

A Contrastive Study on the Sound Systems of Korean and Sinhala Languages

Retired Senior Professor Hemantha Sirisena

*Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya
hsirisena53@gmail.com*

This paper examines the phonetic features of the Korean language in comparison with that of Sinhala language. Based on the results of scientific and theoretical analysis, Korean researchers have confirmed that there is currently no single classification and transcription of Korean consonants and vowel systems, which have engendered many difficulties for a foreigner to learn the Korean language. The number of Korean consonants in different classifications varies from 18 to 21, and there remains various arguments pertaining to the number of vowels in existence. This research study purposes to facilitate Sri Lankan students' learning of the Korean language and to overcome potential problems they encounter in the process. The main objective of the study is to identify the role and characteristics of each phoneme in both languages, by analysing the place of articulation, manner of articulation and voice, in order to examine the similar and dissimilar phonemic features characterised in these two languages. A literature survey was conducted to examine available studies on the phonetic properties of both languages. Furthermore, all accessible and available research publications, books and internet resources pertaining to the Korean language, since the introduction of *Ōnmun* vernacular script and its evolution up to the modern era, have been examined during the course of the research. Information regarding mixed Sinhala sound system were referred to by research works conducted by local and foreign scholars. Descriptive research was the main methodological framework used in this study. The analysis of the available variety of published research materials were used to investigate the evolution of sound systems of both languages and to present a comprehensive description of phonemic inventories. Moreover, this study recommends the use of research results to develop practical exercises in Korean.

Keywords: Contrastive study, Sinhala, Korean, Phonology, Phonemes.

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