Other-Letter;

A hybrid of Sinhala and Tamil scripts for Sri Lanka

- A Work in Progress

Pathum Egodawatta, Sri Lanka / pathumego@gmail.com

Why a new hybrid script?

Why not?

Sri Lanka

Langauge and the Conflict

Brief

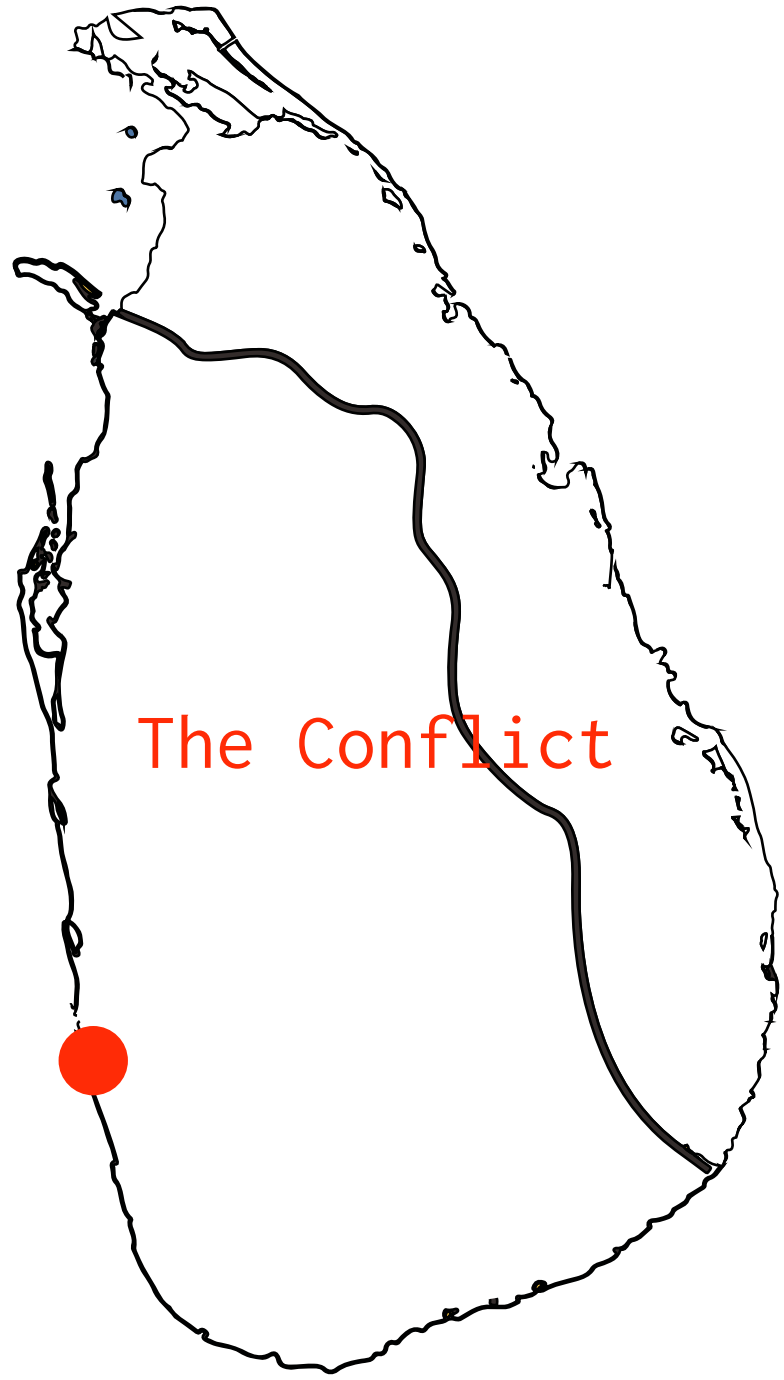
Research

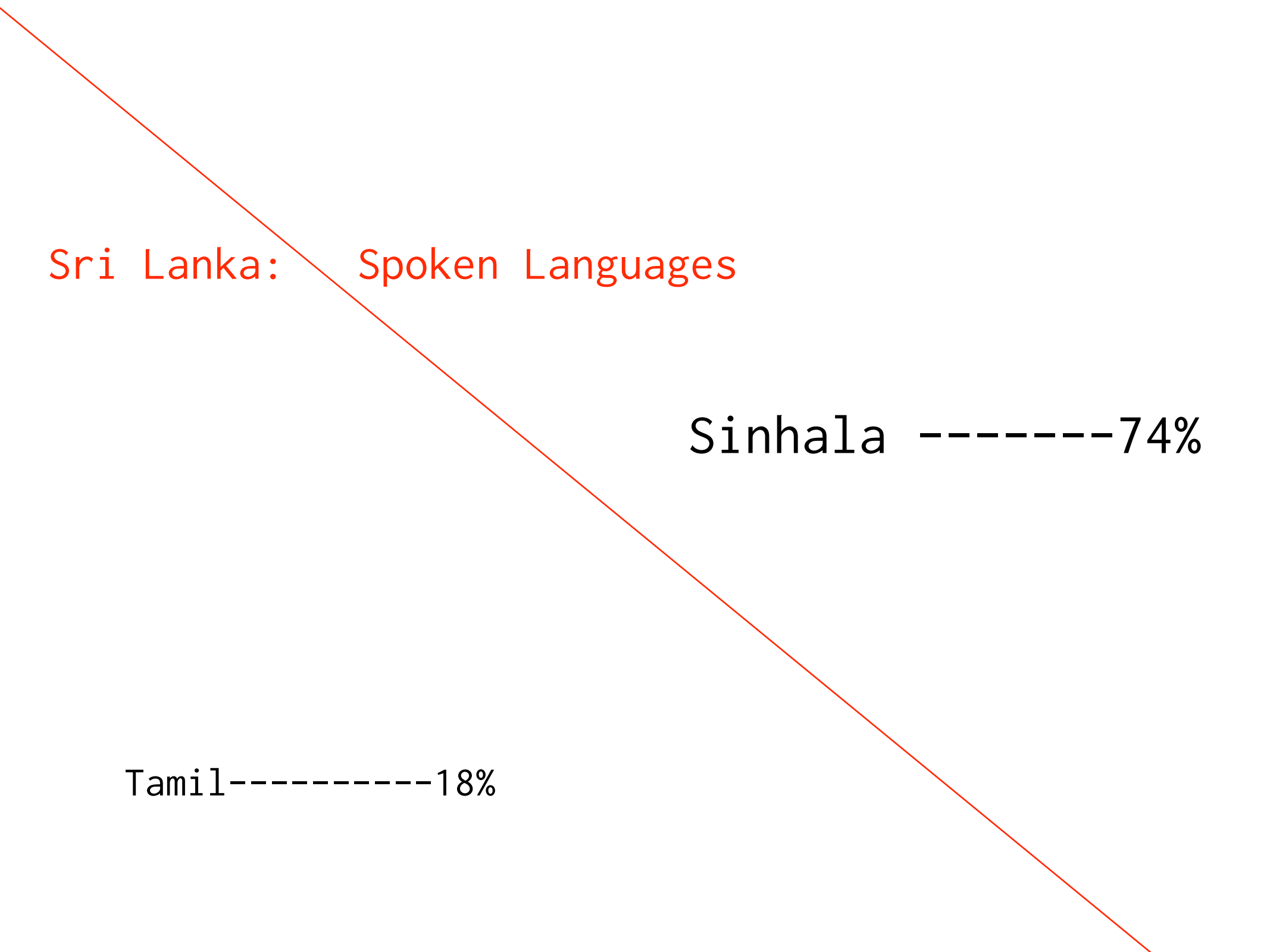
Work

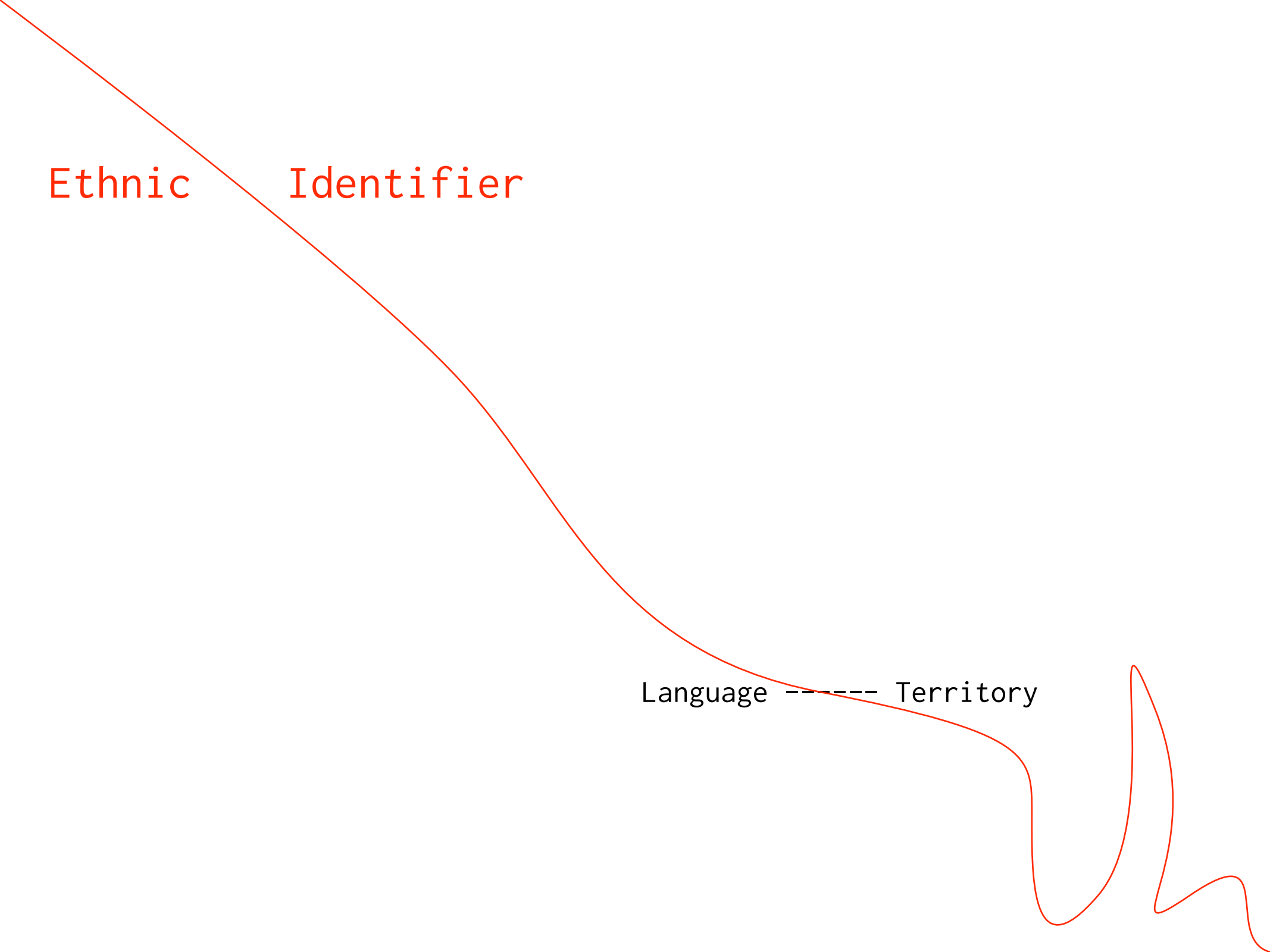
NEXT

Sri Lanka: A Background

20 Million People
30 Year War with LTTE
Geneva


The Conflict

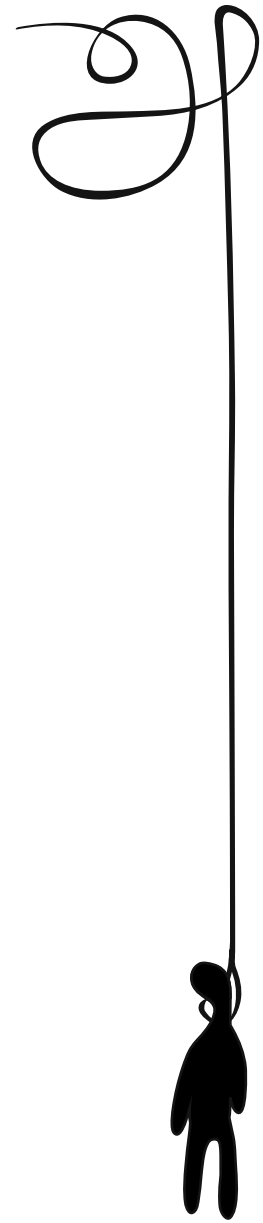

Sri Lanka: Spoken Languages
Sinhala -------74%
Tamil----------18%


Ethnic Identifier
Language ------ Territory

