MUNIDASA KUMARATUNGA'S CONTRIBUTION TO SINHALESE LINGUISTICS

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Ever since his death in 1944, (and even during the latter part of his lifetime), Munidasa Kumaratunga[1] has been a highly controversial figure in the Sinhalese literary world. However, Kumaratunga's most important achievement, his valuable contribution to Sinhalese linguistic studies, has not so far been subjected to any serious, detailed assessment. It is readily conceded even by Kumaratunga's most vehement critics, that he was one of the greatest classical Sinhalese scholars of the 20th century;[2] but his eminence as a great pioneer and revolutionary in the field of Sinhalese linguistics has so far remained unrecognized,[3] perhaps for two reasons:

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[1] Munidasa Kumaratunga was born on July 25, 1887 at Dikhena in the Matara district. He entered the Training College for English teachers in Colombo in 1907, and, on passing out, was appointed Head Teacher of the Government School, Kadugannawa, in 1909. In January 1917, he was promoted to the rank of Inspector of Schools. Subsequently, he became Principal of the Training Colleges at Nittambuwa (Sept. 1927) and at Balapitiya (1929). Kumaratunga relinquished the latter post to become the editor of the *Lak Mini Pahana*, a Sinhalese newspaper, and two literary journals, *Subasa* (Sinhalese) and *The Helio* (English). He died on March 2, 1944, at the relatively early age of 57.
For a sketch of Kumaratunga's life and a complete bibliography of his works (comprising 118 items), see *Kumaratuṅga Munidāsa*, Ed. Sitinamaluwe Sumanaratana, (Colombo: Peramuna Press, 1955) pp. 355-69.

[2] c.f. මෑත කාලයේ ලංකාවේ විසූ සිංහල පඬුවන් අතර උසස් තැනක් මුනිදාස කුමාරණතුංගයනට හිමි විය යුතුය යනු සියලු දෙනාම විවාද රහිතව පිළිගත යුත්තකි.
("Everyone should acknowledge without debate the fact that Munidasa Kumaratunga should receive an important place among the Sinhalese scholars of modern times").

— Dr. S. Paranavitana, Sitinamaluwe. op. cit., p. 9.
මුනිදාස කුමාරතුංග පණ්ඩිත රත්නය සිංහල භාෂාව පවතින තාක් පවතින්නකි.
("Munidasa Kumaratunga the great scholar will live as long as the Sinhalese language lasts").

— Dr. G. P. Malalasekera, *Sarasavi Sandaresa*, March 5, 1948.
මෑත කාලයෙහි සිංහලයන් අතර පහළවුණු ශ්‍රේෂ්ඨතම සිංහල පඬිවරයා . . .
("The greatest Sinhalese scholar to have been born among the Sinhalese in modern times").

— Ananda Tissa de Alwis, *Lankā*, March, 1946.

[3] c. f., however,
අන් හැම්වටත් වඩා මුනිදාස කුමාරතුංග නාමය අනාගතයෙහිදී පරම්පරයන් අතර සිහිපත් කැරෙන්නේ, සිංහල ව්‍යාකරණය සම්බන්ධයෙනි.
("Above everything else, the name of Munidasa Kumaratunga will be remembered by future generations in connection with Sinhalese grammar.")

— Editorial, *Nuvana*, 15 March, 1944.

(1) the paucity of trained linguists and of up-to-date works on modern linguistic theory and practice in Ceylon; and (2) the 'puristic' and 'prescriptive' aspects of some of Kumaratunga's writings on Sinhalese grammatical usage.

Consequently, at the present time in Ceylon, the most , widely prevalent "image" of Munidasa Kumaratunga is that of a linguistic dictator, a 'purist' who ignored the language of current usage and tried to foist upon his contemporaries the outmoded Sinhalese literary style of the 13th century, together with its now–obsolete verb forms, syntactic patterns, the characteristic use of the sound ඇ [ä], and the use of the suffix –එක් [–ek] in the indefinite forms of inanimate nouns.[1] Among a small minority of his followers, now collectively referred to as the 'Hela Havula',[2] on the other hand, Kumaratunga is revered as a great critic, poet, commentator, philosopher, polemicist and nationalist, and also as the final, omniscient authority not only regarding problems of Sinhalese grammar, but also on classical Sinhalese literature, ancient Sanskrit literature, and even poetics.[3]

Kumaratunga's contribution to Sinhalese grammatical studies is embodied in three important works: *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya* (1935). *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* (1936), and *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* (1938). The first of these is an elucidation-cum-critique of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, the 'standard' grammar of Sinhalese[4] which had been composed (in verse) around the 13th century.[5] As clearly indicated

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[1] 13 වන ශත වර්ෂයෙන් මෙපිට සිදුවුණු භාෂා විපර්යාසයන් නොතකා පැරණි වියරණ අනුව වර්තමාන භාෂාව ද සකස්වනු දැකීමට කුමාරතුංග මහතා තුළ තිබුණත් ආශාව නිසා ඒ මහතාගේ උද්‍යෝගය උමතුවක් යයි කිව යුතු තරම් සීමාව ඉක්මවීය.

("Owing to Kumaratunga's intense desire to shape the contemporary language in close accordance with ancient grammar without paying due regard to the linguistic changes effected since the 13th century, his interest amounted to an extremism which should be called an obsession or madness").

— Editorial, *Dinamina*, 3 March, 1944.

[2] The literary group termed 'Hela Havula' was formed in 1940. Vide Sitinamaluwe Sumanaratana, op. cit., p. 363.

[3] Ibid.. pp. 68, 105, 158, 220, 285.

[4] "The only standard Grammar of the Sinhalese" — Lambrick, quoted by James de Alwis, *The Sidat Saṅgarāwa*, (Colombo: Ceylon Government Press 1852), p. cclxiii.

