

Abstract 78

Relevance of the Morphological Concepts *Root*, *Stem* and *Base* in the Structural Analysis of Sinhalese Words

Kande Kapuge Ganushka Randula

Temporary Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, University of Kelaniya

k.k.g.randula@gmail.com

The term *piyewi* (*prākṛti*) appearing in traditional Sinhalese grammars refers to an element operating within word structure. It is a morphological extraction which has not been properly defined in any of the traditional Sinhalese grammars. Therefore attempts have been made by some modern Sinhalese linguists to define *pijewi* (*prākṛti*) with the light of morphology. However, the *piyewis* (*prākṛti*) extracted by modern linguists are totally different from the *piyewis* (*prākṛti*) extracted by traditional grammarians. This difference of the forms has resulted in much debate among Sinhalese scholars. The study was designed to identify the most appropriate morphological extraction which best suits the structural analysis of the Sinhalese words. Data for the study were collected from a number of grammatical works and linguistic works. It was observed that modern linguists have employed three slightly different morphological concepts as *root*, *stem*, and *base* in their morphological analyses. Just as the term *piyewi* (*prākṛti*) in Sinhalese, they too refer to some abstract morphological element operating within the word structure. After examining the technical definitions of the three terms, a significant observations has been made: the notions of *root* and *stem* are similar to what is known as *piyewi* (*prākṛti*) by traditional Sinhalese grammarians, while the notion of *base* is similar to what is known as *piyewi* (*prākṛti*) by modern Sinhalese linguists. This study recognises *stem* as the best morphological extraction that fully facilitates the structural analysis of Sinhalese words. The concept of *root* can also be employed with a theoretical restriction only when referring to what is known as *simple stem*. The concept of *base* is not an appropriate selection as it produces a number of totally abstract extractions that even violate the syllabic structures of the Sinhalese language. It also makes the morphological analysis unnecessarily complicated. As evident from these facts, it is the use of the same term *piyewi* (*prākṛti*) in referring to both *stems* and *bases* that has led the Sinhalese scholars to confusion. In order to avoid such confusions, this study proposes three distinctive Sinhalese terms as *mu:lə*, *prākṛti* and *pa:dəkə* for *root*, *stem*, and *base* respectively.

Key words: Abstract, Base, Extraction, Root, Stem