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# Trilingual Chinese Dictionary: Development of a Sri Lankan learner-oriented approach tailored for local learners

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## Abstract

Sri Lanka is a diverse country that is home to three recognized languages; Sinhalese, Tamil, and English, that stem from the multicultural community that are its people. Accordingly, language plays a vital role in sustainable development and in a fostering harmony and peaceful coexistence among these communities. Within this context, the growing economic, educational and tourism links between Sri Lanka and China, have created an increasing need for Chinese language proficiency in the country. It was thereby, recommended by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission; LLRC that Sri Lanka should develop a trilingual language policy. This study hence assesses the effectiveness of employing a

trilingual Chinese dictionary tailored for Sri Lankans to enhance the vocabulary acquisition for beginners, usable by its multilingual communities. To do so, this study used a mix method, applying the Design and Development (DD) Model. The DD model was applied to construct a user-friendly, trilingual Chinese dictionary. The steps carried out included; analysis, design, development and finalizing. The analysis was based on existing scholarly research conducted among Chinese speaking and non-Chinese speaking countries to formulate the number of most commonly used Chinese words or characters. The concept chosen by this study was one thousand most common Chinese words or characters needed to develop a Sri Lankan-learner oriented lexicon. Design was conducted according to the traditional Chinese monolingual dictionaries. Development process included; Chinese word in character form, picture in early *Jiaguwen* or/and *Jinwen* forms, *Pinyin,* parts of speech, trilingual meaning and example. Finalizing will be the completion and publication of the dictionary for Chinese language learners in Sri Lanka. Importantly, this research has

identified a significant curriculum gap along with limitations on teaching material. This study is aimed at developing a Chinese dictionary in Sinhala, Tamil and English for beginners in Sri Lanka which is of salient importance in order to further strengthen Sri Lanka-China ties.

**Keywords:** Chinese; Sinhala; English; Tamil; Trilingual; Dictionary

## Introduction

As an island, Sri Lanka has been influenced by various foreign cultures including the Chinese culture since early Chinese navigators found this country as a turning point of their sailing route in Indian ocean. Chinese sailors found the country to be of great value for its geographical location. "Sri Lanka was one of the last stops for Chinese navigators in the Han period as Han Shu mentioned. At that time, it used the term of *Sichengbu* for Sri Lanka which can be identified as *Sinhadipa*, one of ancient names of Sri Lanka" (Nedalagamuwe, 2017, p.

10). Early Chinese navigators referred to the island with 30 different Chinese names within a span of centuries. "In Chinese sources dating from the *Han* dynasty (206 BC – 220AD) to the *Qing* dynasty (1616-1911AD) alone, more than thirty names have been used to denote Sri Lanka" (Madurawala, 2011, p.200).

However, it is unclear how Chinese navigators communicated with the local people in Sri Lanka in these early periods of history. There are several implications in early Chinese records; *Faxian. A Record of Buddhistic Kingdoms*, as to how this was made possible. A renowned Chinese Buddhist monk; *Fa Xian (Fa Hsien)* who had visited the *Abhayagiriya* Temple of Sri Lanka in 411 AD states "the country originally had no human inhabitants, but was occupied only by spirits and *nagas*, with which merchants of various countries carried on a trade. When the trafficking was taking place, the spirits did not show themselves. They simply set forth their precious commodities, with labels of the price attached to them; while the merchants made their purchases according to the price; and took the things away.

Through the coming and going of the merchants (in this way), when they went away, the people of (their) various countries heard how pleasant the land was, and flocked to it in numbers till it became a great nation." (Legge, 1971, p. 101-102).

During the 5th century AD *Fa Xian* translated 6 of 11 or 12 Buddhist texts from Pali and Sanskrit language with the help of a Nepalese Buddhist monk; *Buddhabhadra*. *Buddhabhadra* was a resource person and a living dictionary specialized in translation. Until the application of modern translation methodologies with dictionaries, the process of translating and communicating from language to language was very primitive from the pre-historic era to the medieval period of Sri Lanka. Dictionaries are not only useful for translation processes but are inherently important for efficient communication among communities of different cultures. Currently, most schools and universities in Sri Lanka under the country's established curriculum, teach a minimum of three languages, including Sinhala and Tamil as local languages, and English as an international

