

The Religious Influence on Morphology of Sinhalese Language

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Sinhalese language (one of the national languages spoken in Sri Lanka) and culture have a long and continuous history, ingrained traditions, and highly differentiated social norms. The Sinhalese Buddhist community of Sri Lanka is broadly categorized into two groups, secular/layman (gṛhast^hā > gihi) and mendicant/clergy (prāvrajitā > pævidi). According to this situation, the Sinhalese language depicts very significant usages among Indo-Aryan languages. Buddhism is the main factor for this differentiation. This paper mainly focused on the religious terms and their usages in Sinhalese. These terms show the hierarchical structure of the common Sri Lankan society, especially among layman and clergy. Some characteristic features which have been taken into account in this research paper are as follows: (1) Layman and clergy usages of Sinhalese (Separate set of nouns and verbs which are used to represent the clergy and secular in Sinhalese); (2) The hierarchical structure of usages of imperative forms in the context of religious and secular (superior, equal, and inferior); (3) Formal—Power base vs. Informal—Solidarity relationship; (4) Usage of different morphemes with the same meaning (semantically same usages are identified here with the different morphemes). As a result of the usages of religious and secular forms in Sinhalese the different morphological realizations with similar semantic values can be identified. The collection of relevant data from modern Sinhalese usages and text books and the analysis of them are used as the research methodology of this paper.

Keywords: Buddhist, hierarchy, layman, mendicant, Sinhalese

Introduction

When it comes to the Sinhalese language, it should be accepted that it has a history spanning over 25 centuries. With the evolution of Sinhalese, more advanced and complex features of the language became apparent in the later periods. As such, it is justifiable to identify religious language as an advanced aspect. Looking at the origins of this religious practice, it can be traced back to at least the latter part of the Anurād^hapurā period. Although the language did not have a large number of secular forms in its early stages, it is possible to observe how it developed in later times. The development of these religious practices also took place spontaneously with the gradual growth of the tradition of religious culture in the Sri Lankan literary history.

Sinhalese language and culture have a long and continuous history, deep rooted traditions, and highly differentiated social norms. Sri Lankan society is broadly divided into two groups, secular/layman (Sin. gihi < Skt. gṛhast^hā) and mendicant/clergy (Sin. pævidi < Skt. pravrajita). According to this situation the Sinhalese language shows very significant usages among Indo-Aryan languages. The Buddhism is the main factor for this differentiation. Some of the differences are reflected in the language in its address forms, commands, and requests. This paper is mainly based on the religious terms, imperative forms (Alwis, 1852, p. 60; Palmer, 1986, p. 109;

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Pandharipande, 1997, p. 60; Munidasa, 1999, p. 49; Dhongde & Wali, 2009, p. 98; Meegaskumbura, 1990, p. 156), and their usages. Here the sociolinguistic background is also included to get a clear picture of the topic. Some characteristic features which have been taken into consideration are as follows:

1.1 Historical realizations of secular and clergy forms in classical Sinhalese

1.2 Secular and clergy usages of present Sinhalese

1.3 Hierarchical structure of usages of imperative forms (superior, equal, and inferior)

1.4 Formal—Power base vs. Informal—Solidarity relationship

1.5 Usage of different morphemes with the same meaning (semantically same usages are identified here with the different morphemes).

Historical Realizations of Secular and Clergy Forms in Classical Sinhalese

During the eras of Anurādhapurā, Polonnaruva, Daṁbādenjya, and Kuruṅgala the Buddhist devotional proses began to spread as a challenge to Hinduism. As a result, the books such as *Amāvaturā*, *Butsarəṇā*, *Dahamsarəṇā*, *saṅgəsarəṇā*, *Pūjāvāliya*, *Sadd^harməratnāvāliya*, and *Jātakə Potə* were created. (These books were written in Middle Sinhalese Era-8th A.D. to 13th A.D.) According to these texts secular and mendicant or clergy forms are interchangeable. These two types of patterns were commonly found in *Amāvaturā*. Some instances are brought out from that text.

