

Present tense in spoken Tamil and Sinhala: A comparative analysis

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Syntax differs from one language to another. The second language learners find it hard to understand the syntax of the language they learn when it differs from the syntax found in their mother tongue. Thus, the similarities and differences of the Tamil and Sinhala languages in the present tense are analyzed in this study. The similarity found out through this comparative study is that both Tamil and Sinhala languages have a similar subdivision in Present tense, they are the Simple Present, Present Perfect and Present Continuous. On the other hand, in Tamil, infixes are used to differentiate the present tense, whereas verb suffixes and affixes are used in Sinhala Present tense. In Tamil, the present tense verbs will take various forms based on Case, Gender, Number and person, but in Sinhala a common verb form is used irrespective of these case, gender and number. For example, the Tamil expressions naan poran, naangal poram, nee porai, neengal porengal, avar porar appear in Sinhala as mama yanawa, api yanawa, api yanawa, oya yanawa, eya yanawa respectively. The knowledge in the present function of these languages will give a clear idea to the learners and teachers of these languages and this research study will facilitate the teaching and learning process of these languages. The research area is limited to the tenses being used in the spoken context of Sri Lankan Tamil and Sinhala. The data for this study were obtained from books, articles, websites, and discussions.

Keywords: Language, Sinhala, Tamil, Present tense and Syntax