SOME COMMENTS ON MARKED AND UNMARKED FORMS IN SINHALA GRAMMAR

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It is not for nothing that Ferdinand de Saussure[1] has been called the father of modern linguistics for many developments in the work of several later linguists can be traced directly or indirectly to his work. De Saussure sees language as a complex system of contrastive oppositions. In language there are only differences and any given linguistic item gains its value from being in contrastive opposition to other members of its set, this set in turn being in opposition to other sets[2]. It seems to me that the concept of marked and unmarked categories though it originated with Trubetskoy's *Grundzuge der Phonologie*[3] is, at least partly, the outcome of Saussurean ideas very much in the linguistic air of early twentieth century Europe. The notion of contrast between the members of a correlative set is a key one but it is not the only ideational component of the marked / unmarked concept. Also included is the notion of the archiphoneme, the result of phonological neutralisation in certain environments. As described by G. H. Greenberg in *Language Universals*[4] the concept of marked and unmarked categories in phonology is briefly this : a correlative set, usually consisting of two phonemes, differs only in a single feature of the same category but its other features are not found in any other set.

In other words, there is contrast between the members of a given set as well as contrast between this set and other sets in the phonological system in any language. /p/ and /b/ would constitute a correlative set in English for they are kept apart by the single feature of voice and in regard to their remaining features function as the only non-nasal

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1 Cours de Linguistique Generale, (Paris, 1915)

2 The notion of contrastive oppositions is both insightful and useful but there are many areas of language where linguistic differences are not necessarily in contrastive opposition to one another. The idiomatic and figurative uses of language would be one such example.

3 Prague, 1939.

4 Mouton & Co., 1966.

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bilabial stops. In certain phonological environments the contrast between such correlative sets is neutralised and what occurs is the archiphoneme, the unit defined by the common features of the correlative set externally or internally determined. Thus, though we usually distinguish between /p/ and /b/ in minimal pairs like *pin* and *bin* there is no such opposition after /s/. Since the stop in *spin* lacks the aspiration of accented, initial /p/ or the voicing of /b/ it may be classed with either though it is generally represented in phonemic transcription by /p/ : / spin/. The /p/ of /spin/, thus, is an example of the externally determined archiphoneme. The voice contrast is neutralised in the environment of /s/ but the sound produced still shows the common features of correlative set /p/ and /b/, namely non-nasal bilabial plosion. In terms of the marked/unmarked concept voicing would be regarded as a marked feature, a positive 'something' in a given sound and unvoicing the unmarked feature, the absence of 'something'. Marked features or forms do not appear in positions of neutralisation.

As first presented by Trubetskoy this concept of marked and unmarked was confined to phonology. Since then it has been extended to grammar and lexis with great point and usefulness by such linguists as Roman Jakobson[1] and Joseph Greenberg[2]. Jakobson's example of the marked/unmarked opposition in the lexis is one of the best and illustrates beautifully the way it applies in this area. *Man* in English has two meanings. In its commoner meaning *male* it is the unmarked member of the set *male / female* and in this sense indicates the absence of the marked category *female*. But *man* can also indicate humanity in general. In this instance it does not contrast with woman but rather, incorporates the semantic component of the latter so that a statement like *Man is mortal* refers to both sexes, something that does not happen in *Woman is fickle*. *Man* in *Man is mortal* is an unmarked lexeme defined by the features common to both *man* and *woman*—their common humanity. *Man*, in this instance, stands for the whole category in the position of neutralisation.

Sets like *old/young* and *tall/short* function in a similar way. *Old* contrasts with *young* in *Russell was old when he died but Byron was young*. But there is no contrast in *How old was Russell then? Ninety eight. And how old was Byron? Twenty nine,* where *old* stands for age in general in the same way that *man* stands for humanity, and not specifically for old age as opposed to youth.

[1] "Signe Zero", Melanges Bally (Geneva, 1939).
[2] Language Universals, (Mouton and Co. 1966).

The higher text frequency of *old* and *tall* (an important characteristic of unmarked forms) as against *young* and *short* is indicated even without the support of a frequency count by the comparative rarity of *How young is he?* or *How short is he?* and the ungrammaticality of **He's three years young* or **He's four foot short.*

My intention in the rest of this article is to examine the marked/unmarked opposition in some areas of Sinhala grammar-the categories of gender and case, determinacy and person as expressed in nouns and pronouns[1].

Gender and case in Sinhala

First, a few general introductory comments on the Siamese-twin-like kinship of gender and case—a feature that is particularly relevant in the description of Indo-European languages.[2] There has recently been a revival of interest in the place of 'case' in in syntax generally, not simply in the syntax of those languages where case is overtly recognised by means of inflectional affixes on substantives. Charles J. Fillmore,[3] the chief exponent of the "case for case" in recent times, holds that case is a category present in deep structure and, therefore, not always inflectionally realised at surface level. This point of view is shared at least in part by John Lyons[4] who points out that certain functions may be realised in the one language by case inflections as well as by prepositions, post positions and word order and that case "cannot be discussed solely from a morphological point of view." Greenberg,[5] quoted

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[1] My examples come both from spoken and written Sinhala. The spoken material represents about half an hour's recorded conversation between three different groups of people. The written material was intended to be representative of a variety of styles ranging from the expository prose of science, geography and history texts to the creative prose of the novel and autobiography. The total sample examined gave a total of 620 utterances. My own competence as a native speaker provided additional support for my conclusions.

