

## Synopsis of the Key Presentation:

# Phono-semantic Matching in the Sinhalese Language: A Neologisation Process Innovated by Cumaratunga Munidasa

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### 1. Introductory Remarks

Lexical borrowing is a commonplace word-formation process in many a languages of the contemporary world. Phono-Semantic Matching (henceforth PSM) is an important but hitherto neglected process of camouflaged lexical borrowing. This process employs pre-existent Target Language (henceforth TL) forms to coin new words (henceforth neologisms) that phonetically and semantically resemble the original Source Language (henceforth SL) words. Thus, it is clear that PSM is something more than mere lexical borrowing.

This paper presents the findings of a research conducted to explore PSMs in the Sinhalese language. The research was executed in three steps. The first was the collection of PSMs. During the library research a considerable number of PSMs were found among neologisms coined by Cumaratunga Munidasa. Most of them appeared in his journal 'Subasa' published from 10<sup>th</sup> July 1939 to 16<sup>th</sup> February 1942. Thus, it was made the key sample of data for the research. The second step was the analytic classification of PSMs. Documentation of the findings became the third step.

This paper presents a general introduction to the concept of PSM in section 2, along with a classification of PSMs in the Sinhalese language in section 3 below.

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## 2. Neologisation & Phono-semantic Matching (PSM)

A neologism is a new word introduced into a language. P. H. Matthews (1997:261) defines it as a new word which has entered a language by whatever process, and has gained some currency in its speech community. The act of forming neologisms in a language is traditionally referred to as 'Word-formation'. Here, the term 'Neologisation' is preferred over that traditional term. Thus, all possible ways and processes of forming neologisms are known as neologisation processes.

Before examining the features of PSM as a neologisation process, it is proper to present a taxonomy of the sources of neologisation. That will help in positioning PSM in the system. Yair Sapir (2003:61-62) observes four sources of neologisms as follows:

### a. Zero Source (henceforth *ex nihilo*)

Neologisms from this source are not based on any pre-existent lexical material. Some English brand names like *Google*, *Yahoo* are from this source.

### b. Sound Source (henceforth *ex sono*)

Neologisms from this source are reproductions of sounds or sound symbolism. Ideophonic words resulted from onomatopoeia such as *crash*, *thud* are from this source.

### c. External Source (henceforth *ex externo*)

Neologisms from this source belong to various processes of lexical borrowing from other languages. It is said that almost ninety percent of the words in English language are borrowings.

### d. Internal Source (henceforth *ex interno*)

Neologisms from this source are coined employing exclusively the native roots of a language. In any living language such forms are comparatively lesser in number.

Yair Sapir (2003:62) considers the first two sources to be productive in a language's initial stages, whereas the two latter are considered to be productive throughout any stage of its evolution. This allows the latter two sources to be

admixed or bifurcated with each other in different ways. Calquing is one such way the two are bifurcated. There, an ex externo sense is rendered by an ex interno form. This can be elaborated with an example from Cumaratunga's neologisms. He calqued English *background* into Sinhalese as *pasubimā* (පසුවිම) with identical meaning (*pasu-* 'back' + *-bimā* 'ground'). Similarly, PSM is a process of neologisation based on a bifurcated source. There, ex externo senses and phonemes are inter-combined with similar ex interno senses and phonemes. This can also be elaborated with an example from Cumaratunga's neologisms. Sinhalese *kamifu* (කමිඳු) coined by him is a PSM of English *committee*. It is a combination of Sinhalese *kam* 'work' and *ifu* 'perform'. From this comparison it is clear that PSM is distinct from calquing. Calquing includes only semantic matching, but not phonetic matching.

As evident from the above demonstration, PSM is the lexical borrowing process whereby a SL word is reproduced in the TL, using pre-existent native elements that are similar to the SL word both in meaning and sound. The concept of PSM was defined and termed by the Israeli linguist Ghil'ad Zuckermann (2003:08) in his famous work 'Language Contact and Lexical Enrichment in Israeli Hebrew'. He employs the term PSM in referring to both the neologisation process as well as its results. Since PSM employs an admixture of both ex externo and ex interno sources Zuckermann urges lexicographers and etymologists to recognise such borrowing as Multisourced Neologisations.

According to Yair Sapir and Ghil'ad Zuckermann (2008:44) PSM occurs in two categories of languages. They are:

- a. Puristically oriented languages, in which language-planners attempt to hinder undesirable foreignisms from entering the lexis or to get rid of existing foreignisms, e.g. Finnish, Icelandic, Israeli Hebrew and Revolutionized Turkish
- b. Languages using 'phono-logographic' script e.g. Chinese and Japanese to the extent that Kanji are used.

### 3. Phono-semantic Matching (PSM) in the Sinhalese Language

The Sinhalese language which has a strong puristic tradition which

continues even today, rightfully belongs to the category of puristically oriented languages. Cumaratunga Munidasa was the pioneering grammarian of the Sinhalese puristic movement. Thus, observations have been made of PSMs among the neologisms coined by him. W. D. Pintu Jayawadu, who was an ardent follower and admirer of Cumaratunga, was the first individual to recognise PSM in Cumaratunga's neologisms. That was more than a half century before the process was defined and termed by Ghil'ad Zuckermann.

