DYNAMICS IN SOCIOLINGUISTICS:
A STUDY OF
THE IMPERATIVE SENTENCE IN SPOKEN SINHALESE

Introduction

Sinhalese culture, which has a long and continuous history and deep rooted traditions, is replete with highly differentiated social norms, some of which are reflected in the language in its address forms, commands and requests.[1] The present study will mainly focus upon the imperative sentence, but will also partially deal with the address system in so far as it is relevant to the study of the imperative sentence. We also have included historical information regarding the imperative forms and their sociolinguistic background wherever possible.

The Imperative sentence in Sinhalese is generally regarded as a direct, simple sentence type. This is true if we confine our attention only to the morphological aspect according to which any sentence whose nucleus is an imperative verb is an imperative sentence:

<p align="center">Oyā yannā 'You go'</p>

However, if we adopt the semantic approach and try to distinguish all types of expressions that have direct or associated imperative sense, the picture becomes quite complex. It is complex not only in the number of expressions involved, but also in the nature of the commands, which range from severe orders to mere suggestions. Further, there is a regular correspondence beetween the pronoun (usually in the second person) and the verb, which indicates three levels of relative status-ranking that prevail between the speaker and the addressee, for whom the command is intended. These status rankings are referred to here as *superior, equal* and *inferior* with intermediate gradations in each category.[2] We propose to trace this hierarchical order along with the formal/informal and polite/impolite distinctions involved therein. Further, we shall discuss the ways in which modern social attitudes have brought about some radical changes in the norms, creating in the present a new situation which could be formulaed as *Formal — Distant versus Informal — Proximate,* which has been responsible for elevating some of the so called inferior usages to normal informal contexts.

1. A few representative studies pertaining to this study are found in J.B. Pride and Janet Holms edited *Sociolonguistics,* Penguin Books, 1972. See: Bright, W. B. Ramanujan, A.K. (1964), "Sociolinguistic Variation and Linguistic Change", pp. 157–166; Geertz, C. (1960), "Linguistic Etiquette". pp. 167–179; Labov, W. (1970) "Study of Language in its Social Context)", pp. 180–202; Ervin-Tripp, S.M. (1969), "Sociolinguistic Rules of Address", pp. 225–240; Frake, C.O. (1964), "How to Ask for a Drink in Subanum", pp. 260–266; Cazden, C.B. (1970), "The Situation: A Neglected Source of Social Class Differences in Language Use", pp. 294–313. See also: Roger Brown and Marguerite Ford, "Address in American English", Dell Hymes (Edited) *Language in Culture and Society,* Harper and Row, 1966, pp. 234–244; Ferguson, C.A. and Gumperz J.J. *Linguistic Diversity in South Asia,* Indian University Research Center in Anthropology. Folklore and Linguistics, Pub. no. 13, 1960.

2. Somewhat similar situation is found in Javanese. For an exposition see, Geertz, C. "Linguistic Etiquett", loc. cit.

Though we are mainly concerned with these two sociolinguistic problems, it is necessary to redefine the imperative construction so as to accommodate the sociolinguistic variations that we propose to investigate. To some extent the historical background of the linguistic components is also taken into consideration to substantiate our views.

Definition

According to the morphological definition, an imperative sentence is based on an imperative verb nucleus. Such verbs in the spoken language include, for example, *marə, marənnə, marəpan marəpiyə, marəpiyav* 'kill'. In the spoken language, however, the most common verb form with *navi* ending *(yanəvā* 'go') could also be used as an imperative. If we take a grammatically invariable sentence like *k̄məyā gedərə yanəvā*, it could be used as a statement, a question, a command, an exclamation and a purturbed statement, depending upon the intonation contours.[*]

k̄məyā	*gedərə*	*yanəvā*	
1	2	1		statement
1	2	1		question
2	2	3		command
2	2	2		purturbed statement
2	3	2		exclamation

Accordingly, any sentence that has the intonation pattern of 2 2 3 ' with rising intonation could be defined as an imperative sentence. However, most of the components in a command are optional. In spoken language we often hear expressions like *ayin* 'Get to a side' where the verb is dropped, instead of *ayin yenna*. In such instances 3 ' intonation is shifted to the remaining form. In expressions like *tamuse yanəvā gedərə* 'You go home' where the regular word order is changed, 3 ' intonation falls not on the verbal form but on the final word.

This simple definition based on intonation would allow us to include within an imperative sentence not only those expressions with imperative verbs but also others with periphrastic constructions, which serve as their substitutes. If we drop such elliptic sentences and focus our attention on those which have both nominal and verbal components, we usually find an address form in the vocative, a pronominal and the verbal piece: (VP)

Nimal, oyā gedərə yannə: 'Nimal, you go home'

The verbal piece could be extended by subordinate clauses:

Oyā iskōle gihillā, havəsə mehe enna: 'You go to school and come here in the evening'.

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3.   de Silva, M.W.S., *Vigrahatmaka Vāgvidyava*, Sri Lanka Govt. Press, 1963, pp. 43 45.

While the noun maintains the number distinction, the verb shows number distinction only in the case of 'inferior' category, remaining invariable with regard to the other two groups (see section 4).

The imperative is mostly used in the second person. However, it is posited for the 3rd person in Sinhalese, by the author of the *Sidatsaṅgarāva*. This and its probable connection with some 1st person pronominals will be discussed in the next section.