1956 --- Sinhala Only Bill

1958 --- The ‘Sri’ conflict

1983 --- Black July & the ‘Ba’



1 1956 --- Sinhala Only Bill

2 1958 --- The ‘Sri’ conflict

“New cars moving in the north and the east with the offending letter had their plates smeared with tar. The Tamil ‘Sri’ character was substituted for the officially accepted Sinhalese character.”

(VITTACHI, T. 1958)

“The government made the situation worse by sending to Jaffna government-owned buses with the Sinhalese symbol denoting ‘Sri’ on number plates; a crazy innovation that provoked Tamil anger.”

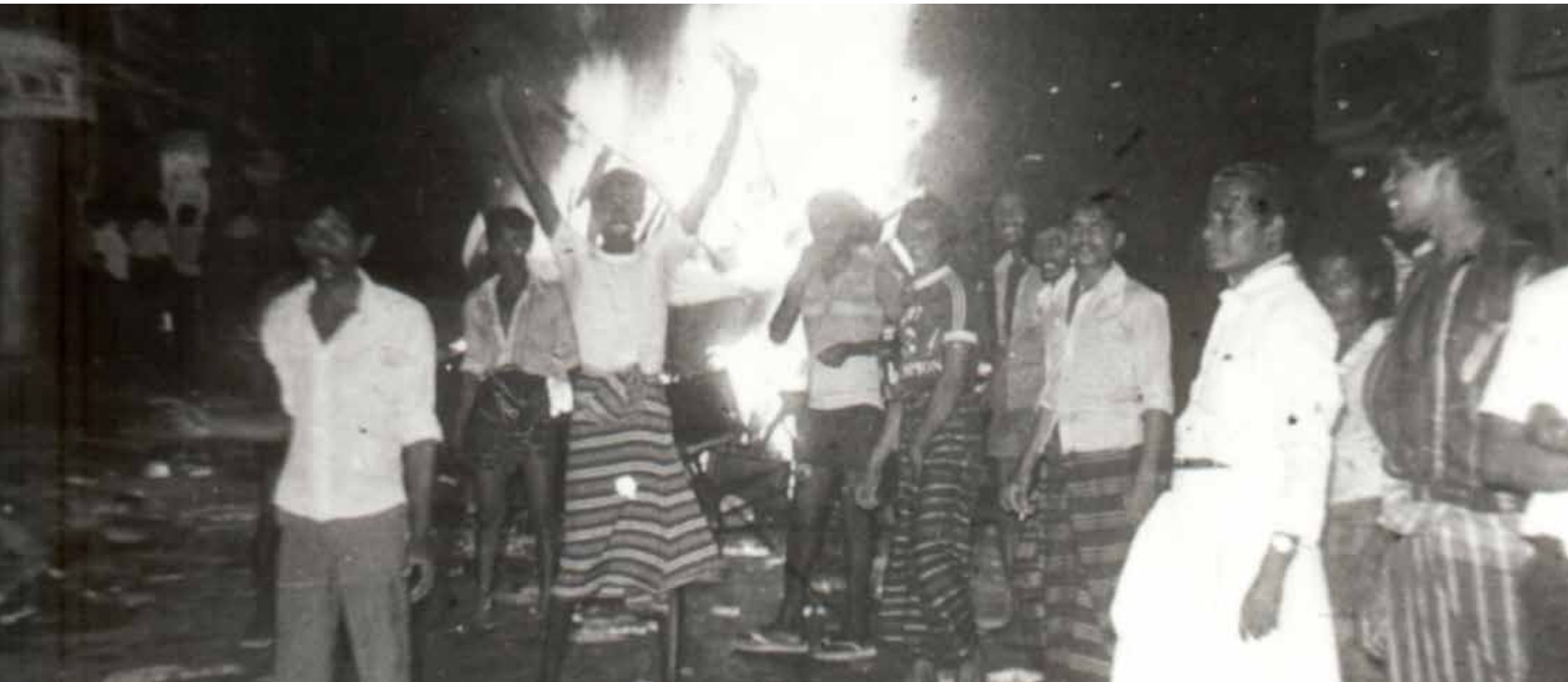
(S. SIVANAYAGAM,2005)

