

TEACHING LANGUAGE THROUGH LITERARY TEXTS

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In Sri Lanka, the proficiency in the first language as well as a second language, specifically English language has become a necessity to achieve higher in the current job market. Though a proficiency in a language should be determined by the mastery of both productive and receptive skills, the society tend to evaluate an individual's language skills mainly through their writing skill. Writing skills involve the accurate use of grammar, punctuation and spelling and therefore the improvement of the students' writing skills has become a necessity in catering to the needs of the job market. Questioning the conventional language teaching methods, a class room action research was carried out with the participation of ten university students of lower intermediate level from the Department of Marketing Management of University of Kelaniya to investigate the necessity for the improvement of writing skills using modern approaches to language teaching. The objective of the action research was to assess the effectiveness of adopting the unconventional language-based-approach rather than the use of conventional content-based-approach in teaching second language (ESL) learners. Unlike the content approach, the language-based-approach incorporates literature and language skills. Thus, the researcher was able to guide students on the specific literature piece based on their proficiency level, lexical and discourse knowledge (Lazar, 1993). The classroom action research was conducted in two circles. Each cycle included four stages, planning, implementing, observing, and reflecting. The research data were collected by using observation, interview, documents, and photographs and tests. The data were analyzed during and after data collection. The results after the initial data collection showed the need for the improvement of basic grammatical skills such as the use of articles and prepositions and by the evaluation of the data collected at the end of the research, the researcher was able to conclude the effectiveness of the language approach in teaching language to ESL students.

Key Words: Language-based-approach, ESL, Literary texts, writing skills, Action research.

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