2. Historical background

The sociolinguistic phenomena that we wish to discuss here as well other issues were touched upon by the author of the *Sidatsaṅgarāva*, the classical Sinhalese grammar of the 13th century.[4] In the discussion of the imperative verb (*vidi kiriyā*) he says: "A command given to a person expressed in the second or the third person, politely or rudely, without distinction of present or future tense, is put in the imperative mood." Here he takes into consideration three distinctive features of the imperative verb:

      (1) tense
      (2) polite/impolite distinction and
      (3) person.

Positing of tense for the imperative is really irrelevant, except for the fact that it is based on the present active base and the reflexive base (*mara pan* 'kill' ; *märi yan* 'die'). Even this is not necessary because the verbal base itself functions as an imperative (*kara* 'do'), with zero suffixation.

The second distinction of polite or rude nature of a command takes into account the very same sociolinguistic feature with which we are concerned here. It is therefore clear that this polite/impolite distinction has had an overbearing significance at the time. This distinction, though significant, does not take into account the imperatives that are neither polite nor impolite It appears that such istances of neutral type have been incorporated with polite forms. Even though the *Sidatsaṅgarāva* gives a set of examples, it does not mention which of them are polite and which rude, but we may be able to make our own conjectures regarding this. It gives six suffixes for the imperative, namely, *a, e, annō, annā, av* and *u*, and illustrates them with the following examples:

1.	*Bamuṇa paṇa dā bojə*	'O Brahmin, eat on the following day'
2.	*Särade mahabä*	'May the strong armed one live long'
3.	*Mēkaru mē pisannō*	'The cook may prepare food'
4.	*Himi numba daham desannä*	'Lord, may you preach the Dhamma'
5.	*Guṇek ätnam mehi bajav*	'If there is any good here, accept it'
6.	*Sajaneni yahak dakku*	'Virtuous men, may you see good'

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4.   *Sidatsaṅgarā Vivaraṇaya*, (Ed.) Cumaratunga, Munidasa: Gunasena Company, Colombo.

Of these, the first and perhaps fifth and sixth are impolite while the others are polite. Another factor that the *Sidatsañgarāvə* notes is that certain types of imperatives have optative (*ā*si) connotations, and in fact, No.2 is an example. The list of suffixes given here is rudimentary. At the same time the *Sidatsañgarāvə* fails to mention one of the characteristic features of the imperative namely the number distinction. This is a very significant feature even in the spoken Sinhalese, where number distinction in the verbal system has disappeared elsewhere. The classical position regarding the imperative verb is best exemplified in Paranavitana's exposition of the *Sigiri Graffiti* belonging to the 8th – 10th centuries[5]. Paranavitana gives the following ten types:

1.	Verbal base:	*balu* 'see'; *kiya* 'say'; *gan* 'take'
2.	*-hi* suffix:	*balahi; kiyahi*
3.	*-va* suffix:	*balava; kiyava*
4.	*-u:*	*ganu: daku* 'see'
5.	*-ga* suffix:	*balaga: kiyaga*
6.	*-yu* suffix:	*balayu; vasayu* 'dwell'
7.	*-vu/ v* suffix:	*balav; kiyav; dev* 'give'
8.	*-ne/nne/nna:*	*balane / balanne / balanna*
9.	*-nu* ,,	*balanu; kiyanu* 'say'
10.	*-na/n* ..	*balan; kiyan; vana* 'may be'

Of these, 1-5 are singular, 6 and 7 plural (two alternating plurals for No. 3), and 8 to 10 are indistinct for number. In the modern spoken many of the above forms have disappeared, although some of them surface in the standard written, especially in poetry. In the spoken language we still have types 1, 7 (latter in the form of the psudo suffix *-piyə/-piyav* added to the verbal base as in *bala+piyav*), and 8 with the modification of the suffix *-nnä* to *-nnə*, which is quite common.

Consideration of the origins of these historical forms is relevant for the present study for two reasons. Firstly, it will allow us to ascertain how the shades on meanings that were associated with each of the early forms became semantically redistributed in the present language, once the original forms disappeared. In this connection we have to take into consideration some of the periphrastic constructions which function as imperative forms. Secondly, to ascertain the point in the history of the Sinhalese language at which the polite (adərə) and rude (anadərə) distinction surfaced.

If we go strictly by the rule of grammar, of the ten types given above, we would be left out with only type 1 as a pure imperative form. This type of stem imperative has existed right through the history of the language and could be traced even up to the Old Indo-Aryan (OIA) language. Geiger considers type 2, along with its plural, type 7, as derived from OIA or MIA imperative forms ending in *-hi* (sg.) and *-the* (pl.).[6] Cumaratunga's view that second person singular and plural imperatives

5.   Paranavitana, S. *Sigiri Graffiti*, Oxford University Press, 1956, Vol. 1. Introduction, pp. cxli–cxlv.

6.   Geiger, Wilhelm, *A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, Royal Asiatic Society, Colombo, 1938, Sec. 150, pp. 149–150.

with -hi and -vu/v endings are derived from -hi and -hu suffixes of the indicative is untenable.[7] The origin of type 3 has been differently interpreted; Geiger thinks that it is derived from -tha ending forms, such as karotha "do;, while Paranavitana thinks that it is associated with the verb form ve 'happen", which is, however, unlikely, because ve in that sense is associated with involitive action. This is rather an alternative form of type 6, which is very frequently found in the Sigiri graffiti. Ending yu → vu; and the singular va (as in karavu) is probably an analogical replacement on the basis of the singular/plural distinction that appeared in the nominal during that time. In the early texts -yu/vu are found mainly with plural nouns, thus showing the late origin of -və. The -u ending of type 4 is of optative derivation. The origin of type 5 with -ga suffix is uncertain but is definitely a polite and solidarity form. Paranavitana connects it with the Sanskrit form anga 'pray/please'. Type 6, which is frequently found in Sigiri verses, alternates with type 7. Type 8, which has given rise to the most common modern imperative form with -nnə suffix, is of infinitive derivation, with the variant forms -ntə and -ndə (balanna/ balantə/ balandə). Type 9, with -nu ending, is an elliptical construction which originally was -nu + mänəvi, as in kərənu mänəvi 'may do' or 'beffitting to be done', a suggestion rather than a direct command. But forms like kərənu have now assumed the role of direct command. While -na ending of type 10 is extremely rare, and seems to be a variation of type 9, that of -n is due to vowel elision : -nu → -n.

