

## An Appreciation of Aelian de Silva's Contribution as a Neologist

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Neologisation is the act of coining and accompanying neologisms i.e., new words to the lexicon of a language. Aelian de Silva (31<sup>st</sup> October 1926 - 22<sup>nd</sup> December 2015), an electrical engineer by profession, was a neologist of the recent times who made a significant contribution to the lexical development of the Sinhalese language. However, his endeavours as a neologist have not yet been subjected to a commendable appreciation. Therefore, this study was designed to explore the linguistic features of his neologisms while focusing on the neologisation processes employed in coining them. An adequate corpus of data was collected for examination by referring to the books and articles written by Aelian de Silva. The data were analysed utilising the theories and methods of structural linguistics. It was observed in the analysis that his contribution to the field of neologisation is mainly two-fold. Firstly he has outlined five salient features that one should take into consideration in coining Sinhalese technical terms. These are flexibility, brevity, precision, comprehensibility, and pronounceability. Flexibility refers to the ability to yield the whole derivational paradigm of the neologism. Brevity refers to the one to one correspondence between the source and target forms. Precision is when the term conveys the exact intended meaning and nothing more or less. Comprehensibility is the quality of being intelligible to the average native speaker of the language. Pronounceability is the quality of being easily pronounceable. In order to conform to these five salient features, Aelian de Silva always encouraged the use of indigenous roots in coining Sinhalese neologisms as borrowed foreign roots fail to fully comply with the five salient features. Secondly, Aelian de Silva has accompanied more than three thousand neologisms to the lexicon of the modern Sinhalese language. Most of them appear in the glossary of his masterpiece *Technical Terms in Sinhala* which was published in 2002. Interestingly, a considerable number of the neologisms he coined have gained currency in many a technical discipline like electrical engineering, petroleum industry, and television industry. Thus, Aelian de Silva's contribution to the lexical development of the modern Sinhalese language is a commendable service which deserves a proper appreciation preceded by strenuous research.

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