

**Relationship between Development of Grammatical Competence and
Pre-linguistic Input in L2 Learning context: an experimental study**

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(B.A. & M.A.)

**Thesis submitted for partial fulfillment of the requirements of
Master of Philosophy Degree**

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May 2011

Abstract

The experimental study was designed to investigate the effect of linguistic input on development of grammatical competence among Sinhalese adult learners of English. One hundred and twelve (112) participants learning English as a second language at Buddhist & Pali University were selected. A questionnaire was distributed among them to obtain information about the amount of linguistic input each learner had received. On the basis of a pre-determined five point criterion, their exposure to English language through reading, listening, speaking, and writing, the amount of linguistic input of each learner was assessed. A pre-test was conducted to evaluate the grammatical competence of the learners at the initial stage. A grammar instruction programme was conducted to all the selected subjects.

The research data gathered through questionnaire revealed useful aspects of second language development in the study sample. Two way chi-square tests showed that there are systematic relationships between linguistic input and the years of monkhood among Buddhist priests and their attitudes to reading.

Two-independent sample t-test was performed on the pre-test scores ascertained the relationship between linguistic input and grammatical competence of the learners. The learners with sufficient linguistic input performed better, recording a significant median difference (< 0.05) of 2, as reflected in the Mann Witheny U-test. The results of the Mann Witheny U-test ($0 < 0.05$) supported a strong claim that the grammar instruction has been effective only for learners with sufficient linguistic input.

The study, therefore, recommends the use of different instruction programmes, depending on the amount of learner's linguistic input. It also encourages future researchers to draw on appropriate instructional intervention to cater to the needs of the learners without sufficient linguistic input.

Key words; Linguistic input, Grammatical competence, Buddhist and Pali University of Sri Lanka, Grammar instruction, L2 development