[2] John Lyons, Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics (Cambridge, 1969) p. 302.

[3] Emmon Bach and Robert T. Harms (editors), Universals in Linguistic Theory, "The case for case" (Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1968) pp. 1–88.

[4] Theoretical Linguistics, p. 302. A similar point of view was presented in somewhat different terms by Edward Sapir (Language, 1939) who examined the concepts underlying case, prepositional and post positional uses in terms of the relational system of a language.

[5] Universals of language, "Some Universals Of Grammar with particular Reference to The Order of Meaningful Elements" (MIT Press, 1966) pp. 80, 98.

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by Fillmore,[1] concedes that crosslinguistic comparison of case uses is possible and though his comments refer to languages where case has been inflectionally realised Fillmore concludes "that the concepts underlying the study of case uses may have a greater linguistic significance than those involved in the description of surface systems." The case category essentially concerns intra-sentence semantic-syntactic relationships which are empirically discoverable, predictive and explanatory. More explicitly, "case notions comprise a set of universal, presumably innate, concepts which identify certain types of judgement which human beings are capable of making about the events that are going on around them, judgements about such matters as who did it, who it happened to and what got changed."[2] Such judgements centre on certain NP-VP relationships of the following sort:

Agentive (A): the case of the typically animate perceived instigator of the action identified by the verb.

Instrumental (I): the case of the inanimate force or object causally involved in the action or state identified by the verb

Dative (D): the case of the animate being affected by the state or action identified by the verb.

Locative (L): the case which identifies the location or spatial orientation of the state or action identified by the verb. Fillmore regards the directional element as being a component of the locative.

Whatever the position might be in other languages in Sinhala and English, at least, gender as expressed in the animate/inanimate distinction is most relevant to the agentive and instrumental cases. The relevance of gender to cases like the dative and the objective is less evident. As R. D. Huddleston[3] points out there seems to be little use in restricting the dative, the case of the experiencer, only to animates and assigning all inanimates to a residual case like the objective. Huddleston's examples

John died (D in Fillmore's system)

The snow melted (O in Fillmore's system)

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[1] Universals in Linguistic Theory, p. 19.

[2] Fillmore, Universals in Linguistic Theory p. 24.

[3] "Fillmore's Case Grammar", (Conference in Theoretical Linguistics, Sydney University, 1970). Unpublished paper.

show quite clearly that the animate/inanimate distinction has really no relevance here for what takes place is a change of state and this change of state occurs regardless of gender. The same would apply to *John fell* and *The tree fell*

Fillmore also refers to the factitive objective and benefactive cases but those described above give a fair indication of the kind of semantic-syntactic relations he has in mind in his theory of case.[1] In terms of what Fillmore says then, *knife* in

1. This knife slices bread better than that.
2. Banda cut the bread with this knife.
3. Banda used this knife to cut the bread.

is equally instrumental inspite of different surface realisations. Syntactically *knife* is subject in 1 and object in 3 but this difference of syntactic role does not nullify its instrumental function in all three sentences. This implicit underlying instrumental function could be surfaced by transforming 1 into

The bread can be sliced better with this knife than with that. and 2 into *This is the knife that Banda cut the bread with. Banda* in *Banda cut the bread* and *The bread was cut by Banda* on the other hand, would be agentive.

From the notional point of view the key feature on which the agentive-instrumental contrast hinges is gender as expressed in the animacy/inanimacy distinction. Fillmore maintains that the agent is typically animate and accordingly, constrained by certain co-occurrence restrictions when optionally associated with specific verbs while the instrumental is inanimate. His example 18, for

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[1] To assign a consistent semantic value of this kind to each case is, admittedly, a trickly business.
For example, which cases are we to assign the following to in Fillmore's terms ?
      John resembles his father (D or I ?).
      I dreamt I was on the Moon in my Apollo 14 (A or D ?)·
      I shrugged (with) my shoulders and waved (with) my hand (I or O?).
At the same time, to ignore the interrelationships between syntax and semantics is to ignore one of the most important aspects of language - an aspect which is so integral a part of a speaker's competence that he would not be able to communicate effectually if he lost his grasp of it. So that though this area bristles with unsolved mysteries one can hardly avoid dealing with it in any exhaustive discussion of syntax.

instance, shows the subject in agentive relation to the verb. In 19 the subject is instrumental and in 20 both agent and instrumental appear but with the agent as subject not the instrumental:[1]

18. John broke the window.
19. A hammer broke the window.
20. John broke the window with a hammer.

The two subjects, *John* and *a hammer* of 18 and 19 are different syntactically and semantically and this difference emerges in the ungrammaticality of a complex subject like **John and a hammer broke the window*. These two NPs belong to the agentive and instrumental cases respectively and this difference in membership makes any alliance between them unacceptable. **A hammer broke the glass with a chisel* is again unacceptable-an instrumental interpretation is forced upon us by the inanimacy of *hammer*. A similar instrumental interpretation is forced on us in our reading of *The car broke the window with its fender* by the preposition *with* and the possessive *its* underlining the inanimacy of the subject in its instrumental function. In contrast is the ungrammatical **The car broke the window with a fender* where the absence of *its* converts the inanimate car into a pseudo-agent and reduces the sentence to nonsense in terms of normal everyday usage.

