M.A THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

CORPUS BASED ANALYSIS OF THE ERRORS MADE BY ENGLISH AS A SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN WRITING

(A STUDY BASED ON STUDENT WRITING IN A GOVERNMENT SCHOOL IN KURUNEGALA DISTRICT)

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Abstract

This corpus based analysis of the errors made by ESL learners in writing examines errors in a corpus which consists 85 essays written by 85 participants. The participants are G.C.E. (A/L) students who are studying in the arts section of a girl's school in Kurunegala district. About 95% of the participants come from a non-English speaking background while 5% of them have opportunities to communicate in English outside the school.

The purpose of this study is to investigate the common types of errors made by these students and by that to obtain information on common difficulties in grammar as an aid in teaching or in the preparation of teaching material.

The researcher followed both qualitative and quantitative methods in this study and the instruments she used were participants' written essays and a questionnaire. In the process students' essays were collected for errors which were analyzed later using corpus linguistics software called Antconc. From the 85 essays, a total of 257 grammatical errors were analyzed. The most common errors were in the use of articles with 142 errors (55.25%) and the least common type of errors were in the use of auxiliary verbs with 10 errors (2.5%) .

This study has shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language. Such an insight into language learning problems is useful to teachers because it provides information on common trouble-spots in language learning which can be used in the preparation of effective teaching materials and remedial measures.