language. In 2010, following the end of the armed conflict in Sri Lanka, the government in power appointed the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) to investigate the reasons for the failure of the nation's harmony and peaceful coexistence amongst its different communities and to make recommendations to prevent any such failures in the future. Having recognized the vital role that a language could play in sustainable development and in fostering harmony and peaceful coexistence amongst the different communities in the country, it was recommended by the LLRC that Sri Lanka should move towards a Trilingual Language Policy. Sri Lanka's Trilingual Language Policy aims to unite the nation and foster reconciliation by promoting proficiency in Sinhala, Tamil, and English. Launched officially as a 10-year national master plan in 2011, the framework treats Sinhala and Tamil as national and official languages of discourse, while positioning English as a vital link and employment skill. These three languages are taught starting from primary education as an initial introduction to the language used in everyday

life before moving on to the next level of formal education at the secondary and higher education levels.

This policy plays a significant role in preparing foreign language dictionaries such as preparing trilingual Chinese dictionaries to propagate Chinese language education among Sinhala and Tamil speaking communities in Sri Lanka. Globalization has increased the value of multilingualism, Thereby, preparing trilingual dictionaries is of crucial importance. The primary aim of this research is to propose a scientific guideline for the preparation of a trilingual Chinese dictionary for Sri Lankans learning the language of Chinese.

## Literature Review

Past research shows that the Chinese language learning and teaching process contains limitation with an underdeveloped curriculum in Sri Lanka. Neither is it user-friendly. A key reason for this being, the lack of teaching materials including Chinese dictionaries.

“Existing "Basic Chinese Teaching" materials in Sri Lanka indicate that Chinese certificate courses were established as early as the 1970s. Institutional documents, current textbooks, administrative records, and faculty information reveal that this was a formative period for Chinese language education. Current teaching materials further prove that this curriculum failed to meet the needs of Chinese language enthusiasts in Sri Lanka. Although individual institutions have continuously launched Chinese language courses since then, Sri Lanka still requires more sinologists up to this day. It can be said that the scope of this field has not yet been significantly expanded” (Nedalagamuwe, 2016, p. 33).

Kwong (2015) in his research said that user-friendliness is an important component of user profile research, because a dictionary would be of little use if user needs were not sufficiently met. By user-friendliness, we mean that the content and presentation of a dictionary should be grounded in the purposes and proficiency, and thus the information demands, of the target users. “The teachers are also advised to use variety of teaching methods to

stimulate the learner by motivating students and encouraging learning Chinese language in TCFL classroom. The teachers should focus on teaching materials in terms of enabling Chinese language communication in the classroom." (Kandambi, 2020, p. 22-23).

There are numerous surveys carried out regarding the satisfaction of using Chinese dictionaries by CFL learners in China. Among the already published Chinese-English dictionaries for CFL learners, only few are found to be at a satisfactory level (Wang, 2008). Yang conducted a questionnaire survey of CFL learners in two Chinese universities, and the results showed a predominant preference for dictionaries published outside China with regard to the dictionaries used by CFL learners (Yang, 2015). Some participants of the survey complained about the quality of current CFL learner's dictionaries, especially those published in China. The main complaint was the lack of helpful information for their Chinese language learning. Lexicographers always concern themselves with the usefulness of the

dictionaries they produce (Yang, 2015). For example, Li discussed practicality in compiling Chinese dictionary for CFL learners (Li, 2013).

Yang states that compiling Chinese dictionaries for CFL learners should follow four basic principles: simplicity, practicality, comprehensiveness and explicitness (Yang, 2015). However, a fundamental problem lies in the fact that lexicographers in many cases fail to capture the specific learning needs of users, which are often deeply rooted in their learning process.

A research carried out by a group of Indonesian researchers from Bali (Adnyani et al., 2021) emphasis that "although the use of dictionary brings beneficial effect for students in acquiring new languages, the result of the studies along with the interviews with language teachers in elementary schools in Bali revealed that the development of a three-language (trilingual) dictionary with illustrations that is focused in assisting students in mastering the three languages is very limited. The common dictionary that is widely used is the bilingual

dictionary. The absence of a trilingual dictionary for each grade level in elementary school is a problem that needs to be solved which aligns with this study's objective.

