

An Investigation on Effective Methods of Teaching Literature to Learners of German as a Foreign Language

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The study of literature plays a vital role in language teaching as well as learning. It is obvious that a good literary text can stimulate the learners to think beyond what they see, to familiarize themselves with the other cultures and make them more interested in the target language. This paper focuses on the methodologies used in teaching German literature and recommends effective methods which can be used during teaching literature to the university students. The sample consisted of 27 undergraduates of German as a Foreign Language at the University of Kelaniya, who follow the three year and four-year Honours Degree programs in German for the Bachelor of Arts Degree. Qualitative data were collected through classroom observations and to collect the quantitative data, the oral presentations, class tests and assignments were evaluated. Secondary data for the study were obtained through printed and electronic resources. The study showed that two methods were successful to improve the literary skills and to awaken the interest among the students towards literature. Interpretation through listening comprehension proved to be successful in teaching poems and songs, whereas to teach the novels and short stories, different methods were combined such as connecting the text to real-life situations and using multiple interpretations. Therefore, it was concluded, that the combination of different methods is the most successful method to teach literature in a foreign language classroom, which also enhances the language skills as well as the literary skills of the students.

Keywords: German as a foreign language, German literature, Teaching literature, Student motivation, Teaching methodology.