

THE TEENS IN SINHALA

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Dr. R. Hundirapola, in an article entitled 'The Sinhalese Numerals for the Teens and their Implications for Word Order Change' (*Indian Linguistics*, 37, 1976, 212-14) has given a succinct account of the two patterns (Object-Verb and Verb-Object) of expressions in use to indicate the numerals from 11 to 19 inclusive.

At the very beginning one finds him limiting himself to spoken Sinhala (i.e. Sinhalese) and then of transliterating the expressions as they are pronounced in that idiom today. A broader base would have been the more appreciable as Sinhala is an old language with a history of over two millennia (possessing an epigraphic literature of 23 centuries) and the oldest literary work now extant in the language is eleven centuries old, although there is evidence to the presence of many works, now lost, of much earlier times. As such, a consideration of historic forms from possible literary sources would have furthered the cause of research.

It is also evident that the word 'teen' has been accepted here (understandably) in its broad meaning to include all cardinal numbers from 11 to 19 although two of them, viz. 11 and 12, are not 'teens' in the strict sense of the word.

In written Sinhala one finds the VO pattern rather more consistent as far as these teens are concerned. Their stem forms may thus be indicated :

- ekoḷos* (11) : *JAG*¹. 231 (11th c.)
doḷos (12) : Jetavana Inscription of Maḷutisa : EZ.I. 255 (3rd c.)
teḷes (13) : *DhAG*.² 129 (10th c.)
tudus (14) : *JAG*. 104 (11th c.)
pasaḷos (15) : *DhAG*. 185 (10th c.)
soḷos (16) : *Dhpr*.³ 97 (12th c.)
saṭḷos/
sataḷos (17) : *DhAG*. 58 (10th c.)
aṭaḷos (18) : *DhAG*. 58 (10th c.)

(Note : The references here give an inflected form rather than a stem form in many instances)

1. ed. D. B. Jayatilaka. Colombo 1943
2. ed. D. B. Jayatilaka. Colombo 1932
3. ed. R. Dharmarama. Colombo 1927

The references given above are, as far as I am aware, some of the earliest instances of their occurrence in classical Sinhala literature (as extant), and all these forms appear to have persisted in various writings throughout the subsequent centuries and remain in usage even during the present day.

It has to be remarked that these forms—nominal stems as they are—take in case-terminations as follows :

-a	:	nominative & accusative
-aṭa	:	accusative & dative
-en, -in	:	instrumental
-ehi, -ē	:	locative
-eni	:	vocative

The inflected nominative forms are, therefore, *ekoḷosa*, *doḷosa*, *teḷesa*, etc.

With these terminations added some of them take on variant forms in pronunciation and subsequently in writing, viz., *ekoḷaha*, *doḷaha* (all vowels *a* pronounced 'open') and *pahaḷaha* (the first two vowels *a* pronounced 'open'), *pāḷoha* and *pāḷaha* (the two vowels *a* pronounced 'open') illustrating such processes as 1. the sibilant *-s-* softening to *-h-* 2. the lengthening of the preceding vowel on the elision of the *-h-* and 3. vowel levelling, all of which are known to Sinhala in general.

It has also to be remarked that the forms *tudusa* (√ *tudus*) for fourteen and *ekunvissa* (√ *ekunvisi* < *ek + un + visi*, 'one less twenty') for nineteen belong to this sequence, but they appear to have been differently derived.

In the terms for the numerals from 11 to 13 and from 15 to 18 (inclusive) a combination of two morphemes is evident, for example, *ek* and *aḷos* in the first: *ek + aḷos* > *ekaḷos* > *ekoḷos*. This combination has resulted in the modification of the vowel *a* (by levelling and elision) as seen in the following too, even in their initial forms :

<i>de</i> ('two')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>daḷos</i> *	>	<i>doḷos</i> (by elision of <i>e</i> and levelling)
<i>te</i> ('three')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>teḷos</i> *	>	<i>teḷes</i> (by elision of <i>a</i> and levelling)
<i>pas</i> ('five')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>pasalaḷos</i>	(direct combination)	
<i>sa</i> ('six')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>soḷos</i>	(by elision of <i>a</i> and levelling)	
<i>sat</i> ('seven')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>satḷos</i>	(by elision of <i>a</i>) or <i>satalaḷos</i>	(by direct combination)
<i>aṭa</i> ('eight')	+	<i>aḷos</i>	>	<i>aṭalaḷos</i>	(by elision of <i>a</i>)	

It has also to be confessed that the term for 'sixteen,' i.e., *soḷos*, may be directly derived from the Skt. *soḷaṣa* and the P. and Prk. *soḷasa*.

