

# **The Discrepancy Between the Content Delivered in the Classroom and Expected Content in the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper with reference to the Essay Type Questions; an Exploratory Study with Special Emphasis on the 2020 G.C.E. Ordinary Level Paper**

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## **Abstract**

This research was carried out as an exploratory study, to find out the content discrepancy in terms of what the students were delivered with, in the classroom and what they had to produce at the General Certificate of Examination Ordinary Level examination in the subject of Appreciation of English Literary Texts, commonly known as English Literature, in the essay type questions in the 2020 paper. The research was done in the mixed paradigm blending both qualitative and quantitative paradigms, using questionnaire as the data gathering tool, as the research directly dealt with school children. Although 100 responses were targeted by the researcher, only 70 could be received. Hence the sample became 70 students who sat for the aforementioned subject at the 2020 Ordinary Level examination, held in 2021 March owing to the Covid 19 pandemic. The results portrayed in pie charts revealed that there is a discrepancy in content to a greater extent, implying that a very negative consequence is dawned on the students if nothing is done to curb the aforesaid content discrepancy as it is students who are affected the most by this discrepancy. In addition to students this research also brings in immense benefits to teachers and other stakeholders involved in the focused area, making this research both unique and significant, as it is the first research of this sort to be carried out, pertaining to Appreciation of English Literary Texts, both in Sri Lanka and in the world, as per the information found by the researcher in the literature review stage.

**Keywords:** Content Discrepancy, Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper, Ordinary Level examination, 2020

## **Chapter 1**

### **INTRODUCTION**

#### **1.1 Background**

Having introduced in “1962” (Study on Evaluation & the Assessment System in General Education in Sri Lanka A Research conducted for the National Education Commission, 2014), the General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level examination is sat for by Sri Lankan learners who follow, the local curriculum, in grade eleven, at the age of sixteen. For the examination there are six core-subjects, which are compulsory for a candidate, and a candidate could select three other optional subjects, one each from three clusters of subjects. The six core subjects are Religion, First Language, Mathematics, English, History and Science (Study on Evaluation & the Assessment System in General Education in Sri Lanka A Research conducted for the National Education Commission, 2014). Appreciation of English Literary Texts falls under the cluster of Aesthetics which is a cluster subject.

When it comes to those who follow Appreciation of English Literary Texts, they need to familiarize themselves with poetry (20), drama (2), prose (1), short stories (3) and a novel out of the three prescribed novels, “The Prince and the Pauper by Mark Twain, Bringing Tony Home by Tissa Abeysekara and The Vendor of Sweets by R. K. Narayan” (Appreciation of English Literary Texts GCE O/L New Syllabus, 2015).

When the structure of the GCE Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts is considered, it comprises of context questions and the critical essays (Appreciation Of English Literary Texts GCE O/L New Syllabus, 2015), out of which critical essays commonly known as essay type answers will be focused in this research.

A learner should therefore be thorough with the aforementioned syllabus, in order to get through the paper with an “A” grade. However, it was indeed highly challenging due to various reasons and in the year 2020 Covid 19 pandemic’s outbreak overtook all the other reasons for this challenge. This is because many students were deprived of receiving education. Hence many could not cover the syllabus completely which in turn affected them a lot in, answering essay type questions in the 2020 Ordinary Level Examination held in 2021 March yet again due to the pandemic. In spite of the crisis situation faced by most who sat for the exam, no amalgamations were done in terms of the content in the examination paper, bringing in a great disadvantage for the learners, especially pertaining to answering essay type questions. This motivated the researcher to dig deep into how far candidates were met with justice when giving them results. Thus, this research topic was chosen.

#### **1.2 The Research Problem**

Was there any discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and the expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination in the subject of Appreciation of English Literary texts in relation to the Essay type questions in the 2020 G.C.E. Ordinary Level paper?

#### **1.3 Objectives**

The surface level objective is to find out whether there is a discrepancy in the content between what was delivered in the classroom and what was expected to be produced at the

Ordinary Level examination, in essay type questions of Appreciation of English Literary Texts, and thereby to suggest what should be done in order to overcome this discrepancy in terms of content.

The deeper level objective of this research is to investigate and identify the loopholes in terms of content in designing the Ordinary Level Appreciation of Literary Texts paper and guide the stakeholders involved in the task; the Examinations Department of Sri Lanka to get away with the loopholes. Thereby to ensure that a fairly designed paper is given to the students not only in Appreciation of English Literary Texts but also in every other subject in other exams held for school learners by the Examinations Department while making the National Institute of Education, the syllabus designing body to think over regarding the appropriacy of the chosen or prescribed literary pieces for the syllabus in all genres of poetry, short stories, prose, drama and novel.

## 1.4 Research Questions

The questions that will be raised in this research are;

- How far teachers have contributed in the discrepancy between what is delivered in the class and what learners should produce in the Ordinary Level Examination?
- Are the learners, the solely responsible party for this discrepancy?
- How far do methods and approaches used in teaching the subject affect this discrepancy?
- Has the time factor that arose due to the Covid 19 pandemic's outbreak, fostered this discrepancy more?

## 1.5 Significance of the Study

Since no research had been done so far regarding this content discrepancy, this research would make an impact in taking necessary actions to move away this discrepancy and thereby to do justice for learners in rewarding for their hard work while letting teachers too, do their best within the available time frame. Moreover, the National Institute of Education, the Sri Lankan body responsible for designing syllabi, could also make necessary, amalgamations in terms of the content of the syllabus.

Most importantly the task of examination paper designing not only in English Literature but also in other subjects too could be changed accordingly, with new horizons being opened for the Examinations Department of Sri Lanka in terms of designing examination papers, in not only Ordinary Level Appreciation of Literary Texts but also in other subjects and other examinations, bringing in the most benefit for candidates who would face those examinations in time to come. This would result in the increase of the number of learners who would select the subject of Appreciation of English Literary Texts as previous results, syllabi and paper structure play a vital role in a learner when it comes to selecting a cluster subject.

## 1.6 Limitations

The most crucial limitation faced was the literature review. This is because of having no previously done research in this regard.

