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Using Sinhalese in Teaching German as a Foreign Language for the Undergraduates of the University of Kelaniya

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The study focuses on the controversy, revolving around the teachers' use of the mother tongue (MT) in foreign language (FL) teaching. Specifically, this report concentrates on the examination of German teachers' and learners' attitudes and methods of employing Sinhalese in teaching German language. Theoretical studies highlight that the MT should be fused by teachers in FL classrooms in resulting a productivity in acquiring a second language or a foreign language. The current study was conducted among the German language teachers and thirty randomly selected students who follow German language as a main subject, representing the three specific course levels of BA degree program conducted by the University of Kelaniya. The research tools were two particular questionnaires designed specifically for the purpose of the study, aiming the German teachers and the students selected. Additionally, the efficiency and the productivity of using Sinhalese in teaching German in the classrooms were examined through keen observations of the students' level of understanding and progress in acquiring the language as required. Hence, it becomes a qualitative data analysis. The findings reveal that the teachers' as well as the students' overall attitude towards the use of Sinhalese in German language classrooms is positive, however with limits; the teachers report that they use Sinhalese for teaching as well as for the classroom management while the students convey that the explanations in Sinhalese support them in understanding the German grammar and language facts better. This understanding will be followed by a comparison between the two particular languages (MT and FL) as well. The findings of this study will be useful in enhancing the quality of the acquisition of foreign languages with a base of using mother tongue and it will open up to approach the theories of applied linguistics in second language acquisition.

Key words: attitude, German, productivity, second language acquisition, Sinhalese