Table 1

The Verbs of Same Meaning With Secular and Clergy Nouns

	Same verbs with secular & clergy nouns		Special verbs with clergy nouns
1A	“buduhu...vanhu” (Ganaloka, 1959, p. 236) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., enter-III.PT.PL.)	1a	“buduhu...vəđiyo” (p. 234) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., go/come-III.PT.PL.)
1B	“buduhu...piḷipanhə” (p. 133) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., enter-III.PT.PL.)	1b	“buduhu...vəđiyāhə” (p. 233) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., go/come-III.PT.PL.)
1C	“buduhu...əviduti” (p. 234) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., go-III.PR.PL.)	1c	“buduhu...vađiti” (p. 230) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., go-III.PR.PL.)
1D	“mahanə, e maṅgəṭə no yā” (p. 133) (Monk-NOM.SG., don’t go that road.)		
1E	“mahaterəhu...giyəhə” (p. 233) (Great monk-NOM.HON.PL., go/come-III.PT.PL.)		
1F	“rajə giyə” (p. 139) (king go-III.PT.SG.)		
2A	“buduhu...vusuhə” (p. 243) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., live-III.PT.PL.)	2a	“buduhu... vəđəsiṭiyāhə” (p. 243) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., sit-III.PT.PL.)
2B	“kumərə visi” (p. 84) (Prince-NOM.SG., live-III.PT.SG.)	2b	“buduhu... vəđə-hunhu” (p. 45) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., sit-III.PT.PL.)
3A	“muhu maḷəhə” (p. 58) (This one-NOM.HON.PL., die-III.PT.PL.)	3a	“buduhu...piriniviyo” (p. 201) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., die-III.PT.PL.)
4A	“aṅgulmal mahaterə kīyə” (p. 134) (Aṅgulimālə great monk say-III.PT.SG.)	4a	“buduhu...vadāḷə” (p. 134) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., say-III.PT.PL.)
4B	“mahaterəhu...kīhə” (p. 139) (Great monk-NOM.HON.PL., say-III.PT.PL.)	4b	“buduhu vadāḷəhə” (p. 292) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., say-III.PT.PL.)
4C	“saṅgəhu...kīhu” (pp. 236-237) (Monk-NOM.HON.PL., say-III.PT.PL.)		
4D	“rajə kī” (p. 134) (king say-III.PT.SG.)		
4E	“sorə kīyə” (p. 134) (Thief say-III.PT.SG.)		
5A	“sunakk ^h attəyā...kəyi” (pp. 176-177) (Sunakkhatta eat-III.PT.SG.)	5a	“buduhu vəḷəṅduhu” (p. 42) (Buddha-NOM.HON.PL., eat-III.PT.PL.)
5B	“he... anub ^h avə kəḷə mənəvə” (p. 241) (He eat-III.PT.SG.) (...Please eat.)	5b	“madū...vəḷəṅdəyi” (p. 46) (My daughter eat-III.PR.SG.)
		5c	“me...vəḷəṅdə kereyi” (p. 57) (He eat-III.PR.SG.)

The usages such as “buduhu...vanhu, ...piḷipanhə, ...æviduti, mahaṇə...yā, mahaterəhu giyəhə” and “raḷə giyē” are found in the *Amāvaturə* and the nouns of superior category and the verbs of inferior category are used together. But “buduhu...vəḍḍiyo’ vėḍḍiyāhə and “vaḍḍiti” are found only in the superior category. These nouns as well as verbs are listed under the superior category. The other examples mentioned in the above table can be described in this manner.

Secular and Clergy Usages of Present Sinhalese

Some Sinhalese nouns as well as verbs are completely different phonologically and morphologically, but are semantically similar to secular and clergy categories. These two types of forms are realized in the usages of Buddhist monks and common people. But these morphemes are not overlapping in the Sinhalese language.

The nature of the languages is the use of a common form in communication. But in Sinhalese it takes on a slightly different manner. There are some differences between the Sinhalese language used by the clergy as well as by the laity. They all are not completely different, but some of the nouns and verbs are completely different. To have an understanding of such terms one must have a good understanding of the Sinhalese language.

