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## **A linguistic analysis of errors committed by English medium students with special focus on first year students in Uva Wellassa University**

This study was conducted to examine errors committed in writing and speaking skills of first year students of eleven different degree programmes of Uva Wellassa University, Badulla, Sri Lanka. To achieve the objectives, 55 students: 23 male and 22 female in the academic year 2009/2010 were observed as the corpus of the study. English is the only medium of instruction for their academic programmes.

The sample of the study reflects a vivid picture of different social and ethnic backgrounds island-wide. Written compositions, oral presentations and oral test have been implemented as research instruments while manipulating the statistical software Minitab 14 for analytical purposes. All the identified errors have been classified into eight main categories: Grammar, Syntax, Semantics, Lexical, Orthography, Morphology, Phonology and Other. The results of the study have explored grammar as the greatest category where undergraduates are committing errors in both writing and speaking aspects. Moreover, advanced analysis has found that newspaper reading and committing errors in grammar and syntax as dependant variables; it evidently revealed undergraduates who read English newspapers commit fewer errors in grammar and syntax than others who do not read English newspapers.

In addition, this study has explained causes of errors mostly affected as intralingual and interlingual. Being a linguistic analysis, this study has shed light on the manner in which students internalize the rules of the target language, which is English. Such an insight into language learning problems is useful to teachers as it provides information on common difficulties in language learning. Furthermore, the findings of the study are vital in designing curricula for the better fulfillment of the objectives of second language teaching and learning while providing guidelines on effective teaching methodology and interesting teaching materials. Moreover, it has suggested areas to conduct further research based on this study.

**Keywords: Grammar, Syntax, Errors, Intralingual, Interlingual**