

# Comparison on Tamil and Sinhala Phonological Structure for Second language teaching and learning process.

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## ABSTRACT

Phonological knowledge of the Second language is a basic need in both teaching and learning process. Sinhala and Tamil languages are very closed relative languages in Sri Lankan context. Historically in Sri Lankan society Sinhala and Tamil languages have rich language contact mutually. This article attempt to make comparative analysis on phonological structure of both languages for better understanding of the Sinhala and Tamil languages for achievement the goals of second language Teaching and learning process. In vowels level there are two vowels with short and long pronunciation in Sinhala dissimilar compare to Tamil. In consonants level dissimilarities are very high in Sinhala than Tamil. Sinhala Nasalized consonants and Aspiration consonants are very unfamiliar to Tamil native speakers. In this context learning and teaching process of the Sinhala as a second language facing more difficulties in Identification and pronunciation of Sinhala consonants.

**Key words-** phonology, second language, Sinhala, Tamil, teaching and learning.

## 1. INTRODUCTION:

The Knowledge on phonemic structure of the language is a necessary need of the language teaching and learning process. Especially it is the basic step in second language teaching and learning process. According to experts on second language acquisition “Learning a second language phonology is more complex than generally thought. Much pedagogical material focuses on the learning of segments; most learners, as a result, are concerned with the accurate production and reception of segments. However, it is clear that learning a second language phonology embraces considerably more than achieving accurate segment production” [1]. This article attempted to help achieved that need through the comparison method. Tamil is a language of Dravidian family of Languages and Sinhala language is a language of Indo-Aryan family of Languages. Hence Tamil and

Sinhala languages are belong to two different families of languages; we can identify some similarities and dissimilarities features between the phonemic structures of both languages.

### Vowels in Tamil and Sinhala languages.

Like other natural languages, phonemic structure of Tamil and Sinhala languages have two main categories namely vowels and Consonants.

### Common vowels for Tamil and Sinhala.

Vowel		
in Tamil script	Sinhala script	in phonetic symbol
அ	අ	a
ஆ	ආ	a:
இ	ඉ	i
ஈ	ඊ	i:
உ	උ	u
உள்	උඹ	u:
எ	එ	e
ஏ	ඒ	e:
ஐ	ඔඑ	ai
ஒ	ඔ	o
ஔ	ඔඹ	o:
ஔள்	ඔඹ	au

**Specific vowels to Sinhala:**

Sinhala script	in phonetic symbol
අූ	æ
අූූ	æ:
ඞා	iru
ඞාඞා	iru:

According to the structure of vowels the Tamil native speaker who learning Sinhala as second language should be learn two additional vowels with short and long forms. But Sinhala native speaker who learning Tamil as second language no facing any difficulties in learning Tamil vowels since familiar with the sounds of Tamil vowels with his / her mother tongue.

**Common Consonants for Tamil and Sinhala**

in Tamil script	Sinhala script	phonetic symbol
ක	ක	K
ඛ	ඞ	n
ඡ	ච	c
ඡ්	ඡ්	ñ
උ	උ	ʈ
ඞ	ඞ	n.
ඡ	ඡ	t
ඛ	ඡ	n
ඡ	ඡ	p
ඡ	ඡ	m
ඡ	ඡ	y
ඞ	ඡ	r
ඞ	ඡ	l
ඞ	ච	v
ඞ	ඡ	h
ඞ	ඡ	s.
ඞ	ඡ	ś

**Specific consonants for Sinhala:**

Consonants in Sinhala script	phonetic symbol
ඞ	g
ඞ	b
ඡ	d
ඡ	s

ඡ	h
ඡ	f

**Nasalized consonants :**

ඡ	mb
ඡ	nd
ඡ	ng

**Aspiration consonants:**

ඡ	kh
ඡ	gh
ඡ	jh
ඡ	th
ඡ	th
ඡ	dh
ඡ	dh
ඡ	ph
ඡ	bh

**Specific consonants to Tamil:**

Consonants in Tamil script	phonetic symbol
ඞ	R
ඡ	Z

The above classification of the consonants in Tamil and Sinhala languages are clearly indication a very clear fact on regarding second language learning and teaching process. That is the phonological structure of Sinhala language is more complex rather than Tamil phonological structure. Thus Tamil native speaker learning Sinhala as second language facing more difficulties in Identification and pronunciation of Sinhala consonants.

**2. CONCLUSION**

It is very clear that phonological structure of the Sinhala language is very complex than Tamil [2]. In vowels level there are two vowels with short and long pronunciation in Sinhala dissimilar compared to Tamil. In consonants level dissimilarities are very high in Sinhala compared with Tamil and Nasalized consonants and Aspiration consonants are very unfamiliar to Tamil native speakers. In this context learning and teaching process of the Sinhala as a second language created the need of vast knowledge on phonological structure of the Sinhala language to Tamil native speakers. The Sinhala native

speaker who learns Tamil as a second language does not face same problem of the phonological level and mostly no vowels or consonants which are created pronunciation difficulties in second language learning process. But some letters of consonants in Tamil language representing the phonologically polyphonic sounds occasionally. The letters of *ஃ, ஃ, ஃ* are example to this kind of letters. Sinhala native speakers who are learning Tamil as a second language facing difficulties identify the correct sound of the letter in particular context. Therefore understanding on phonological structure of the Second language is basic need in regarding the second language learning and Teaching process in Tamil and Sinhala.

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