This difference can be clearly manifested by looking at the verbs used in Sinhalese. The following is an analytical commentary on those verbs.

List of verbs.

Table 2

Verbs for Secular and Clergy

	Secular term	Religious term
1.A	kayi/	
1.B	anub ^h avə kərayi “eat”	
1.C	boyi/	vaḷəṇḍayi “eat/drink”
1.D	pānəyə kərayi “drink”	
2.A	yayi/	
2.B	gaman kərayi “go”	vaḍḍiyi**/
2.C	eyi “come”	səpat veyi “go/come”
3.A	vāḍi veyi/	
3.B	iṇḍə ganiyi “sit”	vəḍḍə iṇḍiyi “sit /stand”
3.C	siṭṭə ganiyi “stand”	
4.A	məreyi/	
4.B	miyə yayi/	pirinivan pāyi** “die” (for Buddha)
4.C	kaḷuriyə kərayi/	apəvat veyi** “die” (for monks)
4.D	ab ^h āvaprāptə veyi “die”	
5.A		dovayi/
5.B	sōdayi “wash”	dōvənəyə kərayi* “wash”
6.A	kiyayi/	desayi/
6.B	pavəsayi/	vadārayi “tell”
6.C	prakāḷə kərayi “tell”	
7.A	atuḡāyi “sweep”	aməṇḍiyi* “sweep”
8.A	snānəyə kərayi/	pən sənəhayi/
8.B	nāyi “have a bath”	pən pahasu veyi “have a bath”
9.A	nidayi “sleep”	sətəpeyi** “sleep”
10.A	genə eyi “bring”	
10.B	genə yayi “carry”	vaḍammayi “bring/carry”
11.A	ovu/	ehemayi/
11.B	hā “yes/O.K. ”	hoṇḍəmayi “yes/O.K. ”

* The verbs “dovayi/dōvənəyə kərayi” “wash”, “aməṇḍiyi” “sweep” are normally used for monks. But if the layperson performs these tasks inside the monastery then occasionally these verbs are used with the nouns of inferior category.

** The verbs “pirinivan pāyi/apəvat veyi” “pass away/die”, “vaḍḍiyi” “go/come”, and “sətəpeyi” “sleep” are normally used for Buddha and monks. Sometimes these forms are used in the classical literature for noblemen such as kings.

This difference can be clearly manifested by looking at the nouns used in Sinhalese. The following is an analytical commentary on those nouns.

List of nouns.

Table 3

Nouns for Secular and Clergy

	Secular term A	Religious term B
1.A	kāma “food”	
1.B	bat “rice”	
1.C	e əvə u “curry”	dānəyə “any food”
2.A	tē “tea”	
2.B	kōpi “coffee”	gīlanpasə “tea, coffee, milk etc. any beverage. ”
2.C	kiri “milk” etc. beverages	(any drink except water)
3.A	puṭuvə “chair”	
3.B	āṇḍə “bed”	āsənəyə “chair, bed etc. any sitting/sleeping equipment”
4.A	idələ “broom” (to sweep outside home)	musnə “broom”
4.B	kossə “broom” (to sweep inside home)	(for both <i>idələ</i> and <i>kossə</i>)
5.A	vaturə “water”	
5.B	jaləyə “water”	pæn “water”
6.A	bulat viḍə “chew of betel”	dəhət viḍə “chew of betel”
7.A	būmidānəyə/	
7.B	pānjukūləyə “funeral”	ādāhənəyə “cremation”
8.A	gedərə/	lægum geyə/
8.B	nivəsə/	āvāsə geyə/
8.C	gṛhəyə “home”	sanghāvāsəyə “living place”
9.A	atə/hastə “hand”	ḥīrī hastə “hand”
9.B	payə/pādə “leg/foot”	ḥīrī pādə/siri pā “foot”
9.C	kaṭə/muvə/muk ^{hə} “mouth”	ḥīrī muk ^{hə} “mouth”
9.D	datə/dantə “tooth”	ḥīrī dantə “tooth” (These words are used only with Buddha)

The Hierarchical Structure of Imperative Forms (Superior, Equal, and Inferior)

Address forms can be identified as a part of Sinhalese which has a lot of linguistic diversities. It has been observed that different nouns, as well as verbs, are used in addressing. When native speakers of Sinhalese command, request or address someone they have to use separate forms for superior, equal, and inferior categories (Meegaskumbura, 1990, p. 165). The following is a detailed description of the nouns and verbs associated with each category.