[5] For details regarding the authorship of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, see J. de Alwis, op. cit., p. 1 ff.; W. Geiger, *A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, (Colombo: The Royal Asiatic Society, Ceylon Branch, 1938) pp. 6-7; W. F. Gunawardhana, *Siddhānta Parīksaṇaya*, 1924) pp. 16-18; M. Kumaratunga, *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya*, (Colombo: Anula Press, 1935) 3-12; and R. Tennakoon, *Sidat Saṅga-a.* (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena and Co. Ltd., 1962) pp. ix-lix.

by two chapters named Prosodial Magic (ඉවුනිවු අදියර chapter 11) and Figures of Speech (ලකර අදියර, chapter 12) which had no ostensible connection at all with descriptive grammar, this treatise had probably been intended as a manual of style and versification for contemporary versifiers.[1] At the time when Kumaratunga wrote, the *Sidat Sangarā* had been elevated to such an eminent position[2] that it was considered sacrilegious to criticise it,[3] in spite of the efforts of Mudliyar W. F. Gunawardhana who had made a forthright critique of the first two chapters, concluding that he had "found that ... as a scientific manual, the book is really hopelesss".[1] The contemporary attitude towards the *Sidat Sangarā* is clearly indicated by Kumaratunga in his Preface:

'සිදත් සඟරාව පැරැණි යැ, මහාස්වාමී කෙනෙකුන් විසින් කරන ලද්දේ යැ, අප සිංහල ව්‍යාකරණය උගත්තේ එයින් යැ, එහි ඇති දෙසක් දුවත් පෙන්නා දීම ගුරුලෙද්‍රෝහි කමෙකැ'යි යනු ඇතැමුන් සිතන පරිදි යි. 'සිදත් සඟරාව සර්වතෝභද්‍ර යැ, ව්‍යාකරණ ශාස්ත්‍රයෙහි කොටි ප්‍රාප්තිය යැ' යන මතය ගත්තවුනට විවරණය සවීෂ වියැ හැකියැ.

("The *Sidat Sangarā* is of long standing; it has been composed by a venerable Buddhist monk; we learned our Sinhalese grammar from this work; to point out even a single defect in it would be a gross betrayal of a teacher" this is what certain people believe. Criticism may be distasteful to those who hold the opinion that the *Sidat Sangarā* is omniscient and that it is the apotheosis of grammar.)

— *Sidat Śangarā Vivaraṇaya*, Preface, p. 12.

In this contemporary literary set-up, Kumaratunga's criticism of the "dear national monument consecrated by traditions of six

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[1] "At the end two other chapters are added by way of appendix, one treating on Prosodial Magic, and the other on Figures of Speech" — Gunawardhana, op. cit., p. 27.

[2] "The reader must now be convinced of the great place the *Sidat Sangarā* occupies in Sinhalese literature, that great hold it has on Sinhalese imagination and the high position it holds in the world as the great grammar of the Sinhalese language" — Gunawardhana, op. cit., p. 18.

[3] c. f. "I am quite aware of the terrific storm this examination (i. e. of the *Sidat Sangarā*) will raise, especially in the less informed ranks of the Sinhalese literati. Those people have no sympathy with originality, and they have a constitutional hatred of modern ideas if opposed to the teaching of our great masters of old. They cannot conceive how any man of the present day can know anything better than those masters ... " — Ibid., p. 24.

[1] W. F. Gunawardhana, *op. cit,*, Introduction.

and a half centuries, and bound up with a large amount of sentiment which has gathered round it during the last century and a half'',[1] was in itself an act of great courage.

Kumaratunga's criticism of the grammatical dicta embodied in the *Sidat Saṅgarā* is almost always made on sound formal grounds. For example, in chapter 3, verse 18, the author of the *Sidat Saṅgarā* had classified the words අද ('today') and එ දා ('that day') as indeclinables. Kumaratunga submits incontrovertible formal evidence as to why the two words should not be included in this category:

සිංහලයෙහි 'අද' යනු නාමයෙකි.   අද – අදින් – අදට යනාදි විසින් ඒ වරනැගෙයි... 'එ දා' යනු නිපාතයෙක් වේ නම්, කවර දා – ගිය දා – ආ දා – උපන් දා – මළ දා යනාදිය ද නිපාත වෙයි.

("In Sinhalese, අද 'today' is a noun.   It is inflected, in the forms අද 'today', අදින් 'from today', අදට 'until today' and so on.   If එදා 'that day' is an indeclinable, කවර දා 'which date', ගිය දා 'the date of departure', ආ දා 'the date of arrival', උපන් දා 'the date of birth', මළ දා 'the date of death', etc. are also indeclinables'')

—Ibid. p. 190.

In the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, සමාස (compounds) had been defined as ''the combination of sounds (?) with several different meanings to express a single meaning'' (chapter 5, verse 1).   Kumaratunga questioned, on quite logical and formal grounds, why, on the basis of this traditional definition, රජුගේ පිරිස් is assumed to convey 'several meanings', whereas රජ පිරිස්, which carries an identical meaning, is said to convey a 'single meaning':

'' 'රජුගේ පිරිස්' යනු නානාර්ථ යැ, 'රජ පිරිස්' යනු ඒකාර්ථ යැ'' යනුයේ කවර හෙයින් ද? අපට නො තේරේ. 'රජුගේ පිරිස්' යන තන්හි යම් බඳු නානාර්ථත්වයෙක් වේ ද, 'රජ පිරිස්' යන තන්හිදු එබඳු වූ මැ නානාර්ථත්ව-යෙක් වෙයි. 'රජ පිරිස්' යන තන්හි යම් බඳු වූ ඒකාර්ථත්වයෙක් වේ ද, 'රජුගේ පිරිස්' යන තන්හි දු එබඳු වූ මැ ඒකාර්ථත්වයෙක් වෙයි.

("Why is it said that 'රජුගේ පිරිස්' conveys several meanings but 'රජ පිරිස්' conveys a single meaning? We are nonplussed. Whatever plurality of meaning is contained in 'රජුගේ පිරිස්'

— Ibid., p. 254.

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[1] Ibid., p. 24.

'රජ පිරිස්' also expresses the same plurality of meaning. Whatever singleness of meaning is contained in 'රජ පිරිස්', 'රජුගේ පිරිස්' also expresses the same singleness of meaning").