## Research Problem

The problems in Chinese language teaching and learning process in Sri Lanka have been extensively studied, particularly by Sri Lankan and Chinese scholars, university undergraduate students and independent researchers. Majority of such research is focused on teaching and learning strategies. The gap identified by this study is that while existing research articles typically focus on teaching learning facts, they rarely focus on teaching materials, especially reference books such as dictionaries. Aligned with this research problem, this study's primary objective is to evaluate existing Chinese dictionaries in Sri Lanka, propose a scientific guideline for the preparation of a trilingual Chinese dictionary and finally make a user-friendly trilingual Chinese dictionary for beginners in Sri Lanka.

## Research Methodology

This study used a mix method by applying the Design and Development Model (DD Model). Data was gathered from written work and questionnaires. Furthermore, this

research carried out a systematic investigation through a quantitative research methodology to gather information on available Chinese dictionaries in Sri Lanka. One of the main characteristics in this process reviled the exact number of available Chinese dictionaries in Sri Lanka. The number of Chinese dictionaries with local language option is one of key facts to be observed. The entries in each dictionary were carefully examined. The target group in this study were fourth year university students studying Chinese. A questionnaire was handed out to 17 of these students, the reason being their long-time involvement in studying the subject.

## Results and Discussion

This research conducted a questionnaire survey of CFL learners in one of the Sri Lankan universities, and the results showed a predominant preference for dictionaries published in China with regard to the dictionaries used by CFL learners. All participants have said that they do not use Chinese dictionaries published up to date in China or Sri Lanka with local language option, because those

dictionaries lack helpful information for their Chinese language learning. They omit crucial usage notes, real-life conversational patterns, clear structural guidance, suitable local language options and parts of speech. Most of the participants complained about the difficulties of using monolingual Chinese dictionaries.

In the beginning of the 21st century, Chinese and local scholars began to compose basic Chinese dictionaries with Sinhala and other local language options. The following seven versions are the only Chinese dictionaries published up to date in China or Sri Lanka with the option of Sinhala language.



*චීන වචන මාලාව* or Chinese Vocabulary is a trilingual vocabulary book prepared by Ven. Dr. Nedalagamuwe Dhammadinna, Mekala Piyumali Kuruvita, Umangee Chandrakumara De Silva and Mallika Narayanan for the

purpose of ordinary and advanced level Chinese language education in 2009. This book is an author publication. This vocabulary book offers Chinese entries with trilingual language options (English, Sinhala and Tamil) and English entries with Chinese words.




Chinese-Sinhala, Sinhala-Chinese Beginner's Dictionary is a bilingual dictionary prepared by Ven. Dr. Nedalagamuwe Dhammadinna and published by Vijitha Yapa Publications in 2010. The headwords in this dictionary are collected from prescribed G. C. E. A/L Chinese textbooks. The number of headword count is around one thousand in both Chinese and Sinhala. The Chinese and Sinhala headwords are arranged according to the alphabetical order in this dictionary.



*මගේ චීන භාෂා චිත්‍ර ශබ්දකෝෂය* or My Chinese Picture Dictionary is a Chinese-Sinhala dictionay published by the Commercial Press in Beijing, China in 2010. The editor of this dictionay is *Wu Yuemei.* My Chinese Picture Dictionary is designed to help students learn Chinese words in a more meaningful context by engaging illustrations and photos. It includes 15 thematic units, 142 graphic topics and more than 4,000 commonly used words. The 15 units are categorized according to the International Curriculum for Chinese Language Education published by the Office of Chinese Language Council International. They are further specified into 142 topics to cover all aspects of daily life.




*ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල-චීන ශබ්දකෝෂය* or English-Sinhala-Chinese Dictionary is an English language vocabulary book composed by Faiz Marikar. This dictionary was published by Godage International Publishers in 2011. In this dictionary headwords are given in English while entries are given in Sinhala and Chinese.




*සරළ චීන භාෂා ශබ්දකෝෂය* or 800 Chinese Characters (Sinhala Edition) is a practical dictionary specifically for

the Sri Lankan Chinese learners published by the Foreign Language Teaching and Research Press in Beijing in 2011. It is designed to help readers master Chinese language more quickly and communicate in Chinese through learning of the most commonly used Chinese characters. It contains 800 of the most commonly used characters in daily life, and listed common words and example sentences, most of which are the common words and sentences used in day-to-day life.