3

1983 --- Black July & the ‘Ba’

“Some Sinhalese words are extremely difficult for people who do not speak the language fluently to pronounce, people were tested by being made to pronounce these words.”

(PATRICIA HYNDMAN,1985)



November 2013, 82.2% of Sinhalese believed

that Official Language of Sri Lanka is Sinhalese only,

26.5% of Tamils said that

Government of Sri Lanka has done nothing to address the root causes of the conflict.

Social Indicator, Centre for Policy Alternatives - Sri Lanka. 2013.

2009- -- Post war tension

“The Commission during its visits to the affected areas witnessed first-hand, that even today many persons of the minority communities are made to transact business, not in the language of their choice.”

(COMMISSION OF INQUIRY ON LESSONS LEARNT AND RECONCILIATION, 2011)

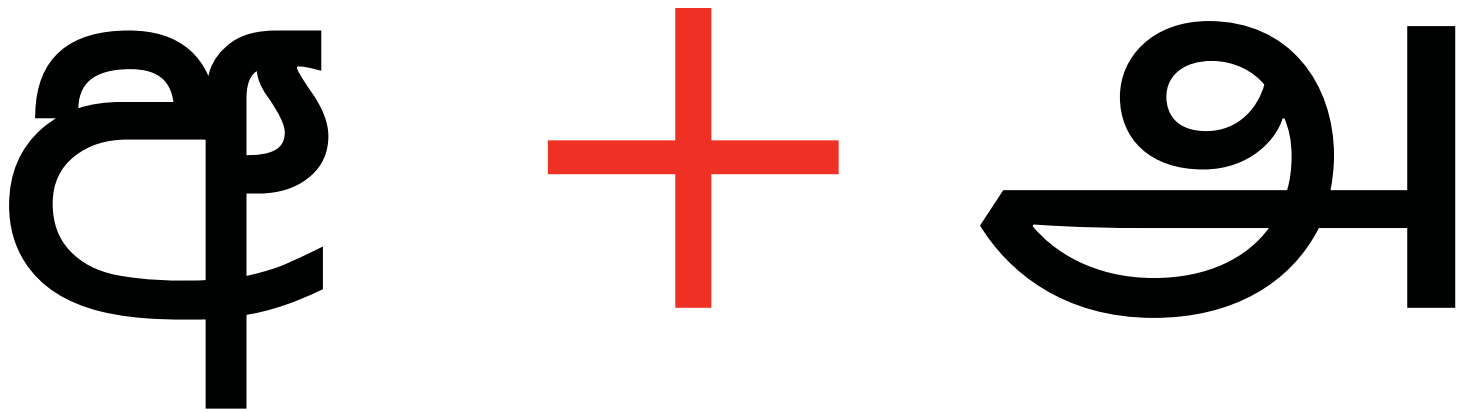
“Construction of new Buddhist temples and establishment of Sinhalese companies have made the Sinhala letters and boards appear in wide light in the middle of these previously Tamil concentrated areas.

(M Jayasuriya, 2011)

‘Appearance of the language’ is a problem

A typography based intervention

Find a way to dissolve the
the ethnic tension caused by
appearance of language in conflict



Combine letters from Tamil
and Sinhala that correspond
to the same phoneme and
build a common script.

Guidelines

Simplify, Evolve

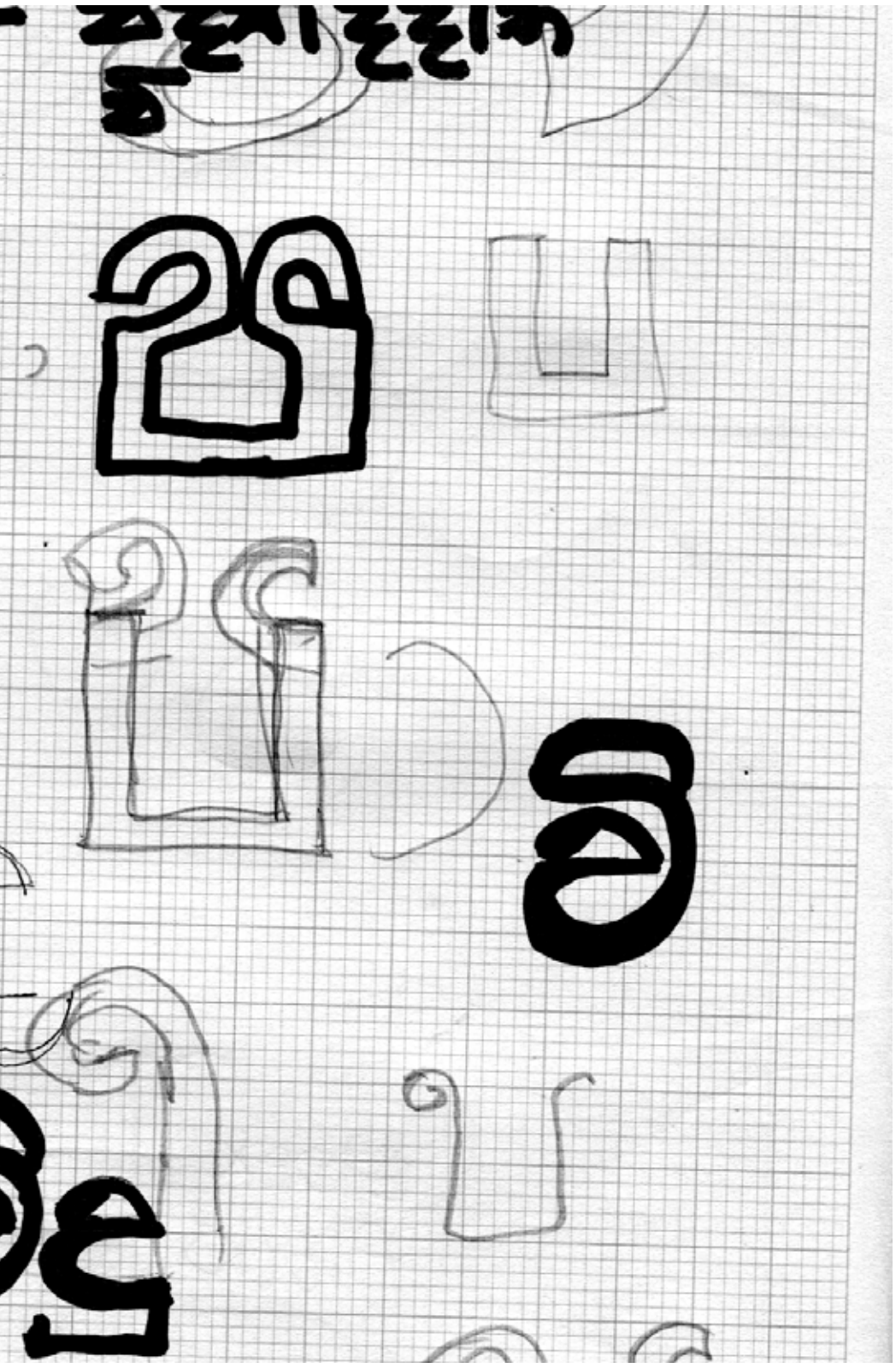
Preserv the script traditions.