— Ibid., p. 254

The above quotations sufficiently illustrate Kumaratunga's attitude towards grammatical definitions—his insistence upon a scientific, logical rigour in the definition of grammatical terms and categories, a kind of insistence that is characteristic of the post–Bloomfieldian school of modern linguistic analysis. Also, like all modern structural linguists, Kumaratunga insisted that the setting up of separate grammatical categories could only be justified if such categorisation or classification was based on objectively demonstrable formal differences, and only if such a procedure helped to further the elucidation of the structural pattern of the language under analysis. Thus, he asserted that the sub-classification of Sinhalese words into two categories termed අන්වර්ථ and ආරූඪ was superfluous, since such a division had no bearing whatsoever on the grammatical structure, both types of words showing the same mode of inflection as well as usage:

අන්වර්ථ ආරූඪ යන ද්වි හෙදය ද සිදත් සහරාවෙහි දක්වුණු ව්‍යාකරණයට නුවුමනා යැ. අන්වර්ථ දුයෙන් හෝ ආරූඪ දුයෙන් හෝ වරනැගීමෙහි විශෙෂ යෙක් වේ නම්, පද යෙදීමෙහි විශෙෂයෙක් වේ නම්, මේ හෙදය ද උගත මනා මැ යැ. එබන්දෙක් නැති හෙයින් මේ නිකම් මැ බරකි.

("The sub-division into the two categories අන්වර්ථ and ආරූඪ, too, is unnecessary for the grammatical analysis contained in the *Sidat Saṅgarā*. If belonging to either of these subcategories indicates a difference in inflection or in usage, this difference, too, should certainly be studied. But since that is not the case, this is mere dead weight").

— Ibid., p. 127.

One of the guiding principles in all Kumaratunga's work was that each language possessed its own unique *system* of grammar, which could be deduced only through analysis of actual usage (but, unfortunately, for Kumaratunga, 'actual usage' meant not contemporary usage, but classical Sinhalese usage). At numerous points in his elucidation of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, he demonstrates, conclusively, how the author of the traditional grammatical treatise was led to make incorrect linguistic statements about Sinhalese because his purpose had been to fit Sinhalese grammar into the grammatical frameworks of Sanskrit and Pali:

'මෙන්' නිපාත යෝගයෙහි ප්‍රථමා විභක්ත්‍යන්ත පදයක් සම්බන්ධ විම සිංහලයෙහි නොලැබෙන්නකි. ද්විතීයාන්ත (දෙවන විභත ගත්) පදය සම්බන්ධ

වීම ලැබෙන්නේ මැ යැ. ඉතින් ධර්මීය ද්විතීයාන්ත පදය යෙදීම නම් ඒ
පෙරළියෙක් නොවේ, රීතියයි. සකු මගද දෙක්හි රීතිය වෙනස් වේ. . .
සංස්කෘත මාගධ පුයෝගයන් බලා සිංහල රීතින් නියම කිරීම, පුතුගේ ලෙඩ
බලා දුවට බෙහෙත් නියම කිරීම වැනි විගිලුවෙකි.

("The indeclinable මෙන් 'as, like' never occurs in combination
with a noun in case 1 (Nominative) *in Sinhalese*. It always
occurs with a noun in case 2 (Accusative). . . If the practice is
to use the noun in case 2, it is not an exception but the rule. . .
In Sanskrit and Pali the usage differs . . .The setting up of
grammatical rules following the usage in Sanskrit and Pali
blindly is like prescribing medicines for the daughter after
having diagnosed the ailments of the son").

— Ibid. p. 101–2

After demonstrating, on formal grounds, that it was necessary
to stipulate a neuter gender for Sinhalese nouns, (the *Sidat Saṅgarā*
indicates the presence of nouns of two genders only, Masculine and
Feminine). Kumaratunga goes on to say:

මෙයින් පෙනී යනුයේ ලිංග ව්‍යවහාරය පිළිබඳ වූ සිදත් සඟරා කාරයන්ගේ
මතය ඉදුරා වැරදි බවයි. සිංහල ව්‍යවහාරය සුදුසු පමණ නො පිරික්සා,
බාලාවතාරයෙහි කියැවුණක් දුටු පමණින් ව්‍යාකරණ සුතුයක් දෙසන්නට
යැම කොතරම් අහිතකර ද යනු මේ පැහැදිලි කෙරෙයි.

("This shows, therefore, that the opinion of the author of the
Sidat Saṅgarā regarding the use of gender in Sinhalese is com-
pletely erroneous. It indicates clearly how detrimental it can be
to attempt to enunciate grammatical rules in mere imitation of
statements found in the *Bālāvatāra,* without having considered
Sinhalese usage in sufficient detail").

— Ibid. p. 70.

This modern attitude towards linguistic structure is expressed not
only in the *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya,* but in all Kumaratunga's works; it
is the over-all principle which, perhaps intuitively grasped, helped
Kumaratunga to liberate himself from bondage to Sanskrit and Pali
grammar and to seek for Sinhalese a type of grammatical analysis
that uniquely suited the language under description:

අප විසින් කළ යුත්තේ ඒ භාෂාවටත් මේ භාෂාවටත් හැකි තරම් එකඟ වන
සැටි බැලීමෙක් නොවේ, අප භාෂාවට ඉතා මැ සුදුසු පිළිවෙළ සොයා
ගැනීමයි.

("What we have to do is not to attempt to see how far (the grammatical analysis) conforms to this language or that, but to discover the system that best suits our own language").

— *Subasa*, Vol. 1, No. 1, July 10, 1939.

සිංහලයට ව්‍යාකරණය සැපැයිය යුත්තේ සිංහල ව්‍යවහාරය විමැසීමෙනි, සංස්-කෘත මාගධ ව්‍යාකරණ ග්‍රන්ථයන් පෙරළීමෙන් නොවේ.

("It is by scrutinising Sinhalese usage that a grammar for Sinhalese has to be supplied, not by scrutinising Sanskrit and Pali grammars").

— *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya*, pp. 215-6.

Kumaratunga's criticism of the *Sidat Saṅgarā* was not merely an attack on the 13th century grammatical treatise, but the expression of a completely revolutionary attitude in contemporary linguistics, for all the works of Sinhalese grammar up to Kumaratunga's time were mere paraphrases or slavish imitations of the *Sidat Saṅgarā* or works based on English grammar (e. g. *Pada Nītiya* by Weragama Punchibandara, 1888; *A Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese Language* by A. M. Gunasekera, 1891; *Vyākaraṇa Mañjariya* by H. Jayakody, 1900; *Sinhalese Grammar* by D. E. Johannes, 5th Ed., 1916; *Sabdānusāsanaya* by Simon de Silva, 1928; and *Sinhala Bhāṣāva* by Rev. Theodore G. Perera, 1932).

