

M. A. THESIS IN LINGUISTICS

**EFFECT OF LEARNING A SECOND
LANGUAGE ON THE LANGUAGE
IDENTITY OF THE LEARNER (IN THE
CONTEXT OF AN INTERNATIONAL
SCHOOL)**

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ABSTRACT

English language enjoys much privilege in the society with its wide popularity as a global language; thus making learning English a trend rather than a necessity most of the times. In the current situation there is an emerging enthusiasm of most of the parents to send their children to international schools to make them learn in the medium of English, where learners from different language backgrounds other than English, might have to face with a conflict with regard to their language identities. This possible effect of learning a second language, on the language identity of the learner, is being investigated here in this study, using a sample of 30 students (whose first language is Sinhala) studying in a reputed international school; through their write ups, reading aloud, interviews and questionnaires which were assessed by a group of 05 assessors, to measure the competency levels of their first language and second language. Data collected through the interview were used to arrive at decisions regarding the learners' attitude towards their first language and second language. It was expected that there would be an effect of learning a second language on the language identity of a learner resulting in a lower competency level in both of their first language and second language and a negative attitude towards their first language. The analysis of data showed that a significant majority only possess an inadequate competency level in both of their languages. At the same time, although it was expected for the learners to show a negative attitude towards their mother tongue, the learners actually had a very positive attitude towards their first language and second language as well. The study expects to draw the attention of relevant parties so that this possible issue of language identity in the context of international schools particularly, will be not be overlooked and necessary steps will be taken to ensure a solid language identity for the learners either in their first language or in their second language or in both.