The above description of the origins of imperative forms show that many of them have come from different sources that have had no imperative connotations earlier. The fact that periphrastic constructions like kərənu mänəvi were used for the imperative is seen in translations of imperatives into Sinhalese from Pali. For example, nisida, an imperative, is translated as 'hindinu mänəvi 'may you sit down' (nisida deva; deviyan vahansē vädə hindinu mänəvi).[8] This type of examples give some legitimacy for including periphrastic constructions as imperative constructions.

Before going into the details of such periphrastic constructions, let us consider the aspect of person. The Sidatsangərāvə mentions that imperative is found in both second and third persons. However, in the examples that are given, there are no instances of the third person being used. In the spoken Sinhalese third person pronouns are used with imperative verbs that have a reflexive base. Compare for example:

> Gahatə nägəla vätiyan 'Climb up the tree and fall down'
> Matə rā nudun ū gahamulə vätiyan 'May he who did not provide me with
> toddy fall down from the tree'

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7. Cumaratunga, Munidasa, *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*, Gunasena, p. 281; *Kriyā Vivaraṇāya*, Gunasena, 2500 B.E., p. 51.

8. Gnanaloka, Kodagoda (Ed.) *Amāvatura*, Gunasena, Colombo, p. 115: Wijemanna, p., *Amāvatura : A Syntactic Study*, Lake House, 1984, p. 134

While the imperative form *vaṭiyan* is used in both sentences, the latter has pronoun *ū* which is in the third person. Similarly, some verbal forms ending in -*den* are used in the third person with imperative connotation: *giyaden* 'let him go'; *āvaden* 'let him come'; *kāvaden/kadden* 'let him eat' etc. They are periphrastic constructions formed by adding *den* 'give', which itself is an imperative form, to the participial base. Another periphrastic construction used with the third person is formed by adding -*ve* to the past participle as in *bahuvave*, 'let him see', *kāvāve* 'let him eat' etc.

The *Sidatsaṅgarāva* does not posit an imperative for the first person in Sinhalese. On the other hand both Sanskrit and Prakrit have imperatives for all persons. However, verbs such as *karannam* and *karamu* which are indicatives of the first person singular and plural respectively in the classical language are now used more or less like permissive commands. In the spoken language their role is entirely limited to this function. Geiger includes the latter as a cohortative imperative, along with such forms as *balamha* 'let us look', *kamha* 'let us eat' etc.

However, the imperatives of the first person and the third person are rather marginal and beyond the pale of the present study.

3. Periphrastic Constructions

We have already come across several periphrastic constructions, some of which have become regular imperatives, like *karanu* 'do', after the elision of *mänavi*. In some, like *kadden* 'let him eat', *giyaden* 'let him go', *märiyan* 'let him die', *giyāve* or *giyāvayi*, the elements have coalesced so that their periphrastic nature is no more recognizable. Preponderance of periphrastic froms became a latent feature in Sinhalese mainly due to the morphological structure being affected by the phonological developments that were operative in the language. This led to the disappearance of many of the case endings.[9] Furthermore, as regards the imperatives it should be mentioned that, while some of the early forms have disappeared in the spoken language, others, which had wider application earlier, are used in restricted contexts so that the semantic areas covered by them earlier are now covered by periphrastic constructions.

Apart from periphrastic constructions given above, some imperatives used in the spoken Sinhalese are of periphrastic origin. Expressions like *dīpiya* (*dī+piya*), *dīpan* (*dī+pan*) have the participial form *dī*, to which *piya* or *pan*, both imperatives, are added to indicate the imperative of the impolite or rude type.

An interesting example is the use of stem imperatives like *kiya*, *bala* etc., in modern Sinhalese. These are now restricted to commanding the inferiors, although there was no such restriction in the early Sinhalese language. In the case of superiors this semantic area is to be covered by expressions like *enu- mänavi*, *āvot hondayi*, which means 'befitting to come'. In the *Sigiri Graffiti*, the pronouns *tō/ tā/ nuba* were used in all contexts, but they are now reckoned disrespectful terms. This state of affairs is mentioned by Paranavitana as follows:

9.   Geiger, W. op.cit., p. 93; Paranavitana, S., op.cit. pp. xcvii & xcix.

"The form *nuba* (No. 339) together with its variant *uṁba* is often used in later language as a substitute for forms derived from the stem *ta*......
Uṁba, which does not occur in our graffiti, can be traced to the same source............(it) started its career as a highly respectable word, for it is used in addressing the Buddha. Its use was resorted to at a time when the notion that it is disrespectful to use the forms of the stem *ta* in addressing superiors or equals was gaining ground; but after some time, it also went the way of the word which it had supplanted, so that it is now used in addressing inferiors only. The democratic government of the day has expressly forbidden its use in official conversation and writing. On the other hand, *oba*, appearing to be of the same origin as *uṁba*, is deemed to be of aristocratic quality. Some words, like some men, have all the luck:"[10].