Though Fillmore admits to "an escape qualification" in characterising the agent as only typically animate (a proviso that takes care of agentive inanimates like *robot* and *nation*) the key feature on which the agentive-instrumental contrast hinges in his system remains animacy vs inanimacy. The instrument is never animate and Fillmore accounts for Paul Postal's *I rapped him on the head with a snake* by invoking the ever handy deep structure as proof of inanimacy: *with a snake* corresponds to the underlying *with the body of a snake*. This would also account for such utterances as *He was impressed with Leela* which in deep structure could mean, depending on context, something like *He was impressed with Leela's charm/courage* etc.

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[1] Fillmore, Universals in Linguistic Theory, p. 33: In terms of surface phenomena "If there is an A, it becomes the subject; otherwise if there's an I it becomes the subject; otherwise the subject is O." There is, in other words, a scale of priorities for subject position in any given utterance and A is at the top. See also pp. 22-23.

Lyons[1] recognizes the overlap between agentive and instrumental in some languages and suggests that this syncretism "rests upon the neutralisation of the distinction at a more superficial level of the grammar or upon recategorisation in terms of animacy or some other syntactically relevant notion." An instrument is seen as an actor rather than as a thing—another way of expressing the traditional notion of personification as Lyons himself concedes. This would account for such English sentences as *A rock hit me; I was hit by a rock; The wind blew down the trees; The drought killed our sheep; The rain washed away the houses; A cyclone hit North Dacca* etc. according to Lyon's theory. Such sentences are not agentless as *The car broke the window with its fender* is but have as their subjects inanimates recategorised or personified as agents. Thus the instrumental *rock* in *Jack killed the giant with a rock* becomes the agentive in *There was a landslide and I was hit by a rock; This is the rock I was hit by.* Fillmore offers no explanation for the fact of inanimate nouns like *robot* and *nation* functioning as agents but Lyons's recategorisation theory would be a possible answer. It would certainly account for idioms like *the tail wagging the dog* where an inalienable possession by functioning agentively tellingly suggests that what should be subordinate now dominates.

Another explanation for the possibility of inanimates functioning agentively seems, to me at least, to be offered by the theory of marked vs unmarked. The animate is the unmarked category, the inanimate the marked. A characteristic typical function of an unmarked form or category is to stand for the whole of a given set in a position of neutralisation. In the context of neutralisation the contrast between marked and unmarked disappears and what is left are the common features of the correlative set in question: bilabial plosion in the second sound of /spin/ as a result of neutralisation in the set /p/b/ and the semantic component that spells human in *Man is mortal* as a result of neutralisation in the set *man/woman*. In the case of the correlative set *hit by John* (agentive) and *hit with a rock* (instrumental) the contrast hinges on *John* being the animate instigator of the action in one instance and *rock* in the other being the causally involved inanimate object. My point is that both animate instigator and the inanimate object which is causally or instrumentally involved are *sources of action* and it is this common feature that remains once the contrast

1 Theoretical Linguistics, p. 298.

between instigation and causal involvement is neutralised. Thus the inanimate agents in *The floods swept away trees and houses; The robot moved towards the door; The computer answered, 'no'; The rock hit me* etc. are not all deliberate agental instigators in the same sense that *I* in *I hit John* is but they are equally sources of action. This 'source of action' criterion applies to the inanimate instrument as well. In *John kicked me, foot* is a necessary semantic component of *kick* just as *teeth* is of *bit*. The action or the state identified by the verb is what it is because of both *agent* and *instrument* – they identify the verb just as much as the verb identifies them. The relationship that is set up is a two way reciprocal one. With verbs like *hit, kick, bite, kiss* etc the action stems from both agent and instrument acting together. In other words, the feature common to both members of the correlative set it is the *source of the action* or state identified by the verb and this source can include agent and instrument. Sometimes, therefore, the action stems from both the animate as well as the inanimate in which case the contrastive features of the category operate (A/I) as in *Tom hit me with a stone;* sometimes only from the animate as in *I dreamt I was on the moon in my Apollo 12;* sometimes only from the inanimate as *The rocks hit me* or *The moon shone brightly.* When there is only one source of action stated in any utterance this source is usually an agentive but the agent could be either animate or inanimate. The agent, in other words, is unmarked and as such can stand in a position of neutralisation for the whole set (with/by) and the whole category (animate/inanimate) while the instrument is marked and can only represent inanimates. Since the agentive can accomodate both animate and inanimate by virtue of its unmarked nature Fillmore's escape qualification that the agent is only typically animate, needs to be seen as something much more. It is not simply that there are a few embarrassing exceptions to the rule that the agent is animate but that the dual animate/inanimate nature of the agent is a necessary feature of the unmarked agentive case.