Pronominal components.

Table 4

Pronominal Components for Clergy and Secular

		Religious term		Secular term	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Superior	1.A	oba vahanse	oba vahanse(lā)	obətumā (M.)	obətumālā (M.)
2nd P.	1.B			obətumī (F.)	obətumīlā (F.)
Equal	2.A	tamunnānse	tamunnānse(lā)	ohē	ohēlā
	2.B			obə	obəlā
	2.C			oyā	oyālā
	3.A			unnānse	unnānselā
Inferior	3.B			yusmətā (M.)/ yusmətī (F.)	yusmətālā (M.PL.)/ yusmətīlā (F.PL.)
	3.C			uṁbə	uṁbəlā
	3.D			nuṁbə	nuṁbəlā
	3.E			tamuse	tamuselā
	3.F			ayise	ayiselā
2nd P.	3.G			tō (M.)/tī (F.)	topi

Verbal components (paradigm of root *balə* “look”).

Table 5

Verbal Components for Clergy and Secular

		Religious term		Secular term	
		Singular	Plural	Singular	Plural
Superior 2nd P.	1.A	baləṇə sēkvā	baləṇə sēkvā	-	-
	1.B	baləṇu- mænəvi	baləṇu- mænəvi	baləṇu- mænəvi	baləṇu- mænəvi
	1.C	bæluvot- hoṇḍayi	bæluvot- hoṇḍayi	bæluvot- hoṇḍayi	bæluvot- hoṇḍayi
Equal 2nd P.	2.A	balannə/ balannəkō	-	balannə/ balannəkō	-
	2.B	balanṭə/ balanṭəkō	-	balanṭə/ balanṭəkō	-
	2.C	balanḍə/ balanḍəkō	-	balanḍə/ balanḍəkō	-
Inferior 2nd P.	3.A			baləṇəva	baləṇəvəḷā
	3.B			baləṇan	baləṇapalla
	3.C	baləṇəva	baləṇəvəḷā	baləṇhan	baləṇahalla
	3.D	bæluvanam	-	balə	balav
	3.E			baləpiyə	baləpiyav
	3.F			balāpiyə	balāpiyav

Formal—Power base vs. Informal—Solidarity Relationship

Linguistic differences can also be identified in the Sinhalese speaking community based on the closeness and distance between them. One can observe the simplicity of the language based on their closeness to each other and the mastery of the language based on the distance. The formal usage which is socially more acceptable indicates some kind of distance between the speaker and addressee (Meegaskumbura, 1990, p. 171). But the informal usage shows solidarity. An adequate commentary on this is given below.

Table 6

Nouns for Formal—Power base vs. Informal—Solidarity

	Formal—Power base		vs.	Informal—Solidarity	
budu rajāṇan vahansə “Buddha-king-HON.VOC.”	+	+	budu hāmuduruvəṇē “Buddha-monk-VOC.”	+	+
svāmīn vahansə “monk-HON.VOC.”	+	+	hāmuduruvəṇē “monk-VOC.”	+	+

Hierarchical Usages of Different Morphemes With the Same Meaning

The same verb or noun cannot be applied in the same way to the Buddha, monks, kings, elders, and younger ones when members of the Sinhalese speaking community address each other. The meaning of those words remained the same, but in their use, the nature of the addressee, his social status, etc., must also be taken into consideration. Therefore the Sinhalese speaker cannot use similar verbal or nominal forms to all the people who are living in Sri Lankan society although those forms have the same meaning. It changes according to the social status of the addressee as well as the speaker. Some verbal forms are illustrated below.