A similar curse has fallen upon the verb forms that were used regularly with these pronouns. Types 1, 3 and 9 were downgraded to be used only with inferiors. As to when such a notion came into being we cannot be certain. If we go by the numerous examples found in the Sīgiri Graffiti, this was not an important consideration even during the late Anuradhapura period. However, by the 12th century type 1 was being used with inferiors and periphrastic forms were becoming preponderant.

Apart from the periphrastic forms already discussed in the spoken Sinhalese, we come across expressions like the following:

> *Kərənə sēkvā*
> *Kərənu mänəvi*
> *Keruvọt hoṅdayi*
> *Kərənəva hoṅdayi*
> *Keruvānam hoṅdayi*
> *Kəranna ōna / Kələ yutuyi*
> *Kərāndm*......

In the spoken Sinhalese language, except the first, all the others are used as substitutes fo *Kərənu mänəvi*, which we have already discussed. The fact that these expressions do have some imperative function is clearly demonstrated when we take their negative formation, *Kəranna epā*, into consideration. Now, *epā*, here is the regular prohibitive particle. Although the negative particle *no* also could be used before these expressions, as in *nokeruvọt hoṅdayi*, it is now being supplanted by *epā*, whose history could also be traced to the Sanskrit prohibitive particle *hāpaya*.. The form *epā* is found in the Sigiri Graffiti.[11] Forms like *Kəranna ōnə* and *Kələ yutuyi* are used as injunctives, but they could be included within the fold of imperatives.

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10. Paranavitana, S., op. cit., p. cxx.

11. Ibid., Vol. I. p. cxlive; Vol. II. p. 23, verse 39.

Just as much as some of the so-called genuine imperative forms are of diverse origin. so are the periphrastic expressions given above. Of them *kərənə sĕkvā* has *sĕkvā*, added to the participial adjectives such as *kərənə*. *Sĕkvā* itself is of optative connotations. It is derived from *seyeka → sĕka* 'appears to be' which has an honorific sense. Periphrastic constructions. like *kərənu mänəvi*, are of infinitive derivation. They have a classical touch and are supplanted by those like *keruvot hoñdayi* or *kərənəvā hoñdayi*. or *karanavanam hondayi* in the spoken language. despite the slight differences between them. Here *mänəvi* is easily substituted by *hoñdayi*. which is its equivalent in the spoken laguage. *Keruvoth* and *Keruvānam* are both conditionals, and along with *hondayi* mean 'better if done', a suggestion rather than a command. *kārannə ōnə* is an injunctive, for which *kələ yutuyi* is the standard substitute. Use of the expression *giyānam* as an imperative reveals the process by which even earlier paraphrastic constructions were reduced to single expressions by ellipsis. This particular expression is still not well integrated into the language as an imperative, but is the process of becoming so. *Giyānam* itself is a periphrastic expression formed by the coalescense of *giyā-+nam*, where to the past participial form is added the particle *-nam*, which is a bound morpheme. Now in this construction the verbal base could be either the present or past participle.

As stated earlier, many would object to these diverse constructions being included as imperatives in Sinhalese. as Robert Hall Jr. has objected in the case of an Italian grammarian's similar exercise with Italian.[12] However, Hall suggests that such expressions could be designated as 'synonyms of the imperatives' rather than imperatives. Let us treat these periphrastic constructions at least in that manner. for they do function as imperatives. although they may have other functions as well. Expressions like *giyānam* are conditional phrases which have been reduced from the periphrastic constructions of the type *giyānam hoñdayi*. 'better if (you) go'.

If we carefully consider all these different constructions, the position of Sinhalese imperative construction is more or less similar to that of Sanskrit and Pali. For Sanskrit, Whithney summarises the position as follows:[13]

"...... the command shades off into a demand. an exhortation, an entreaty, an expression of earnest desire. The imperative also sometimes signifies an assumption or concession: and occeasionally by pregnant construction it becomes the expression of something conditional or contingent." He also says: "The difference between imperative and subjunctive and optative in their fundamental and most characteristic uses is one of degree: command, requisition, wish: and no sharp line of division exists between them: they are more or less exchangeable with one another, and combinable in coordinate clauses."

12.   Hall. Robert. Jr.. *Introductory Lignuistics*. Chilton, 1964. pp. 194-195.

13.   Whitney, W.D.. *Sanskrit Grammar*, Motilal Benarsidas, 1962, Sec. 572-582, pp. 215-220.

An interesting feature of the Sinhalese imperative expressions is the use of *ko* as a pseudo-suffix after the imperative verb to indicate endearment, entreaty or persuasion. This is not used with the periphrastic constructions, probably because they already have such nuances ingrained in them. For example, *vaḍinə sēkvā* 'come' used for superiors, has all respect and is more of a suggestion than a command. *Ko* could even be regarded as an indicator of the imperative verbs in Sinhalese. It is used with the verbs of the three persons as follows:

	Singular	*plural*
1st Per.	Kərannam-ko	Kərəmu-ko
2nd Per.	Kərə-ko/kərəpiya-ko	Kərəpiyav-ko
3rd Per.	Kəradden-ko	Kəraddella-ko

The *ko* suffix is mainly used in the spoken language; however it has a fairly long history in that it has been used in the folk poetry of the late medieval times as *kiyə-koyi, balə koyi* etc., as an attempt to reduce the harshness of imperative forms like *kiyə* and *balə*.