The foregoing account should have provided some kind of context for the examination of Sinhala case and gender. Case relations such as agency, instrumentality, directionality etc. in Sinhala have two fold expression: post-positions and suffixes are both used.

> Vilsan kēlaṅ kianava ohoma hiṭiaṭa. maṅ *ammaṭh ekka* adha udhē kiua balāgana vāḍa karanna kialā.
>
> ai vilsan kēlaṅ kianne?

ai vathura nāsthi karanavā kiua ekita . . .

Wilson carries tales though you wouldn't think so. I told (with) mother this morning to work carefully (because of his tales).

Wilson why do you carry tales?

(He) said (I) waste water to her . . .

Traditional grammarians[1] have consistently distinguished case forms according to number but it is very clear that the real distinction running through the Sinhala case system (where such a distinction is relevant) is that of gender. Sinhala nouns do not change their case forms according to number but according to whether the noun referent is animate or inanimate:

1 *eage* husband . . . husband business karanava.
   Her husband is in business.

2 *ogollange* time eka hāṭiaṭe meka ivaravenna kotchara velā jaida?
   According to your time, how long will this take to finish?

3 vatura ekak dhennako Mr. Viraratne.
   fridge eken araganna bonna.
   Mr. Viraratna, give (me) a glass of water, will you?
   Take (it) from the fridge and drink (it).

4 *kāgendha* ahanne? *oyagen*?
   Whom to ask from? From you?

In 1 and 2 the unmarked animate case form *ge* is used with both the singular and the plural, *eā* and *ogollan*, regardless of number. 3 and 4 also illustrate the point that in Sinhala case forms are not determined by number, for both *fridge eken* and *oyagen* are

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1 Wilhelm Geiger, A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language, (M. D. Gunasena, Colombo, the Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, 1938).

H. J. Kurukularatchi, The Revised Sinhalese Advanced Course, (Colombo, 1959) pp. 14-15.

Revd. Theodore Perera, The Revised Sinhalese Language, (M. D. Gunasena & Co., Ltd. Col:) pp. 181-3.

The only Sinhala linguist, apart from myself as far as 1 know, who has noted the interdependence of case and gender is J. B. Dissanayake in his Bhāshāvaka Ratā Samudaya (Lake House Investments Ltd, Colombo, 1968) Chapter Seven, and he is not traditional.

singular, but by gender : *en* is the marked inanimate directional form and *gen* is the unmarked animate.

Having established this point I should like to examine the case forms in Sinhala in the light of the general criteria for marked and unmarked forms and categories as suggested by Greenberg. Greenberg notes the unmarked status of animates in languages with this gender category. On the basis of his survey, this feature, he suggests is a linguistic universal. I have suggested that the animate is unmarked in English. Does the same hold for Sinhala? The evidence suggests it does.

One of the most important features of markedness as indicated earlier is the basic fundamental character of the unmarked as against the marked. Greenberg appeals to the Gestalt notion of ground, the familiar the taken for granted in order to characterise the unmarked whereas the marked character would answer to figure. This stress on the basic fundamental character of the unmarked ties in rather neatly as Greenberg points out with Zipf's principle of least effort. The basic, more familiar unmarked forms are also, usually, the less complex forms and being less complex tend to be used more frequently. *Poet* is commoner than *poetess*, *old* commoner than *young* and the simple present commoner than the perfect or the future. Greenberg also reminds us that as language does not operate in a cultural and social vacuum we make grammatical and semantic choices based on situational context. *Poet* can be used of both Emily Dickinson and Tennyson but *par excellence* it has a *male* referent because in fact most poets are male. *Nurse*, on the other hand, is *par excellence* female because most nurses in the real world are female though the term with the premodifier *male* as in *male nurse* could be used of the opposite sex as well. *Doctor* is a similar case and we often find *lady* (at least in Ceylon) or *woman* being used before it when it is not used in its par excellence sense of male medicine-man.

With regard to the animate/inanimate category the animate would naturally appear in human consciousness as being basic and fundamental. Man tends to be anthropocentric and his vision of the world is often anthropomorphic. The inanimate, especially natural phenomena, are often formally personified and given animate status, recategorised in Lyon's term, but the reverse is relatively rare. One sometimes refers to a man as a *clod* and a baby as *it* but talking of ships, cars, nations, etc. as animates is much

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commoner. In Sinhala an expression like *irugē rashmija* with the its animate genitive case suffix is an example of recategorisation and stylistically marked as being poetic but one never comes across the reverse process - the animate recategorised in terms of inanimate case suffixes: **minihā-en* or **minihā-ē*. As in most Indo-European languages in Sinhala too the parts of the body are regarded basically as being inanimates and take appropriate case suffixes: *karehi, athē, oluen* etc. Recategorisation implies personification which is not the same thing as being unmarked. In Sinhala, as in English, the animate is unmarked and in its function as the basic fundamental category includes the inanimate as well when in a position of neutralisation:

1. *Vathura ekka made* gahagana giya.
   The mud was washed away *with the water.*

2. magē sithehi biyak äthi kalē gam viharē bithivala adina ladha *narakādhi sitham visini* [1]

   Fear was aroused in my mind by the pictures of hell drawn on the temple walls.

