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Attitudes towards Teaching English through Literature

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Literature is often included into English lessons in school text books with the objective of improving English competency of students and the love of reading poems, novels and short stories written in English. In fact, literature is used in teaching both basic language skills, such as reading, writing, listening and speaking, and language areas such as, vocabulary, grammar and pronunciation. Studies on this field often focus on the effectiveness of using literature in the ESL classroom. Thus, this study aims at investigating the attitudes of teachers in using literature to teach English Language in the ESL classroom. For this investigation a questionnaire including ten questions was given to 20 randomly chosen English language teachers that belong to government, semi-government and private schools in the Rathnapura and Kurunegala districts. Many teachers' responses were positive towards this teaching technique but several problems were discovered such as the lack of preparation of language teachers in the area of literature teaching, lack of facilities in schools, absence of clear-cut objectives defining the role of literature in English language teaching. Thus, the field of teaching English language through literature in the ESL classroom should be more carefully studied and teachers should be more exposed to creative methods of teaching literature.

Key words: literature, teaching English language, literary competence