4. NP + VP Correlation in the Sinhalese Imperative Construction.

Now that some of the theoretical as well as historical problems have been cleared, it may be easier for us to determine the sociolinguistic features involved here. For this, it is necessary to hierarchically arrange the nominal and verbal components in the imperative sentence. We shall leave out those expressions in the first and third persons and restrict our discussion to only those in the second person, where the status ranking is quite evident.

In spoken Sinhalese, the imperative verbs as well as periphrastic expressions and also the pronominals that go with them could be roughly divided into the three categories of *superior, equal* and *inferior*, depending on the relative status ranking. However, it is extremely difficult to make intra-grade subdivisions because some forms overlap due to free variation. Some of the intra-category subdivisions would enter different levels of ranking, depending on dialect variation. However, I have tried to arrange them in a descending order of status-ranking and will discuss the instances where overlappings occur. In this arrangement I have designated the verbs and periphrastic expressions that function as verbs by capital letters, and the pronominals that go with them by simple letters, so that when we match them, it would be much easier to see how closely related they are.

Verbal Components:
Common Forms

		bala 'see'	
		Singular	*plural*
Superior	A. *baləṇəsēkvā*		
	B. *baləṇu mänəvi*		
	C. *bäluvot hoñdayi*		
Equal	D. *balanna/-nṭa/-nḍa*		(balan*ḍəlā*)
	E. *balanəvā hoñdayi*		
Inferior:	F. balanəva		(baləṇavəlā.)
	G. *bäluva-nam*		
	H.	*bulapan/-han*	*bəlapalla/-halla*
	Hi.	*märiyan*	*märiyalla*
	I.	*balə/märiya*	(*balav*)
	J.	*bələpiyə/-āpiyə*	*bəlapiyav/-āpiyav*

This paradigmatic arrangement reveals that all the genuine imperative verbs of yore are now concentrated in the categories from H through J. The others are based on verbal derivatives, conditionals or infinitives or are of the periphrastic type. Even *D*, which is commonly used in higher and equal categories, is of infinitive origin. The other salient factor is that it is only within H through J categories that we have the singular/plural distinction. The plurals in D and F categories are rarely used; they seem to be analoguous to those in H category.

Pronominal Components:

	Singular	*Plural*
Superior	(a) obə vahanse	obə vahanselā
	(b) tamuṇṇānse	tamuṇṇānselā
	(c) obətumā(m)-tumi (fm)	obatumālā(m) -tumilā(fm)
Equal	(d) ounnähe/unnähe	ounnähelā/unnähelā
	(d,i) Ounnānse/unnānse	ounnānselā/unnānselā
	(e) ohe	ohelā
	(f) obə	obəlā
	(g) oyā/meyā	oyālā/meyālā
Inferior	(h) tamā/yusmətā	tamālā/yusmatālā
	(i) tamuse/ayise	tamuselā/ayiselā
	(j) umbə	umbəlā
	(k) tō (m), tī (fm)	topi

In this arrangement some of the dialect forms, such as *obəhe* and *imbə*, have been eliminated. One may also not agree with the relative hierarchical position of some of the forms such as *ohe, obə* and *tamuse* because, in the low country dialect, *ohe* is used with respect and could be in the superior category, while *tamuse* is a somewhat derogatory form. The form *obə* used mainly in formal speech, could in some contexts be of a higher ranking than *ohe*. Again, the ordering of (d) and (d. 1)

may be questionable. While the former is mainly used by laymen to speak to a person senior in age, the latter is exclusively used by elderly Buddhist monks to address monks who are junior to them; but there is some respect involved in the latter, possibly to inculcate in the juniors that despite their young age they are respectable because of their role as monks. Both (d) and (d. 1) may be pushed even to the superior category.

Let us now see how these nominal and verbal components correlate with each other. One problem, however, is that there is no one-to-one correspondence between the nominals and verbals. Even so, from among the overlapping correspondences it is possible to isolate the ideally suited pairs. In the following paradigm, the verbal forms given at the beginning are those that ideally suit the pronominal, and those within brackets are the overlapping forms: (For the sake of conveninence the sentence given here as an example means "You come tomorrow" which in normal polite language would be "*oyā heṭǝ ennǝ.*". Also note in this particular example the difference of the very verbal form in the highest and the lowest categories. Plural constructions are given only where the verbal component displays plurality.

1.   a : A (B C D)   *obǝ-vahảnsē heṭǝ vaḍina sēkvā;... vảḍinu mảnǝvi... vaḍinnǝ, vảḍiyot hoňdayi*

2.   b. : B (C D)   *Tamunnǎnse heṭǝ vaḍinu mảnǝvi......vaḍinnǝ,... enu mảnǝvi, ennǝ/āvot hoňdayi.*

3.   c : C D (B)   *Obǝ tumā heṭǝ āvot hoňdayi; ... ennǝ ... enu mảnǝvi*

4.   d : D E (C)   *ounnảhe heṭǝ ennǝ;... enǝvā hoňdayi;... āvot hoňdayi.*

5.   d–i: D E (C)   *Ounnǎnse heṭǝ enǝvā hoňdayi;... ennǝ; ... āvot hoňdayi.*

6.   e : D (C E F)   *Ohe heṭǝ ennǝ:... āvot hoňdayi; ... enǝvā hoňdayi; ... enǝvā.*

7.   f : C (C)   *Obǝ heṭǝ ennǝ;... āvot hoňdayi/Obǝlā...*

8.   g : D (C E F G)   *Oyā heṭǝ ennǝ; ... āvot hoňdayi/... enǝvā hoňdayi; ... enǝvā; āvǝnam*

