

# The Influence of English as a Second Language on Learning German as a Foreign Language

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Humanities could be defined as a subject area which studies different aspects of human society such as literature, philosophy, modern languages, ancient languages and fine arts. The value of Humanities is highlighted in language learning as it enables people to understand different cultures, societies and their thoughts. Among the foreign languages taught in Sri Lanka, German language occupies an important position. This paper focuses on the transfer of the language between English and German grammatical structures, vocabulary and pronunciation. It further finds the answer for the question as to what extent knowledge of English helps beginners and learners with intermediate skills in German language to acquire or improve German. The main objective of the study is to identify how the knowledge of English as a Second Language contributes to acquire German as a Foreign Language and what interference occurs in this respect. The data were collected through observations during teaching, from undergraduates at the University of Kelaniya and through interviews. The secondary data were collected through printed and electronic sources. It was concluded that the learners with a sound knowledge of English had an advantage in the pronunciation and in grasping grammatical structures, whereas some learners mix up the English grammatical structures with German grammatical structures and English pronunciation with German pronunciation. Knowing English vocabulary widely helps learners to learn German vocabulary, as many scientific words in German are the same as in English.

**Keywords:** Foreign language learning, German as a foreign language, Second language interference