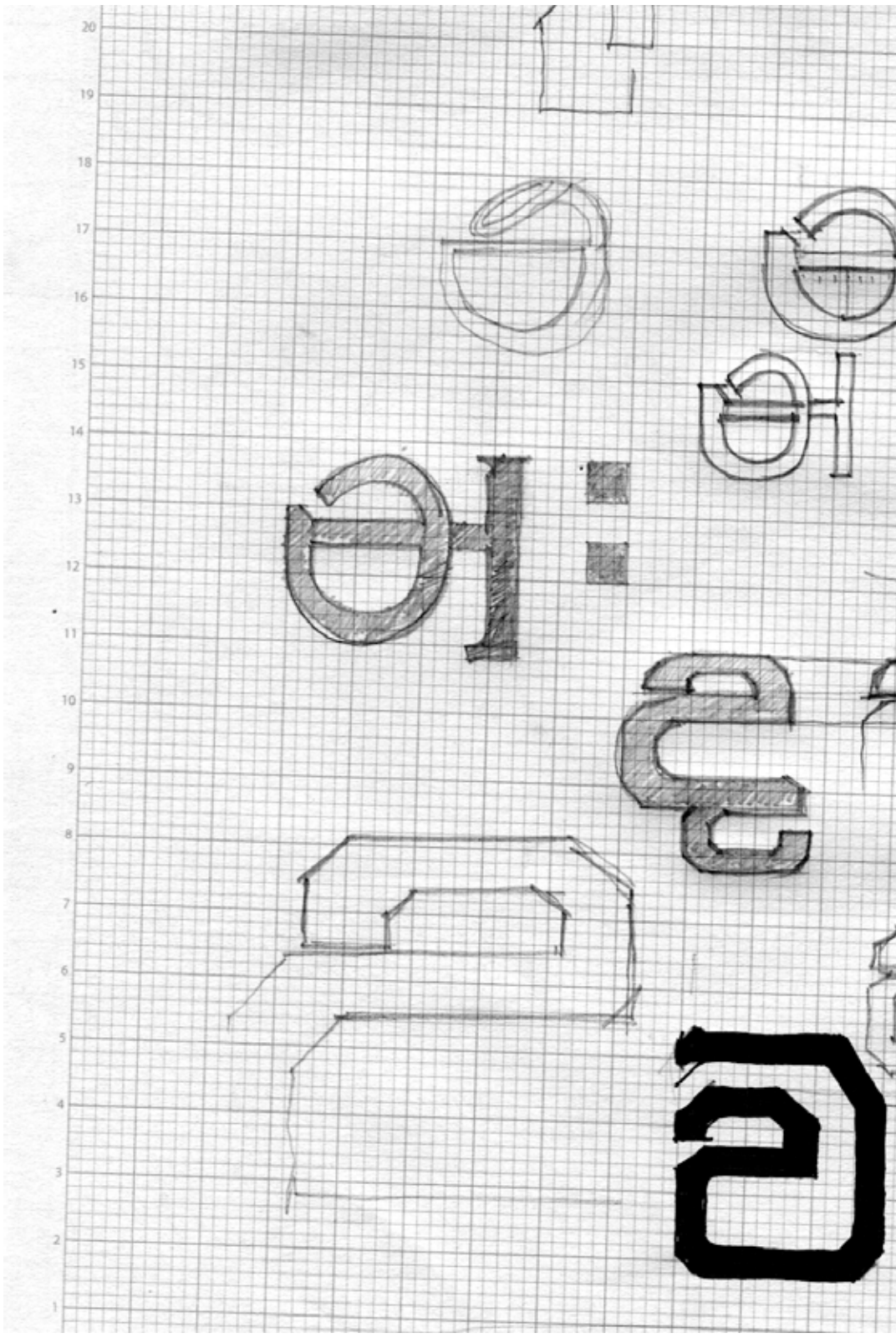
Aesthetic harmony of the script.

Test, Test and Test

FM Malithi (Sinhala)and Kohinoor Tamil

Mono-linear.



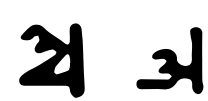


Research Methodology

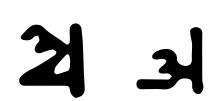
1. Identifying basic visual form of each letter

2. Identifying similar elements / Combining significant elements

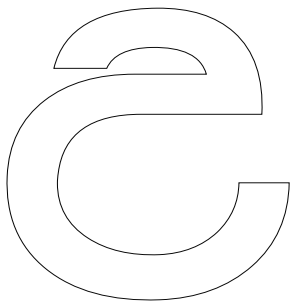
1 Identifying basic visual form of each letter

Time Period	Sinhala	Tamil
A.D. 7th Century		
A.D. 8th Century		
A.D. 9th-10th Century		
A.D. 11th -13th Century		
A.D. 14th -15th Century		

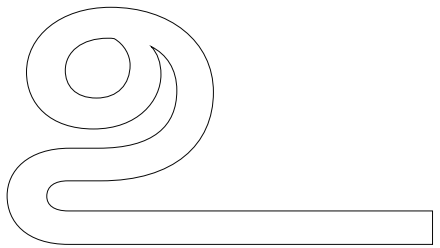
1 Identifying basic visual form of each letter

Time Period	Sinhala	Tamil
A.D. 7th Century		
A.D. 8th Century		
A.D. 9th-10th Century		
A.D. 11th -13th Century		
A.D. 14th -15th Century		

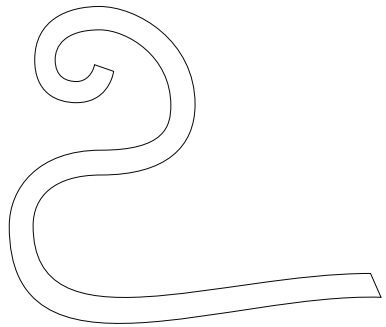
1 Identifying basic visual form of each letter



