6. Chapter - Conclusion

We present here a summary of some of our main findings in our study of the verb morphology of Mediaeval Sinhalese. The verb morphology of Mediaeval period of Sinhalese is more complex than Prakrit and Proto Sinhalese period. In the ancient eras of Sinhalese, limited number of suffixes were used to form the verbs. But in the Mediaeval period, many suffixes were found which occurred in the formation of verbal forms in Sinhalese. There are many inscriptions dated from 3rd c. B. C. to 13th c. A. D. in various parts of Sri Lanka. The Sigiri graffiti written in 7th-9th c. A. D. is also a primary source which provide data on the regional variations of language as well as spoken and written varieties. The Sidat Saṅgarāvə, which was written in 13th c. A. D., is the standard grammar of Sinhalese language. Before this grammar, there were some other literary works which represent the Buddhist religion, culture and rhetoric in Sinhalese. The particular text of our research (Jātākaporne) was written in 13th-14th c. A. D. by a group of scholars who represent various schools of the country as well as different regional varieties of the language. Therefore this text contains spoken, written and regionally accepted forms of Sinhalese.

The overlapping of the present and the future tenses is more common in Sinhalese language. Therefore we cannot find a clearly distinctive three way system of tenses in Sinhalese. It shows a two way system namely past and non-past in mediaeval period of language. The usages of future tense which were found in the Jātākaporne text and standard grammar of Sinhalese show a difference of the mediaeval period language. In Jātākaporne tales, five usages of the future tense were identified whereas three usages were found in the standard grammar of Sinhalese.

It is interesting to note the overlapping of past and future tenses in Sinhalese. This is not a common feature of the language. However, there were some examples in the inscriptions of mediaeval period which show the overlapping of past and future tenses. But such overlapping was not found in the Jātākaporne tales.

Three aspects namely imperfective, perfective and simultaneous are identified in Sinhalese. There are two sub-groups under the imperfective aspect. They are present progressive and past progressive aspects. The conjugated forms of roots iṅḍa ‘sit’ and sīṭa ‘stand’ were used in present and past progressive aspects in Sinhalese.
The verbal forms of future progressive aspect were also found in Jātaka text. However these forms do not have future reading.

The perfective aspect in Sinhalese is further distinguished into present perfective and past perfective aspects. The conjugated forms of roots \(iñdǝ\) ‘sit’ \(siτǝ\) ‘stand’ and \(taβo\) ‘keep’ were used in present and past perfective aspects in Sinhalese. There were relevant examples of past perfective aspect but we could not find instances of present perfective aspect in Jātaka tales.

In the simultaneous aspect, two or more events happen simultaneously. In Sigiri graffiti, six suffixes were used to conjugate the verbal forms of simultaneous aspect. They were ‘-minǝ, -mini, -mǝni, -mni, -min’ and ‘-men’. According to traditional grammar there were three suffixes viz. ‘-min, -minǝ, -mni’. There was only one suffix ‘-min’ in the Jātaka tales. A prominent modern grammarian in Sinhalese, Munidasa Kumaratunga, claims that there was one basic suffix namely ‘-mini’ and three variants or alternative forms viz. ‘-min, -mni’ and ‘-mni’ with similar function.

When compared with later stages of the Sinhalese language, the imperative suffixes used in the period of Sigiri graffiti are more in number. They are ‘-hi, -vǝ, -u, -gǝ, -yu, -vu, -v, -ne, -nne, -nu, -nǝ’ and ‘-n’. But the Sidat Saṅgārāvǝ mentions only six suffixes for imperative. They are as follows: ‘-a, -ē, -annē, -ann, -av’ and ‘-u’. Several suffixes were found which were used to form the imperative verbal forms in Jātaka tales. They were ‘-vǝ, -uvǝ, -evǝ, -u, -annǝ, -annē, -innē, -nnǝ, -hu, -av, and ‘-avu’. We can examine that there are many suffixes in graffiti and Jātaka text when compared to Sidat Saṅgārāvǝ. It has given the clear evidence that the graffiti and Jātaka text included the spoken, written and regional variations whereas Sidat Saṅgārāvǝ contained standard grammar only.

The imperative verbs of Sinhalese were identified under three categories namely superior, equal and inferior. These verbs show number distinction mainly in the inferior category. The other two categories namely superior and equal have singular verbal forms very rarely. Some singular forms of superior category which were used by a person with upper rank to address the person who belongs to lower rank in the same category were found in the Jātaka text.
Periphrastic usages of imperative occurred more commonly in Jātākā text. The honorific particles ‘sēkəvā, mənəvə, and ‘yahapata’ were used immediately after the present participle form to imply the imperative or command. These honorific particles were used to communicate with persons with a superior social status.

There were three categories namely the superior, equal and inferior in the hierarchical structure of Sinhalese. These categories agreed with the suitable verbal forms or periphrastic usages of the language. The speakers had to choose the relevant verbal form according to the religious and social status of the addressee.