The contrast between animate and inanimate in terms of case forms is neutralised in such contexts but it is present, of course, in others:

3. mā ekka gedara enna.
   (You) come home with me.
4. mēsei puṭuai ekeṭe thianna.
   Plase the table and chair together.
5. *mēseje puṭuai ekka thianna.
6. *puṭua ekka gedhara janna.
7. minihā visin gasa kapana ladī.
8. *Perera visin gasa kapana ladī.
9. Pārākramabāhu raju visin ruhūnuraṭada allāgath juthu via.[2]

Par excellence animate forms like *ekka* and *visin* can be used with inanimates only in positions of neutralisation. In other contexts *ekka* or *visin* functions with animates as in 3 and 7. When they are used with inanimates as in 5, 6 and 8 the result is ungrammatical and we would have to express ourselves differently in order to be acceptable:

[1] Martin Wickramasinghe, *Upan Da Sita* (Maharagama, Saman Press 1961) p. 82.
[2] S. F. de Silva, *Apē Urumaja* (Colombo) p. 78.

6. puṭua aragana gedhara janna.
   Take the chair and go home.
8. minihā porovakin gasa kapai.
   The man (is) cutting the tree with an axe.

Category		Agentive	Instrumental	Associative	Directional
Animate		· visin athin 09		gē ekka samaga 10	gen ṭa 72
Inanimate			in en 46	a e i ehi 04	in en 21

Fig. 1

Fig. 1 needs some explanation.[1] Jakobson notes that "The general meaning of marked category states the presence of a certain property A; the general meaning of the corresponding unmarked category states nothing about the presence of A." In Fig. 1 the case forms in the *inanimate column* state the presence of the marked category whereas those in the animate column do not and, therefore, have a much wider general applicability. *visin* is virtually restricted to written Sinhala. It corresponds roughly to the English agental *by*. The spoken counterpart of *visin* is *atin* Sinhala also has certain lexical forms like *pain* which find a close parallel in English *by foot:*

<p style="text-align:center">maṅ pain thamai āve</p>

Atin has 'a foot' in both camps - the grammatical and the lexical. It has a literal lexical referent in *mage athin vidurua kädunā: the glass broke by my hand* and in this instance parallels *pain*. But *bikshūn athin bana asantath . . . āthē mahath saṭhutakini*[2]. Its use is purely grammatical and here it parallels a true agental case form like *visin*. A case form is, however, not obligatory for the expression of the agentive relationship that holds between NP

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1   The total number of case forms in my material was 473.
2   *Ape Urumaja*, p. 30.

and VP. Agency an be conveyed quite efficiently by constructions such as:

> ekenek ä ekenek gurulēthuak bidalā ithin adanavā ä käli dihā bala balā.

A certain person broke a goblet and cried looking at the pieces.

The question now is, how far do the forms listed in Fig. 1 show the other features typical of marked and unmarked forms? One of Greenberg's[1] most important criteria for the unmarked is text frequency which he couples with zero expression arguing that the zero form is less complex and, therefore, illustrative of Zipf's principle of least effort. Most of Greenberg's examples are lexical items like *author* vs. *authoress* or the zero singular form vs. the suffixed or umlauted plural form.[2] Such zero expression is possible in a small two item set. But when it comes to case the set is much more complex and one can be faced with a four member set or more as in Sinhala. The zero expression of all unmarked forms becomes impossible as this would result in an intolerable ambiguity. There is strictly speaking no zero expression in the Sinhala case system. Postpositions or suffixes marked or unmarked indicate a given case - gender relationship in every instance.

Another modification of Greenberg's theory arises from the distribution of the frequency figures for my data. It could very well be that my sample is far too small and compared with Greenberg's it certainly is. At the same time one relevant factor has emerged: that context has considerable effect on the use of forms, marked or unmarked. Thus in a science text dealing with natural phenomena like right and heat or a geography text on the physical features of a given country the inanimate will predominate and the appropriate marked forms appear.

For though the unmarked animate case forms *can* appear with inanimate nouns this does not mean they always do. This is very clear from my figures for the agentive and the instrumental. So that text frequency is not always as definite and as conclusive a criteron as suggested by Greenberg. A given set of forms can answer to the other criteria for the unmarked and yet be numerically inferior to the marked forms in certain contexts.

[1] Language Universals, p. 14.
[2] Ibid p. 37.

