Patterns of phonological errors in the phonemic clusters in Sri Lankan English

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This study investigates whether problems in pronunciation related to consonant clusters of thelanguage learners which have been overlooked over the years as random errors are indeed random. Specifically, this research questions if the problems in pronunciation related to consonant clusters in Sri Lankan English are results of the interference of the learners' first language, Sinhala. Furthermore, it identifies about seven patterns of the errors and compares them with similar errors among other speakers from different language backgrounds who also learn English as a second language. This study aims to address the issues arising on account of teachers in secondary education who generally ignore such challenges and the gatekeepers of Sri Lankan English whose identification of speakers with such pronunciation errors as speakers of 'not pot English', which can create social barriers. Moreover, the features of the cluster deviation which can also be found among pronunciation problems of other New Englishes suggest that it is justifiable to view it as a learner problem common to many second language speakers. The research is primarily based on phonological data gathered from the interviews of fifty (50) adult participants in 2013 and 2014.