Even as a commentator, Kumaratunga stands head and shoulders above earlier commentators of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, for his was neither a word-by-word paraphrase of the original text, nor a purely destructive enterprise. In most cases where Kumaratunga rejects a grammatical dictum in the traditional treatise, he himself suggests an alternative method of analysis, often more formal, logical, or economical. Often, too, he clarifies and elucidates obscure or vague statements in the *Sidat Saṅgarā*. Nor does he look upon the *Sidat Saṅgarā* as being completely valueless (as Mudliyar W. F. Gunawardana had done); in spite of all its inaccuracies, he declares, the *Sidat Saṅgarā* embodies valuable insights into Sinhalese grammatical structure, which could be brought out by a detailed, logical, and impartial scrutiny, similar to the one he himself attempted:

විවරණයෙන් සිදත් සහරා පෙළෙහි අව්‍යාර්ථ දත හැකි යැ, පැසැස්සැ යුතු තැන් දත හැකියැ, නො පැසැස්සැ යුතු තැන් දත හැකියැ. . . සිංහලයෙහි නියම ව්‍යාකරණ රීතිය ද සුදුසු තන්හි එයින් අවුලා ගත හැකි වෙයි.

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("By detailed criticism, the obscurities of the verses of the
Sidat Saṅgarā may be understood; by criticism also, its praise-
worthy features as well as its shortcomings may be known. . .
At relevant points, the inherent grammatical rules of Sinhalese,
too, can be gleaned from it").

—*Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya*, p. 12.

In 1938, three years after the publication of the *Sidat Saṅgarā
Vivarañaya*, appeared *A Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, by
Prof. Wilhelm Geiger, published by the Ceylon Branch of the
Royal Asiatic Society. It was a typical product of the type of
linguistic theory and practice in vogue at the time in Ceylon (and
abroad), designated "Historical Philology" or "Etymological Gra-
mar". The author of this grammar was then occupying the exalted
position of Chief Editor of the *Dictionary of the Sinhalese Language*,
taken in hand in 1935. At that time, philologists had not evolved
a technique for dealing with syntax historically or etymologically,
and the *Grammar* turned out to be, inevitably, not a synchronic
grammar in the modern sense of the word, but a work on the
evolution of Sinhalese morphology. The author himself was in fact
obliged to admit the omission of a section on syntax which he
rather lamely attributed to 'insufficiency of space':

"It will perhaps be regretted that I have omitted to treat
the Sinhalese syntax in this grammar. But an exhaustive treat-
ment of the subject was not possible within the space available
for the present work. It cannot but be postponed for a
later occasion".

— p. xiv.

Needless to say, the "later occasion" never materialised, and the
syntax referred to never appeared in print. However, Kumaratunga
was perhaps alone at the time in understanding that diachronic
linguistic studies of the type represented by Geiger's grammar,
however intrinsically interesting they may be, and however valuable
as "contributions to the storehouse of human knowledge", could
never be adequate substitutes for what Sinhalese needed at the
time, that is, synchronic studies based on actual current linguistic
usage. Kumaratunga's exhaustive criticism of Geiger's work, in 13
parts, may be found in the pages of *Subasa*, the journal Kumaratunga
edited, from 24th July, 1939 to 5th February, 1940. Kumaratunga's
critical attitude towards the method of Historical Philology currently
in vogue in 'enlightened' linguistic circles in Ceylon may be gauged
from the following statement:

"Whatever they (i. e. Geiger and the followers of his school of Historical Philology) say is prefaced by a scholarly digression on the most modern Science of Comparative Philology. Is not this Science that does not help one to compose a Sinhalese sentence correctly, as valuable as somebody's science of modern cookery that does not teach one to cook a little rice?"

— *Subasa*, Vol. 1, No. 4, 8th January, 1940.

Not only did Kumaratunga show that philological studies (as represented by Geiger's *Grammar*) could never take the place of descriptive grammar; he also demonstrated—with a single devastating example—the dangers of attempting to trace the origin of Sinhalese words to their cognate forms in the 'parent' languages, Sanskrit and Pali. Geiger's efforts were directed towards tracing the etymology of every Sinhalese word to its Sanskrit, Pali, or Prakrit origin,[1] but Kumaratunga contended that Sinhalese, like any other language, possessed a certain stock (large or small) of words of purely native origin. Geiger's derivation of the Sinhalese කොටි ('leopard') (Geiger, *Grammar*, p. 42) provided Kumaratunga with the necessary ammunition to ridicule the entire method of Comparative Philology:

"The word කොටි must somehow or other be derived from Sanskrit, Pali or Prakrit. The Professor fingered the great lexicons of Sanskrit, Pali and Prakrit. In none of them did he find for the leopard a name beginning with ක. The Professor was bewildered. Can such a thing happen? කොටි must somehow or other be derived from one of those great languages. The Professor began again to explore the lexicon, this time to find a name with ක and ට in it, not for the leopard itself but for any kind of wild beast. His attempt was crowned with great success. . . . His face beamed with real joy. . . What made him so elated? It was the Sanskrit noun ක්‍රෝෂ්ට [kro/tr] which means, not exactly a leopard, but another wild beast—a jackal. The leopard is a wild beast. The jackal is also a wild beast. It is true that there is no Sanskrit word that has the semblance of කොටි and that means exactly a leopard. But there is ක්‍රෝෂ්ට, meaning a jackal. කොටි, a name of one wild beast – a leopard, must equally be applicable to another wild

[1] cf. "Prof. Geiger is out to prove somehow or other that the Sinhalese language has been draining all along from the two great reservoirs of Pali and Sanskrit through a Prakritic filter. Therefore whatever he does is aimed at the accomplishment of this mission . . ." *Subasa*, Vol. 1, No. 13, December 25, 1939.

beast – a jackal .. Oh! The stupid Sinhalese!... If not for me will they ever happen to possess such a beautiful etymology for their wretched word ෙකාටි?... Whatever it be, now, it is an established fact that the Sinhalese leopard is a direct descendant of the Sanskrit jackal".

