

A Linguistic Study on the Language Errors in the Sinhala Writing of Muslim Students studying in the Sinhala Medium

ABSTRACT

This dissertation is named as ‘A linguistic study on the language errors visible in Sinhala writing of Muslim students studying in the Sinhala medium’. The writings of grade 4 and 5 Muslim students who study in the Sinhala medium is analyzed in this research. This dissertation consists of 8 chapters and an annexure. The first chapter presents the background information. The research problems are ‘what are the language errors visible in the Sinhala writing of Muslim students who study in the Sinhala medium? What are the reasons for the errors? What is the nature of such errors? Though there is research done on language learning of school students, no research is seen on the said research problem. This is therefore an initiative research. This study was conducted based on the theories of Structural Linguistics. The writing of the selected students is analyzed in the 2nd chapter. The information about the standard mixed Sinhala alphabet, the symbols for this, appear in the International Phonetic Alphabet used by the selected students are given under section 2.1. In 2.2, the way they have used vowels and consonants accurately in Sinhala writing and the errors they have committed when using vowels and consonants are analyzed. The third chapter is allocated for the use of vowel symbols (pillam) and 3.1 highlights the vowel symbols (pillam) in the standard mixed Sinhala alphabet and 3.2 investigates how the students have misused or wrongly used the known vowel symbols. The 4th chapter is allocated to identify the spelling mistakes. Most of the spelling errors are done in using ‘ආ ඉ ඊ උ ඔ ඛ’ letters and aspirated sounds. The 5th chapter describes language and word division errors; errors in writing words with Samāsa and Sandhi. The 6th chapter is an analysis of Syntactic errors in sentences. Sentences in which the Muslim students have used the spoken variety while neglecting grammatical rules, sentences with wrong cases, sentences with mixed language and sentences with Semantic issues are analyzed. The 7th chapter describes a range of language related factors in such errors. Language related factors and external factors are the reasons for such errors. Internal language factors and external factors are discussed under 7.1 and 7.2. Internal factors are associated with the knowledge of a language. Language factors are the influence of the mother tongue and not grasping the rules of the language they are learning. The 8th chapter presents the conclusion, which is that students commit such errors in every level of a language due to language related factors and external factors. A few suggestions are presented for further research in order to eliminate the difficulties discussed. The data is presented in the annexure.

Keywords: Mother tongue influence, Muslim students, Sinhala language