

Teaching English as a Language of Communication: A Case Study of Arts Graduates in the State Universities in Sri Lanka

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In today's increasingly globalized atmosphere, the English language is crucial for career success in various fields. As such, English communicative competency is the key to advancement in academic and professional fields. Although, in Sri Lankan context, English language teaching has been given a major focus, the lack of English as a language of communication has hindered the academic and professional success of Arts graduates in Sri Lanka. The key aim of the current study is to examine the challenges that Arts graduates encounter in their studies and employment due to their poor communication abilities in the English language. Quantitative research was conducted with a hundred Arts graduates in two state universities in Sri Lanka to investigate their English written and oral communication experiences at primary, secondary, and tertiary levels of education and at the workplace. The study employed a semi-structured questionnaire as the research instrument to gather data. Microsoft Excel (MS Excel) was used for visualizing, summarizing, and analyzing the data. The results of the study indicate that the inadequate English written and oral communication skills at primary and secondary levels and ESL teachers' inadequate feedback at the tertiary level have unfavorably affected Arts graduates' academic and professional achievements. The study emphasizes the need to use new technology and strategies to foster an interesting classroom environment. It is recommended to gain a thorough understanding of the aspects like individual differences of the students in designing lesson materials and activities along with internet-assisted tools and applications. The outcomes of the study have implications for ESL teachers, material designers, and management that are responsible for implementing required developments. Future researchers can extend the current study by referring to the existing English written and oral communication competency levels of the undergraduates by using different contexts.

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