Another characteristic of the marked/unmarked distinction noted by both Jakobson and Greenberg is syncretisation. By this is meant that grammatical distinctions existing in the unmarked member are often neutralised in the marked categories. In Sinhala, for instance, distinctive forms predominate in the unmarked animate column - *visin, gé, gen* - but one set of case forms do double work in the marked inanimate one: *in/en* are shared by the instrumental and directional cases and *a/e/i/ehi/* are shared by the associative (genitive) and the locative. Only the second example (genitive-lo cative) shows complete syncretisation. The genitive *gé* is normally reserved for the unmarked animate: *magé poth*. A poet might say *irugé rashmija: The sun's heat* which is genitive but in ordinary conversation the usual expression would be *auvé rasne: the heat in the sunshine* which is locative just as *lāchué poth: the books in the drawer* is locative. Thus a feature present in the unmarked animate category is syncretised in the marked inanimate. The inanimate in Sinhala has no genitive except in instances of poetic recategorisation: *irugé rashmija*. *in/en* show syncretisation only on the formal level. i. e. the directional and the instrumental share the same set of morphs but the grammatical distinction, in this instance, case, still remains:

poro*ven* gaha kapanna.
Cut the tree *with* the axe.

pän*en* lianna.
Write *with* the pen.

gedhar*in* da avé?
Did you come *from* home?

gam*en* avé.
(I) came *from* the village.

What Greenberg terms facultative expression is yet another feature of unmarked forms. Context can force the reader to invest a given unmarked form with marked category significance precisely because it is unmarked and has, therefore, a wider applicablity. English *sheep* would generally be interpreted as singular unless the syntactic and semantic environment forced a plural interpretation on us. Context forces this interpretation on the hearer though *sheep* which shows neither suffivation or vowel change would be interpreted *par excellence* as singular - the unmarked category. An example from Sinhala of facultative interpretation is provided by *visin:*

> narakaya gäna kuḍā kālayē magē sithehi biyak athikale gam
> vihāra bithivala . . . adina lada *narakādhi sitham visini.*[1]

In infancy the fear of evil was created in my mind by the
pictures of hell which were drawn . . . on the walls of the
village temples.

narakādhi sitham (*pictures of hell*) is inanimate and would normally
take the instrumental suffixes `in/en: eya sithiamak-in däkve` (literally
it is shown with a picture) but in this context the unmarked
animate agentive case form *visin* forces the interpretation agent on
us. An English parallel of this would be the subjects of *The
pictures of hell on the walls frightened us* or *We were frightened by
the pictures of hell* both agentives by virtue of the relationship
holding between *pictures of hell* and *frightened* but contrasting with
*They frightened us out of our wits with devil masks and pictures of
hell* where the same NP is now used instrumentally. In other
words Sinhala *visin* and English *by* usually signal animate agent but
sometimes signal inanimate 'agent' by virtue of their unmarked
character. In such instances we do not interpret the inanimate
NPs as being examples of recategorisation but simply as coming
within the orbit of the unmarked category in a position of
neutralisation. From the semantic point of view these NPs are as
inanimate as ever but from the grammatical point of view they
now function as agents - an interpretation forced on us by the
syntactic context. *in/en* on the other hand, never function with
animates. As marked forms they do not lend themselves to
facultative expression.

What the foregoing account has attempted to demonstrate is
the Siamese-twin-like kinship of Sinhala case to gender in terms
of the marked/unmarked concept. Gender is central to case uses
in Sinhala and any attempt to describe these case uses without
reference to the animate/inanimate distinction which determines
them is about as useful as talking about *Hamlet* without the
Prince of Denmark.

The Determiners in Sinhala

In Sinhala, as in a language like English, the determiners have
three, not two functions. They signal indefinite, definite and
generic meanings. Roughly corresponding to English.

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[1] Martin Wickramasingha, Upań Dā Siṭa (Maharagama, Saman Press, 1961)
p. 82.

A dog is on the road. (indefinite)
The dog is on the road. (definite)
(The dog is a useful animal.
(A dog is useful animal.
(Dogs are useful animals. (generic)
(Man is mortal.
(Gold is precious.

are the functions of the Sinhala determiners as shown in the following figure:[1]

	Indefinite Function	Definite Function	Generic Function	
			Indefinite Form	Definite Form
Countable (Singular)	māth ithin nāki *gāniek* ne, eka hinda And I am *an* old *woman* too, that's why	ithin *gāni* pare jana koṭa onna ballek pānalā eaiva kāvā So when *the woman* was going along the road suddenly a dog jumped and bit her.	*Saprāniaku* visin karana jhivakria bohoja.[2] The acts of self presarvation carried out by a living organism are many.	*gāhanija* deva-ganaṅ kara mama . . .[3] I who made (the) *woman* into goddesses . . .
Countable (Plural)		ane ane me gei *gānuge* katāva! Aney, aney the talk of the women in this house!		gānuge vanchā-valaṭa ahuvenna epa ! Don't be caught by (the) *women's wiles* !
Uncountable	maṭa kisima *nidāhasak* nā eā avaṅ passe I have no (a) *freedom* at all after she came.	. . . are ammaṭa kelaṅ kiua ne, vilsan *vathura* nāsthi karanava kia kia. Wilson carried tales to that mother, no, saying I waste the water.		*vathura* nāthuva apaṭa jivathvenna bā. We can't live without (the) *water*.
	166	506	09	197

Fig 2

[1] The total number of determiners in my material was 878.
[2] A. C. Dharmawardana *Vidyā Māvata*, Bk. 3 (Sri Lanka Publishers, 1963) p. 2.
[3] Martin Wickramasinghe, *Upan Dā Sita*, p. 22.