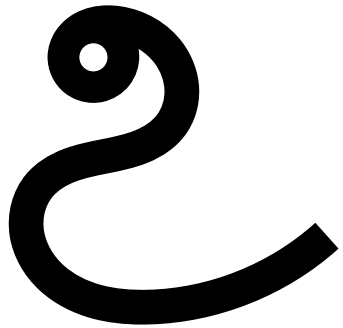
Sinhala



Tamil

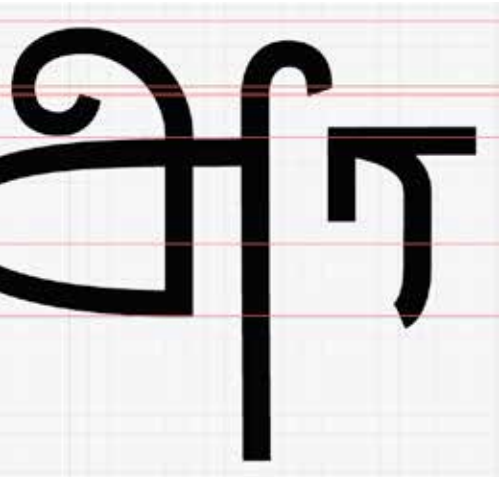


Basic form

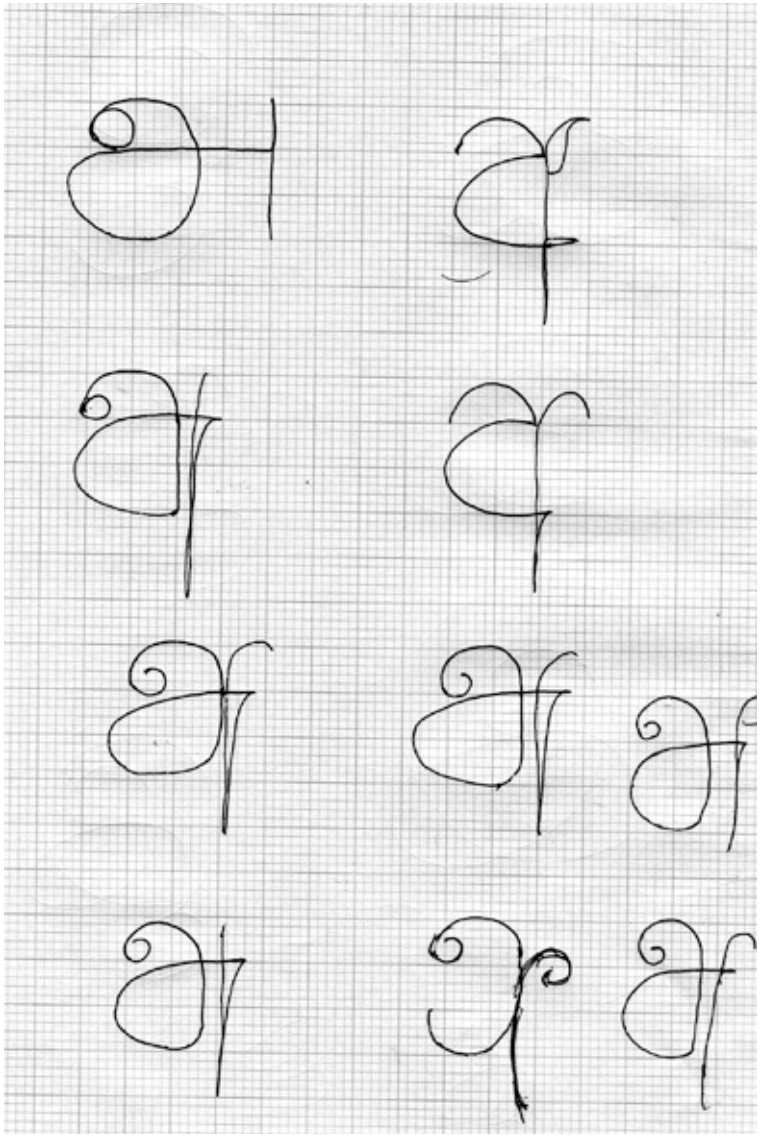


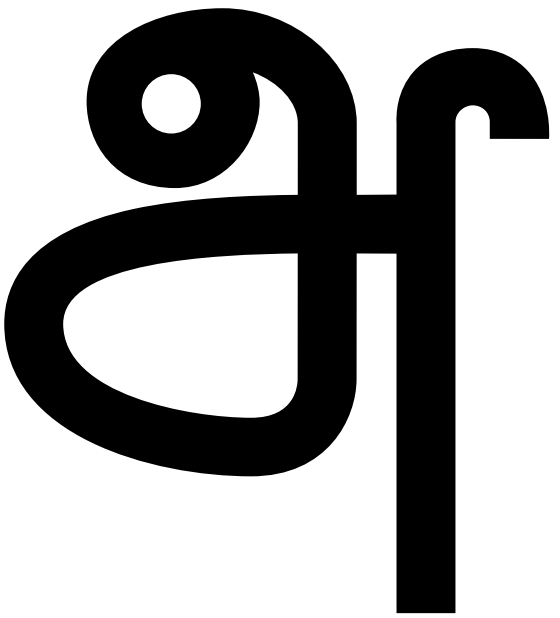
Final glyph

al digital draft

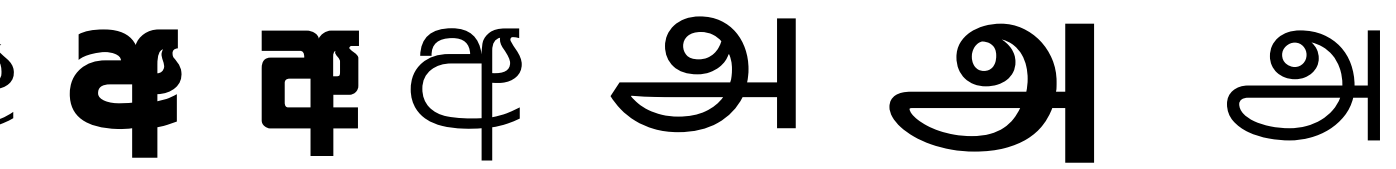


sketches



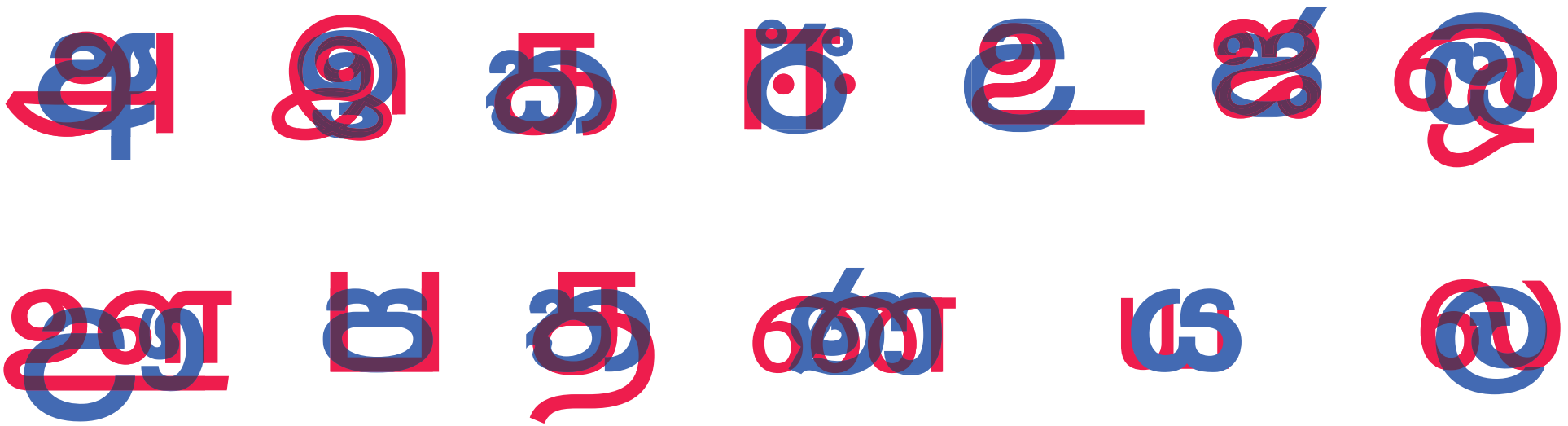


rent typefaces

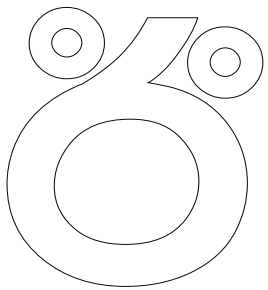


ᄉᆞ /ᄋᆞ/ æ

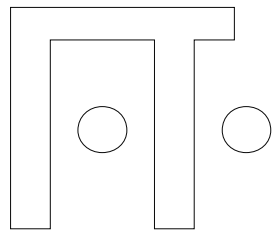
2 Identifying similar elements / Combining significant elements



