

**The Impact of Gender Differences on Class Attendance and Student Performance in Second Language Learning  
(A Case Study Based on First Year Undergraduates of the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya)**

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This study intends to investigate the relationship between gender and second language learning, while paying special attention to the class attendance of the undergraduates. This was achieved through the analysis of their performance in language in relation to class attendance according to their gender. The sample of this study consisted of 46 (23 male and 23 female) first year students from the Faculty of Science, University of Peradeniya. The final grades based on the mid-term and end-term results on English tests and attendance recorded for both semesters of the students who completed the questionnaire based on the compelling reasons for absenteeism were obtained for analysis. The quantitative data collected were analysed using Statistical Package for Microsoft Excel Windows 2010. The study reveals that females are significantly successful than males in terms of overall test scores with the females scoring an average of almost fifteen points higher than male language learners. It is found that 92% of female students earning above-average grades have over 75% attendance while 83% of male students earning grades below class average have low attendance. Thus, class attendance seems to be particularly effective at reducing the number of failures while having stronger or weaker effect on the number of high grades received. When further analysing the possible underlying reasons for absenteeism, 43% of the males say that they use English hours to do the work of the other subjects they are doing while only 4% of females express the same. Moreover, 88% of the students who use English hours for extracurricular activities and students' union/ welfare activities are males. This is mostly due to the mind-set that they only have to focus on their own academic specification and utilize the English hours for such activities. Thus, it is found that there is a direct relationship between grades achieved for second language learning and the class attendance of the undergraduate corresponding to the specific gender.

**Key words:** Language, Second Language Learning, Gender, Absenteeism, Class Attendance