

Abstract 76

Past Tense in Jaffna Tamil and Sinhala: A Contrastive Study

Sivagnanavathy Senthuran

Department of Linguistics, faculty of Arts, University of Jaffna

sivamorthy18@gmail.com

Sri Lankan nation consists of varied cultures, languages and religions. Tamil and Sinhala are the major languages spoken in Sri Lanka. Sinhala belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family and Tamil belongs to the Dravidian language family. Morphology is two fold, namely noun morphology and verb morphology. Tenses play a main role in verb morphology. Generally tenses are not similar in the structure of all languages. There are many different types of tense systems in the languages of the world. Morphologically there are three different tenses in Jaffna Tamil. They are present tense, past tense and future tense. In spoken Sinhala there are two main tenses, namely past tense and non-past tense. Non-past tense includes present and future tenses. The main Objective of this paper is to bring out the similarities and the dissimilarities between past tense in Jaffna Tamil and Sinhala. This research involves contrastive and descriptive methodology. Primary data was collected through self-observation and personal interview method. The important sources of this research are secondary resources such as related books, journal articles and conference proceedings. The Tamil data represents the author's own dialect of Jaffna Spoken Tamil and the Sinhala data represents the standard spoken Sinhala dialect. Accordingly, a number of similarities and dissimilarities between the past tense in the two languages are identified. Further, it has been discovered that these dissimilarities create difficulties for second language learners.

Key words: past tense, Sinhala, Tamil, tenses, verb morphology