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### **An Examination on the Semantic Adversation of the Sinhalese Language**

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As a living language, the Sinhalese language has come to its present status after going through a numerous number of changes to all its components. Any given word of a language has a meaning of its own, which cannot be easily changed. However, it is not entirely impossible to change the given meanings of the words of a living language since it is infinitely modifiable and extendable according to the changing needs of its speakers. Any change that happens to the meaning of a word is known as semantic change. Semantic adversation which can be defined as acquiring a meaning entirely opposite to the existing one is one of the processes that can be seen under this. This study is an attempt to examine the semantic adversation in the Sinhalese language. Data has been collected through a comparison between classical Sinhalese and contemporary Sinhalese. The older meanings given to words were identified from their usage in selected classical Sinhalese literary work and it was evident that though many words used then are still being used, many of them are affected by semantic change in a number of ways. Since the range of this study is limited to semantic adversation, other processes of semantic change such as semantic expansion were not examined. Accordingly, a considerable amount of words in relation to which semantic adversation has happened is identified. However, exact reasons that can be pointed out as responsible for the semantic adversation or distinguishable processes of semantic adversation are not identified, which leads to the judgment that semantic adversation in the Sinhalese language is purely an accident of history.

**Key words:** classical Sinhalese, contemporary Sinhalese, semantic adversation, semantic change, words