

A STUDY ON THE EFFECT OF THE MODERN GRAMMAR BOOKS IN CHARACTERIZING THE SINHALA ALPHABET DISPLAYED IN SIDATH SANGARAWA

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Introduction

Though it took centuries to set up a tradition of compiling grammar books after the compilation of *Sidath Sangarawa* in ELU Sinhala in 13th century, the main source text of those books was *Sidath Sangarawa* itself. It was used as the guide book in teaching Sinhala grammar and grammar rules in the movement of awakening Education in Sri Lanka rehabilitated by Saranankara Sangaraja Thero. As a result of this awakening, commentaries, annotations were written for *Sidath Sangarawa* by the grammarians of that time, but, Sinhala they were not satisfied with that. So, they were inclined to compile grammar books so as to fulfill current language needs of the society in addition to *Sidath Sangarawa* and other traditional grammar books. The resurrection of monastery education (*piriven* education) contributed immensely on this.

Materials and methods

Not only *Sidath Sangarawa* but also several other grammar books belong to Mahanuwara period in Modern Era,

Colombo Era and the Era after the Colombo Era, have been selected and examined in this study. They were *Sinhala Varna Sahita Varna Riitiya* (1878) written by Ven. Hikkaduwe Sumangala Thero, *Pada Nithiya* (1888) by Veragama Punchibandara, *Sinhala Vyakaranaya* written by Mudliyer Don. Evusta Kiyus Johannus Senanayaka and *Sinhala Bhashava* (1932) written by Theodore G. Perera. Accordingly, the above books which were compiled in the latter part of the Mahanuwara Period of Modern Era (1706-1815), Colombo Era (1815-1947) and the books which got the influence of *Sidath Sangarawa* and belong to the later period too have been examined and scrutinized in this study. Also, the study analyses the fact that how *Sidath Sangarawa* has influenced them and how they standardize, reform and modernizes the theories and rules in *Sidath Sangarawa*.

Design, Results and Evaluation

The study analyses the nature of standardization, reformation and modernization done on the Sinhala alphabet used in *Sidath Sangarawa* by

the grammar books which were compiled in recent past under several sub-categories, such as the fact that not including the sounds "w - /a/" and "wE - /æ/" into the alphabet given in *Sidath Sangarawa*. In the book titled *Sinhala Bhashawa* written by G. Perera is included with these two letters and he has mentioned "*Amishra Sinhala bhashawe akuru 32 ki* (ELU Sinhala alphabet contains 32 letters)" and further explained and pointed out the suitability of including these two letters into the alphabet in such a way that justifies the weakness of *Sidath Sangarawa* mentioning that defying *Sidath Sangarawa* is not appropriate. At the same time, Punchibandana too has included "a" and "æ" letters into the mixed Sinhala alphabet in his book *Pada Niithiya*. In *Sinhala Vyakaranaya* written by Senanayaka, the letters has not been included where as they were included after the letter "T - /o/" in the alphabet appears in *Varna Riithiya*. As the reasons of not including "a" and "æ" letters into the alphabet of *Sidath Sangarawa*, the author states that the mindset of the society was such that opposing to have included "w - /a/" and "wE - /æ/". The classification of vowels and consonants is important here. In *Sidath Sangarawa* vowels were referred as "*panakuru*" and consonants as "*gatakuru*" which can be seen in the Johannus grammar (1929: 2). In *Pada Niithiya* the vowels and consonants were referred as "*swara*" and "*vyanjana*" respectively in Sinhala language - "*iajrhkag mKl=re hehso jH[ackhkag .;l=re hehso isxy, jHdlrKjha jHjydr lf<da h* - In Sinhala grammar vowels were called as "*swara*" and consonants were called as "*gatakuru*". In *Sinhala Bhashava*, it is explained that vowels were called as

