5.4. Summary

The word order at the phase level in SOV and SVO languages observed in the present study indicates rigidity. The word order within the clause is fixed whereas the order of clauses within the sentence is comparatively free in Sinhala and English.

CHAPTER SIX

Conclusion

6.0. Preliminaries

This chapter presents the observations reached at after the analysis and the discussion about the word order in Sinhala and English in the previous chapters. Before summing up, there are two general problems that need to be addressed while attempting to identify word order characteristics of the two languages. The first is of identifying the basic word order for which the language may have more than one order. The second is of identifying instances of particular constructions. In two languages examined, classifications according to each of the various characteristics in them have been recorded. In instances where only one order of elements is possible, the classification is not very complex. But especially Sinhala in its word order at the sentence level exhibits more than one order for at least some pairs of elements and then the classification becomes complicated. There is some variation in the practice of linguists on this question, both in terms of what criteria to employ in these instances and in terms of whether to classify a language at all when the criteria do not yield an obvious answer. These issues have been discussed in the context of identifying a basic order of subject, object, and verb, but they apply to all pairs of elements. One of
the criteria is frequency of usage. Considering the first extreme example, English allows OSV order, as in *Chocolate I like*, but this order is quite obviously much less frequent than the order SVO. Where languages allow alternative orders, one order is often overwhelmingly more frequent. But in other instances, the differences in frequency may be much less extreme. In this case, both orders are relatively frequent. Linguists answer this question in different ways. One argument is simply that frequency should not be used as a criterion because it is not a part of the grammar of the language. Another possible argument is that such differences in frequency might be an artifact of a particular set of texts, and that one might find different frequencies in a different set of texts. A further argument is that even if the set of texts can be considered sufficiently varied that the difference in frequency can be considered typical. In defense of frequency, it can be argued that differences in frequency often provide a more reliable test than other tests in that where the difference is large enough, it will be intuitively obvious to the linguist working on the language, and often to speakers of the language as well, that one order is the normal order. And frequency is a clear operational test; if one order is consistently more common across large enough samples of texts, then anybody examining such texts will arrive at the same conclusion. Finally, many of the conclusions in word order typology are based on grammatical descriptions in which there is flexibility of word order but in which one order is described as normal. In other words, in practice, frequency has been the primary criterion in word order typology. Furthermore, the universal tendencies associated with OV versus VO order are found in languages in which there is considerable flexibility of word order at the sentence level in particular.

**6.1. Findings**
The major findings of the study can be summarized as follows:

1. As far as the word order at the phrase level is concerned, it indicates rigidity in SOV and SVO languages observed in the present study. Particularly, this fixed word order phenomena in Sinhala has not been explored by researchers so far.

2. In both languages noun phrases with ordinal and cardinal numbers have a fixed word order. In noun phrases for example like /paloveni miniha/ the first man and /minissu denna/ the two men, the word order is fixed.

3. In Sinhala, the word order is fixed in noun phrases with singular nouns modified by a nominal modifier, but it is not true in noun phrases with plural nouns whereas in English the word order in noun phrases with singular or plural noun is fixed.

4. One of the significant differences between two languages concerned is that when the word order changes in Sinhala there are changes in the inflections used. This does not apply in English since there is no inflection. Being an inflectional language, the word order of Sinhala is flexible, does not mean that the same is applicable to any strings of words. A sentence may have many variations but some of them are dominant while the others would be optional.

5. Though the word order in English is considered to be very rigid particularly at the phrase level, there are some peculiarities. For example, the word order of the phrase like a tall and old man can be changed as a man tall and old.
6. In an extended noun phrase in Sinhala a clause occurs as a PreM whereas in English a clause functions as a PoM.

7. In extended noun phrases like /gođa:k prəsiddə pudgələya/ the very famous person, the word order is inflexible in both languages.

8. In complex verb phrases also the word order is inflexible. In Sinhala for example, the auxiliaries in verb phrase like /kaɭə yutuyi/ do must follows the main verb whereas in English the opposite holds true.

9. The auxiliary verbs in Sinhala like /venna æti/ may be can be seperated from the main verb and attached to NP only for focus.

10. The inflexibility of word order in adverbial phrases in both languages marks a significant similarity of them. However, the order of adverbial phrases at the sentence level is free.

