

A Critical Evaluation of the Grade 7 English Pupil's Textbook Used in Sri Lankan National Curriculum

C.M. Arsakulasuriya

Department of English Language Teaching, University of Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

The objective of the research is to examine the validity of grade seven English pupil's textbooks used in the Sri Lankan national curriculum as a practical study material in learning/teaching the language. The use of a textbook in a language classroom is a debatable issue in the post-method era of which the communicative competency becomes the primarily expected learning outcome. The study was qualitative research in which the researcher attempted to conceptualize self-experiences as an English as a Second Language teacher and pupil's textbook user in teaching the English language to grade seven students. In addition to direct observation of grade 7 students, content analysis was employed as a research methodology; a selected section of the textbook was analysed based on David Williams' criteria for evaluation of textbooks (1983) and the theoretical perspectives of Donovan and Smolkin (2002) on the genre and writing development in designing language courses for elementary students. The selected section of the textbook consists of the lessons that are expected to be learned/taught in the third term of a calendar year. The research showed the negatives of using the textbook in a language classroom, the alternative study materials, and methods that could be introduced to the classroom to upgrade the practical use of English. The findings of the research also suggested that the content of the textbook that is expected to be learned by grade seven students and the up-to-date knowledge on designing/writing textbooks do not correlate, making the pupil's textbook less productive study material.

Keywords: English language, Grade seven, Pupil's textbook, Study material, Language planning