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DHIVEHI (MALDIVIAN): A SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC  
STUDY

A Dissertation  
Presented to the Faculty of the Graduate School  
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in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of  
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by  
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# DHIVEHI (MALDIVIAN): A SYNCHRONIC AND DIACHRONIC STUDY

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Cornell University, 2000

This dissertation has two goals: to give an account of Dhivehi phonology and grammar, and to explore the historical development of Dhivehi in its relationship with Sinhala, a closely related language. The latter is done by comparing cognates from Dhivehi (including various dialects), Sinhala, Sanskrit, and Middle Indic (Pali and Prakrit) in light of what is known of Sinhala's historical development. These comparisons reveal that Dhivehi began diverging from Proto-Dhivehi-Sinhala by approximately the 1<sup>st</sup> c. B.C.

The Introduction in Chapter 1 provides a general overview, outlines Maldivian history and contact situation, and makes some observations on Dhivehi dialects.

Chapter 2 comments on the most important contributions to the study of Dhivehi to date, the data on which most of this present study is based, and summarizes how this current study was carried out. The analysis of Dhivehi presented in this dissertation relies primarily on information gathered on site by the researcher.

Chapter 3, Phonology, reports on Dhivehi's segmental phonemes, syllable structure and phonotactics, metrical stress, intonation patterns, and

Dhivehi morphophonemic alternations. A brief introduction to Dhivehi orthography, called Thaana is also provided.

Chapters 4 and 5 cover morphology and syntax respectively, and Chapter 6 focuses on Dhivehi's valence system which is quite similar to that found in Sinhala.

Chapter 7 traces the historical development of Dhivehi phonology from Proto-Dhivehi-Sinhala to the present. Evidence of Dhivehi's early beginnings is found here.

Chapter 8 is a preliminary report on possible historical sources for some Dhivehi morphosyntactic constructions. Most of the chapter focuses on Dhivehi nominals and verbs.

Chapter 9 examines possible Dravidian influence in Dhivehi and compares this with what may have been the case in Sinhala as well.

Chapter 10 summarizes the conclusions of this research and suggests areas for further study.