

SINHALA — WORD — PHONOLOGY

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Abstract:

The segmental phonemic composition of the Word in Colloquial Sinhala is discussed in this paper under the main headings: segmental sounds, stress - placement, phonemic units, allophonic assignment, phonemic contrasts and distribution, and syllabic constitution.

0. Some of the phonological properties of the 'Word' in Colloquial Sinhala (C. S.) are presented in this paper within a structural frame-work. The variation is that of normal - tempo.

1. Segmental Sounds

1.1. Vowels

Vowels in Sinhala are generally,

- a. voiced,
- b. nasalized in the environment of nasal sounds,
- c. have a glottal-stop on set in absolute initial position of words, and a glottal - stop offset when final of a word,
- d. slightly tenser when immediately followed by a stop - cluster,
- e. high vowels are slightly lowered in closed syllables, before retroflex stops, and also in open - syllable when followed by a low-vowel in the subsequent syllable : i.e. $i \rightarrow E (...>e)$; $u \rightarrow U (...>o)$; $e \rightarrow \Sigma (...>æ)$
 $o \rightarrow \text{ɔ}$

These features will not be marked in the transcription.

1.1.1	[i]	high, front, unrounded short vowel.				
e.g.	inə	'waist'	dirə	'date'	ivərə	'over'
	ivə	'instinct'	divə	'tongue'	irənə	'tearing'
	irə	'sun'	pirə	'merit'	issərə	'earlier'
	pirimi	'males'	pini	'dew'	rikili	'twigs'
	siritə	'custom'	miṭi	'short'	padəvi	'ranks'

01. The variety of C.S taken up for discussion here is that which is spoken around Colombo and its northern suburbs within a radius of about twenty miles.