

AB102

## **The difficulties in Chinese language acquisition of Sinhala speaking students.**

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Chinese is one of the most ancient languages in the world spoken by the people not only in the mainland of China mainland, but also in other regions. Learning the Chinese language has become important in several countries due to issues linked to economic development. The Chinese language is a historical language which belongs to the Chinese-Tibetan language family. It script belongs one of the most historical writing systems called "Hanzi". In recent times, Sri Lanka has also stepped towards teaching Chinese language as a second language in order to overcome communication difficulties. In order to understand the difficulties associated with Chinese language acquisition, it is important to analyze the structure of the first language as well as the Chinese languages through a comparative study. This research examines Chinese language acquisition by comparing it with Sinhala. When Sinhalese-speaking students learn the Chinese language, the major problem faced by students is the difference in between the language structures of Chinese and Sinhala, as Sinhala follows SOV (subject, object, verb) structure and Chinese follows SVO (subject, verb, object) language structure. In addition, when learning Chinese, students make a number of acquisition errors due to the absence of several language phrases in their own mother tongue. For instance, in Chinese, there are several set phrases such as "méi guān xi" (It's ok), "bù yòng xiè" (no thanks), "bù kè qì" (no need to be polite) which do not appear in the Sinhala language. Thus, the learners face difficulties due to the absence of those phrases in Sinhala. Therefore, Sinhala-speaking students should also keep in touch with the English language in order to solve the communication problems somehow as no such particular word phrases exist in their own language. The purpose of this paper is to analyze the difficulties faced by Sinhala speaking students and provide a clear understanding of the differences between Sinhala and Chinese languages.

**Key Words:** *Acquisition, Chinese-Tibetan Language Family, Hanzi, Historical Language, Language Structure*

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