

## **1.26 A case study of how Sinhala influences first year undergraduates learning English.**

W.M.S.P.K.Wanasinghe  
Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya, Kelaniya

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### **ABSTRACT**

Throughout history it is obvious that many scholars have discussed theories about first language acquisition and second language learning. Specially learning a second language means not only gaining knowledge but also the development of skills of reading, writing, speaking and listening. So the input as well as the output is very important in this process. But what I personally experienced was that the second language learning process may be difficult due to the interference of one's first language.

Thus the aim of this paper is to examine the influence of Sinhala language on learning English as a second language and the problems encountered by the first year undergraduates during this process. Acquiring competence in English has become a great need of Sri Lankan University students. The majority of these students have a sound knowledge of Sinhala as it is their first language. Sometimes this causes certain contradictions in identifying the syntactic and semantic differences between Sinhala and English Languages. Thus many students have a tendency to follow Sinhala word order in written and spoken English. As a result, students face various problems in learning English.

In this paper, such problems are identified by examining 40 randomly chosen first year students who are undergoing their degree program in the English medium from the Faculty of Applied Sciences and the Faculty of Business Studies and Finance, Wayamba University of Sri Lanka. Further, this study is based on assignments, tests and relevant activities given to the students.