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Development of English writing skills among Sinhalese adult learners: a case study

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Abstract

Development of writing skills among the undergraduates of GWAI was the focal point of investigation in this research. Some of these second language learners do not show considerable interest in the communicative teaching course.

The existing literature was reviewed (**chapter II- IV**) with special reference to the second language developmental process and writing competence: the individual learning patterns, the effect of subconscious language production, and the relationship between age and linguistic input were given prime importance in this review.

A case study approach was used in the investigation (**chapter V**). The writing course provided to the selected class included the input-models through which organizational, stylistic and syntactic elements were highlighted. The learner writings were analyzed in view of the linguistic input of the learners, the information about which had been obtained through a questionnaire: accordingly, three sets of learners were found, those with sufficient input continuously from 5 years (group X), those with input only from 15 years onwards (group Y), and those without sufficient input (group Z).

The developmental patterns discussed (**chapter VI**) with reference to syntactic, organizational and stylistic features suggest that the input-model based writing course benefits only group X and Y learners to improve organizational competence and stylistic competence.

The case study was extended to an experimental research (**chapter VII**), the outcome of which revealed a number of vital aspects of L2 development:

- The group variability of learners was confirmed in the one way ANOVA performed on the pretest scores for both components: in each case, significant p value < 0.05 indicates that group variability exists at 95% level significance.
- Both X and Y could develop both organizational and stylistic competencies: mean difference of 0.700, and 0.978, with a significant p value (dependent

variable- paired sample t-test): group Z learners had not shown significant improvement in any of the two components.

- Independent sampling paired t-test, comparing mean values of X and Y, recorded a significant p value ($p < 0.05$), which demonstrates that group X learners outperformed the others.

The learners with sufficient level of linguistic input could improve organizational and stylistic competencies through a writing course which included input-models for focusing on organizational and stylistic elements: only such learners would find these communicative teaching courses useful.