<div align="right">

Subasa, Vol. 1, No. 14, 8th January, 1940.

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However, Kumaratunga was not content with the demolition of the theory of comparative philology[1] and the 'omniscient' *Sidat Saṅgarā* hallowed by the passage of 800 years; he was, in his *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya* and the criticism of Geiger's *Grammar* in *Subasa* merely preparing the ground for an adequate, complete, grammatical analysis of the Sinhalese language. Although hampered by the lack of formal linguistic training, Kumaratunga set out, in his own way, to provide for Sinhalese its own structural grammar, unencumbered by etymological statements and by the grammatical dicta of Sanskrit, Pali or Prakrit.

From the above discussion, it is clear that a formalist kind of approach towards linguistic analysis, though nowhere explicitly stated or fully integrated in the form of a 'linguistic theory', begins to emerge in Kumaratunga's early work, i. e. in his criticisms of Geiger's *Grammar* and of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*. Kumaratunga's insistence upon clear, mutually exclusive definitions of linguistic terms and classes, his acceptance of formal criteria in the setting up of grammatical categories, his view that etymological or philological studies could never serve the purpose of synchronic and teaching grammars, and the principle that the structure of each language has its own unique features which would be obscured if any attempt was made to fit it to the grammatical frameworks of other languages, clearly indicate the beginnings of a formalist-structuralist approach towards linguistic analysis. Although there is no evidence that Kumaratunga had access to the works of contemporary European linguists, his major concepts bear a surprisingly close relationship to the linguistic theories and principles developed in the west by such pioneers in the field of linguistics as Ferdinand de Saussure, Edward Sapir and Leonard Bloomfield.

It remains to be examined to what extent an integrated linguistic theory was formulated and applied in Kumaratunga's last two

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[1] "This is a strange land. Any nonsense will be a perfect science here if it is presented in words interspersed with a few high-sounding names such as philology, phonology, morphology, etc." — *Subasa*, Vol, 1, No. 16, February 5, 1940.

works on Sinhalese linguistics, *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* (1936) and *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* (1938).

The preliminary definition of කියා ('verb') in *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* is not based on formal, but notional grounds:

ධාත්වර්ථයක් දෙනුයේ "කියා" නමින් මෙහි ලා ගනු ලැබේ.

("That which conveys the notion of a root is defined as verb")

Kriyā Vivaraṇaya, p. 1.

However, this was clearly an advance on the negative, in fact meaningless 'definition' provided in the *Sidat Saṅgarā* ("That which is neither substance nor quality, but in association with a substance, develops out of root, assisted by the six cases, is verb"- 1,23). Kumaratunga's subsequent classification and analysis of Sinhalese verbal roots is made on a purely formal basis. Each of the six conjugational classes he sets up has its own mutually exclusive set of inflectional suffixes. The categories of Number, Person, Tense, Voice and Kāraka are set up,[1] and their formal characteristics indicated. Each conjugational class is then taken up in turn, and is provided with a list of inflectional suffixes with which each root in the class may combine.[2] Changes consequent upon the combination of roots with inflectional suffixes are set out, as far as possible, in the form of (what a modern structural linguist would call) morphophonemic rules. Exceptional forms are set forth in a special subsection termed විශෙෂ රූප සාධනය. One or more roots typical of each class are declined in full, and further examples of the membership of each class listed at the end of each section. The derivation of nominal forms from verbal roots,[3] and the morphology of non-finite verb-forms,[4] too, are dealt with in considerable detail. The last section of the book, ධාතු පාඨය, is a lexicon of nearly 800 Sinhalese verb stems, alphabetically arranged.[5] Every stem in the lexicon is assigned to one of the six declensional classes, its lexical meaning given, and all the morphological forms it may assume in the various grammatical categories (together with any allomorphic alternants it may assume in usage) set out, in schematic form. Thus, in spite of certain shortcomings – especially the notional criteria employed in the preliminary definition – Kumaratunga's

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[1] *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya*, (Colombo: Anula Press, 2nd ed., 1956) pp. 2-8.

[2] Ibid,, p. 12.

[3] Ibid., pp. 60-85.

[4] Ibid., pp. 85-106.

[5] Ibid., pp. 107-256.

Kriyā Vivaraṇaya sets up a model for comprehensive linguistic analysis, at least for one part–without doubt, the most important part–of Sinhalese grammatical structure. This work is, in fact, a valuable morphological study of the Sinhalese verb, embracing not only all aspects of morphological form, but also morphophonemic changes, certain aspects of syntax, and the lexicon.

However, a perusal of the stems listed in the lexicon (e. g. උවෙක්ස, අවදර, නහස්, පිළිබහ, බහව, බිහිස්, මොහ, රැහුර, ලදුර, විලිකුස් and the examples cited from classical Sinhalese literary texts[1] (e. g. පිරිසුදු හුදු මීලින් හා—මීලියෙන් සසඟතෙන් වී; මුනි රිව් උද දෙන තිතුඑ කැන් මීලියෙමිනි අනුරැදහන් බුහු) indicates that for the most part, Kumaratunga utilised as his corpus the literary language employed by Sinhalese classical writers before and up to about the 14th century (and, of course, used by Kumaratunga himself and his followers), and not the language used by his contemporaries, a fact which detracts considerably from the usefulness of *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* as a grammatical study relevant to present needs.

Kumaratunga's most ambitious work, a work of such wide scope that it has not been surpassed nor even attempted up to the present day, was his *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya,* a grammar of Sinhalese, published in 1938. The Preface to this work indicates, once again, that a.though the author had had no formal grounding in modern linguistic theory and techniques, he had intuitively grasped many of the main principles set out and affirmed in post-Bloomfieldian structural linguistics. For example, Kumaratunga affirms that *actual usage* should provide the corpus from which linguistic rules ought to be deduced:

ලෝකයෙහි ඉතා උසස් අන්‍ය භාෂා කොතෙකුත් ඇති වියැ හැකි යැ. එහි ව්‍යාකරණය අති නිර්මල වියැ හැකි යැ. සිංහල භාෂාවේ ව්‍යාකරණය හෙළි කිරිමෙහිදී සැලැකියැ යුත්‍මත් ඒ එකකුත් නොවේ. ව්‍යාකරණය නම් භාෂා නිතියයි. එක් එක් භාෂාවේ ව්‍යාකරණය ඒ ඒ භාෂාවේ ව්‍යවහාරයෙන් විනිශ්චය කරනු ලැබේ.