It is relevant to point out at this stage that there are two other expressions in the Sinhala language where, in all probability, the form *aḷos* (and none other) occurs.

1. *ataḷos* or *atḷos* (> *ataḷossa*), probably > *at(a)+aḷos*, 'a handful' : *But.*⁴
2. *dumaḷos(u)* > *dumaḷosuva* & *dumaḷossa*, probably < *dum(a)+aḷos*, 'incense burner'

It is likely that the term *aḷos* here indicates a small unit of any material as may be enclosed in a hand or palm or be held in a small container. And when it was used to indicate the few 'teen' numbers mentioned, the term came to mean a unit of 10, as each of these expressions *ekoḷos*, *doḷos*, etc. denoted 10 plus the amount indicated by the prefixed term for a number, viz., *ek+aḷos* = 1+10, *de+aḷos* = 2+10, etc.

This, may it be confessed, is a conjectural opinion about which other scholarly points of view are welcome, indeed.

It is also of note that the term *aḷosa* occurs in the *Saddharmaratnāvaliya*⁵ (814) of the 13th century. A variant reading also occurs as *asaḷosa*, and the meaning attributed by the learned editor is *anusasa* (i.e., 'power,' 'result,' 'benefit'). It is difficult to bring in a direct relationship between this meaning and that which may be attributed to the suffixed *aḷosa* under discussion. Likely, the word possessed meanings (as a homonym), or it meant 'a unit, primarily, and was subsequently extended to mean '(a unit of) benefit'; or, it meant 'benefit' to start with, and was later extended to mean 'a benefit of ten' when suffixed to the term for a cardinal number. In any case one remains in the realm of conjecture here too. The word, may it be added, is not currently in vogue as an independent expression.

It is, nevertheless, apparent that *aḷosa* as a suffix corresponds to the Prk. *-ārasa* suffixed to *ek* (1), *du* (2), *aṭṭha* (8), etc. to render the forms *ekkārasa* (11), *duvārasa* (12) and *aṭṭhārasa* (18), respectively. They are also phonetically related, with the *a* shortened and the cerebral *ḷ* taking the place of the (cerebral) *r*, for a difference. It is, therefore, not unlikely that the Sinhala expression is a direct derivative.

The Sinhala terms for the 'teens' as found in the two orders may be comprehensively enlisted as follows :—

VO	OV
<i>ekoḷosa/ekoḷaha</i>	—
<i>doḷosa/doḷaha</i>	—
<i>teḷesa</i>	<i>dahatuna</i>
<i>tudusa</i>	<i>dahahatara/dāhatara</i>
<i>pasaḷosa/pahaḷoha/pāḷoha/pāḷaha</i>	—
<i>soḷosa</i>	<i>dahasaya/dāsaya/dāseya</i>
<i>satḷosa/sataḷosa</i>	<i>dahahata/dāhata</i>
<i>aṭaḷosa</i>	<i>daha-aṭa/dasa-aṭa</i>
<i>ekunvissa</i>	<i>dahanavaya/dahanavē/dahanamaya/ dahanamē</i>

4. ed. Sorata. Colombo 1931

5. ed. D. B. Jayatilaka. Colombo 1929

The relevant passage reads *maitriyehi aḷosa labannaṭa utsāha kaṭa yutu*, i.e., 'should strive to obtain the benefit of loving kindness.'

It is certainly difficult to arrive at the era during which expressions in each of these orders came to be used in spoken Sinhala (for evident reasons), but the first VO patterns appear in written literature of over 600 hundred years ago, as exemplified above. Those of the second (OV) are probably of later occurrence and are quite rare in the (written) Sinhala of the classics. Perhaps the earliest of them is *dasa-aṭa* along with *dasata* (resulting of the combination of *dasa+aṭa*, i.e., 10+8) occurring in the Pārakumbā Sirita⁶ (10, 23) and the Girā Sandēṣa⁷ (137, 142), both of the mid 15th century. During subsequent times both orders (VO & OV) are evident, with those of the first more numerous.

