized which makes them to unveil their true opinions and be open making it a more strong and healthy relationship.

Response 16: “The students feel they are valued and not neglected.”

As per the research by Yahya and Huei⁽⁸⁾ (2002), cooperative language tasks are useful to upgrade students’ proficiency levels and further it allows each student to take an important part in doing the group’s assigned tasks. It shows that they are valued as each student’s expertise is taken into consideration when completing the group task. This has been clearly pointed out through the Food Festival. In order to make such a big event a success, each student’s contribution was a must. This activity involves more speaking/ conversations which improves their speaking and strengthens their relationships.

However, the teachers highlighted the fact that some students had skipped some lectures. As I mentioned earlier, this is due to the fact that those students were not willing to take part in discussion sessions very much due to their poor proficiency. Yet as some students suggested, they had realized cooperative learning environment as the ideal platform to improve their proficiency while helping each other. This further broadens unity among students.

Finally the students were questioned of their feeling to be a member of their respective ethnic groups. In spite of the 10% of the students who disliked the program, the rest was highly impressed to be in a diverse group and had realized the essence of ethnic reconciliation leading to peace and harmony.

All in all the teachers stated that the cooperative learning platform was a success as the student made friends irrespective of other cultures, races, languages or religions. Further they had started to communicate in English to their level best despite their fear for English, introversion or poor proficiency making the learning outcomes of the orientation program a success.

Conclusion and Recommendations:-

Coelho’s (1994) research study has proven that cooperative learning helps students in multicultural classrooms to develop more appropriate skills for their futures. The proper guidance and instruction by the teacher drive the students towards proper learning and working together.

According to the Orientation 2016/17 of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, the students were expected to be united as one family while improving their English proficiency. As it was explained in Coelho’s book, these skills will lead the students to productive and quality graduates in the future broadening their capacity to work in any environment full of diversities.

As per the results of this study, majority of the students (88%) were highly motivated by the teaching learning through cooperative learning strategies. Further the grouping of the students by the institution before the commencement of the classes was a success as the students were given an opportunity to explore a new diverse learning environment and get to know new friends. If the grouping had been done by the students themselves, the expected outcome would not have been achieved.

As per the suggestions made by the students, a request for the same type of a cooperative learning setting for their semester studies as well had been made. This can be considered a positive feedback from students. Yet, as per recommendations, it is needed to notify certain drawbacks of the program highlighted by the students. 18% of students still emphasized that the students from the same ethnic group tend to form their own relationships with their respective comfort zones. Some find it really difficult to step out of their comfort zone even if they do have a desire to do so. Moreover, while other students are actively engaged in cooperative learning tasks, some are still neglected. These issues should be taken into consideration when conducting the semester classes. If certain students miss the opportunity to demonstrate their abilities due to other students’ behavior, the teacher should be attentive and strategic enough to identify such circumstances and conduct lectures giving equal opportunity to all of them. Thereby the team-spirit can be further enhanced.

According to the research data, more than 85% of the sample ensured that the overall program was a success as the expected learning outcomes are achieved. All the three teachers too stated that the overall program was a success as the majority of the students were able to attain the expected level of performance and attitudinal change. They confirmed this based on their class observations and discussions held with other students on the final day of the

class. Further this has been confirmed by the teachers as compared to their prior teaching experiences gained in 2015/16 or before working at SLIIT, students were more active and willing to do the tasks in order to be successful as a team.

Deviating from the monotonous style of teaching, cooperative learning provides a student friendly platform to perform in an interactive way while helping each other. As the teachers suggested, cooperative ESL tasks should be planned appropriately so that each individual is encouraged to involve in the lessons. When this methodology is applied in a multicultural setting, the reconciliation can be promoted as each student is involved in fulfilling tasks cooperating with the rest of the team-mates. As witnessed by the researcher, the Literary Carnival and the Food Festival were of an utmost success as the students' participation in activities was noteworthy and admired by the audiences. However, it is recommended that the teachers should have freedom to amend or adopt cooperative learning activities according to their own preferences and classroom settings in order to cater the best to the students.

In conclusion, Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology offers degree programs in Computing, Engineering, Architecture, Quantity Surveying and Business which are of highly technical aspects and the students are lectured in English. Thus, apart from promoting ethnic reconciliation, to accomplish the aim of implementing English only speaking environment for students facilitating their L2 usage to be utilized in higher education, the said Orientation 2016/17 was a successful approach.

Acknowledgement:-

I express my sincere gratitude to Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology, Malabe, Sri Lanka and specifically, Dr. Malitha Wijesundara, Dean – Education and Student Experience who came up with the wonderful thought to launch 'Bootstrap': the Orientation 2016/17, for the opportunity given for me to involve in the Orientation 2016/17 which led me to carry out this study. I thank my colleagues who provided insight and expertise that greatly assisted the research and my students for their support in order to produce a productive study that would benefit the upgrading of teaching and learning.

References:-

1. Bannon, I. (2003). conflict prevention & reconstruction, Social Development Department. The World Bank Washington DC 2043. USA.
2. Coelho, E. (1994). Learning together in the multicultural classroom. Markham. Ontario: Pippin Publishing Limited.
3. Education Research Consumer Guide. (1992). Office of Research. Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI) of the U.S. Department of Education.
4. Felder, R., and Brent, R. (1996). Navigating the Bumpy Road to Student-Centered Instruction. College Teaching. 44, 43-47.
5. Gnanaseelan, J. (2011). English Language Performance and Teaching Profession -a Case Study of the Conflict-affected Vavuniya District of Sri Lanka. Samodhana. Vol. II/2011 of the Journal of Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities. Rajarata University. ISSN 2235-9109. 61-88.
6. Post War Reconciliation and Social Integration: Youth and Development. (2014). Sri Lanka National Human Development Report, UNDP. Retrieved from: [www.lk.undp.org/content/dam/srilanka/docs/nhdr-2014/UNDP LK NHDR 2014 Chapter 6 Reconciliation and Social Integration.pdf](http://www.lk.undp.org/content/dam/srilanka/docs/nhdr-2014/UNDP_LK_NHDR_2014_Chapter_6_Reconciliation_and_Social_Integration.pdf).
7. Wedikandage, L.N.P. (2014). 'A study of multicultural practices in Sri Lankan secondary schools and an English comparator school'. PhD thesis. University of Bedfordshire.
8. Yahya, N., and Huei, K. (2002). Reaching English language learning through cooperative learning. The Internet TESL Journal. Vol. VIII. No. 3. Retrieved from: <http://iteslj.org/>.