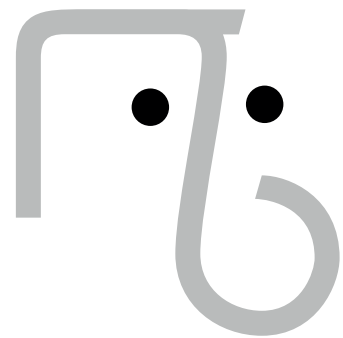
2 Identifying similar elements / Combining significant elements



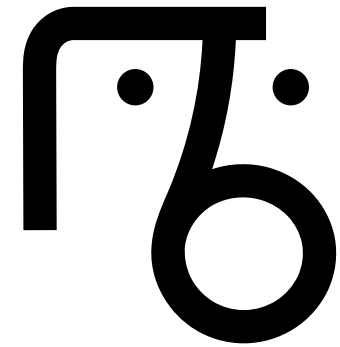
Sinhala



Tamil

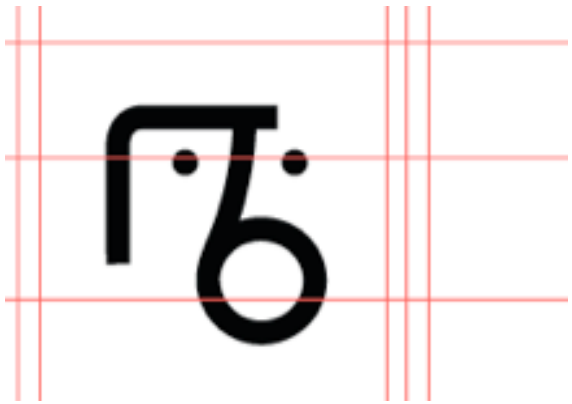


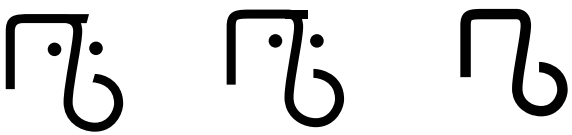
Common element



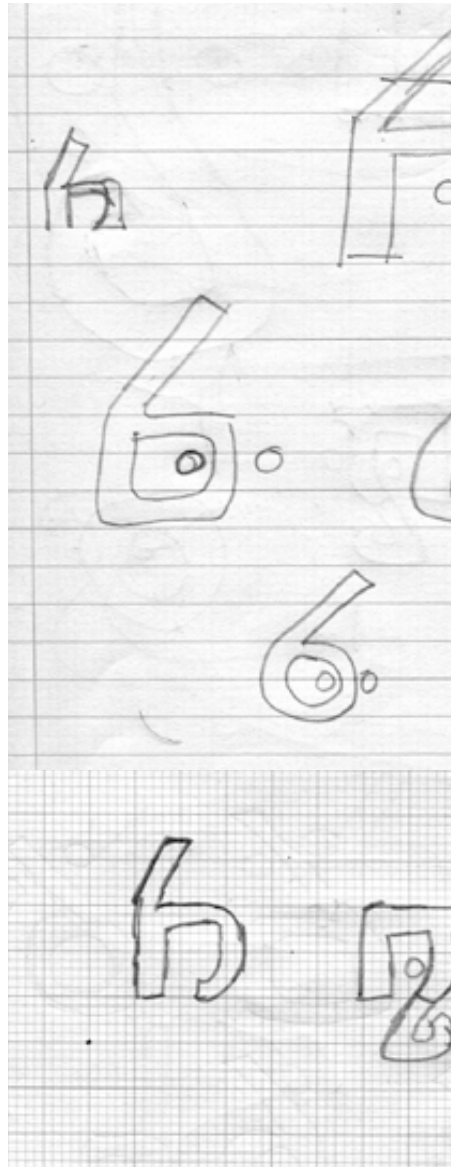
Final glyph

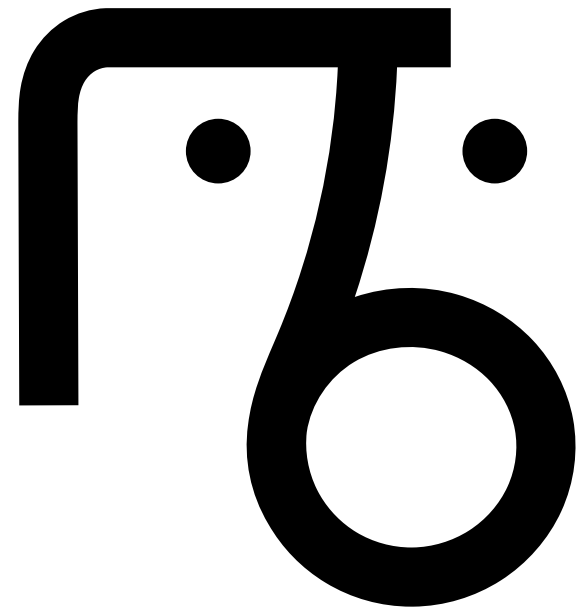
initial digital draft





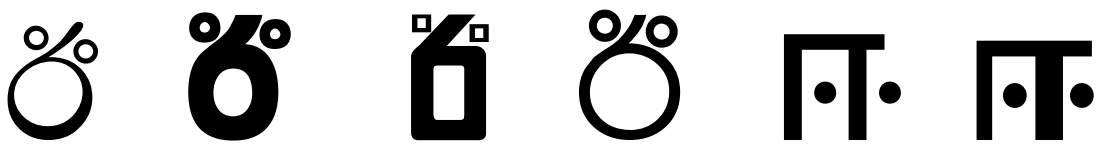
sketches



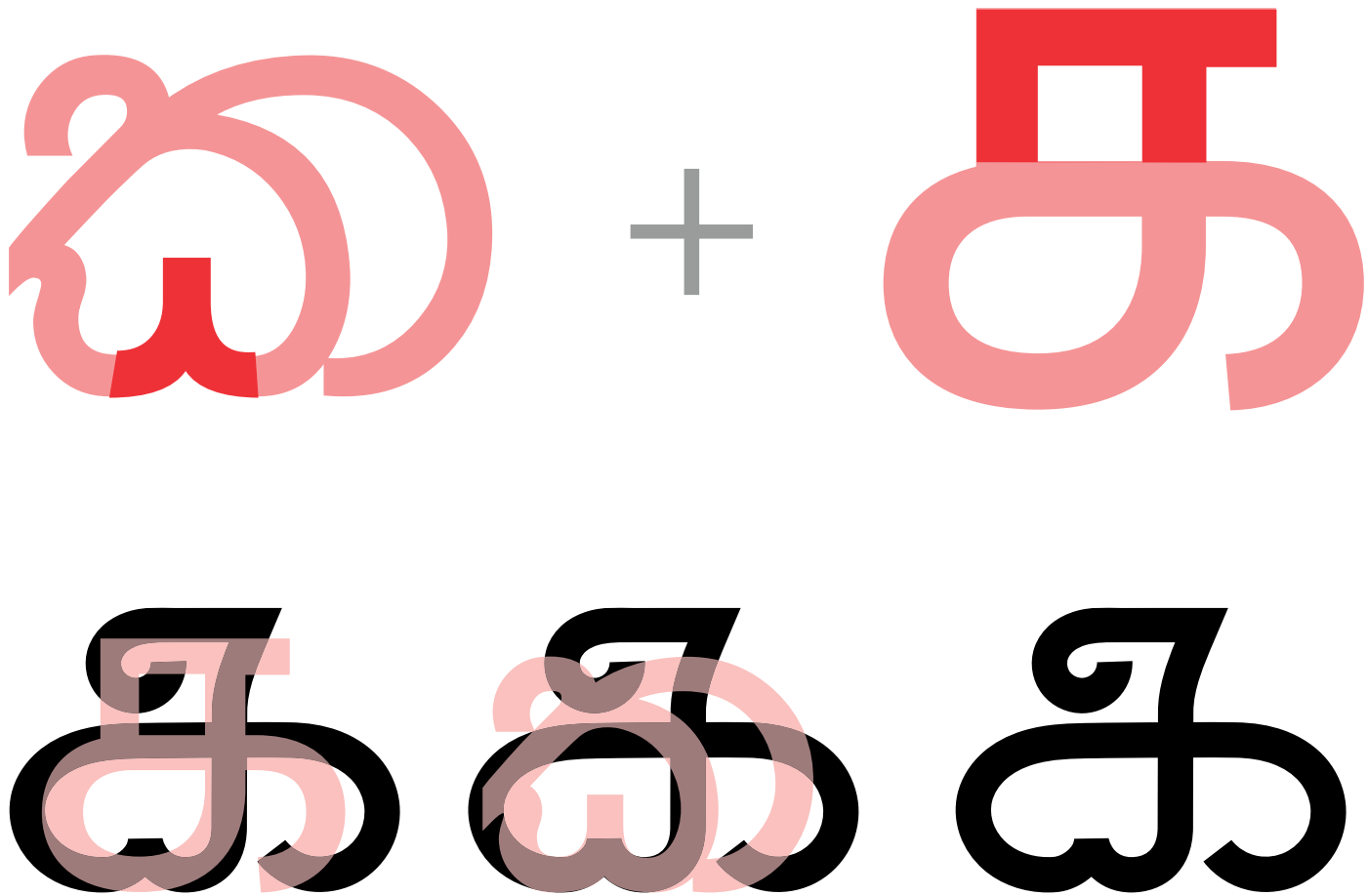


ᳪ / ᳬ / /iː/

different typefaces



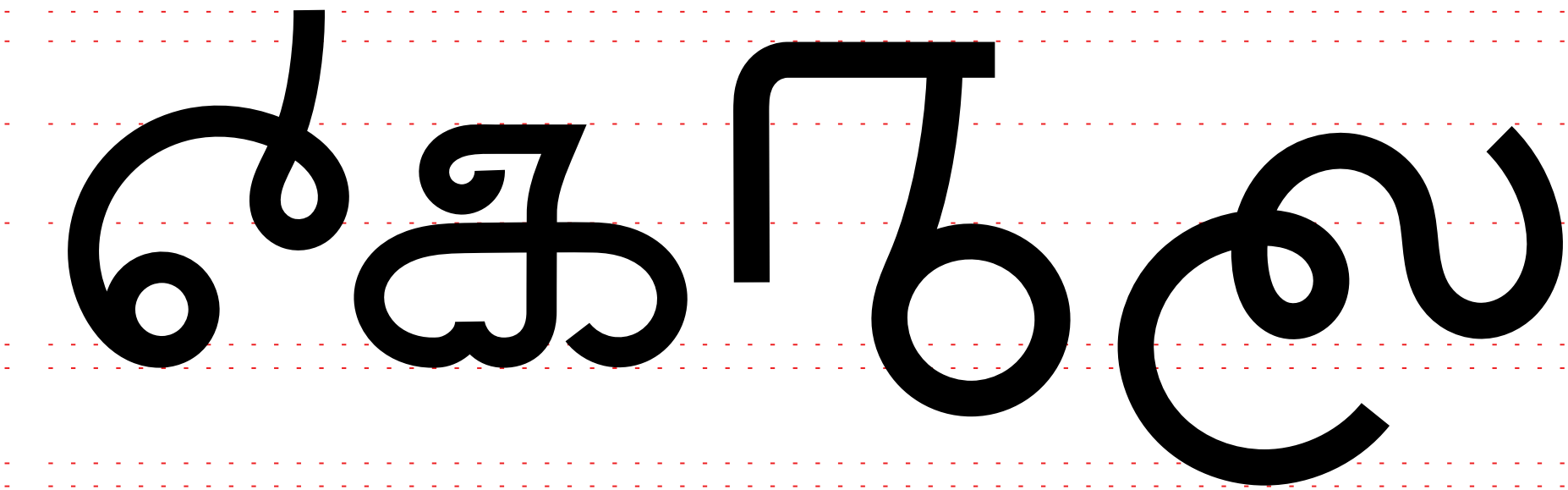
2 Identifying similar elements / Combining significant elements