*චීන සිංහල වර්ගීකෘත ශබ්දකෝෂය* or Chinese Sinhala Classified Dictionary is another publication by the Commercial Press in Beijing, China in 2013. The author of this dictionary is Ms. *Sheng Li.* The words are catogarized into five main catogaries in this work including daily life, social activities, public affairs,

economic activities and social sciences and natural sciences.




*කුඩා චීන භාෂා ශබ්දකෝෂය* or Concise Chinese Dictionary (Sinhala edition) written for elementary Chinese learners, is another bilingual dictionary published by the foreign language teaching and research press in China in 2016. There are approximately 4000 entries in the Chinese-Sinhala section. This includes the basic vocabulary of HSK and high-frequency words of lexicon of common words in contemporary Chinese. There are around 3000 entries in the Sinhala-Chinese section. This includes the most commonly used and fundamental terms. In this dictionary, most of the definitions are literal translations that are easy to understand. All words and sentences are marked with Chinese *pinyin.* The dictionary provides sample words and sentences that come from daily life, focusing on oral expression and taking into account the cultural backgrounds concerned. Moreover, it is

equipped with hundreds of colorful illustrations to help learners to understand the meanings of certain words.

| Options | චීන වචන මාලාව or Chinese Vocabulary | Chinese-Sinhala, Sinhala-Chinese Beginner's Dictionary | මගේ චීන භාෂා චිත්‍ර ශබ්දකෝෂය or My Chinese Picture Dictionary | ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල-චීන ශබ්දකෝෂය or English-Sinhala-Chinese Dictionary | සරළ චීන භාෂා ශබ්දකෝෂය or 800 Chinese Characters (Sinhala Edition) | චීන සිංහල වර්ගීකෘත ශබ්දකෝෂය or Chinese Sinhala Classified Dictionary | කුඩා චීන භාෂා ශබ්දකෝෂය or Concise Chinese Dictionary (Sinhala edition) |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Availability in Sri Lanka | Yes | Yes | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Sinhala Language | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes | Yes |
| Tamil Language | Yes | No | No | No | No | No | No |
| English Language | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No | No |
| Entries less than 1000 words | Yes | Yes | No | No | Yes | No | No |
| Availability of Chinese characters following by words | No | No | No | No | No | No | No |

Table-01

**Shortcomings of these Dictionaries**

This research has found that four of the seven dictionaries with Sinhala language option were published in China from 2010 to 2016. Therefore, they are not available in Sri Lanka. The other two dictionaries are available in Sri Lanka but the *ඉංග්‍රීසි-සිංහල-චීන ශබ්දකෝෂය* or English-Sinhala-Chinese Dictionary is an English language vocabulary book which includes headwords in English while the entries are in Sinhala and Chinese. This vocabulary book can be used as an English Chinese dictionary but it offers very little information regarding the headwords. Chinese-Sinhala, Sinhala-Chinese Beginner's Dictionary is a bilingual dictionary which is the other locally published dictionary. It offers around one thousand Chinese and Sinhala headwords.

The findings of this research include the following key points which clearly denotes the current situation of Chinese lexicography in Sri Lanka. (See table 01)

1. Four of the seven dictionaries with Sinhala language option were published in China from 2010 to 2016. Therefore, they are not available in Sri Lanka.
2. This research confirmed that the dictionaries which were published in China do not fulfill the local requirements as Sri Lankan learners prefer locally composed dictionaries with local language option.
3. This research reveals that the two dictionaries published in Sri Lanka have less entries compared to the other four Chinese dictionaries.
4. All seven dictionaries are not adequately suitable for beginners due to the afore discussed limitations.
5. The headwords must consist of entries and all entries of Chinese dictionaries must consist Chinese characters followed by words that start with the entry character. All of the above dictionaries lack this crucial point.

This research provides an overview to Chinese lexicography in Sri Lanka. It further emphasizes that trilingual Chinese dictionaries with local language (Sinhala, Tamil, English) option are very rare in Sri Lanka even in today's context. This situation is a barrier to the development of Chinese language-based communication. While Sri Lanka is a Sinhala dominant society, it needs more efficient Chinese dictionaries to carry out positive activities in the process of socio cultural academic and political aspects. In order to fulfil these requirements, it is of utmost importance to have preliminary studies regarding the preparation of modern Chinese dictionaries tailored for local needs.

