

Teaching of Idiomatic Expression in Teaching English as a Second Language in Sri Lanka

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Abstract

Idioms are one vital component every language around the world owns which entails an intended meaning behind them. Idioms and idiomaticity enable one to develop figurative competency, a component of communicative competency, which ultimately enables one to master overall language competency. Since there are different varieties of the English language, there are idioms from such varieties that can be used to identify the culture of the language and any hidden meanings. When teaching English as a Second Language, it is essential to expose the second language (L2) learners to such idioms from varieties of English. A corpus-based textbook analysis was done using the English grade 10 and 11 textbooks from the local syllabus in Sri Lanka to determine to what extent second language acquisition through idioms is supported by these texts. The findings indicate that idiom usage is very confined in English textbooks for grades 10 and 11, and that all those idioms that are included are of one specific variety-British English-and are not from different varieties. The study's findings unambiguously support the Sri Lankan L2 learners' minimal exposure to idiomaticity. This talk will highlight these findings and propose improvements that can be made to the syllabus to increase learner understanding of idioms.

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