The other limitation was gathering data owing to the pandemic situation. This is due to the impossibility of meeting principals of schools to get permission to get students for the sample. Hence what had to be done was forwarding the questionnaire to the target group via WhatsApp in the form of a Google Form and obtain the necessary data.

Finally receiving responses for the shared Google Form questionnaire became highly challenging as not even half of the expected amount of 100 was received even after one week of sharing it with the respective schools to be forwarded to the students. However, with the help of the social media of Facebook the researcher managed to reach 70 responses which was a sufficient number to proceed with the rest of the research.

## **Chapter 2**

### **LITERATURE REVIEW**

As mentioned above, this research is aimed at finding out whether there is a discrepancy in terms of content in the Ordinary Level Appreciation of Literary Texts paper of the year 2020 pertaining to what was delivered to students and what they had to produce at the Ordinary Level examination. The purpose of this research is to take necessary steps to curb this discrepancy and thereby ensure that students are treated fairly and justly at the Ordinary Level examination in terms of the targeted subject.

When it came to the task of reviewing literature, it became a highly challenging task due to the unavailability of previously done research articles pertaining to the research topic as aforementioned, which also boosted up the researcher's interest to move further in this research. However, there were few research articles written in relation to this research even though they did not directly link to this research topic. One of those puts forward the fact that the "Teachers' content knowledge made the greatest contribution to students' achievement in Literature-in-English, while teachers' attitude comes next in the order of distribution, meaning that teachers' attitude to teaching Literature-in-English is not a crucial factor that can improve students' achievement." (Samuels). In the researcher's point of view, she does not agree with what Samuels brings forward as attitude matters a lot when it comes to teaching as it is all about how the teacher views both the learner and the act of teaching, making him or her engage in it, in either a positive or a negative manner giving a positive or a negative impact for the learner as well.

In contrast to Samuels, the other research article is on the viewpoint that neglecting "content validity of tests is leading students in the wrong direction of the syllabus goals, resulting in lower scores in their exam results and less development in solid mathematics knowledge, skills, and attitudes" (Alemayehu, Solomon and Yilfashewa 2021). Although Alemayehu, Solomon and Yilfashewa bring forth their viewpoint, as stated above, with regard to Grade 10 Mathematics

Model Examinations in Oromia National Regional State, Ethiopia, the researcher's opinion is that their viewpoint is valid to any exam held anywhere in the world pertaining to any subject, including

Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts. This is because the syllabus is the guide for learners in terms of the content of the examination paper making them always stick to it,

when preparing for the examination. Therefore, an examination paper prepared deviating from the syllabus even in the least extent will surely result in candidates scoring low scores due to having to deal in unfamiliar grounds in terms of content.

When considering as a whole about the viewpoints mentioned above, the researcher's opinion is that teachers' attitude towards the subject and the validity of the content in terms of the examination paper go in hand in hand in the creation of a discrepancy in content. This is because it is the teacher who gives the content to the learner, making a discrepancy in content, even if the examination paper is completely based on the syllabus and because the paper could still have a discrepancy in content despite the teacher having done his or her role properly, if the paper includes content out of the syllabus even in the least percentage.

In addition to the aforementioned researches, the research article titled as, "Features of Assessment Activity at the Lessons of Literature" by Marina V. Vedishenkova and Fatima R. Kadyrova states that "it is important that the assessment at the Literature lesson to be fair for the students with different levels of language development, with a different type of thinking, emotion, attention, communication skills" (Vedishenkova and Kaydrova, 2016). At this point the researcher's point of view is that assessment in Literature should be common to all types of learners of kinesthetic, digital, audio and visual as any class would comprise of all of the above types of students.

When the impact of Covid 19 is concerned, it impacted or rather affected the entire education sphere positively and negatively, irrespective of the subjects being taught, with negative effects becoming the most. This fact is clearly proven by the research article, "Evaluation of distance English Language Teaching Education during COVID-19 Pandemic from the

Perspectives of ELT Student Teachers and Their Instructors" where the researchers Büşra Türegün Çoban and Aslihan Kuyumcu Vardar point out that the pandemic affected positively by fostering "time-space flexibility, reviewing lessons by recordings, self-paced learning, affordability, comfort, sharing a wide range of resources, instant feedback" (Coban and Vardar, 2021), while it affected negatively leading to "technical problems, applied courses, lack of social interaction, assessment and evaluation, workload, health problems and low motivation." (Coban and Vardar, 2021). The researcher, being an English Literature teacher she herself agrees with this viewpoint, especially in terms of the Sri Lankan context emphasizing that negative impacts were more than positive ones.

When considering all the before stated facts, it is clearly evident that research done in the content discrepancy of Appreciation of English Literary Texts or English Literature in both Sri Lankan and global contexts are almost null, whether it is in or out of the Covid 19 pandemic context, which becomes the very reason to make this research both significant and unique from other researches. Moreover, this research will also make an impact on not only English Literature but also in content when it comes to designing papers in general, which in turn would foster the designing of fair papers for learners and paying of more attention on content selections, teaching approach and method selections, the creation of comfortable grounds for teachers in marking papers and doing justice for the learners' hard work and lastly reaching the goal of exploring English Literature with passion, becoming better users of English as well as better human beings in the society, country and in the world at large.

## **Chapter 3**

### **METHODOLOGY**

#### **3.1 Introduction**

As aforementioned this research is aimed at finding whether there is a discrepancy in content in terms of essay type of questions in the 2020 Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper, by way of an exploratory study.

#### **3.2 Research Method**

A blended or a combination of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms were used in this study as the method to analyze the gathered data and get the findings and derive into conclusions accordingly. This is because the use of statistics in terms of respondent numbers and percentages (numerical data) were used when it came to analyzing the data, as depicted below in the Results chapter. The researcher had to adopt a mixed approach as no interviews could be done to practical and permission issues owing to the pandemic situation, making her analyze only the data received from the questionnaire. Furthermore, the research approach was a focused group exploratory study via the survey method, as the researcher's aim was to find whether there is a discrepancy between what was delivered and what was expected at the Ordinary Level Examination in terms of essay type questions of Appreciation of English Literary Texts particularly in the 2020 examination paper, as stated before and suggest solutions to curb this discrepancy.