It will be seen that like the English determiners *a* and *the* the Sinhala forms expressing the definite, the indefinite and the generic categories are associated with nouns. Indeed, as far as the definite is concerned, Sinhala has no formal linguistic counterpart of the English *the* to express definite meaning, but simply uses the singular form of the noun: "The Sinhalese substantive is always definite in the singular: *goviya* means 'the cultivator', *kikili* 'the hen', *ata* 'the hand.''[1]

This statement by Geiger on the Sinhala definite form is only partially correct. In the construction *mē kiri jati!: This milk is jolly good!* *kiri: milk* is in the definite form. The 'definiteness' is not given independent morphological regognition but is implicit in the form of the word - a root morpheme. But as with English *the* this very same form can occur in a different sort of syntactic and semantic environment with a generic meaning:

kiri tharuna lamainta hari hodai.
Milk is very good for young children.

Apart from uncountables like *kiri* Sinhala also plural countables having this same double function.

mē saapuē gurulēthu hari gini ganaṅ ne! (definite)
The goblets in this shop cost the earth!
dän *gurulēthu hari* ganaṅ! (generic)
Goblets cost the earth these days!

Definite singular forms like the following may also have a generic function:

mānava jāge parināmaja
(the) Man's evolution
siumäli *yanagi atha* men nàvi ouhu ketharam lalithjakine bara usulathda?[2]

Bent like the slender willow with what grace do they bear that burden?

In all the examples cited above the noun forms gain their generic meaning from the linguistic context in which they appear.

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[1] Geiger, p. 113, Section 117.
[2] E. R. Sarathchandra, *Malagiya Atho* (Maharagama, Saman Press, 1961) p. 6.

In languages where the generic meaning is signalled by the definite and indefinite forms instead of a special distinctive form how do we recognise it as such? The definite and the indefinite on the one hand and the generic on the other demand different types of constructions. In English we have

1. A/the cat/the cats/was/were by the fire that night constrasting with

2. A cat/Cats/loves/love warmth.

1 cannot possibly be generic since it relates to a specific point of time and is, therefore, contrary to the meaning of the generic class. The generic requires predicative constructions of the type *love warmth, drink milk, is an useful animal, There are . . . in Lapland,* in conjunction with certain sorts of subjects: A cat/The horse/reindeer. The generic meaning is usually incompatible with the perfect and imperfect tenses while the definite and the indefinite meanings are not. Nor could one with regard to a generic statement meaningfully ask, 'Which cat/dog/reindeer? Many of these conditions[1] would apply to Sinhala as well.

"The indefinite article is expressed by adding the numeral *ek.* 'one' to the substantive. The constituent parts then coalesce into word . . . *goviya*' the cultivator *goviek . . .*[2]

For the indefinite then, Sinhala has a separate form, the bound morpheme *ek.* The indefinite form not only expresses the indefinite and generic meanings but in the written language it also couples with gender and case. Only gender appears together with the indefinite meaning in speech:

Written Forms

	Nom.	**Acc.**	
Animate Mas.	minis-ek	minis-eku	man
Fem.	gähäni-ak	gähäni-aka	woman
Inanimate Neut.	gah-ak	gah-ak	tree

Speech Forms

Animate	minih-ek	man	
	gäni-ek	woman	
	ball-ek	dog	
Inanimate	gah-ak		

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[1] Holger Steen Sorensen, Word Classes in Modern English (Copenhagen G. E. C. and Gard Publishers 1958) Sect. 67–69.

[2] Geiger, Sect. 117.

In my discussion of marked and unmarked case forms in Sinhala I noted that one of the most important features of the unmarked as against marked was its basic or fundamental character. This feature together with that of text frequency, emerges very strongly in the determiner system of Sinhala. The definite is clearly the unmarked feature in form, in function and in frequency. Morphologically it is the unmarked zero form e.g. *miniha* as against the marked indefinite *minihek*. This latter form, at least in the more formal written styles, shows some morphological variation, a typical feature of marked forms :

Acc. Mas.	tharuna-eku-gē prēmeje
	a young man's love.
Acc. Fem,	tharuni-aka-gē sitha
	a young woman's mind
Nom. Anim.	gei ball-ek burai.
	A dog [is] barking in the house.
Inanim.	sulegeṭe gah·ak vätei.
	The wind blows down a tree.

As far as function goes the definite has that wider range of applicability that characterises all unmarked forms in relation to the marked. Forms like *gäni ganu* have two grammatical meanings : they indicate the absence of indefiniteness (the marked category)- they are definite. They can also indicate the female of the species in which case they have a generic meaning (cf Fig. 2). This happens much less frequently with the marked indefinite form as the figures for the indefinite form in the generic function in Fig 2. show. Typically, a construction like *kotiek mas kanevā* would tend to occur within larger stretches like *anna balanna koṭiek mas kanevā!* : *Hey, look! A leopard eating meat!* which do not favour generic meaning since they suggest the particular. The form *koṭiyā/ koṭiyo*, however, is par excellence definite, or generic according to context. Once again the figures in Fig. 2 speak for themselves.

