

PERFECT TENSE IN SPOKEN SINHALA

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0. A descriptive statement of the formation and the major syntactic usages of the perfect tense form in Spoken Sinhala (SS.) is presented in this paper. What we mean by the **perfect tense form** here, had been referred to as the **past participle** in previous works.¹ We prefer to call it the **perfect tense form** because one of its major usages is to express 'the completion of an action, only the result of which the speaker notices. In this sense it is more reportive of a past action' and compares with the **parokṣā perfect** of Sanskrit.
1. Verb-base in SS. can be either simple or derived. Derivation involves either **causativising** or **involitivising** or both.

Simple bases can be classified under two major classes, the **-ə** class, e.g. **bal** -ə 'look', and the **-i** class, e.g. **badi** - 'fry'. There is also a small set of irregular verb bases e.g. **ya** - 'go', **in** - 'be', **tiye** - 'be' etc. Causative bases are derived by suffixing - **və** - to the base. An involitive can be derived out of a simple or a causative base by suffixing - **e** accompanied by the fronting of the base - vowels. A verb base in SS. can enter into inflection under three tense - stems, the **present stem**, the **past stem** and the **perfect stem**. This can be diagrammed as follows:

{ R (C) (I) T }

where R = root; C = causative ; I= involitive; and T = tense.

Examples :

balə 'look'	baləvəva	'simple present.
	bələvəva	'involitive present.
	baləvəvəva	'causative present'.
*bələvəvəva -	bələvəvəvəva	'involitive - causative- present.

2. Perfect-tense formation

2.1 Perfect - base

The perfect tense base is formed as follows.

- 2.1.1 Regular verbs ending in -ə; (These can be either simple or causative bases.) No change.