#### **3.3 Sample**

Homogeneous sampling was used as it needed to be students who have faced the exam in 2020 in Appreciation of English Literary Texts that should be taken. A sample of hundred students, with 20 from each were chosen from five Catholic Private schools for which the following pseudonyms are used to safeguard the ethicality of this research.

1. SCS
2. WS
3. MTS
4. HS
5. MA

These schools were chosen as they fall into the same school type, as they cover both genders and two different districts of Gampaha and Colombo in the Western Province of Sri Lanka where the target subject is chosen mostly. Moreover, all the chosen students were those who sat for the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper at the 2020 Ordinary Level examination, for the first time. The matter of convenience too impacted considerably in selecting the aforementioned five schools.

As the expected number of responses could not be covered through the aforementioned schools, the social media of Facebook too had to be used to gather data through sharing the questionnaire to the target group.

### **3.4 Data Collection Techniques**

The tool of questionnaire was used to gather data as the research directly dealt with school children. A questionnaire carrying fifteen questions wherein the student had to mark “yes” or “no” and mark his or her agreement was designed accordingly. As mentioned before, due to the pandemic situation in the country, the questionnaire was designed using Google Forms and was sent to the respective teachers of the chosen five schools to be forwarded to the respective students. Later the questionnaire was shared in Facebook due to the inability of covering the required responses, as stated before.

### **3.5 Ethical Considerations**

As stated, before the ethicality of the research started from the point of selecting the data gathering tool as interviewing school children is quite unethical even for a good cause, as the researcher believes. This is because the researcher will have to record interviews for research purposes. One may say that with permission recording can be done. This is true but as a teacher the researcher is on the opinion that it is quite inappropriate with students as they are children. Moreover, no permission too is given by principals to interview school children as it often leads unnecessary issues, with parents not liking their children being interviewed by any party within or out of the school, even for a rightful purpose as of this sort.

In addition to selecting the data gathering tool, not leaving room to reveal the school, the identity of students and structuring questions in such a way that students are not burdened psychologically were other steps followed in order to observe the ethicality of this research.

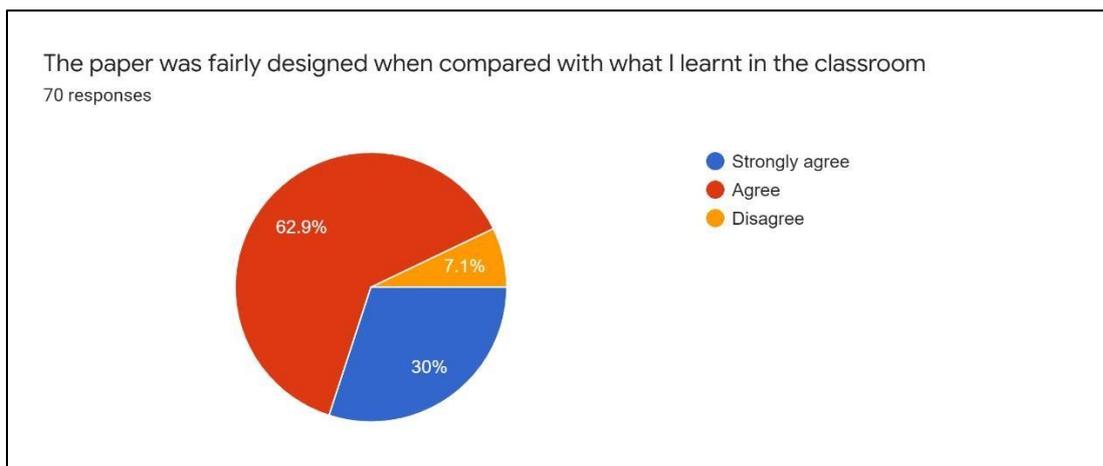
Apart from the students’ side, to make the research valid and accepted prior permission was sought from the principals and rectors of the chosen schools even amidst hardships resulted by the pandemic, as stated before.

## **Chapter 4**

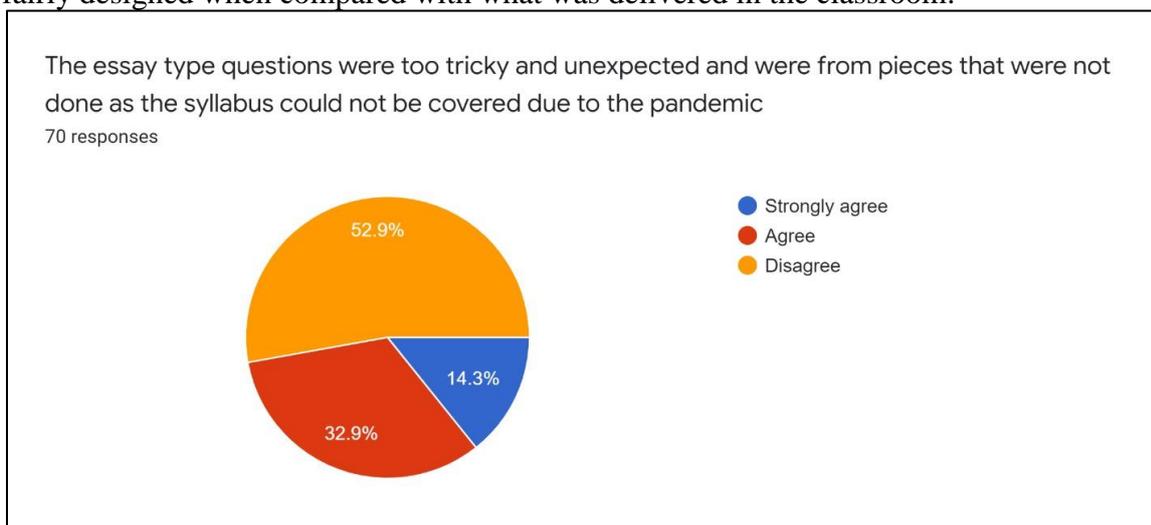
### **RESULTS**

As mentioned before the purpose of this research is to identify whether there was a discrepancy in terms of content in essay type questions of the Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper, particularly in the 2020 paper. In terms of research questions, the focus was woven around the contribution of teachers, learners, teaching approaches and methods and the Covid 19 pandemic towards this content discrepancy. The blended or the mixed paradigm comprising of both qualitative and quantitative paradigms was used along with a sample of 100 students who did Appreciation of English Literary Texts for the first time at the 2020 Ordinary Level exam held in March 2021, due to the pandemic. Questionnaire was used as the tool of gathering data, to preserve the ethicality of the research, as the research directly dealt with children.

