

## Some Contrastive Aspects of Proverbs and Idioms of Speech in German and Sinhala

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Proverbs and idioms of speech are considered to be a significant component in a given language and are regarded as the “salt in the soup” of a language. As in the case of any living language, idioms of speech and proverbs are used in everyday discourse by both German and Sinhala native speakers. The native speakers have no difficulty in understanding the context of the idioms and proverbs. However, learning a language requires a knowledge of culture and the society of the speech community. Thus as a student of foreign languages, there are many difficulties encountered in grasping the finer points of the target language.

This paper attempts to analyse the contrastive aspects of proverbs and idioms of speech in German and Sinhala with an aim to identify the areas of difficulty for the students of German as a foreign language in understanding and using these expressions. The study is based on research conducted at the Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya from primary and secondary sources relevant to both languages since 2003. The proverbs and idioms now in use in German and Sinhala have been added over the centuries originated from the experiences, wisdom and ideas of people of different social classes. Thus it is not possible to comprehend meanings of the proverbs and idioms just by their outward meanings. There is some hidden meaning to each and every proverb and idiom. Hence it is required to read between the lines. Thus this study attempts to discuss the similarities and contrastive aspects of this significant area in the two languages.

The analysis of data shows that both German and Sinhala have common proverbs and idioms of speech expressed differently according to each culture and ways of thinking.

A study of this nature involving German and Sinhala has not been conducted so far. Thus it is expected that this study will pave way for future studies in this area.

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