11. According to Greenberg (1966:79) languages having dominant SOV order are postpositional. Sinhala is in accordance with this principle whereas English is considered a prepositional language. However, the word order in both prepositional and postpositional phrases is rigid. In English, the prepositional stranding is acceptable only at the sentence level.

12. The order of prepositional phrases in English in a sentence decides its function. That is when the prepositional phrase functions as an adjectival phrase it follows the noun and that order is fixed but when it functions as an adverbial phrase the order is free. As a result it occurs at the initial position or the end
position of the sentence. In Sinhala the postpositional phrases can occur as an adverbial phrases freely without any semantic differences.

13. There are about seven basic major clause types in Sinhala with many variations whereas in English there are seven clause types with less number of variations.

14. The word order within the clause in both languages is inflexible whereas the order of some clauses within the sentences is free in English. Spoken Sinhala can be considered a language with some features of mixed branching direction since relative clauses occur left and right to the head whereas English according to Chomsky & Lasnik (1993:518) a right-branching language, all heads precede their complements. So, the order in both languages is determined by the setting of the head parameter.

15. Gapping which results the changes in the word order is predominantly operated in compound sentences in both languages.

16. In Sinhala, being a head last language the adjectival clause occurs before the H whereas in English, the adjectival clause follows the H. The dissimilarity of this kind will make difficult for the L₂ learner to acquire English.

17. In a sentence like All I did was hit him on the head, the infinitive without to and the subject of the sentence also has free word order in English since the word order of the same sentence can be changed as Hit him on the head was all I did.
18. In cleft sentences in English, there are two subjects: the anticipatory subject and the postponed subject whereas in Sinhala no such complexities come about and instead the focus marker /tamayi/ is used.

19. Depending upon the element which one wants to focus, the order of focus marker in Sinhala can be changed and as a result a simple sentence may have several cleft sentences.

20. The word order within the conditional clauses in English is totally fixed. But in Sinhala the word order in the main clause is flexible since deviated forms are permitted. In both languages, the order of conditional clause in a sentence is comparatively free.

21. The word order in interrogative form in Sinhala is simpler than that of in English.

22. It is difficult to decide the unmarked word order in negation in Sinhala but in English mostly it is largely pre-verbal.

23. English is considered a non pro-drop language. Nevertheless, subject pronouns are almost always dropped in commands defining a word order in both languages.

24. In both languages, the unmarked word order in a sentence can be changed depending upon the element which one wants to put emphasis on.

25. The right headedness and the left branching nature are dominant in Sinhala while English has left headedness and right branching nature at all levels.
Thus, the present research reveals a number of similarities and dissimilarities in the light of the word order in Sinhala and English at various levels. It is found that the word order typology plays a vital role in predicting syntactic changes. The main argument is that, on the scale of free word order and fixed word order, English leans more towards fixed word order while Sinhala has relatively free word order. However, Sinhala also leans more towards the fixed word order at the phrase level. The insights gained through this research can be utilized in understanding the structures of two languages concerned.

6.2. The Pedagogical Implications

The present study has significant pedagogical implications. This study definitely enables learners to understand the different properties of the two languages in respect of word order, which introduce the L2 learner the comparative concepts of two languages (Sinhala and English) so as to facilitate them to acquire English. This contrastive analysis can be utilized to identify the main difficulties in learning English as a second language caused by interference from the first language (Sinhala) and there by reduce the effect of interference. The method of classification of grammatical units used in this study can be utilized in teaching English language very effectively.

6.3. Future Research

For the obvious limitations of time and space and other constraints, the researcher has concentrated only on the synchronic word order of Sinhala and English. A research can be undertaken on the comparative study of diachronic word order of Sinhala and English with the particular attention to the evolution of grammar in two languages as well.
The other area of research would be the comparative study of word order in Sinhala and other Indo-Aryan languages like Pali and Sanskrit with special attention to the written varieties. In Pali and Sanskrit nominal modifiers occur before a noun. The verb modifiers are placed before the verb as in Sinhala. In Sanskrit the matrix clause is drawn to the beginning since the focus is on the consequence which is different from written Sinhala since the relative clause in Sinhala is followed by the matrix clause.

A comparative study of word order in Sinhala and Dravadian language like Tamil is also an imperative area of research. Geiger (1957:22-23) distinguishes two streams of Dravadian influence on Sinhala. One of them is the Dravadian influence on Indo-Aryan and the other is the direct Dravidian influence on Sinhala.