

Tenses in Tamil and Sinhalese in Written Language

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Tamil and Sinhalese are the major languages in Sri Lanka. Sinhalese belongs to the Indo-Aryan language family and Tamil belongs to the Dravidian language family. Tenses play a main role in a language. Tenses express the time distinctions through all languages. The main purpose of this paper is to bring out the similarities and the dissimilarities between tense in the Sinhalese language and Tamil language. The data were gathered by books. Thus the present research aims to discuss the similarities and dissimilarities between written Tamil and Sinhalese tenses. Sinhalese has two main tenses. They are Past Tense and Non – Past Tense. Non- Past Tense includes Present Tense and Future Tense. But Tamil language has three main tenses. They are Past Tense, Present Tense and Future Tense. Verbs in Sinhalese and Tamil languages conjugate according to person (1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person), number (singular, plural) and gender (male, female). When verbs conjugate in Tamil language it differs according to human and non – human being. This is different from Sinhalese language, because main categories are living things and non – living things in Sinhalese language. Therefore in Sinhalese language, animals and human beings consider as a one category. But in Tamil language animal and human beings are consider as two categories. Accordingly a number of similarities and dissimilarities between tenses in the two language are identified. Further it has been discovered that these dissimilarities create difficulties for second language learners.

Key words: future tense, past tense, present tense, Sinhalese, Tamil

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