"*panakuru*", "*sara*", "*nisisara*" and consonants by the names of "*hal akuru*", "*hayakuru*", "*gatakuru*" in ELU Sinhala. The author further states that the vowels are called "*nishrayakshara*" and consonants are called "*nishrithakshara*" in Sanskrit and he illustrates the classification of Sinhala sounds as "*swara*" and "*vyanjana*" in the book. In addition to that, the analysis on "*unamathraya*" too unveils certain significant facts pertaining to the study. Because, the illustration on *unamathraya* and *mathra haaniyaa* in *Sidath Sangarawa* is quite similar to the analysis found in Perera's book except to the fact that Perera's analysis (1932:62) carries more details compared to *Sidath Sangarawa*. Specially in illustrating the points giving examples, Perera has given the same examples in *Sidath Sangarawa* and standardized it. *Pada Niithiya* points out that half a syllable of the sounds of "v - /d/", "[- /j/", "K - /ŋ/", "u - /m/" do get added or merged with the sounds " - /g/", "c - /j/", "v - /d/", "o - /d/" respectively. The words " - /gaḡə/", "r`cka - /raḡən/" approve that it is true. This feature is not available in both Pali and Sanskrit. Punchibandana explains that the letter "X - /ŋ/, /ŋ/" is not available in ELU Sinhala and at the instances like " - /gaḡə/", "we` - /æḡə/" the sound " - /gə/" gets merged with the sound represented by the diacritical mark *bindra ardhaya* (1888: 04). *Bindra ardhaya* occurs before the letters, " - /g/", "v - /d/", "o - /d/", "n - /bə/ and turns them into "*anusvara ardhaya*" - " - /ḡ/", "v - /ḡ/", "o - /ḡ/", "U - /ḡ/" according to Johannus (1929: 05). On the other hand the author of *Varna Riithiya* examines the description of the occurrence of "o` - /daḡə/", "iev -

/sæḍə/" , "i'o - kaḍə" , "nU - baḍə" and concludes "half a syllable of *binduwa* gets merged with sound "g" and it creates the sound of the half a syllable of *binduwa*" and the words "r'cka - /raḷən/" , "y'v - /haḍə/" , "i'o - saḍə" , "nU - baḍə" are created out of the letters "[- /p/" , "K - /n/" , "u - /m/" , "k - /n/" (1878-12-16). The indication of short syllables and long syllables too are examined in this research. *Sidath Sangarawa* mentions "*luhuguruvein dasa ve*" (1902:07). *Pada Niithiya, Sinhala Vyakaranaya, Sinhala Bhashava and also the Sinhala Varna Riithiya* refers to short and long sounds as "*brasva*" and "*diirgha*" respectively and also mention that they are referred by the names such as lagu (*luhu*) and "*guru*" too. The classification of mixed (*mishra*) and pure or ELU Sinhala (*Amishra / Shuddha*) is also a significant point which brings to light many important points. *Sidath Sangarawa* promotes are ELU Sinhala alphabet (pure Sinhala alphabet). *Sinhala Bhashawa* illustrates not only the both pure (*Amishra*) Sinhala alphabet and mixed (*Mishra*) Sinhala alphabet and also the Sanskrit and Magadhi alphabets as well. That is to indicate that the mixed (*Mishra*) Sinhala alphabet is a synthesis of all of them (1932:56-56). *Pada Niithiya* which includes the mixed (*Amishra*) Sinhala alphabet illustrates the letters of Sanskrit and Pali languages and describes the ELU Sinhala (*Amishra*) and mixed (*Mishra*) Sinhala (1888:4-5). Though the author of *Sidath Sangarawa* displays the alphabet of *siyabasa* (vernacular) the Sinhala grammarians of the latter period referred the alphabet in *Sidath Sangarawa* and displayed two alphabets in their grammar books.

Therefore, the alphabet in *Sidath Sangarawa* was standardized as the ELU */Amishra/ Shuddha/* Sinhala alphabet and the grammar books compiled later the *Sidath Sangarawa* were very much instrumental in this process of standardization.

Conclusions and Further Work

This study which examines how the modern Sinhala grammar books have involved in characterizing the Sinhala alphabet included in *Sidath Sangarawa* unveils five factors which supports the study. They are the appropriateness of inserting "w - /a/" and "wE - /æ/" sounds into Sinhala alphabet which is not available in the alphabet of *Sidath Sangarawa* and including them to the alphabet. The nomenclature and the standardization of vowels and consonants in *Sidath Sangarawa*, the reformation on the analysis on *unamathra*, illustration on short and long syllables, classification, standardization and reformation of Sinhala alphabet as "*amishra*" and "*mishra*". Accordingly, it is realizable that the research brings to light many significant facts that are new to the research world.