Although 100 responses were targeted from the questionnaire, only 70 were received and a detailed description about those are depicted in the table in appendix C. The data that was obtained from those responses are as follows. (The pie charts are arranged and data are analyzed based on the questions in the questionnaire.)

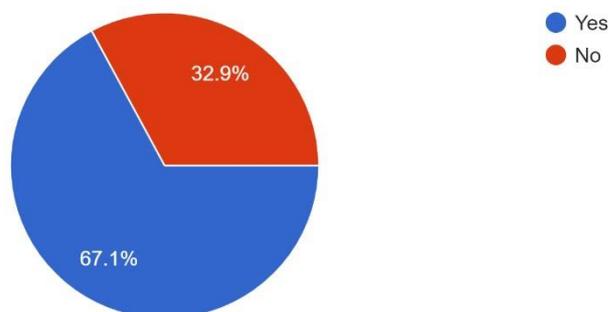


According to the above pie chart 62.9% (44 respondents) agree that the 2020 Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper was fairly designed when compared with what was delivered in the classroom. Furthermore, 30% (21 respondents) strongly agree that the 2020 Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper was fairly designed when compared with what was delivered in the classroom while 7.1% (5 respondents) disagree with the fact that the 2020 Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper was fairly designed when compared with what was delivered in the classroom.



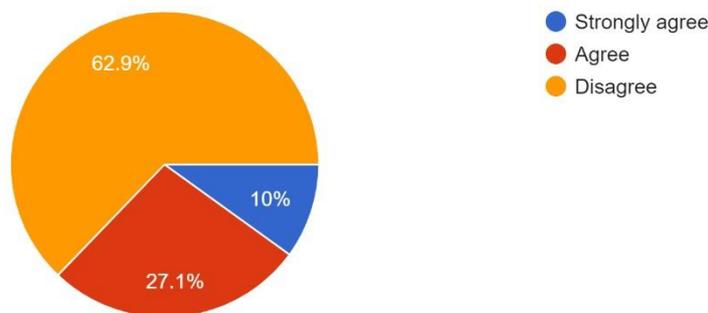
As per the above pie chart 52.9% (37 respondents) disagree, while 32.9% (23 respondents) and 14.3% (10 respondents) agree and strongly agree with the fact that the essay type questions were too tricky and were from literary pieces that were not done due to being unable to cover the full syllabus owing to the pandemic.

The knowledge gained in the classroom was sufficient to answer the paper well and as expected  
70 responses

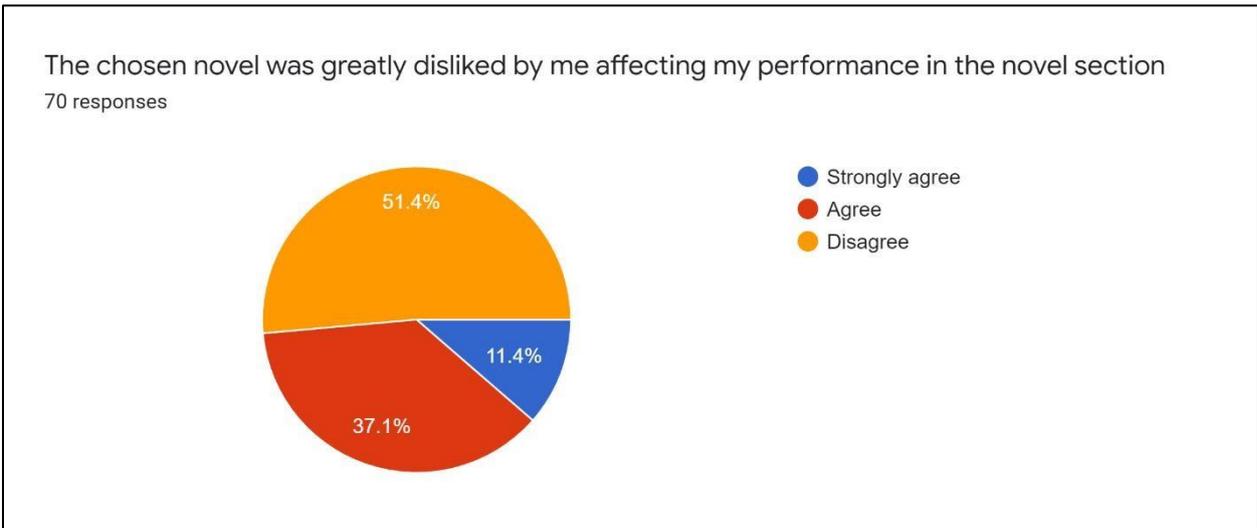


As depicted in the above pie chart, 67.1% (47 respondents) believe that the knowledge they gained in the classroom was sufficient to answer the paper well and as expected, while 32.9% (23 respondents) do not believe that the knowledge they gained in the classroom was sufficient to answer the paper well and as expected.

