

Parameswaren, M.  
PAPER

### **A Lexical Analysis of Tamil and Sinhala Languages**

M. Parameswaren, Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya

The Sinhala language has two main varieties: literary and spoken, both differ from each other in important ways. Literary Sinhala is the language of virtually all written materials, not just literature in the specific sense. Spoken Sinhala, setting aside some formal sub-varieties heard primarily in lectures and seminars, is basically the language used by everyone at all social and educational levels, for all face to face discourse and it is this colloquial variety of Sinhala that is mostly represented in the present study.

Some of the recent studies on Sri Lanka have pointed out that Tamil dialects vary in lexicon. Both languages have certainly developed in Sri Lanka in socio economic, political, educational and industrial fields. Dissimilar changes have continued to develop in the vocabulary of both languages. The vocabulary is the most vulnerable part of language, subject to various kinds of linguistic influences.

In the Sri Lankan context, both these languages have been taught and learnt as second language by Tamil and Sinhala students at the university level. The objective of this study is to compare the linguistic features of Tamil and Sinhala languages based on lexicology to facilitate the learners of these languages as a second language.

The main difficulties in learning a new language are caused by the interference from the first language and these difficulties can be predicted by contrastive analysis. This paper explains how both languages have some kind of freedom in their lexicon; and this factor might help to contribute in theorizing about common items of the two languages. Using linguistic analysis in a descriptive way this paper describes the unique lexicology of each language which contributes to the linguistic richness and ethnic identity of the speakers of this language.