Development

1. Grid
2. Unification
3. Simplification

1 Grid



1 Grid

2 Unification

	Sinhala / Tamil		Other Letter
k			
ka			
ka			
ki			
kī			
ku			
kū			

3 Simplification

ISO	kk	hg		gh	ṅc		ch	jj	hñ		ṭt	.hd	.	ḍh	ṇ	tt	h
Sinhala	ක	ඛ	ග	ඝ	ඩ	ච	ඡ	ජ	ඣ	ඤ	ට	ඨ	ඩ	ඪ	ණ	ත	ථ
Tamil	க				ங	ச		ஜ*		ஞ	ட				ண	த	

ISO	dd	hn			pp	hb		bh	my		rl	r̲		ḷ	l̲	v	ś
Sinhala	ද	ධ	න		ප	ඵ	බ	භ	ම	ය	ර		ල	ළ		ව	ශ
Tamil			ந	ண	ப				ம	ய	ர	ற	ல	ள	ழ	வ	ஶ*

3 Simplification

ISO	a	ā	æ	ǣ	i	ī	u
Sinhala	අ ක	ආ කා	ඇ කැ	ඈ කෑ	ඉ කි	ඊ කී	උ කු
Tamil	அ க	ஆ கா	—	—	இ கி	ஈ கீ	உ கு

ISO	ū	e	ē	ai	o	ō	au
Sinhala	ඌ කූ	එ කෙ	ඒ කේ	ඓ කෛ	ඔ කො	ඕ කෝ	ඖ කෞ
Tamil	ஊ கூ	எ கெ	ஏ கே	ஐ கை	ஒ கொ	ஓ கோ	ஔ

