Improving Foreign Language Teaching/Learning in *Exolingual* Learning Contexts

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In the globalised world today, more and more people aspire to become multilinguals. However, most people acquire their target foreign languages in their native countries, without having ever visited a place where those languages are used in day-to-day communication. Such learners, whom we name '*exolingual*' learners in this paper (as opposed to '*endolingual*' learners who acquire languages in learning contexts where their target language is spoken outside the classroom), have a greater risk of falling short of achieving their objective. Many reasons for such failures could be linked to obstacles which are inherent to *exolingual* language learning contexts. However, in the field of acquisitional linguistics, foreign language acquisition is often studied alongside first and second language acquisition, that is, under language acquisition in *endolingual* learning contexts.

Our objective in doing this study was to research into an *exolingual* context of foreign language learning and to precisely identify obstacles linked with such learning contexts. In order to do this, we opted to study a particular *exolingual* context of foreign language learning: namely the context of foreign language learning in Sri Lanka. The selected target foreign language being French, the methods of research included observations of French classes, studying of French text books used in those foreign language classes and discussions with students and teachers of French.

At the conclusion of the study, we discovered how little the contexts of *endolingual* and *exolingual* language learning have in common. Except for targeting a common language in its fundamental form, *endolingual* and *exolingual* language learning situations differ largely from each other when we consider their classroom, social, cultural and academic set ups; teaching and learning methods, techniques and material; learner motivation, objectives, etc. As an obvious consequence, the outcome of the teaching/learning process in the two different learning situations too is hardly the same.

Key words: *Foreign languages, Teaching/learning, Endolingual/exolingual contexts*