

The Structure of The Verb phrase in Spoken Sinhala. A Linguistic Study.

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According to structural linguistics, the structure of a language can be studied as sounds, words, sentences and meaning. Sentences of all languages have both a deep structure which gives the meaning of the sentence, as well as a surface structure which is responsible for the form of the sentence in communication. The deep structure of a sentence can be turned into surface structure by using transformational rules. Hence, Phrase structure analysis becomes essential to recognise the structure of phrases, and to ascertain the inter-structural patterns of languages. The objective of this research is to recognise the structure of the verb phrase in spoken Sinhala. Data for this study is gathered from the book of “Kelani Paalama” written by R.R. Samarakoon. Accordingly, phrase structure rules were used to recognise verb phrases from the collected data. This research applies the theories of generative grammar to analyse the structure of verb phrases. The findings of this study reveal that the verb in which the head of the verb phrase appears can be of various forms such as finite verbs, infinitive verbs, volitive verbs, involitive verbs, transitive verbs, intransitive verbs, helping verbs and main verbs. Verbs behave in the form of reports and commands in a verb phrase, while emphasise and phrase focus may happen in abundance. Furthermore, the word order of Sinhala verb phrase can be observed as a free word order. The study also observed that, simple sentences do not exhibit any change when the deep structure is transformed into surface structure, whereas complex sentences undergo some changes due to transformational rules. Therefore, it can be observed that spoken Sinhala verb phrases have a number of structures, and it is possible to construct verb phrases by incorporating linguistic units such as nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, determiners, compliments and sentences.

Keywords: Transformational rules, Phrase structure, Verb phrase, Spoken Sinhala