

# **A Study of German Pronunciation Problems Among First Year Undergraduate Students at University of Kelaniya**

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There are some common problems when learning German as a foreign language. Among them, new language learners face many problems with German pronunciation, and it is one of the important factors that we should consider when speaking a Language. If the speakers mispronounce words, then the listener may not receive the exact message that the speaker is trying to deliver. There are some common pronunciation problems I encountered while doing this research. In the German alphabet, mostly the letter "j" sounds like "y". And in many cases, the letter "v" sounds like "f". Also, if the students do not have a proper understanding of the alphabet, they interpret the letter ß (=SS) as the letter "B". Students try to substitute English speech sounds with German speech sounds. They may also mispronounce words due to shyness. This research aims to provide new German language learners with strategies to overcome pronunciation problems. The research was done using data that were collected from 85 first-year undergraduate students at the University of Kelaniya. This target group includes students from different areas of Sri Lanka, who have different language accents. The data collecting methods of this research are doing oral tests, phonetic exercises, and interviewing German language lecturers. A set of specific strategies were used in the lesson planning, and teaching-learning process to identify the gaps. This includes promoting self-learning, using online dictionaries, and online learning apps, launching mini motivational speeches, instilling basic of the beginning, and regularly setting aside half an hour for speaking practice during German lectures. The final output of the research is to motivate them to speak in German as much as possible with confidence and improve their pronunciation and enunciation in speaking German. The key results of this study will benefit first-year undergraduate German learning students in the future.

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