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PAPER

The Effectiveness of Using *Colourful Semantics* as a Whole-class Approach with Sri Lankan Tamil-speaking Children with Language-learning Difficulties
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Background: The *Colourful Semantics* approach (Bryan, 1997) has been used effectively to support vocabulary and syntactic development with children experiencing language-learning difficulties (Bennington, 2011; Bryan, 2008; Ebbels and van der Lely, 2001; Morrissey, 2010; Wade, 2009). Using a colour-coding system and thematic roles, it helps children learn to use and respond to key 'wh' questions.

Objectives: The aim of this study was to evaluate the effectiveness of using the *Colourful Semantics* approach to develop target vocabulary knowledge and the use of Subject- Object-Verb (SOV) structures in Sri Lankan-Tamil speaking children experiencing language-learning difficulties.

Methodology: Thirty Sri Lankan-Tamil speaking children identified with language-learning difficulties attending a community centre in a deprived area were included in the study. The *Colourful Semantics* approach was introduced as a whole-class approach via the teacher and incorporated into daily literacy activities for 6 weeks. Pre- and post-intervention measures were undertaken on five receptive and expressive language and literacy measures of vocabulary and syntax.

Outcomes & Results: There were positive changes in all the vocabulary and syntactic measures undertaken at an individual and group level.

Conclusions: The *Colourful Semantics* approach can be used successfully as a whole-class intervention approach, facilitated by the teacher under the supervision of a speech and language therapist. The study supports the use of collaborative practice between speech and language therapists and teachers, particularly in deprived and under-resourced areas.

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