During the present times all those of the OV order are in use both in the written and the spoken usage, monopolising the latter. In the three instances where OV forms are absent, the VO forms *ekoḷaha* (11), *doḷaha* (12) and *pahaḷoha/pāḷoha* (15) are used in the spoken language. The other VO forms have not disappeared; they are there to be made use of in the written idiom, particularly in versification.

The term for 14, viz., *tudusa*, is evidently derived through a process different from the rest. Geiger (Colombo 1941. s.v.) notes its Indo-Aryan parallels, viz., the Skt. *caturdaśa* (4+10) together with *catuddasa* and *cuddasa* (P.) and *cauddasa* and *coddasa* (Prk.). The P. *cuddasa* appears to be the immediate antecedent.

The term *ekunvissa* (19) is a direct derivative of the P. *ekūnavīsati*. It is not impossible that at some time or other this cardinal would have been denoted by the expression *navalosa* keeping to the pattern of the rest of the VO order, but there certainly is no evidence of a literary or epigraphic nature to its prevalence.

No single reason may be attributed to the absence of OV forms to denote the cardinals 11, 12 and 15. In the case of the first, *ekoḷosa*, and the third, *pasalosa*, OV terms are not particularly necessary as the vital numbers, one and five, are indicated in the VO terms themselves by means of the respective terms known to popular usage, viz., *eka* and *pasa*. This is quite in contrast to the terms for thirteen, *teḷesa*, and fourteen, *tudusa*, in which these vital numbers are not so evident to the ordinary speaker or hearer; and hence, the simpler *dahatuna* and *dahahatara*.

An objection to this suggested reason may be raised in connection with *sat(a)losa* (17) in which *sata* (7) is not an unfamiliar expression. Or, is it? It is not *sata* but *hata* (on the substitution of *h* for *s*) that is familiar, and this term for the cardinal never appears as *hatalos* or *hatlos*. If it does, would there be a form *dahahata*?

6. ed. Sri Charles de Silva. Colombo 1954

7. ed. Munidasa Kumaratunga. Colombo 1951

The form *dolosa* for 12 is equally interesting. The well-known term *de* (= *dve*), meaning 'two', is replaced by *do*⁸, largely known to classical usage. The Jētavanārāma Inscription of Malutisa (3rd c.) refers to 'two taxes' as *dopati* (EZ. I. 255), and the Slab Inscription of Mahinda IV (11th c.) has the expression *do at-hi* (*Ibid.* 234) meaning 'in the two hands.' The Kavsiḷumina⁹ (IV. 38) of the 13th century refers to 'two hands' as *do at* (< *do hat*, in which *hat* < Skt. *hasta*, 'hand') which form also occurs in the Amāvatura¹⁰ (12th c.) along with *doho at* and *dōt* to mean 'two palms (of the hand)'. Incidentally *dōt* and (<) *dohot* are known to present-day parlance too, although *do* in itself, meaning 'two' is unknown. However, it is clear that *do* (meaning 'two') remained a popular usage in the past, which factor may suggest that the form *dolos* (or *dolaha*) was generally understood to render an alternative 'simpler' form unnecessary.

There is no doubt that Dr. Hundirapola has addressed himself to a problematic issue existing, though, in simple Sinhala usage, and aroused the curiosity due. There is also no doubt that his attempt at suggesting a solution inspires still further research in this and allied fields.

However, certain opinions expressed by Dr. Hundirapola are worthy of being scrutinised. He proposes that the OV pattern for 11 was not adopted in order to 'avoid lexical homonymy', because a contraction of **daha-ek* would result in *dek* which also means 'two'.

There need be no controversy in so far as *daha-ek* > **daa-ek* is concerned. This supposed resultant (*daa-ek*) would, in effect, be pronounced as (*daa-y-ek*>) *daayek* with a -y- augmenting between the two vowels.

- cf. *paa-ak* > *paa-y-ak* > *paayak*, 'a tower'
 -ehi/-ē > *paayehi/-yē*, 'in the tower'
 -en/-in > *paayen/-yin*, 'from the tower'
 -aṭa > *paayaṭa*, 'to the tower'

Similar nominative, accusative, locative and ablative forms are also evident of stem forms *raa* ('intoxicant', 'lust'), *laa* ('measure'), *vaa* ('air') and *saa* ('hunger'). The long vowel *aa* (or *ā*) appears to remain in strength unaltered in all these cases.

