

# M.A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

## THE DIFFICULTIES FACED BY SECOND LANGUAGE LEARNERS IN ACQUIRING THE TENSE SYSTEM IN ENGLISH:

(A STUDY CARRIED OUT WITH GRADE 11 STUDENTS OF  
JANADHIPATHI BALIKA VIDYALAYA, NAWALA.)

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## ABSTRACT

This thesis is mainly to examine the process of teaching and learning grammar in English . English is taught in every school from grade three to grade thirteen. But majority of the students are unable to produce grammatically correct sentences. The purpose of this study is to find out the most difficult grammatical item to understand and find the causes for that situation. Two samples were selected - 20 teachers who teach English for more than ten years and the 50 students in grade 11, who will sit for the G.C.E. ( O/L) in December, 2015. They were given two questionnaires to mark the most difficult grammatical item to teach by teachers and to learn by students. Both samples stated that Tenses in English Language as the most difficult grammatical item. Then the students were given a model question paper to evaluate their grammatical knowledge. The students who got low marks, were interviewed. At the interview , the students were questioned in order to find their difficulties in learning tense system in English language. According to their responses, the complexity of tense system in English is found as the main reason. The structural differences in two languages (Sinhala and English) act as obstacles to master the tense system in English. Further, uninteresting teaching methods also a cause for above situation.

Hence it was recommended to train and educate the teachers with new teaching approaches to facilitate students to overcome this situation.