

Difficulties Encountered in Learning Chinese Language by Sri Lankans

Kandambi, Sammanie Upadya

Department of Modern Languages, University of Kelaniya

sammanieupadyak@gmail.com

Chinese is the most-widely spoken language in the world. It is also known as Mandarin Chinese and belongs to the Sino-Tibetan family of languages. The Mandarin spoken in the country's capital of Beijing is the official national language of mainland China, termed as Putonghua (common language). In contemporary society, Chinese language-learning has been promoted among many countries in the world. Sri Lanka is one such country; it has already taken successful measures to teach Chinese language to local people. In the process of learning Chinese, Sri Lankans have experienced a number of difficulties due to intra-language socio cultural differences. As Chinese is a tonal language based on four different tones, Sri Lankans have undergone many difficulties due to this varied pronunciation. There is also the issue of existing different types of sounds in the Chinese language that do not appear in the Sinhala alphabet. For instance, due to the absence of the “Ů” sound in Sinhala, a number of pronunciation errors can be seen as Sri Lankans have become accustomed to their own sound systems. Another major problem is remembering how to write Chinese characters. Generally, Chinese characters are formed by different kinds of strokes. For an accurate way of writing, those strokes should also be written in order. Therefore, learners should keep in mind the correct order of strokes in Chinese characters when they engage in the process of learning Chinese language. The purpose of this paper is to discuss the difficulties that Sri Lankans encounter during the process of Chinese language learning and to provide suggestions to overcome them.

Key words: *Putonghua; Stroke Order; Tonal Language.*