Traditional grammar had established two types of usages of the optative in Sinhalese. The authors of Jātākā tales used four types of forms of the optative to express their ideas in medieval Sinhalese period. The usages of wishing and censuring were the traditional two types of the optative and declaring and liking (desirous) additionally we find. Therefore, traditionally established two types of usages were extended to four in the Jātākā text.

The Sigiri graffiti mentioned suffix as well as particles which were added to the root to make conditional forms. They were ‘hotə, hot, ot’ and ‘hotin’. In Jātākā tales, some additional particles were found in the formation of conditional verbs. They were ‘nam’ and ‘do’. Therefore the formation of conditional verbs in Jātākā tales was more complex than the formation of the conditional in graffiti.

When we examine the suffixes used to form absolutes in the history of Sinhalese, the following suffixes could be identified. In Sigiri graffiti, there were three suffixes namely ‘-ā, -æ’ and ‘-i’. The Sidat Saṅgārāva had used eight suffixes viz. ‘-æ, -ā, -i, -in, -əlā, -ilā, -nìlā’ to form these verbs. The suffixes ‘-ælā, -ālā, -ilā’ and ‘-nìlā’ mentioned in the Jātākā tales were variants of the suffixes ‘-æ, -ā, -i’ and ‘-in’ respectively. The suffixes with additional ‘lā’ did not give any special meaning to the absolutive. There were five suffixes in the Jātākā tales viz. ‘-ə, -ā, -æ, -ā, -i’ in the formation of absolutes. There was an additional suffix in Jātākā tales namely ‘in’ which was used in irregular forms of absolutes. Therefore, we can conclude that the Jātākā tales used more suffixes than contemporary literature in relevant period.
The particle ‘lā’ has two functions in Sinhalese language. It was used as absolutive form as well as particle which was added immediately after the absolutive forms conjugated from other roots. This particle was normally not added to the absolutives when the verb ended with inherent ‘la’. However, some exceptions were found in Jātākā tales.

There is a verbal construction commonly found in the Indo-Aryan languages called vector verbs. These verbal forms were frequently found in Sinhalese also. However, they are partially or completely ‘bleached’ of their lexical meaning when they function as auxiliary verbs. This verbal construction refers to a sequence of two verbs $V_1$ (main verb of the sentence) and $V_2$ (auxiliary verb which takes the tense, aspect etc.). The Siğiri graffiti had four auxiliaries to form vector verbs. The traditional grammar had not taken into account vector verbs. There were several auxiliaries in Jātākā tales which participated in vector verb constructions in Sinhalese. They are as follows: ‘gan ‘take’, piyə ‘leave’, la ‘put’, ya ‘go’, pā ‘point/show’, naŋə ‘climb’, sīə ‘stay’, harə ‘release’, he ‘fall’, kā ‘eat’, iṅdə ‘stay’, tabə ‘keep’ de ‘give’ vadə ‘enter’, and ‘e’ ‘come’.

Many scholars have paid attention to conjunct verbs because these verbs are more significant and common verbal entities in Indo-Aryan languages. Traditional grammarians had not made a proper attempt to identify and analyze these verbs. But the researchers working within a modern linguistic framework had attempted to identify these verbs as a separate verbal category in South-Asian languages. The conjunct verbs are a sub-branch of complex predicate. There were several types of formations in conjunct verbs. Conjunct verbs were formed by adding verbs to preceding nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and adverbs. Mostly the vocabulary items borrowed from Sanskrit and English were used to form this construction. Sometimes inherent and derived forms were also found in this construction. The following verbal roots were used with noun or adjective or adverb to form conjunct verbs in Jātākā tales. They are kərə ‘do’, νə ‘be’, gəsə ‘hit’, gə ‘apply/touch’, ara ‘remove’, baṇdə ‘tie’, vadə ‘develop’, bas ‘descend’, viṅdə ‘suffer’, gan ‘take’, kā ‘eat’, νə ‘go’, piyə ‘leave’, de ‘give’ and la ‘put’.

Volitive and involitive distinction is most prominent feature in Sinhalese language. Most of the verbal roots as well as some nominal stems underwent this
umlaut or vowel fronting process throughout the history of the language. The back vowels (short and long vowels) became front vowels (short and long vowels) in this process. If the roots consists of front vowel/s, they remain unchanged.

When we examine the structure and usages of medieval period of Sinhalese, the Jātākā tales show some characteristic features in the language. The standard grammar of Sinhalese was compiled before the translation of Pāli Jātākā stories to the Sinhalese. However, it appears that the influence of this grammar or Sidat Saṅgārāvā had not spread to all the groups of scholars or at least all the traditions of schools throughout the country. Therefore more suffixes as well as verbal forms were found in the Jātākā text.