Furthermore, this research shows that monolingual Chinese dictionaries with Chinese language definitions are also not suitable for local people in Sri Lanka though they may have certain Chinese knowledge during the course of their studies. They may prefer trilingual Chinese dictionaries with local language definitions as such dictionaries are more convenient to use. However, monolingual Chinese dictionaries are more user-friendly

than current existing Chinese dictionaries because such work have been improved through the integration of modern scientific methods. Following is the Chinese-based definition for the headword of Chinese character “爱” in a monolingual Chinese dictionary (Figure: 1).

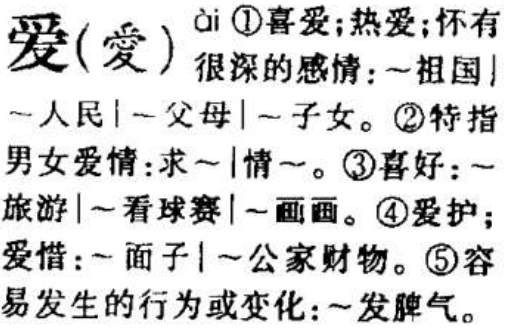

爱(愛) ài ①喜爱；热爱；怀有很深的感情：～祖国｜～人民｜～父母｜～子女。②特指男女爱情：求～｜情～。③喜好：～旅游｜～看球赛｜～画画。④爱护；爱惜：～面子｜～公家财物。⑤容易发生的行为或变化：～发脾气。

Figure: 1 [The Chinese character “爱” shown in a Chinese monolingual dictionary

王继红、陈鸣、任丽青主编《现代实用汉语词典》上海远东出版社、第 3 页。]

In this monolingual Chinese dictionary, each Chinese headword consists of both simplified and complicated (Traditional) forms of the character. *Pinyin* pronunciation with the tone consists of different meanings and examples of the usage of each definition. Some of the definitions are given with synonyms. Each entry has

useful information in connection with the headword. This type of entry has convenient usage which makes it easy to understand and use. The opinion of the respondents shows that this type of dictionary can be said to be a user-friendly dictionary in line with modern scientific methods. According to the research findings, this study suggests that local editors must apply this method. It is called “Design” in this research which is already used in traditional Chinese monolingual dictionaries.

It is clear that Sinhala, Tamil or English-speaking Sri Lankans are not able to read and understand completely Chinese entries as those are written only in Chinese language (Monolingual). Correct pronunciation and the understanding of definite meaning of Chinese characters are essential for foreigners but monolingual Chinese dictionaries are prepared for professionals or fulfil local Chinese needs. The local community of Sri Lanka abide with basic grammatical components such as verbs, nouns, tenses and more. Therefor preparation of Chinese dictionaries must be more localized. This is an example

for a Chinese entry in proposed Chinese-Sinhala bilingual dictionary (Figure: 3).

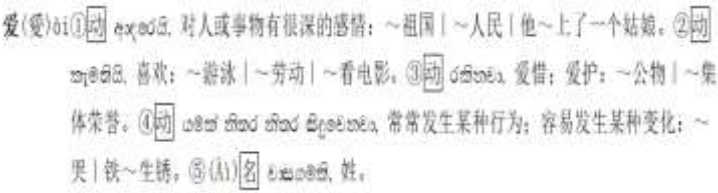
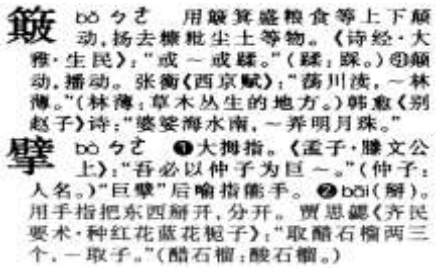


Figure: 3 [The proposed entry of the Chinese character "爱" with Chinese Sinhala bilingual options]

The above example from a proposed Chinese-Sinhala bilingual dictionary includes the headword of Chinese character in both simplified and complicated (Traditional) forms. The definitions in the entry are same as in monolingual Chinese dictionaries despite the Sinhala language definitions. An observation was made by this study that bilingual dictionaries are more practical rather than Chinese monolingual dictionaries among the Sinhala dominant society in Sri Lankan context.