Syncretisation does not appear as a feature of the marked category in this area of Sinhala grammer but facultative interpretation does as a result of the basic nature of the unmarked definite. Thus the root noun morpheme which is par excellence definite can be interpreted facultatively as generic if context forces such an interpretation on us:

ara kůḍue koṭiyā dän mas kanēva.   (definite)
The leopard in that cage is eating meat now.

koṭiyāgē pradhāna kǎma jāthiya mas.   (generic)
The leopard's staple food is meat.

The definite then emerges very clearly as the unmarked member of the definite/indefinite opposition in Sinhala by virtue of its zero form, its basic fundamental character, its greater text frequeney and its appearance in contexts which force a facultative interpretation on the hearer.

Person in Sinhala

The categories of person and gender in Sinhala pronouns both in the spoken and written language can be dealt with briefly. A good many of the personal pronouns in Sinhala are unmarked for the masculine and feminine genders (Fig. 3). The rest are marked either for masculine, feminine or for neuter (Figs 4 and 5):

Person	Singular		Plural	
First	mama mā	54	api apa	36
Second	uba ojā oba thō	01 10 16	ubalā ojālā, ōgollō/an obalā	
Third	eā meā thamā ekenek	14 03 07 08	egollō/an) megollō/an)	09

Fig. 3

Person	Singular		Plural
	Mas.	Fem.	
First	—	—	—
Second	thamuse thā	— thī	thamuselā thopilā
Third	ōkā mekā ekā u mu ohu	ōki meki eki — — ā	— — — uń muń ouhu, oun 19

Fig. 4

Person	Singular	Plural
Neuter	ēka mēka ōka eja 28	ēvā mevā ōvā eja

Fig. 5

The unmarked pronouns (Fig. 3) have the generality and the frequency that are two of the primary characteristics of such forms as opposed to the marked. They also show the feature of facultative expression in a modified form. i.e. *mama, ube, api, eā* etc. are interpreted as masculine or feminine according to situational context. But these forms have no par excellence interpretation as with the unmarked definite noun which is definite par excellence but generic when facultatively interpreted. The other features of zero expression and syncretisation are also lacking in the pronoun area of Sinhala grammar. *Both* the marked and the unmarked pronouns show zero expression for gender and syncretisation is irrelevant as far as the masculine/feminine distinction is concerned.

No gender distinctions appearing in the unmarked forms are syncretised in the marked. In fact it is the reverse that occurs. Gender distinctions in the marked (Figs 4 and 5) are syncretised in the unmarked (Fig. 3).[1] Sinhala pronouns do not, therefore, show all the features of the marked/unmarked opposition and share this deficiency with the Sinhala article determiners.

One interesting feature of the unmarked forms is that a proper name is often used in place of a pronoun like *eä, oyā* or *ube he/she* or *you:*

1. misilin kiua kaudha allaganna janevā kiela-kaudha misilinve—
   oyā   oyāve
   uba   ubave

   Misilin (you) said someone was going to put the blame on (you) who (was going to put the blame on) Misilin (you)?

2. vilsan kēlañ kienevā ohoma hiṭiaṭa.
   äi vilsan kelañ kianne?
      eä

   Wilson tells tales though you wouldn't think so.

   Why does Wilson (he) tell tales?

So far I have been considering the category of gender in Sinhala personal pronouns. As far as person goes Greenberg[2] notes that in general, the third person appears as the most unmarked form and that this form may be considered in opposition to the unmarked first and second persons. This does not appear to be the case in the Sinhala conversational material examined by me. But it must be admitted that the Sinhala third person is more basic and fundamental in some ways than either the first or second persons. It is, for instance, the only form that can be taken as a surrogate, a general term for the second person as well:

      janna kiua ne ekenekta

           oyāṭa

      I told someone (you) to go, didn't I?

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[1] The total number of pronouns in my material was 224.

[2] Language Universals, pp. 44, 45.

ekenek a ekenek gurulethuak bidalā ithin aḍaneva a kali dihā
oyā   oyā
bala balā

Someone (you) ah someone (you) ah had broken her goblet
and so (you) was crying and crying ah.

All in all the pronouns with regard to gender and person
reflect some of the major features of the marked unmarked oppo-
sition: the basic general character of unmarked together with the
greater frequency that characterises such forms (in some instances)
in contrast to the marked. But syncretisation, facultative and zero
expression do not set off the marked pronouns from unmarked.
These latter are 'discordant facts' and indicate that the criteria
that identify the unmarked as against the marked do not always
operate together in the same area of grammar But the theory
of marked and unmarked forms does remain, nevertheless, a
useful one giving us as it does insights into the behaviour of
linguistic forms within that intricate and highly structured system
of opposing and contrasting relationships which is language.