("There may exist many other very great languages in the world. Their grammar may be admirably pure. But none of these should be considered in revealing the grammatical structure of the Sinhalese language. Grammar is linguistic usage. The

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[1] For other illustrations drawn from classical Sinhalese texts, see pp. 50, 90, 101, 102, and 104.

grammar of each language is determined by the usage of that particular language'').

— *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*, Preface, iii.

Here, Kumaratunga upholds one of the cardinal principles of modern linguistics—that each language has its own unique *system* of grammar, which can be deduced only by collating, analysing, classifying and reducing to general rules the actual usage of its native speakers (or writers), without being influenced by the grammatical rules of other languages, however 'perfect' the latter may appear to be. Indeed, Kumaratunga contended that grammar could be learned only from actual practice, and that a grammar was the product of a person who had made an extensive study of the usage of the language under consideration:

ප්‍රයෝග මාර්ගයෙන් මැ ව්‍යාකරණය ඉගැනීම යැ ප්‍රශස්ත.

(''The best method of studying grammar is through practice'')

— Ibid. Preface, iii.

ව්‍යාකරණ ග්‍රන්ථයෙක් නම්, සකල වාක් ප්‍රයෝගයන් මැනවින් විමැසුවකු-ගේ විනිශ්චයයි.

(''A grammar is nothing but the considered opinion of one who has carried out a thorough study of every linguistic usage'').

— Ibid. Preface, iii.

Consequently, for Kumaratunga, the primary task of the grammarian was to provide a synopsis of actual linguistic usage:

ව්‍යාකරණ කාරයා විසින් කළ යුත්තේ තමා ව්‍යාකරණය සපයන භාෂාවේ ව්‍යවහාරය බලා, අළලා, පෙරා, කිරා, පිඬු කොටැ දැක්වීමයි.

(''What the grammarian ought to do is to ascertain, collate, review, assess, and summarise the usage of the language for which he wishes to supply a grammar''). — Ibid. iii.

Kumaratunga attributed the incongruities and inaccuracies in the Sinhalese grammatical treatises from the *Sidat Saṅgarā* to his own day to the attempts of grammarians to fit the structure of Sinhalese into a Sanskrit or Pali mould. The inevitable result of this process, he pointed out, was to obscure rather than to reveal the inherent structure of the language:

බොහෝ සිංහල ව්‍යාකරණ කාරයෝ ස්වභාෂාවට ව්‍යාකරණය සපයන්නට අන්‍ය භාෂාවල ව්‍යාකරණය ප්‍රමාණ කොටැ ගත්හ. ඔවුන් ගත් මීම

පාලි සංස්කෘත ව්‍යාකරණයයි. ඒ මිම්මට සරිලන ලෙසක් කරන්නට ගියැ හෙයින් ඔවුන්ගේ ව්‍යාකරණය බෙහෙවින් මැ සිංහල තත්ත්වය වළහන්නට වහල් වියැ. . . . සිංහලයෙහි යම් රීතියෙක් වේ නම්, එය අන්‍ය මහා භාෂාවලැ ඇතිවීම හෝ නොවීම හෝ අපට පැකිලීමට කරුණෙක් නොවියැ. සිංහලයටමැ උරුම වූ රීති අපට වඩාලා මැ උසස් සේ පැනිණ.

("Most Sinhalese grammarians adopted the grammars of other languages as a criterion in trying to supply a grammar for their mother tongue. The measure they accepted was the grammar of Sanskrit or Pali. Since they tried to approximate as closely as possible to Sanskrit or Pali grammar, their grammatical treatises tended to obscure the intrinsic structure of Sinhalese to a very great extent. . . Where a certain grammatical feature exists in Sinhalese usage, the fact that it was present or absent in other great languages was no cause for perturbation to us. The usages exclusive to Sinhalese appeared to be the most valuable to us").

— Ibid. iv.

Kumaratunga also upheld the view that statements about the history of the Sinhalese race, etymology, comparative philology, the historical development of the language, metrics, and "figures of speech" should have no place in a descriptive grammar (to him, as to most modern linguists, synchronic, descriptive grammars were primary, and of the greatest practical value):

ජාතියේ ඉතිහාසය හෝ භාෂාවේ ඉතිහාසය හෝ ව්‍යාකරණාංගයෙක් නොවේ. ඒ පිළිබඳ දීර්ඝ පරිච්ඡේදයන් ලියා ව්‍යාකරණ ග්‍රන්ථයක් විශාල කිරීම අපරාධයෙකි. . . . අලංකාරය ද ඡන්දස ද ව්‍යාකරණයෙන් බාහිර වූ ශාස්ත්‍ර යි. ("The history of the race or of the language is not a grammatical feature. It is a crime to enlarge a grammatical treatise by including long chapters on these subjects. . . Figures of Speech and Metrics, too, are sciences extraneous to grammar").

— Ibid. vii.

Considered as a whole, it could hardly be asserted that the expectations generated by the linguistic principles enunciated in the *Sidat Saṅgarā Vivaraṇaya* and the Preface to *Vyākaraṇa Vivāraṇaya* are fulfilled by Kumaratunga's *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* (1938). As in *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya*, this work reveals Kumaratunga's considerable labours of collation and analysis (as the author himself stated in his Preface, the book was the result of over 27 years' labour). Lacking a formal linguistic training, Kumaratunga had, perforce,

not only to invent his own grammatical terminology, but also to devise a methodology for dealing with syntax; for, up to his time, grammar had been considered to be synonymous with morphology, and syntax had rarely or never been dealt with by Sinhalese grammarians.