Use of verb with similar meaning but different morphemes. Variations in the verb of a language exist only in its grammatical aspect and not in its social or religious aspect. However, it can be observed that many

features of the Sinhalese verb are associated with the social status and religious traditions of the individual. There are some verbal forms in Sinhalese which are treated as similar semantically and different morphologically. When a Sinhalese speaker uses these verbs she or he has to select the relevant form according to the context. Let us examine the following examples.

Death is a universal doctrine. With this concept, languages often use the same set of names and verbs. According to the Sinhalese language, death is the same but the verbs used in it are different. The religious and social status of the individual is unique here. The Sinhalese speaker has to apply the verbs of the Buddha's death in a way that is different from the usual verbs.

(1) budun vahansē pirinivan pānə sēkə

budun	vahansē	pirinivan	pānə	sēkə
Buddha	PL.HON.PTCLE.	die	show-PRES.PTCPL.	HON.PTCLE.
"The Buddha dies." (superior)				

It can be manifested that a different verb is used not only for the death of the Buddha but also for the death of the monk.

(2) hāmuduru vō apəvat veti

hāmuduru	-ō	apəvat	və	-eti
monk	PL.(HON)	die	be	III.PRES.PL.
"The monk dies." (superior)				

Even though "Buddha" and "hāmuduru vō" "monk" are nouns from the superior category, the verbs "pirinivan pānə sēkə" "pass away" and "apəvat veti" "die" are not interchangeable.

When a king or head of state who represents the standard section of society is dead, another verb is used.

(3) rajətumā svargasthə veyi

rajətumā	svarga	-sthə	və	-eyi
king	heaven	stay	be	III.PRES.SG.
"The king dies." (superior)				

If it is a death involving a nobleman or other chief, it can be seen that a different kind of verb is used.

(4) prəbhūvərayā abhāvaprāptə veyi

prəbhūvərayā	a	-bhāva	-prāptə	və	-eyi
nobleman	NEG.	exist	become	be	III.PRES.SG.
"The nobleman dies." (superior)					

It can also be observed that the verbs used in the death of a head of state or an aristocrat of the country are exchanged with each other. Therefore the terms "svargasthə veyi" and "abhāvaprāptə veyi" are interchangeable.

(5) sorā məreyi

sorə	-ā	marə	-eyi
thief	DEF.	die	III.PRES.SG.
"The thief dies." (inferior)			

The verbs "svargasthə veyi" "die" in (3) and "abhāvaprāptə veyi" "die" in (4) mentioned above can be used interchangeably in Sinhalese language, but these verbs are never used with "sorā" "thief" in (5).

In Sinhala, the meaning of "go" is used in different forms of verbs with different people. Let's look at examples of how it works with the people involved in each sector.

(6) budun vahansə vaḍinə sēkvā

budun	vahansə	vaḍinə	sēk	-vā
Buddha	VOC.HON.PTCLE.	come/go	HON.PTCLE.	OPT.
“Dear Buddha, (please you) come/go.” (superior)				

(7) svāmīn vahansə vaḍinu mænəvi

svāmīn	vahansə	vaḍinu	mænəvi	
monk	VOC.HON.PTCLE.	come/go	HON.PTCLE.	
“Dear monk, (please you) come/go.” (superior)				

(8) rajətuməni səpat vənu mænəvi

rajətumə	-ni	səpat	vənu	mænəvi
king	VOC.	come/go	PRES.PTCPL.	OPT.
“Dear king (please you) come/go.” (superior)				

It is also evident that some of the applications such as “vaḍinə sēkvā” in (6), “vaḍinu mænəvi” in (7), and “səpat vənu mænəvi” in (8) are interchangeable usages. But the terms “vaḍinə sēkvā” and “vaḍinə mænəvi” are used only with the Buddha and monks in the present Sinhalese language. These are periphrastic usages of imperatives and they represent the optative function in Sinhalese. In the opinion of some researchers, it refers to terms based on politeness (Alwis, 1852, p. 60).