There are two types of Chinese monolingual dictionaries mainly used in modern days. They are Chinese character dictionaries（汉语字典）and Chinese word dictionaries（汉语词典）. Chinese character dictionaries offer

headwords in Chinese character forms and entries with their meanings and usage. However, they have no meanings of Chinese words. Chinese experts and professionals use this type of dictionaries for special purposes. For example, following quotation is copied from《古汉语常用字字典》 (Dictionary of Frequently Used Classical Chinese Characters). This is a main Chinese character as a headword and the entry with Chinese definitions. In this dictionary, the characters of headwords are given in bold, are in a larger font size and are arranged according to the *Pinyin* order. The opinion of the respondents shows that this format is not suitable for Sri Lankan needs, especially for those who are studying Chinese or those who use Chinese language to communicate in their work spaces. (Figure: 4).


簸 bǒ ㄅㄛˇ 用簸箕盛粮食等上下颠动，扬去糠秕尘土等物。《诗经·大雅·生民》："或舂或～。"（舂：舂。）②颠动，播动。张衡《西京赋》："荡川泼，一林薄。"（林薄：草木丛生的地方。）韩愈《别赵子》诗："婆娑海水南，一弄明月珠。"

擘 bò ㄅㄛˋ ❶大拇指。《孟子·滕文公上》："吾必以仲子为巨～。"（仲子：人名。）"巨擘"后喻指能手。❷bāi（掰）。用手指把东西掰开，分开。贾思勰《齐民要术·种红花蓝花栀子》："取醋石榴两三个，一取子。"（醋石榴：酸石榴。）

Figure: 4 [Chinese entries in a bilingual Chinese character dictionary 《古汉语常用字字典》，商务印书馆出版，2001，22 页。]

On the other hand, commonly used Chinese abbreviations in monolingual Chinese dictionaries can also be applied into localized Chinese-Sinhala bilingual or trilingual Chinese dictionaries. It is clear that Chinese characters are logographic letters, though most of characters contain at least two parts, especially a meaning part and a pronunciation part. Ordinary practitioners may not be able to understand the inside components of Chinese characters, but they can understand the meanings of Chinese characters by using Chinese abbreviations. In the process of preparing the trilingual Chinese dictionaries, the editorial board must finalize the basic Chinese abbreviations with its correct usage. At the beginning of the studying process, the ordinary practitioners may face some difficulties when they use Chinese abbreviations in trilingual Chinese dictionaries because the formation of the content of an entry (Chinese character or word) consists of Sinhala, Tamil and English definitions with Chinese abbreviations. But users must be encouraged to use monolingual Chinese dictionaries as it is easier to overcome many difficulties that practitioners face when they use monolingual Chinese dictionaries. There are too many Chinese abbreviations in monolingual Chinese dictionaries, but it is convenient if the editorial board limits the number of abbreviations.

The most used Chinese abbreviations of dictionaries are as follows: “名, 英, 方, 波斯, 阿拉伯, 前缀, 梵, 见, 拟声, 叹, 形, 同, 助, 注, 动, 介, 副, 口, 旧, 代, 见”. The list of abbreviations must have a user-friendly order as observed in Figure 05.




Figure: 5 [Proposed method for abbreviations in a bilingual Chinese dictionary]

The following example gives a clear picture of the application of the proposed method for abbreviations to a bilingual Chinese-Sinhala dictionary (Figure: 6). After reviewing the opinion of the respondents, it is absolutely clear that this proposed method for abbreviations can also be applied into the preparation of trilingual Chinese dictionaries.