9.   h : D (C E F G)   *Tamā heṭǝ ennǝ* (as above)

10.   i : D (C E F G)   *Thamuse/ Ayise heṭǝ ennǝ,;... āvot hoňdayi ... enǝvā; ... enǝvā hoňdai; ... āvǝnam*

11.   : H (C G)   *Uṁbǝ heṭǝ varen, Uṁbǝlā ... Varellā, Uṁbǝ vảḍǝ kǝrǝpan; Uṁbǝlā... kǝrǝpallā 'You work'; Uṁbǝ/ Uṁbǝlā... āvǝnam; ...... āvot hoňdayi.*

12.   k : I J (C G)   *Tō heṭǝ vǝrǝ; Topi heṭǝ varev; Tō vảḍǝ kǝrǝpiyǝ; Topi ... kǝrǝpiyav*
Tō bǝlǝ ; Topi balǝpiyav;
Tō āvot hoňdayi; Tō...āvǝnam

(The injunctive construction, which is not listed in the hierarchical arrangement of the verbal component, does not vary except in the case of (I) above, where it would be ......*vaḍinnǝ ōnǝ,* and elsewhere it occurs as ......*ǝnnǝ ōnǝ.*)

5. Relative Social Status

The above semantic presentation would no doubt demonstrate the extreme complexity of the imperative sentence in Sinhalese. It illustrates the fact that one's social status partly depends on one's own attainments and partly on the recognition of this status by outsiders, who do this by linguistic norms. It is, as Geertz puts it, a wall partially constructed by others.[14]

Status is maintained here by the use of different expressions as well as the control of the tone and voice. It is relative in two ways. First, in the normal society the status of a person also depends on his qualifications, wealth and titles, profession etc.; but here the status of the addressee depends on the status of the speaker, in this particular context the person who commands. Second, though the linguistic expressions used in addressing a person generally depend on the status ranking that the society assigns to him, they could also be transferred to evoke humour, sarcasm and condemnation. For example, the word *vaḍinavā* 'go/come', used exclusively for Buddhist monks, could also be used in the case of an ordinary person. The boss may say, *"Onnə dänuyi vaḍinne"*, addressing his employee to ridicule him for his late arrival. (Buddhist monks are expected to walk slowly with measured steps and mind at rest.) So also any ordinary person may use disparaging words even for a Buddhist monk, if he sees any misdemeanour in him. Thus, as linguistic usages are context-bound, many subtle variations could take place in any linguistic act. This very fact has been responsible for some of the variations within each category.

Sri Lankan society is broadly divided into two main groups, secular (*gihi*) and mendicant (*pävidi*). Theoretically, the status of the Buddhist religious order, which is super-wordly (lokuttərə) oriented is regarded to be superior to that of the worldly (laukikə) oriented secular society. This is acknowledged by the linguistic usages within the order as well as by outsiders. It is shown by $a : A$ correspondence, which is set apart for addressing Buddhist monks. Expressions like *obə vahanse vaḍinəsēkvä* were hitherto used exclusively for the Buddhist clergy, but are now being extended to include others, especially the Christian clergy. Formerly such usages were extended to the kings as well. Command here is very mild and is more or less a suggestion. B,C,D in (*1*) show gradual increase of the commanding nature. Of these, C (*āvot hoñdayi*) could be used in all categories, but the commanding tone could be increased as one goes down the scale. D (ennə, kərannə etc.) is used with most pronouns, except those in the inferior category.

B used for the Buddhist clergy as well as respectable persons, corresponds mainly to a. In the spoken language it is used in formal occasions as well as in correspondence.

C. (*āvot hoñdayi*) is used with all pronouns, but the tone of the sentence maintains the severity of the command. At lower down grades it may have a threatening stance.

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14.   Geertz, C., loc. cit., (Note-I) p. 173.

D. (enne), which is mainly used with the equals (d - g), is also shared by the superior category but never with those of the inferior category. It is a polite form, less harsh than *E*, and is the most common imperative in use. It is becoming more and more popular because, while remaining a polite form, it does not have any connotations of servitude toward the superiors, so it is a form that goes with notion of equality, one of the cardinal principles of modern democracy. When the use of some of the derogatory forms of address were prohibited from public use, as mentioned by Paranavitana, this particular form became the standard polite form.

E (enəvā hoñdayi) is generally used in both equal and inferior groups, but not with superiors. Within the Buddhist clergy it is used by the senior monks to their juniors; it shows authoritative, concessionary and threatening stances.

F (balənava), as shown earlier, is the most widely used finite verb in spoken Sinhalese, which has the efficacy to function as VP in statements, questions, exclamations etc. As an imperative it is slightly more impolite than *D* or *E*. Its range of opera-. tion is with the nouns from (e) through (i), thus cutting across the boundary of equal and inferior categories. However, it does not reach the nouns of (J) and (k) categories.

G (giyānam), a conditional used in imperative connotations, is an elliptical vesrsion of expressions like *giyānam hondayi*. This is used mainly in informal contexts and there is a touch of humour and ridicule when used with second person pronouns.

H, I and *J* are always regarded as derogatory except in private conversation and at a different level of social solidarity (see section 7). They are distinct in their having the singular plural distinction. Of these, *H (baləpan/balāpan baləhan)* is a periphrastic construction, which in the classical language appeared as *balāpannə* etc. Here, *pannə* ending is an imperative derived from *pā* 'show'; its still early from is *pānuya* "should show', a verbal derivative; and all these forms take the nominal suffix *la* for there plural, as in *kiya+pan+la —kiyapalla*, While *I* forms, like *bala*, are without any suffixation, *J* has *-piyə* and *-piyav* ending, which are derived from *piyə* 'throw', meaning 'finish off doing'. It thus has the force of a double imperative, demanding total subjugation to the command given.