Hence, Dr. Hundirapola's statement, viz., 'By further contraction this sequence (i.e., **daha-ek* > *daa-ek*) would have become *dek*' is rather unsubstantiable. To re-iterate, *daa-ek* would have become *daayek*, if at all..., and remained in usage! The original form, i.e., *daha-eka*, too, would have remained in usage, being pronounced as *dahayeka*.

8. An alternative form is *doho* as seen in *DhAG.* 132, *KSm.* III. 25, *RmN.* 253

9. ed. Sorata. Colombo 1946

10. ed. Nanaloka. Colombo 1959. 27, 91, 253. The editor adopts only the form *doho at* for the text, but indicates the presence of the rest as variant forms in other redactions.

Dr. Hundirapola's statement, further, is based on an assumption which does not appear to portray the actual suffixing process in Sinhala. He regards *kollek* as a derivative of *kollā+ek*. Now *kollā* itself is an inflected form of the stem *kolu* with the suffix *-ā* (denoting the animate singular) added. This combination results in two derivative forms :

1. *kolu+ā* > *kolu+v+ā* > *koluvā* (with a *-v-* augmenting between the vowels, the preceding *-u* being the determinant)
2. *kolu+ā* > *kol.l.u+ā* > *kol.l+ā* > *kollā* (by the duplication of the *l* and the elision of the vowel *u* and subsequent combination¹¹).

The stem form *kolu* plus the animate indefinite suffix *-ek* results in *koluvek* and *kollek* by the above respective processes. The form *kollek*, therefore, is not a derivative of *kollā+ek* which would have rendered a form *kollāyek* according to evident *sandhi* rules in Sinhala. Such a form, of course, does not exist.

A primary case termination, it has to be remembered, is a-fixed to the stem form itself, and not to an already inflected form.

The form which Dr. Hundirapola accepted as possessive of the etymological pattern to justify his derivation of **dek* < **daa-ek* (meaning 11) appears to lie beyond the limits of acceptability.

And hence, the reason/s for not adopting an OV pattern for '11' in Sinhala seem/s to lie elsewhere.

The prevailing VO pattern in *doḷosa* and *doḷaha* ('12') is also attributed by Dr. Hundirapola to a desire to avoid homonymy. But the process in which the form concerned, viz., *dedek*, is obtained is not satisfactorily established. He refers to a form *daha-dek* yielding a form *dā-dek* which is acceptable as lying in the associated etymological process; but how **dā-dek* may result in *dedek* is open to serious doubt. Not *dā-deka* but *da-deka* can give way to *dedeka*, with the short vowel in *da* subject to a levelling process. The long *a* is rather more resistant, and if ever a form *dā-deka* for the cardinal 12 ever evolved and was in use, there is no reason why that form, in itself, should not have remained without subjecting itself to any modification resulting in a possible ambiguity. The danger of ambiguity itself, if at all, is sufficient reason for the term *daha-deka* to remain in popular use.

As regards the absence of an OV form for 15 in Sinhala Dr. Hundirapola is of opinion that the form *daha paha* contains four low-back vowels, and that 'spoken Sinhalese does not permit the occurrence of more than three

11. This combination process, unfortunately, appears to be almost wholly ignored by local linguists of the present day.

low back vowels adjacent to each other within a word'. But what about the several examples of duplicated participial forms *aha-aha* ('asking'), *kaha-kaha* ('scratching'), *gaha-gaha* ('hitting'), *maha-maha* ('sewing'), etc. where all the vowels are low back ?

What he says is certainly relevant to such Sinhala words ending in any consonant except in the *ha* preceded by *a*

A terminal *-ha* preceded by a *-a* is always an 'open' consonant as in *aha* ('side', 'direction'), *kaha* ('yellow', 'turmeric'), *gaha* ('tree'), *baha* ('language'), etc.

Further, if the form *daha-paha* is not permissible under the low back vowel requirement stated above, it is more in the nature of things to see a modified form of it (as is permissible), say, *dā-paha*, rather than a total rejection of it. Many are the instances in spoken Sinhala where 'phonologically impossible' forms have been rendered possible and put to the best use.

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