

M. A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

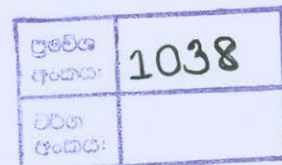
**THE ACQUISITION OF TENSE SYSTEM
IN FRENCH LANGUAGE BY NATIVE
SINHALA SPEAKERS**

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Abstract

The objective of this study is to understand the problematic areas of French tense acquisition. It investigates the acquisition of past tense system in French by native Sinhala speakers. This is a case study involving a sample group. It is limited to perfect and imperfect tense in French. There are five chapters in the dissertation. First chapter introduces the two main causes for this research problem. One is the interference of learner's first language towards the acquisition of French past tenses. The other one is the difficulty of understanding the difference of the past tenses in French and Sinhala language. Second chapter explains the past tenses in French and spoken Sinhala tense system by providing examples from prominent grammarians and also the key words such as first language interference, aspect in tense and diglossia will be discussed. Third chapter describes selection and preparing of a sample group and the data collecting process by providing work-sheets and conducting a written test followed by an oral test. Fourth chapter presents the achievements of students regarding the final test and the achieved progress by doing work-sheets. It is a systematic presentation by using statistics and bar charts. Final chapter concludes the dissertation by confirming the existent difficulty in understanding the French tense system by native Sinhala speakers. According to the findings of the research, it seems the interference of learner's first language may not directly affect for this acquisition difficulty, but inability to understand the aspect of French tenses may affect for it.