It is in the *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* that we find, for the first time in Sinhalese, systematic treatment of grammar under Phonology, Morphophonemics, Morphology and Syntax. Kumaratunga begins with the definition of language as a collection of sentences — භාෂාවක් නම් වාකෳ සමුදායයෙකි, p. 2. The analysis of Sinhalese phonology in chapter 2 appears to be considerably indebted to the one provided by Mudliyar W. F. Gunawardhana in *Siddhānta Parīkṣaṇaya* (1924) (pp. 70-83); Kumaratunga's analysis is much more detailed than Gunawardhana's, but it also contains several grave inaccuracies —the result, once again, of the lack of an adequate phonetic training. For instance, Kumaratunga makes such statements as, that all Sinhalese vowels are voiceless, අප කියවන සැටියට නම් සියලු ස්වර අසෝෂයි, p. 17; that only voiced sounds may be aspirated, අල්ප ප්‍රාණ හෝ මහා ප්‍රාණ වියෑ හැක්කේ ප්‍රවෘත්ත ප්‍රාණ හෙවත් සඝ්‍රාණ ශබ්ද පමණෙකි, p. 19; and that the nasals of Sinhalese are always voiceless, ව්‍යාකරණ පොත්හි දක්වෙන්නේ ඩ් ඬ් ණ් න් ම ∘ යන අනුනාසික ශබ්දත් ඝෝෂ ලෙසයි. එහෙත් කියැවෙන්නේ නම් අඝෝෂ ලෙස මැයි. p. 18.

The chapter on Morphophonemics or junction features in Sinhalese (chapter 3), is characteristic of Kumaratunga in its wealth of detail and particular attention to exceptions, marks a considerable improvement in comprehensiveness and analytic technique on traditional grammar as embodied in the *Sidat Saṅgarā* and its later imitations.

It is in the field of syntax, however, that Kumaratunga made his most important contribution to Sinhalese linguistics. In phonology, morphology and morphophonemics, he was enlarging upon the pioneering work of the "father of modern Sinhalese linguistics", Mudliyar W. F. Gunawardhana. The latter, however, had only dealt with the first two chapters of the *Sidat Saṅgarā*, and had not dealt at all with the syntax. Unlike Geiger and the ardent followers of his method of Historical and Comparative Philology, Kumaratunga was the first to perceive that syntax lay at the heart of grammar, and that therefore phonological, morphological and morphophonemic studies were important and necessary only so far as they enabled the grammarian to describe the syntactic

combinations into which words may enter, i. e. the typical syntactic patterns of the language under analysis.

After a very detailed description of the formal characteristics of the Sinhalese noun in chapters 6 and 7, Kumaratunga deals with the syntax of the noun in chapter 8. This chapter deals with the syntactical relations of the noun with verbs, indeclinables, and with other nouns. Thus this chapter includes the analysis of subject + predicate sentence patterns, features of concord and agreement, and types of adverbial, adjectival, and postpositional phrases. The three chapters (6, 7 and 8), running into 126 pages, comprise a full-scale study of the morphology and syntax of the noun in Sinhalese, similar to the grammatical study of the Sinhalese verb in *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya.* Once again, the initial definitions are set up on notional grounds, but the formal features of each category are subsequently dealt together with adequate illustrations. Thus, in *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* and in chapters 6, 7 and 8 of *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*, Munidasa Kumaratunga laid a solid foundation for a descriptive grammar of literary Sinhalese.

Kamaratunga's account of නිපාත (Indeclinables) in Sinhalese[1] is also an original contribution to Sinhalese grammatical studies. The definition of indeclinables in the *Sidat Saṅgarā*— පියවි නිසා හොත නොනිසා හොත කෙළේ නිපා නම් —("That which is produced in association with, or without, a root is called indeclinable"—i, 39) is too absurd to deserve any consideration or comment. By contrast, Kumaratunga's definition is as formal as any modern linguist would like it to be: නාම හෝ ආඛ්‍යාත හෝ නොවන්නාවූ සියලු පද නිපාතයි ("All words other than nouns and verbs are termed indeclinables", p. 282). The sub-division of indeclinables into අකාර්ය නිපාත and සකාර්ය නිපාත[2] is based on differences in grammatical function. The two sub-classes are further sub-divided[3] on the basis of several types of criteria—notional, situational and syntactic.

Chapter 13, also an original contribution to Sinhalese grammar, contains a characteristically detailed study of derivational affixes in Sinhalese, and the morphophonemic changes consequent upon the combination of roots with derivational affixes. The importance of Kumaratunga's analysis becomes evident when we bear in mind the

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[1] *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*, (Colombo: M. D. Gunasena & Co. Ltd., 2nd Ed., 3rd Imp. 1963) Chapter 12, pp. 288-308.

[2] *Ibid.*, pp. 281-3.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 283-308.

fact that in the *Sidat Saṅgarā* and in all other subsequent grammatical treatises. උපසර්ග (prefixes) had been classified as පද (free forms or words). Kumaratunga, correctly, classed prefixes with suffixes, not with words.[1]

Kumaratunga's chapters on sentence structure in Sinhalese[2] represent, perhaps, the weakest parts of the *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*. Here, he was obviously influenced to a great extent by contemporary text-books on English grammar.[3] The eight types of sentence elements he sets up for the analysis of sentence structure (Subject, Extension of Subject, Predicate, Extension of Predicate, Complement, Extension of Complement, Object, and Enlargement of Object), the division of sentences into three types (Simple, Complex and Compound), the classification of clauses and phrases, the chapters on the combination of sentences and "parsing", all resemble similar analyses in English traditional grammar texts too closely to indicate any originality. This type of analysis had been, moreover, attempted in several earlier works on Sinhalese grammar (notably, A. M. Gunasekera's *A Comprehensive Grammar of the Sinhalese Language*, 1891, and John Blok's *Sinhala Vākya Nītiya*, 1903).

Considered as a comprehensive Sinhalese grammar, Kumaratunga's *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* cannot, of course, stand up to all the rigorous, formal-structural requirements of modern linguistics. Most of the definitions it sets up are based on notional criteria which modern linguists would totally abjure; its analysis of Sinhalese phonology contains many inaccuracies; and its chapters on Sinhalese sentence

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[1] ඇතැම් වෛයාකරණයෝ උපසර්ග ද පද විශේෂයක් කොටැ සලකති. තනිවැ සිටු කිසි අර්ථයක් නොදෙන බැවින්, උපසර්ග පද කොටැ සැලකීම ශාස්ත්‍ර විරෝධ වේ. මුලට යෙදි සඞ්ග්‍රහ ප්‍රකෘති නිපදවන උපසර්ගය ඉදින් පදයක් වේ නම්, අගට යෙදි සඞ්ග්‍රහ ප්‍රකෘති නිපදවන ප්‍රත්‍යය ද පදයක් විය යුත්තේයැ.

