

CAUSATIVE VERBS IN SPOKEN SINHALA

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PIKRIA APKHAIDZE

Abstract

This study investigates the causative category of the Sinhala¹ verb. The issue of causativization according to the Sinhala language has not been the main preoccupation of any linguistic studies up to now and therefore, no major studies have been done so far². However, the typological-linguistic studies (Comrie: 1981; Nedjalkov, V. P. and Sil'nickij, G. G: 1969; Song, J. 1996, among others), which investigate the causative constructions according to the wide range of languages, do not account for the data of the Sinhalese causative. Therefore, this study is aimed to present an account of the structural-functional analysis of causative verbs in Spoken Sinhala³, which will be interesting at least in regard to the typology of causative construction in the broad perspectives of typological studies. In addition to this, I hope this study will be helpful in applied linguistics, for the language teaching as well as for translators.

The main object of this study is to examine the corpus of causative verbs, which is compiled from the data available in Spoken Sinhala. Basically, I have accounted for the data in terms of colloquial and standard levels of the spoken language.⁴

1. Sinhala is the mother tongue of the Sinhalese, who comprise about 70% of the population of Sri Lanka. It is genetically related to Sanskrit and Pali and it belongs to the Indo-Aryan subgroup of Indo-European family of languages.

2. It should be mentioned that some interesting aspects of causativization in Sinhala are dealt with in studies of the following authors: Gunasekera (1891), Charter (1815), Geiger (1936); and recent investigators: Gair (1970), Wickramasinghe (1973; 1988-89), among others. See an overview of the previous studies respectively, Chapter 1, pp.16-21.

3. Due to the various historical, socio-linguistic and geographical features, Sinhala has different varieties. The main divisions are Spoken and Written. There is a significant difference between them according to the grammatical structure, vocabulary and their usage and functions. This study is devoted to the investigation of the main issue of causativization according to the spoken variety of the Sinhala language.

4. Two registers basically present Spoken Sinhala:

a. Formal Standard.

b. Colloquial.

The difference between them is conditioned by two different socio-linguistic factors. The standard variety of Spoken Sinhala shows varieties in style, usage and grammar. Certain social situations are generally considered formal, such as public and academic lectures, religious discourses, seminars and conferences and the variety of standard Sinhala used on such occasions may be designated "Formal Sinhala". Social situations such as those at home and market, office and the temple are considered informal and the style of language used on such occasions may be designated "Colloquial Sinhala". Disanayaka J. B. (1991) *The Structure of Spoken Sinhala*, Vol 1 Sounds and their Patterns, p. 13.

The method of study followed in the investigation is that of modeling of the grammatical framework, which underlines the functional and structural mechanism of the derivation of causative verbs in Spoken Sinhala. The theoretical framework of the present analysis is highly influenced by the following authors: Tesnier'e (1976), Comrie (1981) and Machavariani (1986-87).⁵ The methodological synthesis of their concepts is the theoretical basis of the study.

The present work is composed of four main chapters and the conclusions, which summarize the overall results reached by the present study. The content is organized as follows:

Chapter 1: *Introduction*. It consists of two main sections. They are:

- i. A brief survey of the Sinhala verb morpho-syntax; and
- ii. Prologue to the issue of the present study.

Chapter 2: *Morphological Causatives*. It introduces the varieties of causative verbs in Spoken Sinhala, which fall into the type of morphological causatives and provide a summary and conclusions.

Chapter 3: *Analytic Causatives*. This chapter provides the analysis of the variety of causative verbs, which are considered as the analytic causatives and also a summary and conclusions.

Chapter 4: *Mixed Analytic Causatives*. It introduces the type of the mixed analytic causatives with a summary and conclusions.

Chapter 5: *Conclusions*. It summarizes the overall assumptions and results of the present analysis.

Appendix (presents a corpus of the literature on causative verbs accounted for in the present analysis)⁶

5. See an overview on the present approach referring to these authors in: Chapter 1, pp. 12-13 and p. 21.

6. I would like to mention that my appendix accounts for the causative verbs in terms of peculiarities of formal construction. According to this appendix, the functional characteristics will not be exactly identified, since my account of functional analysis (the higher levels of causation) is substantially conditioned by the syntax, which is not possible to be presented in this appendix. However, the functional characterization for each type of causative verbs is discussed in the corresponding chapters of this work.