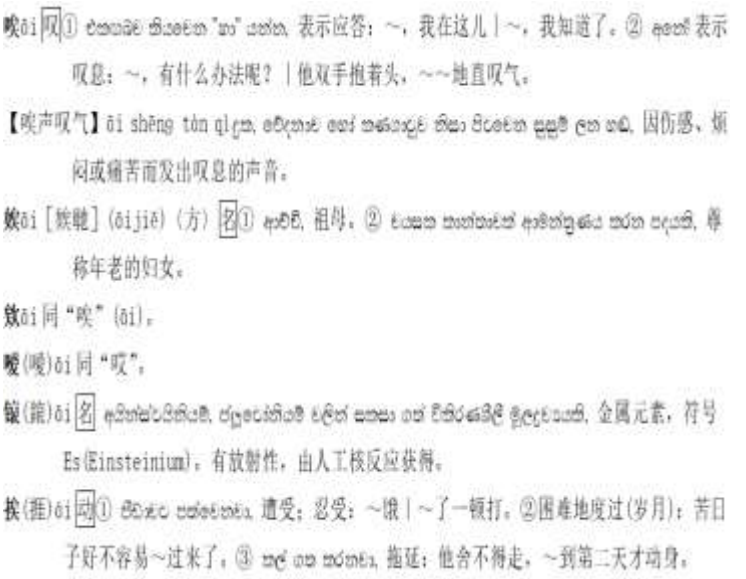



Figure: 6 [The application of proposed method for abbreviations to a bilingual Chinese dictionary]

The process of the analysis of this study is based on previous research. Among three types of results which were carried out in Chinese speaking and non - Chinese

speaking countries to formulate the number of most commonly used Chinese words or characters, the chosen concept is called the one thousand most common Chinese words or characters to develop as words with trilingual entries in this research. The one thousand most common Chinese words consist of the vocabulary list of HSK Level 4.

This research primarily focused on the main body of an entry in a dictionary. The "entry" means a Chinese character or a Chinese word with trilingual explanations which is given in a Chinese dictionary according to the alphabetical order. This step was carried out in the development of the research process.

It consists of six categories which include the Headwords or so-called Chinese words in character form, consisting of one or two (or more than two) syllable Chinese characters, Pictures of early *Jiaguwen* or/and *Jinwen* forms which are written forms of Chinese characters (the earliest written styles in Chinese history, *Pinyin* which is the official system to Romanise Mandarin Chinese, using the Latin alphabet and diacritics to represent

sounds and tones. This enables learners to read, pronounce, and type Chinese characters, and it is the foundational phonetic tool used in mainland China and globally for Chinese language education. The next category is Parts of Speech. Most parts of this section are given as examples in abbreviations. The next category is trilingual meaning which is crucial to the study of Chinese language among locals. This research emphasizes on the importance of the trilingual policy of Sri Lanka by applying English, Sinhala and Tamil meanings in construction of user-friendly trilingual Chinese dictionaries for beginners in Sri Lanka. Each entry is given at least one example in Chinese to understand the meaning(s) of Chinese word.

After the completion of each entry in this proposed dictionary method, the development procedure carried out ten entries of the one thousand most common Chinese words as an example (Figure: 7).

汉语-英语僧伽罗泰米尔词典
**Chinese-English Sinhala Tamil Dictionary**
චීන-ඉංග්‍රීසි සිංහල දෙමළ ශබ්දකෝෂය
***சீன-ஆங்கில சிங்கள தமிழ் அகராதி***
**1000 Most common Chinese words**

1
【阿姨】ā yí *n.* Aunt, පැත්ත, மாசி, அத்தை. ～，附近有地铁站吗?

2
【啊】a *int.* used to express surprise, exclamation, or agreement, පුදුම, විමතිය හෝ එකඟතාව ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමට යොදෙයි, ஆச்சரியம் அல்லது ஆமாத்தை குறிக்கப் பயன்படுத்தப்படுகிறது. ～，这儿的环境多么好啊！你们家住在哪儿～？～，好的，我现在就去。

3
【矮】 （篆）ǎi *adj.* short, low, කට, පහත්, குள்ளமான, கட்டையான, தாழ்ந்த. 弟弟的个子比我～。

4
【爱（愛）】 （金）ài *v.* love, ආදරය කරනවා, அன்பு காட்டுதல். 妈妈，我～你。like doing sth., යමක් කරනවා, விருப்பம். 我～吃米饭。

5
【爱好】àihào *n.* hobby; an interest, විනෝදය, පැවැත්ම, பொழுதுபோக்கு, ஆர்வம், விருப்பம். 我最大的～就是打篮球。*v.* be fond of, යමක් කරනවා, விருப்பம். 我从小就～音乐。

6
【爱情】àiqing *n.* love, ආදරය, அன்பு, நேசம், காதல். 这是一个感人的～故事。

7
【安】 （甲）
【安静】ānjìng *adj.* quiet, calm, නිහඬ, නිශ්ශබ්ද, அமைதியான. 因为教室里没什么人，所以很～。*v.* quiet down, keep silent, නිහඬ වෙනවා, அமைதியாக இருத்தல். 孩子们都睡着了，家里～了下来。