Now let us digress a little and ascertain the nature of the pronominals from (a) to (k), which despite their variations as shown here, consist of a few basic forms. To these basic froms some honorific forms are added to indicate the desired status ranking.[14] The pronouns discussed under *a, c, f, j,* despite their location at different levels in the hierarchical order, originate from the same source. Similarly, *b, h, i,* are from a single source, and those of *d, d-i, e; g* from yet another source.

Pronouns in *a, c* and *f* have *obə* as their base. In case of *a,* pronoun *obə-vahanse* has the honorific form *vahanse,* whose origin is obscure. The Honorific form *tumā* in *c* originates from Skt. *uttama → utum+ā → utumā — tumā.* Umbə of the inferior category, which really is the original form from which *obu* itself originated,

is from Skt. *yusmat* (see *h* above), whose evolution was through prakrit *yumha-* →
*umhə → *uṁbə* (clusters like *mh* become *bh*), which has alternative forms *muṁba*
(where initial *m-* is introduced for assonance with medial *-ṁb-*) which alternates with
n-, giving rise to the form *nubə/numbə Uṁbə,* after elision of the half nasal *ṁ*, becomes
obə. Thus this late arrival becomes more fashionable and goes up in the social scale,
pushing down the more archaic form into an inferior position.

The reflexive pronoun *tamā* is the base for *b, h* and *i* categories. In *b,* the
honourific form *vahanse* is added to *tamā*. In *h* category, *tamā* is usually used in
formal contexts like a judge addressing the plaintiff. Use of the parallel form *yusmatā*
also is restricted to such contexts. *Tamuse* in the *i* category is an interesting construc-
tion. While it has the base *tamā,* the ending *se* seems to be an anlogical restoration
based on the parallel form *ayise,* and this in turn is a recent borrowing from the
English expression "I say", frequently used by teachers to draw the attention of
students. Even in English conversation it is usual to hear expressions like 'I say,
come here'. While this has become a pronominal form in Sinhalese, it is most
interesting to note that it has also a regular plural form with *-lā* ending, as *ayiselā*.
This is a formal form used for a subordinate person. *Tamuse* is also used by elder
monks to address their juniors.

The pronominals included under *d, d-i, e* and *g* are based on the deictic particle
ō 'that, near you'. In Sinhalese, deictic forms *ē, mē, arə* and *oyə,* have the efficacy
of taking gender suffixes and are conjugated as regular nouns. Of those based on *ō,*
d and *d-i* have *ounnähe* (o+*unnähe*) and *ounnänse* (o+*unnānse*) respectively. *Unnähe*
and *unnänse* are honorific forms, which when used alone will be in the third person,
and in fact *oyā* itself is ambiguous as regards its person:

Oyā parissam vennə 'You be careful'

Laməyə oyāgen parissam vennə "Child, be careful *of him,* In the first, *oyā*
means 'you' and in the second 'him'. However, as *ō* or *oyə* refers to something that
is close to the addressee, by association it acquires second person status.

Ohe which has the dialect variation *obəhe* is of peculiar formation. Ending *he*
denotes a place or location rather than a person, as illustrated by expressions like
mehe 'here', *kohe* 'where' etc, For respect a person may not be directly referred to,
but may be implied by reference in this manner. In the Veddah dialect as well as
in the social dialect of Buddhist monks, a person is addressed as *oyə-tänə,* or in the
spoken Sinhalese as *otänə* 'yonder place', meaning you. In this manner, *etänə/ehe*
'there; *him*' *metənə/mehe* I; here'. A similar semantic parallel is the use of *here* in
English, as in *expressions* like "Same here" where *here* refers to the speaker.

The last form in this hierarchy is *tō/tī* and its plural *topi*, which are cognates
of Skt. *tvam* → *tuvam* → *tuvan* → to for which the feminine category is introduced
to obtain tī, and the plurals from Skt. *tumha* Pkt. *tupphə* → *tupə* → *topə/topi.*
These were used without any derogatory sense up to about the Polonnaruwa period
and lost their respectability later on.

6. Polite : Impolite and Formal : Informal Distinctions.

Although one would expect *polite : impolite* and *formal informal* distinctions to go together with the status rankings discussed above, microanalysis of the system reveals that these distinctions are found within each of the categories of superior, equal and inferior. I think this is one of the reasons for the preponderance of minute distinctions within the system. As contextual variations abound in the language, it is extremely difficult to assign them definite values applicable to all situations and sort of transfix them in the process. In the following table we give a general picture of the *polite: impolite* and *formal : informal* distinctions for the NP + VP correspondences of the imperative expressions given earlier:

		Formal	Informal	Polite	Impolite
1,	a:A	+		+	
	a:B	+		+	
	a:C		+		+
	a:D		+		+
2.	b:B	+		+	
	b:C		+		+
	b:D		+		+
3.	c:C	+		+	
	c:B	+		+	
	c:D		+	+	
4.	d:D	+		+	
	d:C		+	+	
	d:E		+		+
5.	d:D		+	+	
	d:C		+	+	
	d:E		+	+	
6.	c:D	+		+	
	c:C	+		+	
	c:E		+	+	
	c:F		+		+
7.	f:D	+		+	
	f:C	+		+	
8.	g:D	+		+	
	g:C	+		+	
	g:E		+	+	
	g:F		+		+
	g:G		+		+
9.	h:D	+		+	
	h:C	+		+	
	h:E		+		+
	h:F		+		+
	h:G		+		+

	Formal	Informal	Polite	Impolite
10. i:D	+		+	
i:C			+	
i:E		+	+	
i:F	+			
i:G	+			+
11. j:H				
j:C				
j:G	+			+
12. k:I	+			+
k:J	+			+
k:C		+		+
k:G	+			+

The above tabular representation would show how relative are the concepts of politeness and formality. For example, the function of *C* appears to fluctuate in different groupings. The reason for such fluctuation is that the function of any component depends partially on the other components with which it is used. In the present context, the function of *C* depends on the nouns with which it correlates. Thus, in the above schematic presentation, the position of an expression depends on the N P or V P, or both.