3 Simplification

Sinhala - 10 Aspirate Letters

One-to-many phoneme - grapheme assigned system

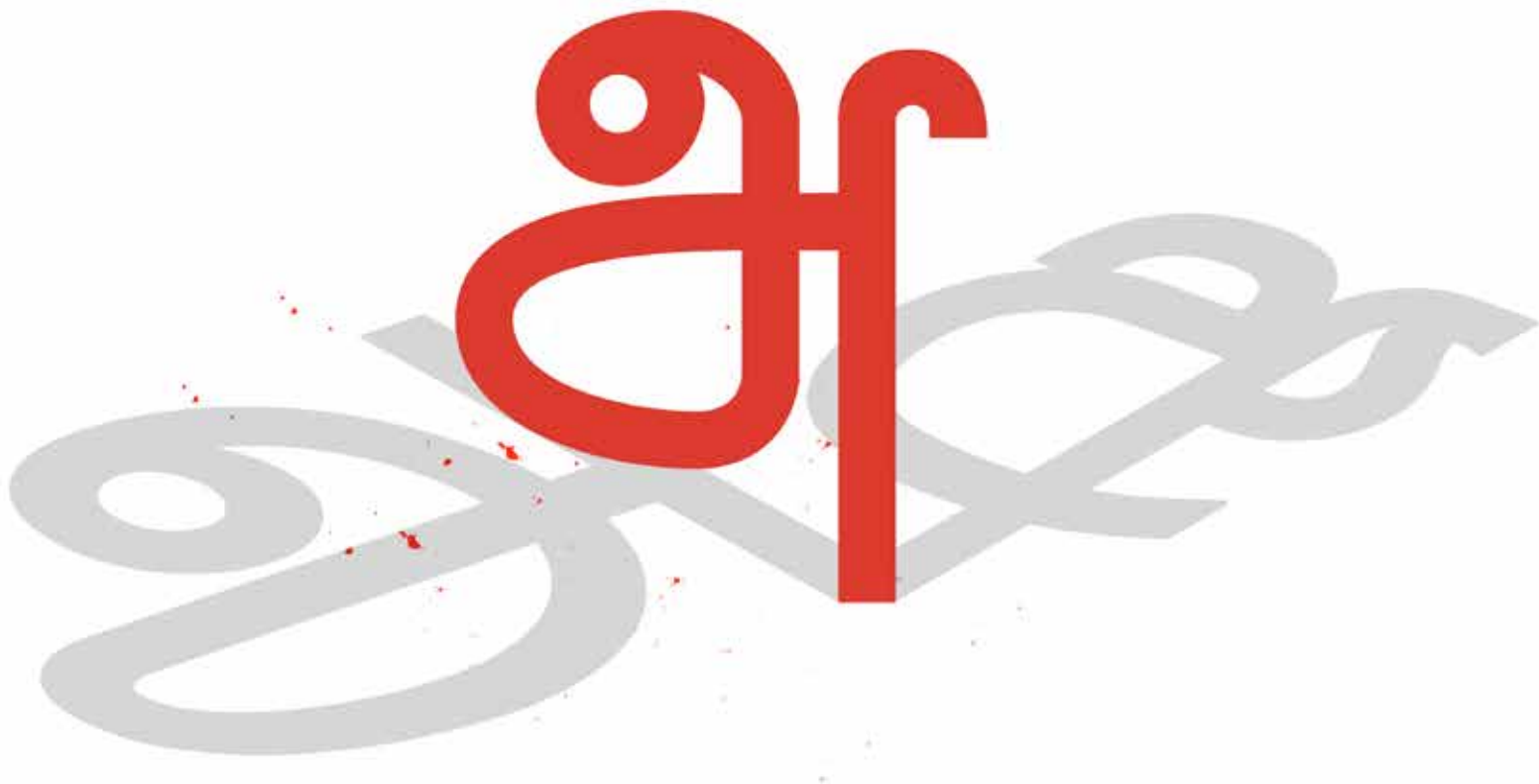
Complex vowel modifier rules

3 Simplification

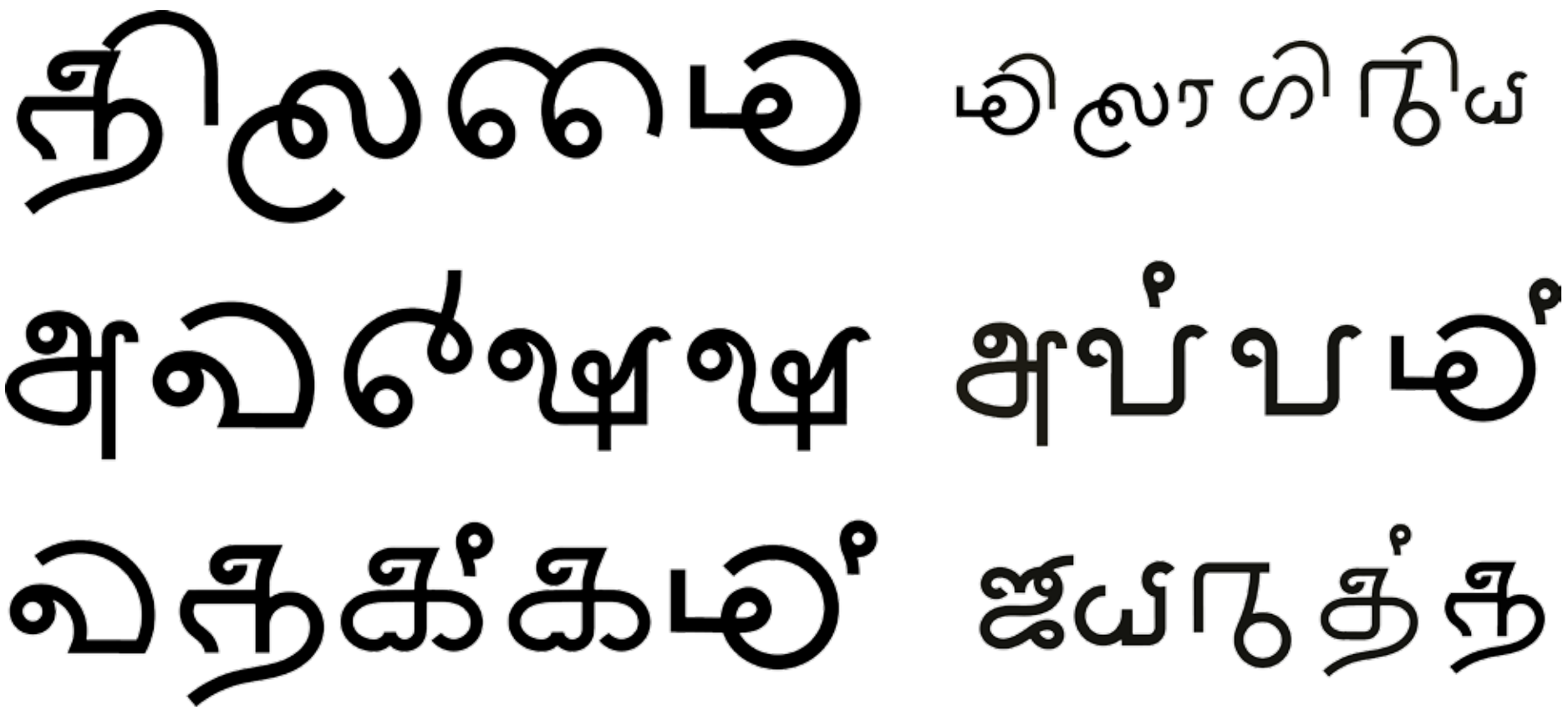
stroke / consonant	්	ෙ	ි	ී	ු	ූ	ොෝ	ෝ
ක ‘kayanna’ (ka)	ක්	කෙ	කි	කී	කු	කූ	කෙකෝ	කෝ
ම ‘mayanna’ (ma)	මි	මෙ	මි	මී	මු	මූ	මෙමෝ	මෝ

3 Simplification

Ajith Thilakasena Script Reforms



அ	ஆ			ஓ	ஈ
ஈ + அ	ஈ + ஆ			ஓ + இ	ஊ + ஈ
உ	ஊ	ஸ	ஸ்	ஐ	ஐ்
ட + உ	ட + ஊ	ச + ஈ	ச் ஏ	ஐ + ஓ	ஐ் ஓ
க	ஜ	ப	ந	த	ப
ங + க	ஜ + ஜ	ட + ட	ந ந	த + த	ப + ப



அம்மா

යක්කල
யக்கல
Yakkala

யக்கல
Yakkala

தரிப்போஷ
NOT FOR SALE
NUTRITIONAL SUPPLEMENTARY FOOD
FOR CHILDREN AND MOTHERS
Packed in Sri Lanka for CARE and
distributed through the Department of Health Services.

தபால்
POST
CODE NO
10350
OFFMARKS

Next

Streamline

Systematic Tests

Implementations

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Thank You!

iampathum.com

pathumego@gmail.com

@pathumego