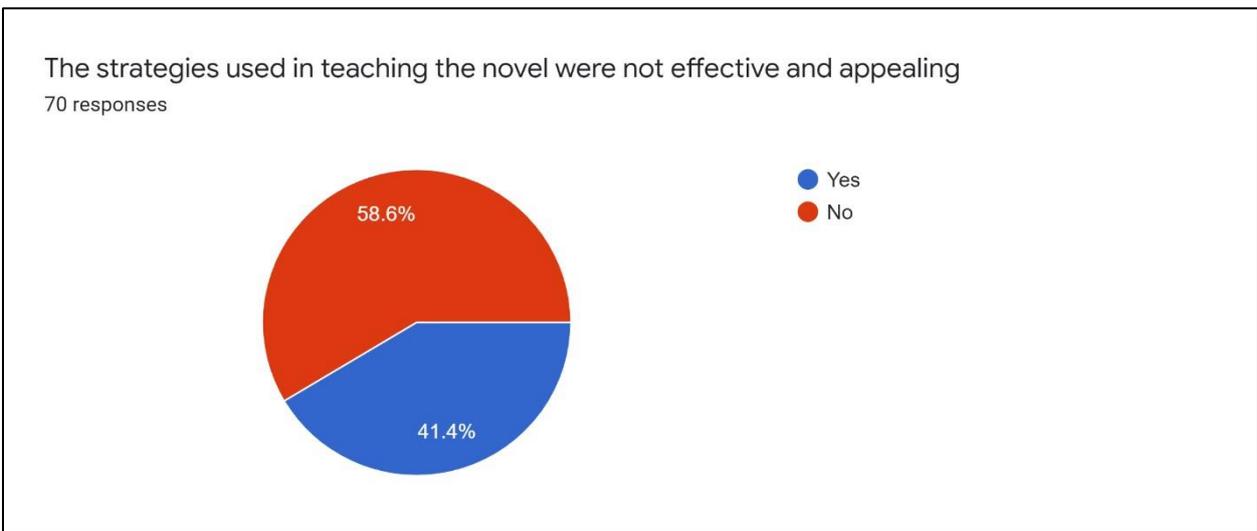
Learning online due to the lockdown had no negative impact on the performance at the O/Level exam  
70 responses



According to the given pie chart 10% (7 respondents) strongly agree and 27.1% (19 respondents) agree while 62.9% (44 respondents) disagree with the fact that learning online due to the pandemic had no negative impact on their performance at the Ordinary Level examination, in terms of essay type questions in the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper.

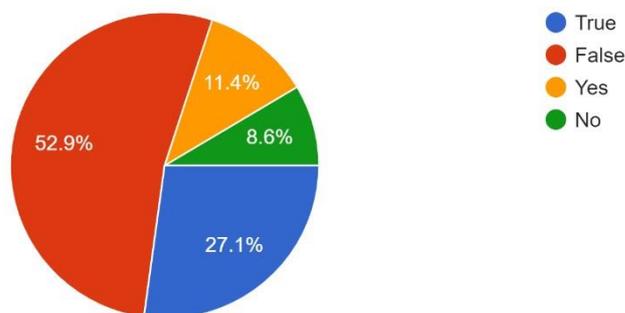


As per the above pie chart 51.4% (36 respondents) disagree while 37.1% (26 respondents) and 11.4% (8 respondents) agree and strongly agree with the fact that the chosen novel was disliked by them affecting their performance in the novel section of the paper.



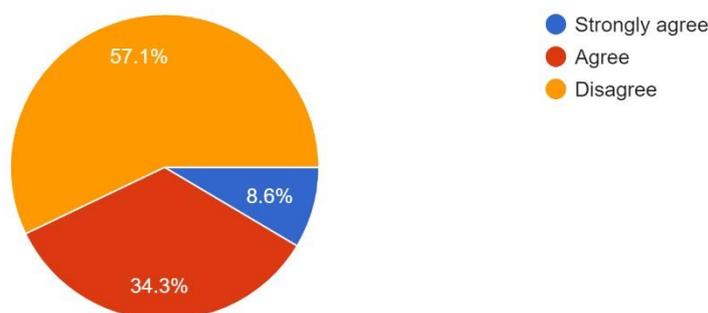
According to the above pie chart 58.6% (41 respondents) do not believe that the strategies used in teaching the novel were not effective and not appealing to them, while 41.4% (29 respondents) believe that the strategies used in teaching the novel were not effective and appealing to them.

Teacher having to cater to a large number of students in online classes, made her not give essay type questions to answer and hence I sat for the exam knowing the art of writing an essay type answer properly  
70 responses



As depicted in the above pie chart 61.5% (52.9% + 8.6%), that is 43 respondents (37+6) are on the belief that they sat for the exam knowing the art of writing an essay type answer properly, while 38.5% (11.4% + 27.1%), that is 27 respondents (19+8) are on the belief that they sat for the exam without knowing the art of writing an essay type answer properly.

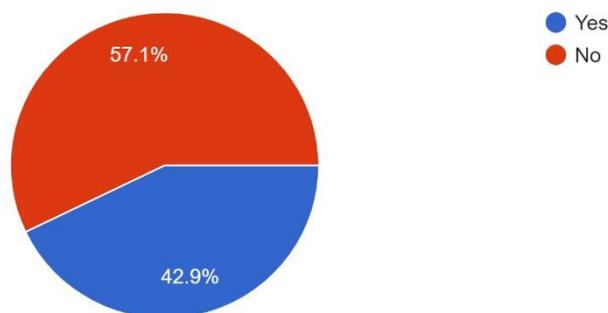
Proper and enough guidance were received but due to being lethargic nothing was done accordingly regarding essay type answers  
70 responses



As illustrated in the pie chart given above, 57.1% (40 respondents) disagree with the fact that they were lethargic and did nothing regarding learning to write and improving writing essay type answers although proper guidance was received from their teachers, while 8.6% (6 respondents) and 34.3% (24 respondents) strongly agree and agree with the fact that they were lethargic and did nothing regarding learning to write and improving writing essay type answers although proper guidance was received from their teachers.

Not receiving papers according to the O/Level structure during term tests due to the pandemic, result in being unable to face the O/Level paper properly

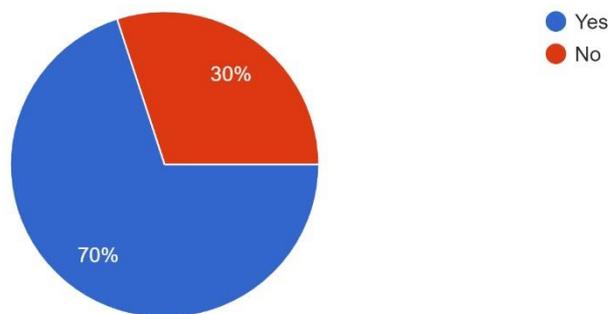
70 responses



According to the data showcased in the above pie chart, 57.1% (40 respondents) do not believe that not receiving papers according to the Ordinary Level structure at term tests owing to the pandemic made them unable to face the exam properly, while 42.9% (30 respondents) believe that not receiving papers according to the Ordinary Level structure at term tests owing to the pandemic made them unable to face the exam properly.