(9) māmē yannə

māmā	-ē	yə	-annə	
uncle	VOC.	go	II.PRES.SG.	
“Uncle (you) go.” (equal)				

(10) |aməyō palə

amə	-ō	palə		
Boy	VOC.	go-II.PRES.SG.		
“Boy (you) go.” (inferior)				

Here the verbal forms “vaḍinə sēkvā”, “vaḍinu mænəvi”, “səpat vənu mænəvi”, “yannə”, and “palə” imply the meaning of movement—come/go. The action is the same but the morphological entities are different. The bare or uninflected form is used in the inferior category (Stevenson, 1854, p. 106; Geiger, 1938, p. 149; Paranavitana, 1956, p. 142; Whitney, 1962, p. 213; Palmer, 1986, p. 108; Masica, 1991, p. 260; Pandharipande, 1997, p. 43) whereas the other forms are used with superior and equal categories.

Use of nouns with similar meanings but different morphemes. Some terms have a separate religious connotation, not only in relation to verbs but also among the nouns we use. They have similar semantic values with different morphological realizations. Then the Sinhalese speakers who use these expressions have to choose the appropriate or relevant expression from the nouns. Such types of usages are illustrated with examples below.

(1) hāmuduru vō dæhæt viḍə va|əṇḍəti

hāmuduru	-ō	dæhæt	viḍə	va əṇḍə	-ti
monk	PL.(HON.)	betel	bunch	eat	III.PRES.PL.
“The monk eats chew of betel.” (superior)					

(2) minisā bulat viḍḍa kayi

minis	-ā	bulat	viḍḍa	ka	-yi
man	DEF.	betel	bunch	eat	III.PRES.SG.
“The man eats chew of betel.” (inferior)					

These two terms “bulat viḍḍa” and “dāhæt viḍḍa” are used in common and religious usages respectively to describe the same thing. From this example, we can understand how they are used in Sinhalese.

(3) hāmuduru vō dānəyə va|əṅḍəti

hāmuduru	-ō	dānəyə	va əṅḍə	-ti
monk	PL.(HON.)	food-HON.	eat	III.PRES.PL.
“The monk eats food.” (superior)				

(4) kollā kāmə kayi

kolu	-ā	kāmə	ka	-yi
boy	DEF.	food	eat	III.PRES.SG.
“The boy eats food.” (inferior)				

These two terms “kāmə” and “dānəyə” are used in secular and religious usages respectively to describe the same item. From the given instances, it is evident that how they are used in Sinhalese.

(5) hāmuduru vō gilānpasə va|əṅḍəti

hāmuduru	-ō	gilānpasə	va əṅḍə	-ti
monk	PL.(HON.)	tea/coffee-HON.	drink	III.PRES.PL.
“The monk drinks tea/coffee.” (superior)				

(6) goviyā tē/kōpi boyi

govi	-ā	tē/kōpi	bo	-yi
farmer	DEF.	tea/coffee	drink	III.PRES.SG.
“The farmer drinks tea/coffee.”				

These two terms “tē/kōpi” and “gilānpasə” are used in secular and religious usages respectively to describe the same item. From the above examples, we can understand how they are used in Sinhalese.

Here the noun “dāhæt viḍḍa” in (1), “dānəyə” in (3), and “gilānpasə” in (5) are used only with the Buddha or monks and “bulat viḍḍa” in (2), “kāmə” in (4), and “tē/kōpi” in (6) are used only with layperson. They are not interchangeable.

Conclusion

Knowledge of Sinhalese alone is not enough to communicate properly with the Sinhalese people, the one who should have a proper and vivid understanding of the addressee’s religious traditions, the social status of the individual, the certain responsibilities she or he bears in the society, the age group of the people and so on. According to the above facts, one can examine the hierarchical structure of superior, equal, and inferior categories, the layman and clergy usages, and formal—Power base vs. informal—solidarity relationship in Sinhalese. As a result of the usages of religious and secular forms in Sinhalese the different morphological realizations with similar semantic values can be identified. Actually it is more complex in Sinhalese language to play speaker-addressee role, to express ideas and successful communication among speech communities.

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