("Certain grammarians consider prefixes too, to be a class of words. Since prefixes, standing alone, do not convey any meaning, it is unscientific to consider them to be words. If a prefix, occurring in initial position as part of a compound root is considered a word, then a suffix occurring in final position in a compound root, too, should be called a word"—*Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*. pp-329-30.

[2] Chapters 16, 17, and 18, pp. 375-412.

[3] This has been conceded even by some of the chief disciples of Kumaratunga; see, for example,

හෙළ බසේ කියමන් බෙදීම (වාක්‍ය විභාගය) සඳහා මොවුන් විසින් හඳුන්වා දෙන ලද ක්‍රියාව තම ඉ.ගිරිසියේ බෙදීමේ පිළිවෙළ මැයි.

("The system introduced by him for the analysis of Sinhalese sentence structure is the system employed for the analysis of sentence structure in English") —Abiram Gamhewayo, in Sitinamaluwe Sumanaratana, *op. cit.*, p 123.

structure and types of sentences are based quite clearly on English grammatical structure. Just as the author of the *Sidat Saṅgarā* had tried to stretch Sinhalese structure on the Procrustean bed of Sanskrit and Pali grammar, Kumaratunga tried, in the later chapters of *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya*, (consciously or otherwise), to fit Sinhalese grammatical structure into an alien English framework. However, the detailed chapters on the morphology and syntax of the noun, the verb, the indeclinables, and derivation in the *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* are sufficiently comprehensive and original to represent a contribution of considerable importance to Sinhalese linguistic studies.

Although a potential structural linguist, quite in advance of his age, and passionately interested in his mother tongue and all linguistic matters, Kumaratunga's belief in the pristine glory and "purity" of the classical Sinhalese literary language coloured his theory of, and attitude towards, linguistic analysis. Thus, both his *Vyākaraṇa Vivaraṇaya* and *Kriyā Vivaraṇaya* are based, at least for the greater part, on the linguistic usages and practices of classical Sinhalese writers from the 12th century up to about the 15th century; the occasional concessions he makes to contemporary usage are usually relegated to footnotes[1]. These two works cannot even be considered to be synchronic studies of classical Sinhalese, because Kumaratunga includes examples from contemporary colloquial usage, too, wherever such illustrations suit his particular purpose[2]. Strangely enough, while thus accepting both classical Sinhalese literary usage as well as contemporary colloquial usage, Kumaratunga presistently refused to give primary place to the literary usage of the vast majority of his contemporaries. His obsession with certain (now obsolete) features of classical literary Sinhalese[3] (e. g. the prescriptive use of ඇ and the use of the suffix –එක් with inanimate nouns),

[1] cf. note 3, p. 166.

[2] See pp. 206, 207, 301, 302, 306, for examples from non–literary, purely colloquial usage.

[3] Kumaratunga's ideal of literary style is implcit in the following statement from an unsigned article titled 'Contemporary Sinhalese' in *Subasa*, Vol. 1, No. 3, August 7, 1939:

ඉහළමු කොංකට ගැණෙනුයේ මේ ලිපියෙහි එන්නා වැන්නයි (භාෂාවයි). මෙයට ඉහළමු සිංහලයැ යි කියන්නේ වෙන උසස් කමෙක් නිසා නොවේ. සිංහලයට මැ හිමී වූ සිංහල ලකුණ දු සිංහලයට ආඩම්බරයක් දු සිංහලයෙහි බොහෝ තන් නිරවුල් කොටැ දෙන්නාවූ ''ඇ'' යන්න පුදුසු සේ යෙයෙදෙන නිසා යැ.

("The highest position is held by the literary style which is similar to the language employed in the present article. This is called the best Sinhalēse,

his static view of language[1], his haughty, dictatorial, uncompromising attitude towards his critics and opponents[2], and his intemperate attacks on almost all his foremost fellow-writers, resulted in Kumaratunga's being cut off (except for a small group of his ardent admirers who comprised the Hela Havula) from the mainstream of contemporary literary activity. The inevitable result of this isolation was that Kumaratunga's substantial achievement in the field of Sinhalese linguistics (like that of Mudliyar W. F. Gunawardhana before him) did not receive the importance and the appreciation it rightfully deserved. Nevertheless, it is sufficient testimony to Kumaratunga's greatness that even at the present time, with four Universities providing facilities for linguistic training in Ceylon, an adequate, comprehensive and complete grammar of the Sinhalese language (spoken or written) remains yet unwritten, more than 30 years after Munidasa Kumaratunga attempted the task for the first time.

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not for any other reason, but because it uses correctly, and in the appropriate places, the sound "ඇ", which is the distinctive mark of Sinhalese, a pride to the Sinhalese, and which clarifies many ambiguous instances").

[1] Kumaratunga believed that linguistic change was the result of the 'corruption' of the language at the hands of the 'illiterate' villagers, and that it had to be resisted as far as possible; cf.

ගම වැසියාගේ කට යන යන අතට වියත් බස යවන්නට තැත් කළෙහොත් අගදී ලැබෙන්නේ නිකම් මැ ගොන් බසයකි.

("If we try to change the language of the learned in accordance with the mode of speech of the villagers, the ultimate result will be nonsense"—*Subasa*, Vol. 1, No. 5, July 24, 1939; and "If such a form (i. e. කිකිළිට) occurs, it must be amongst those to whom Sinhalese is a language very loosely adopted"—Ibid., Sept. 4, 1939.

[2] cf. "You ask me to give my authorities. Well, let me frankly tell you that I am my authority. Nose-ropes are meant for the bull not for the man. If you ask Einstein to quote his authorities the poor man will simply be nonplussed"—*The Helio*, Vol. 1, No, 1, August 29, 1941.