Not having physical school took away the chance of getting marked written essay types answers

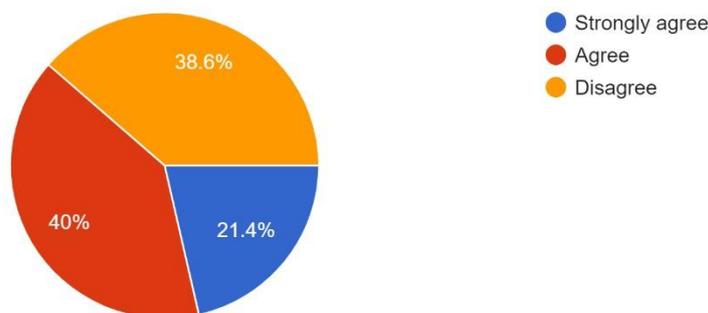
70 responses



As the above pie chart depicts, 70% (49 respondents) believe that they could not mark their written answers as no physical school was held while 30% (21 respondents) believe that they could mark their written answers even though no physical school was held owing to the pandemic.

Not knowing to write something original made it impossible to write to the point when answering essay type questions

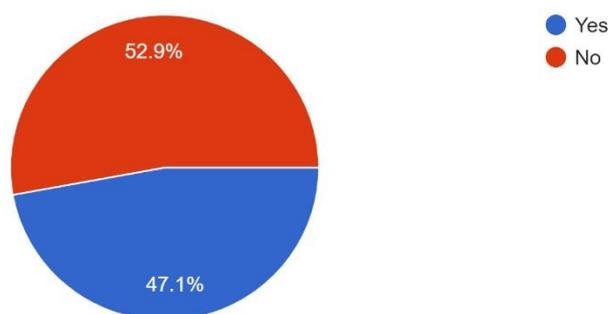
70 responses



According to the data shown in the above pie chart, 40% (28 respondents) agree with the fact that not knowing to write something original made it impossible for them to write essay type answers to the point and 21.4% (15 respondents) strongly agree with the fact that, not knowing to write something original made it impossible for them to write essay type answers to the point, while 38.6% (27 respondents) disagree with the fact that not knowing to write something original made it impossible for them to write essay type answers to the point.

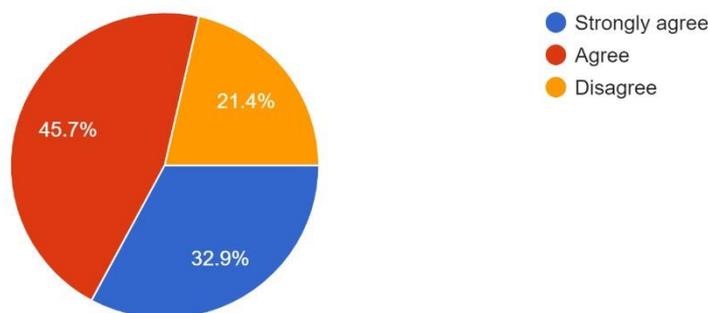
Lack of time management in answering the paper resulted in missing answering essay type questions

70 responses



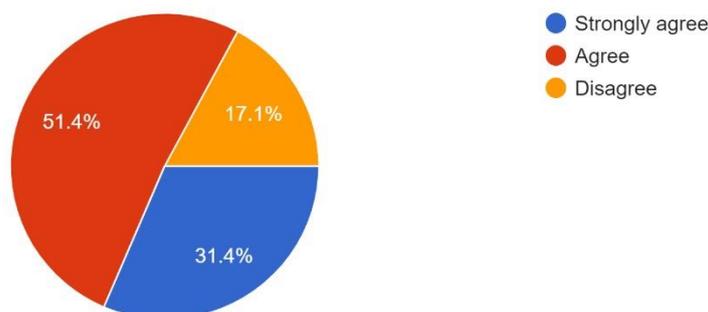
As per the above pie chart 52.9% (37 respondents) do not believe that lack of time management in answering the paper resulted in missing answering essay type questions while 47.1% (33 respondents) believe that lack of time management in answering the paper resulted in missing answering essay type questions.

Despite being a very studious and a very enthusiastic person who is keen on the subject I couldn't perform as expected as the pandemic killed the interest in studies due to the exam being postponed  
70 responses



As the given pie chart portrays, 45.7% (32 respondents) agree and 32.9% (23 respondents) strongly agree with the fact that they could not perform as expected at the Ordinary Level exam as the pandemic killed their interest in studies due to the exam being postponed, despite them being enthusiastic and keen on the subject, while 21.4% (15 respondents) disagree with the fact that they could not perform as expected at the Ordinary Level exam as the pandemic killed their interest in studies due to the exam being postponed, despite them being enthusiastic and keen on the subject.

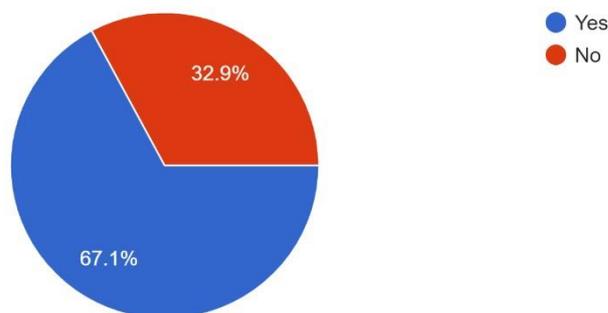
Preferring physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, looking at her face, impacted greatly in gaining the things through online learning  
70 responses



According to the pie above chart, 51.4% (36 respondents) agree and 31.4% (22 respondents) strongly agree with the fact that they preferring physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, looking at her face, impacted greatly in gaining things through online learning, while 17.1% (12 respondents) disagree with the fact that they preferring physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, looking at her face, impacted greatly in gaining things through online learning.

