

## **Impact of the proficiency in English language on the students' performance in their main subjects**

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As ESL teachers at Sri Lanka Institute of Information technology (SLIIT), we observed that the students' performances are in different levels not only in English but also in their main subjects. Since the degrees offered by SLIIT are conducted only in English, we hypothesized that there is an impact of their proficiency in English language on their performance in the main subjects of the degree programme.

In pertinent to the observations made by us, this pilot study aims to investigate how the proficiency of English language affects the students' performance in the main subjects of their relevant degree programme. The hypothesis of this research study is that there is a correlation between the proficiency in English language of the students and their performance in their main subjects.

This study was carried out among a selected batch of 220 first year IT undergraduates of Sri Lanka Institute of Information Technology. The students were grouped into three according to their levels in English language proficiency. The results that these students obtained for English Language Skills, Mathematics and Database Management System-1 at their first semester final examination were analyzed quantitatively. Further, question papers (of each subject) of 5 students were randomly selected from each ability group and they were examined qualitatively. The essay type answers of these papers were examined to see their grammar, sentence structures and vocabulary usage. The researchers' objective here was to see whether the students had used the correct language to discuss the answers.

The findings of this research show the impact of the students' proficiency in English language on their performance in main subjects of the degree programme. Moreover, this research identifies key factors that can be investigated in further research.

*Key words: students' performance, proficiency in English language, correlation*