8
【安排】ānpái *v.* arrange, ඇරියෙන්ජ් කරනවා, ஏற்பாடு செய்தல், திட்டமிடுதல். 下午的会议，我已经～好了。*n.* plan, සැලසුම. 他的～让大家都很满意。

9
【安全】ānquán *adj.* safe, ආරක්ෂිත, பாதுகாப்பான. 晚上开车要注意～。*n.* safety, ආරක්ෂාව, பாதுகாப்பு. 请放心，我们会保证您的～。

10
【按】 （篆）
【按时】ànshí *adv.* on time, නියමිත වේලාවට, உரிய நேரத்தில். 我～完成了任务。

Figure: 7 [The application of proposed method for the preparation of Chinese multi-lingual dictionary]

The finalizing process of this research is the completion and publication of the trilingual (English, Sinhala and Tamil) Chinese dictionary for Chinese language learners in Sri Lanka.

## Conclusion

Sri Lanka has a long-standing history of teaching Chinese as a foreign language. Formal Chinese-language education in the country's higher education sector, especially among local, government universities dates back to the earlier 1970s. The University of Kelaniya has played a pioneering role in this development as it was one of the very firsts to introduce the Chinese-language course in 1972. It has now expanded its teaching curriculum of the subject, offering specialized honours degree programmes for local university students.

Amidst these ground-breaking steps, the development of Chinese education throughout past decades remains at an unsatisfactory level with much improvement needed in Chinese reference books, particularly of dictionaries. Locally composed Chinese textbooks as those discussed previously remain limited and produced at a significantly low level. Thereby, local students are forced to rely heavily on textbooks

and material produced and compiled in China for international learners of the language. It is for this very reason, that there is a crucial need to identify this lack of suitable Chinese dictionaries in Sri Lanka and develop one that is tailored primarily for the Sri Lankan demographic.

Such a dictionary goes beyond language development but also opens the doors for the local students to expand their horizons internationally, securing them more job opportunities, given the strong ties Sri Lanka has with China. A trilingual dictionary is essential to support vocabulary, pronunciation and the learning of Chinese characters, giving local students the opportunity of independent learning. With the demographic increasingly moving towards digital resources, this study also emphasizes on the opportunity to turn this trilingual dictionary into a digital and mobile friendly dictionary given the usefulness of e-dictionaries for vocabulary and especially, pronunciation learning of the language.

This research is most salient as it introduces the novel concept of a trilingual language option to Chinese dictionaries. The result of this research will expand the existing knowledge of Chinese education in Sri Lanka. The development of a trilingual Chinese dictionary will be a crucial product of high

lexicographic achievement in the process and curriculum of studying Chinese language. Since this study only involves the basic aspects of trilingual Chinese dictionaries, further studies are needed to establish more valid results that can be generalized for the benefit of Chinese language learners. Nonetheless, its importance for strengthening and producing strong and eloquent Chinese speakers among the local community is invaluable.

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Nedalagamuwe, D. (2016). An Introduction to the Commencement of Chinese Language Teaching in Sri Lanka. International Conference on Chinese Studies 2016, Kelaniya, Sri Lanka. Original Chinese text:“斯里兰卡现有的“基础汉语教学”材料表明，七十年代斯里兰卡就开办了汉语证书班。学校文献、当前教材、办公资料和教师信息等都表明这是一段汉语教学的形成时

期。目前的教材进一步证明，这个课程没能够满足斯里兰卡汉语爱好者的需求。虽然后来个别院校在不断开办汉语言课程，但到目前为止，斯里兰卡还需要更多的汉学家。可以说是这方面有相当范围还没有扩大。”

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## Biographical Note

Ven. Dr. Nedalagamuwe Dhammadinna serves as a senior professor of Chinese in the Department of Modern Languages at the University of Kelaniya. With over 25 years of experience, Ven. Dr. Nedalagamuwe Dhammadinna specializes in Chinese language, literature and philology. He holds a PhD in Chinese from East China Normal University and has been awarded several CSC scholarships. He authored several books in Sinhala, English and Chinese. He affirms as a

sworn translator (Chinese, Sinhala and English) in the courts. Ven. Dr. Nedalagamuwe Dhammadinna is a passionate advocate for language communication and regularly contributes to peer-reviewed journals.