As a whole the pandemic became the factor that affected the most for my performance at the O/Level exam

70 responses



As depicted by the pie chart given above 67.1% (47 respondents) believe that as a whole the Covid 19 pandemic affected the most in their performance at the Ordinary Level exam pertaining to answering essay type questions, while 32.9% (23 respondents) do not believe that as a whole the Covid 19 pandemic affected the most in their performance at the Ordinary Level exam pertaining to answering essay type questions.

## Chapter 5

### DISCUSSION

#### 5.1 Introduction

This research was conducted with the primary objective of identifying whether there is a discrepancy in terms of content, between what was delivered in the classroom and what the students had to produce at the 2020 Ordinary Level examination, pertaining to essay type questions of the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper. Going beyond the primary objective, the deeper level objective was to ensure that a fairly designed paper is directed to students in not only the concerned subject and exam but also in all other subjects and exams associated with school children, and to bring forth the importance of prescribing an appropriate syllabus to students not only in Appreciation of English Literary Texts but also in all other subjects. In order to gather data, to conduct the research, questionnaire was used as the data gathering tool. All the fifteen questions in the questionnaire were woven around the research questions that dealt with the contribution of teachers, learners and the Covid 19 pandemic towards the discrepancy that was stated earlier.

#### 5.2 Summary

According to the found data, it was revealed that majority of the students are on the viewpoint that the Appreciation of English Literary paper was fairly designed pertaining to essay type questions, when compared with what they were provided with in the classroom. As shown in the found data, most of the students believed that the essay type questions were neither

tricky nor from unexpected ones that were from the pieces that were not covered. Moreover, the data also reveals that for majority of the students, the knowledge gained in the classroom had been sufficient enough in answering the essay type questions well and as they expected. Furthermore, a vast majority are on the viewpoint that learning online owing to the lockdown impacted negatively on their performance at the Ordinary Level exam in terms of answering essay type questions of the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper. Going further, majority of the students also have had no effect on their performance due to disliking the novel that they were taught in the classroom, from which they had to answer the essay type question on the novel section. In addition to this, the findings also reveal that for majority of the students the strategies their teachers have involved in teaching the novel had been effective and appealing. With regard to data that were gathered, it is also shown that majority of the students were with a clear picture of writing an essay type answer, in spite of the fact that their teachers had not given essay type questions due to having to cater to a large number of students in online classes. The gathered findings also reveal that majority of the students had done their part in terms of being armed with the proper and correct art of writing an essay type answer, getting the maximum out of the guidance that they received from their teachers. The findings also show that majority of the students had found no difficulty in facing the Ordinary Level exam, when it came to dealing with essay type questions, although they had not received papers according to the Ordinary Level structure at terms tests. The findings also show that majority of the students were deprived of getting their written essay type answers marked as a result of not having physical school. The gathered data also bears evidence that majority of the students found it impossible to write to the point when they wrote essay type answers at the Ordinary Level examination because, they did not know the way to write something original or something of their own, when answering essay type questions came into place. It was indeed surprising and significant that majority of the students, had found time management as a factor that did not result them missing answering essay type questions, as per the gathered data. The findings also mirrored that postponing of the Ordinary Level examination owing to the pandemic, killed the interest for the subject in majority of the students making them unable to perform as expected, despite they being very studious and enthusiastic students who were keen on the subject. The findings also highlighted the fact that majority of the students had a great impact on gaining things through online learning, as they preferred physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, with looking at his or her face, over online learning where they got neither. Finally, the findings revealed that when considered as a whole, the Covid 19 pandemic has become the factor that affected the most, for the majority of the students in their performance at the Ordinary Level examination, in answering essay type questions of the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper.

### **5.3 Discussion**

When the findings of this research are taken into consideration, it is clearly evident that it cannot be concluded that there is a discrepancy in terms of content in what was delivered in the classroom and what the students had to produce at the Ordinary Level examination pertaining to essay type questions in the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper, or there is no discrepancy at all in terms of content, in what was delivered in the classroom and what the students had to produce at the Ordinary Level examination pertaining to essay type questions in the Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper. This is because a considerable percentage of students report for and against this discrepancy as the findings depict. Yet, it is crystal clear that the pandemic has been a decisive factor in this discrepancy as the findings prove that it was the Covid 19 pandemic that has affected the most in the students' performance

at the subject of Appreciation of English Literary Texts at the Ordinary Level examination, as mentioned earlier. Moreover, the role of teachers, in delivering the subject in terms of the approaches that had been used, too have created a discrepancy to some extent, despite the fact that the majority of the students are on the viewpoint that the approaches used by their teachers were both effective and appealing to them. Another key fact that could be extracted from this research is that online learning owing to the lockdown that was imposed due to the pandemic, has contributed a lot towards a content discrepancy as many students prefer physical learning with the physical presence of their teachers and friends over online learning, as aforementioned in the findings. Finally, when taken as a whole, what the researcher believes in her opinion is that the Ordinary Level paper of Appreciation of English Literary Texts of the year 2020, does have a content discrepancy, to a greater extent in terms of its essay type questions.

In the researcher's opinion, she believes that the findings of this research would open the eyes of the relevant authorities, that is the Examinations Department of Sri Lanka to have a clear picture about setting examination papers fairly from the students' side according to circumstances and situations, especially in Appreciation of English Literary Texts. Moreover, teachers too could use the findings and do the needful to amalgamate this discrepancy and bring it to the zeroth level, as this discrepancy affects negatively in a considerably huge scale, to the students.

#### **5.4 Recommendations**

The researcher would recommend that;

Teachers should use common learning approaches that are appealing to all types of learners of audio, visual, kinesthetic and digital, so that no student is left out. Teachers of other subjects also can substitute this research and investigate on their own whether they contribute towards a content discrepancy in their respective subjects. Teachers should also organize and plan out online sessions in such a way that no student is felt bored and make sure they keep the students' interest in the session at the same level from the beginning till the end.

