

**Colour me...orange?:
Incorporating Aspects of the Colourful Semantics Approach
into English as a Second Language Lessons at Preschool**

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Among the challenges faced by Sri Lankan children learning English as an additional or second language is the accuracy of word order and vocabulary knowledge. The Colourful Semantics approach (Bryan, 2008) has been used successfully in the UK and in Australia with children experiencing language-learning difficulties (Bennington, 2011; Chiat, Law, Marshall & Bryan, 1997), with many programmes devised by Speech and Language Therapists (Morrissy, 2010; Wade, 2009). It uses thematic roles and a colour-coding system to support the development of syntax through a semantic route. The aim of this study was to evaluate the efficacy of using aspects of Colourful Semantics to develop vocabulary knowledge and the use of Subject-Verb-Object (SVO) structures in young learners of English. Twenty preschool children in ESL classrooms were included in the study. Key aspects of Colourful Semantics were introduced as a whole-class approach using children's storybooks, colour-coding and signing with lessons offered once a week for 12 weeks together with supplementary activities. Pre- and post-intervention measures were undertaken on five receptive and expressive language and literacy measures of vocabulary and syntax. In this presentation we will discuss the programme offered, the pre- and post-intervention assessment scores and statistical results on vocabulary and discuss the benefits of incorporating aspects of the Colourful Semantics approach into the English language teaching classroom.

Key words: colourful semantics, ESL, grammar, pedagogy, vocabulary