7. Formal — Distant Versus Informal — Proximate Relationship

While there are all kinds of combinations with regard to *status, polite : impolite* and *formal : informal* distinctions, yet another dimension of the language use is that, while formal usage, which is socially more acceptable, shows some kind of distance between the speaker and the addressee, informal usage shows close solidarity. In the Sinhalese language this particular feature is very well seen in the use of the imperative sentence.

In the discussion so far we have noted that some of the early standard forms have become informal and impolite while newly concocted expressions are used to indicate higher status. Similar development could be seen with regard to the two words *mava* 'mother' and *piyā* 'father' two cognates that have survived from old Indian words mātṛ & pitṛ. They were earlier used in both informal and formal contexts but are now mostly restricted to formal uses while *ammā* and *tāttā/appacci* have replaced them in informal contexts. It is clear that the latter pair now constitute the standard endearment forms as well as proximate forms in the language.

In the case of address forms as well as imperative expressions, those used for equals have been gaining ground in keeping with the modern concept of egalitarianism which has been instrumental in creating a somewhat different linguistic atmosphere in the present day Sri Lanka. At this level superiority is not given much credence. The modern education system and the media have been responsible for this change.

While the school insists on the use of more polite and formal expressions, it also suppresses some of the conservative terms that show servility and subjugation. However, on the other hand even formality becomes a problem in the maintenance of solidarity and proximity among the individuals in a given community. In the earlier set up some of the so called *inferior* expressions were used in the col·oquial language, without much heed for formality. Thus in the village society it is not derogatory for parents to address their children as *umbə/umbəlā* or even children to address the parents in the same manner. Sometimes parents address their children by such forms of address to show their caring and intimacy toward the children. This has been the case even in the lower segments of the society for whom the use of formal expression is not in keeping with the solidarity of the group. Formal ways of address for them is only a concession for outsiders.

During recent times the wide gap between formal usages and informal usages has narrowed down. While the diglossic situation in Sinhalese still remains,[15] some of the expressions that were hitherto restricted to colloquial language are being given new currency especially by creative writers and the communication media in general. The result is that those informal and derogatory expressions are being used by social groups such as university students, office girls, workers and even by professionals in intmate conversation so that the stigma attached to these forms is not as severe as it was. However, it must be stressed that such usages are not tolerated by those who are status conscious, for, such informal/impolite forms have the effect of annulling the status gap between the speaker and the addressee.[16] Thus unless both parties are of similar status, or are of close kinship or intimate relationship, any attempt by a lower status person to use informal/intimate address forms not only annuls the status of the addressee but also indicates an undue assertion for status by the speaker which would annoy the addressee. Nevertheless, status seekers use such forms of address privately as well as in public so as to upgrade their own status. Again, if the person of the higher status begins to use intimate/informal expressions in his addressing the lower status person, the latter is free to do so because the former in that linguistic context wishes to annull all status differences to sustain informality. Yet such situations are quite rare.

In this regard changes in the imperative expressions are worth noting. While some verbal forms of the superior category are supplanted by those of the equal category, (D – $nnə$ ending) those in the inferior category are upgraded, especially No. II. j:H. For example, among university students an expression like,

Umbə heṭa varen 'You come tomorrow' (11. j:H) may be more popular than, expressions like,

Oyā heṭa ennə (8. g:D) or

Tamusē heṭa enəva (10. i:E) - although there are hierarchically in a higher position.

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15. Ibid. P. 172.
16. Dharmadasa, K.N.O. *Bhāsāva hā Samājaya*. Lake House, Colombo, 1972.

In a context of this sort the last would be more authoritative than the first. In the world of films and teledrama, it is usual for vivacious girls to address their friends (both girls and boys), irrespective of slight differences in age, using expressions of the type H. j:H. Some fiction writers use such colloquialisms with great ingenuity.[17] This leads to bring about a new rapport between the standard written and the colloquial.

In this process what interests a linguist is how words like *umbə* are regaining their earlier prestige under a changing social order. Equally interesting is the manner in which new linguistic constructions actively serve to reinforce and further these social changes. This sociolinguistic relationship has caught the imagination of the author of the *Siyabaslakara*, a tenth century work on Sinhalese poetics, when he says.

'In this world, words both learned and colloquial, through their benignity promote the world order and make their own survival." (*Siyabaslakara*, Verse 4).

                                                             P. B. Meegaskumbura

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17.   For a similar situation, see : Ervin Tripp, S.M., loc cit. (See note 1).

18.   Dissanayake, J.B., "Sinhala Lekhana Rītiya Vinivida duṭu Navakathākaruvā", in *A.V. Suraweera Nirmāna Vicāra Vimarṣaṇa*, S. Godage & Brothers, Colombo, p. 112–126.