Students, should be able to or rather should be taught to be flexible and adjust themselves according to the times bearing in their minds that something is better than nothing.

In the context of Sri Lanka, the Education Commission should bring in a proposal to the government to open doors of all students in the island to technology and thereby ensure that all students have access to education in a time like of a pandemic.

Researches of similar nature as of this research should be carried out not only pertaining to Appreciation of English Literary Texts but also all other subjects of all exams conducted by the government for school children, in the Sri Lankan context. Moving on to the world context each country should do and in the cases of Cambridge and Edexcel examinations, the two institutions responsible for setting up papers for these examinations too should do the task of conducting similar researches as of this research to find and treat content discrepancies if there are any.

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- Mother Mary for her continuous intercession for me throughout the research journey
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- My parents and my sister for supporting me with encouragement and finding data
- The principals and teachers of all schools who took their time to give permission and forward the questionnaire to the students
- All the students who took their precious time and effort to fill and submit the questionnaire
- All in my study center Horizon Campus, Sri Lanka, especially our dean Dr. Jayanthi Gunasekara and lecturers Dr. Dayananda Keppetigoda and Dr. Lalitha Batuwitage who supported me in approving my research and issuing the approval letter and the permission letter to seek permission from principals of schools, respectively
- All my friends who helped me in finding data when I was stuck at one point in gathering data

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## Appendices

### A. Questionnaire

3/13/22, 5:52 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination Appreciation of English Literary texts with reference to the Essay type questions; an exploratory study with special emphasis on the 2020 G.C.E. O/L paper.

"The purpose of this survey is to find whether there is a discrepancy (gap) between what was taught in the class and what was expected in the 2020 Ordinary Level Appreciation of English Literary Texts paper in terms of the Essay type questions, as a part of the research conducted by me, Jenith Fonseka for Master of Education awarded by Asia E University via Horizon Campus, Malabe. Your honest answers to the questionnaire will contribute a lot for future generations and hence it would be really grateful to provide answers not only to assist me in my research but also to make an important change in this subject with regard to Ordinary Level students who will do the subject in time to come.

jenithf@gmail.com (not shared) Switch account

\* Required

The paper was fairly designed when compared with what I learnt in the classroom \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

3/13/22, 4:52 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

The essay type questions were too tricky and unexpected and were from pieces that were not done as the syllabus could not be covered due to the pandemic \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

The knowledge gained in the classroom was sufficient to answer the paper well and as expected \*

Yes

No

Learning online due to the lockdown had no negative impact on the performance at the O/Level exam

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

3/13/22, 5:53 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

The chosen novel was greatly disliked by me affecting my performance in the novel section \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

The strategies used in teaching the novel were not effective and appealing \*

Yes

No

Teacher having to cater to a large number of students in online classes, made her not give essay type questions to answer and hence I sat for the exam not knowing the art of writing an essay type answer properly \*

True

False

Yes

No

3/13/22, 5:52 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

Proper and enough guidance were received but due to being lethargic nothing was done accordingly regarding essay type answers \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Not receiving papers according to the O/Level structure during term tests due to the pandemic, result in being unable to face the O/Level paper properly

Yes

No

Not having physical school took away the chance of getting marked written essay types answers \*

Yes

No

Not knowing to write something original made it impossible to write to the point when answering essay type questions

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

5/13/22, 5:52 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

Lack of time management in answering the paper resulted in missing answering essay type questions \*

Yes

No

Despite being a very studious and a very enthusiastic person who is keen on the subject I couldn't perform as expected as the pandemic killed the interest in studies due to the exam being postponed \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

Preferring physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, looking at her face, impacted greatly in gaining the things through online learning \*

Strongly agree

Agree

Disagree

5/13/22, 5:53 PM The discrepancy between the content delivered in the classroom and expected content at the G.C.E. Ordinary Level Examination

As a whole the pandemic became the factor that affected the most for my performance at the OLevel exam

Yes

No

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AMARASINGHAGE JENITH YASARA FONSEKA

E60109200125

25 March 2022

Dear Student,

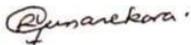
**Approval of Project Proposal**

This is with reference to your project proposal which was submitted for the Master of Education (Honours) degree programme. We are glad to inform you that your topic has been approved by the board of panel members.

Hope this project will reveal interesting facts to the society and we wish you luck and success in the future.

Thank you.



Dr. Jayanthi Gunasekara  
Dean  
Faculty of Education



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## C. Responses Analysis in Number

Question	Strongly agree	Disagree	Yes	No	True	false	
The paper was fairly designed when compared with what I learnt in the classroom	21	44	5				
The essay type questions were too tricky and unexpected and were from pieces that were not done as the syllabus could not be covered due to the pandemic	10	23	37				
The knowledge gained in the classroom was sufficient to answer the paper well and as expected				47	23		
Learning online due to the lockdown had no negative impact on the performance at the O/Level exam	7	19	44				
The chosen novel was greatly disliked by me affecting my performance in the novel section	8	26	36				
The strategies used in teaching the novel were not effective and appealing				29	41		
Teacher having to cater to a large number of students in online classes, made her not give essay type questions to answer and hence I sat for the exam not knowing the art of writing an essay type answer properly				8	6	19	37
Proper and enough guidance were received but due to being lethargic nothing was done accordingly regarding essay type answers	6	24	40				
Not receiving papers according to the O/Level structure during term tests due to the pandemic, result in being unable to face the O/Level paper properly				30	40		
Not having physical school took away the chance of getting marked written essay types answers				49	21		
Not knowing to write something original made it impossible to write to the point when answering essay type questions	15	28	27				
Lack of time management in answering the paper resulted in missing answering essay type questions				33	37		
Despite being a very studious and a very enthusiastic person who is keen on the subject I couldn't perform as expected as the pandemic killed the interest in studies due to the exam being postponed	23	37	15				
Preferring physical learning with friends and with the physical presence of the teacher, looking at her face, impacted greatly in gaining the things through online learning	22	36	12				
As a whole the pandemic became the factor that affected the most for my performance at the O/Level exam				47	23		