Pintu Jayawadu (1952: 03) observed three process of lexical borrowing in Cumaratunga's neologisms:

"...මේ යැ උත් (කුමරතුඟු මුනිදසුන්) පෑ නියර වඩු වදන් තැනීමෙහි ලා:

1. රුවින් හුරු කිරීම

නිදසුන්: සබ්මැරීනය (Submarine), ටැලස්කෝපය (Telescope), බසය (Bus), ඩැස්කුව (Desk), බයිසිකලය (bicycle), ලංඩනය (London), ජවහරලාල නේරු (Jawaharlal Nehru)

2. අරුතින් හුරු කිරීම

නිදසුන්: කුමුදුව (Submarine), දුර දක්නය (Telescope), හසුන් යහළුවා (Pen friend), කුමරි මරියා (Virgin mary), දසුන් මඩුල්ල (Horizon), පසුබිම (Background), පා පැදිය (Bicycle), විද්‍යානුරු (Scientific), උණ මනුව (Thermometer), සරසවිය (University)

3. අරුතින් හා හඬින් හා හුරු කිරීම

නිදසුන්: රේඩියුව (Radio), තලික්සුව (Telescope), වෙළුම (Volume), ගොවුනුරු (Governor), මාදිලිය (Model), හැකියාව (ශක්තිය), මිහිරියාව (මාධුර්යය), පිරික්සු (පරීක්ෂක), විබෙදුව (විභාගය)

කුමරතුඟුවෝ මේ තුන් මඟින් මුලින් කී රුවින් හුරු කිරීමේ මඟට - වරනඟා ගත හැකි වන සේ යෙදීමේ මඟට - වඩා දෙවෙනි තෙවෙනි මං, එනම් අරුතින් හුරු කිරීමේ මං, මැ පැසැසු හ..."

It is needless to explain that the third process given above as 'අරුතින් හා හඬින් හා හුරු කිරීම' is identical to what Zuckermann calls 'Phono-semantic Matching'. Being a puristic language planner, Cumaratunga's intention in advocating this neologisation process must have obviously been his need to conceal the foreign element of the neologisms and ensure their lexicographic acceptability as purely native forms.

Employing a slightly modified version of the lexicopoietic classification proposed by Zuckermann (2003:87), the PSMs introduced by Cumaratunga Munidasa can be broadly categorised into two main classes. Considering the degree of phonetic matching as a criterion a third subclass can also be added. Thus, there are three classes as follows:

- a. PSM through Independent Pre-existent Forms (henceforth PSMIPF)
- b. PSM through Combined Pre-existent Forms (henceforth PSMCPF)
- c. Partial PSM (henceforth PPSM)

These are discussed in the following sections 3.1., 3.2., and 3.3. with substantial examples for each category.

### 3.1. PSM through Independent Pre-existent Forms (PSMIPF)

PSMIPF refers to PSM resulted by semantic shifting of an independent pre-existent TL form in such a way it matches the borrowed SL word both phonetically and semantically. Casting a new sense into an existing independent word thus leads to polysemy as well. Consider the following examples from Cumaratunga's neologisms:

- a. Sinhalese *pedesə* (පෙදෙස) in the sense of English *place* (as in *Ward Place*) is produced from the existing Sinhalese form *pedesə* (පෙදෙස) which originally meant 'area'. It is a noun derived from the root *pedes* (පෙදෙස්) which is phonetically as well as semantically matching with the Greek root *plateia*, meaning 'open area', from which English *place* is derived.
- b. Sinhalese *bubub* (බුබුළු) in the sense of English *bulb* (as in *light bulb*) is produced from the existing Sinhalese form *bubub* (බුබුළු) which originally meant 'blister/ foam'. It is derived from the noun root *bubuhu* (බුබුඹ) which is phonetically as well as semantically matching with *bulb* as both of them refer to round shaped things.
- c. Sinhalese *ræsə* (රැස) in the sense of English *race* (as in *the Mongolian race*) is produced from the existing Sinhalese form *ræsə* (රැස) which originally meant 'group/ gathering'. It is derived from the noun root *ræs* (රැස්) which is

phonetically matching and semantically identical to the Italian noun root *razza* meaning 'a group with common features' from which English *race* is derived.

- d. Sinhalese *wefumā* (වෙච්ඡම) in the sense of English *volume* (as in *encyclopaedic volume*) is produced from the existing Sinhalese form *wefumā* (වෙච්ඡම) which originally meant 'bandage/ wrapping'. It is a verbal noun derived from the verb root *welā* (වෙළ) which means 'to bandage/ warp'. It is phonetically matching and semantically identical to the Latin verb root *volvere* from which English *volume* is derived.

Of these PSMs ones given in b & d might have an ex interno element that is etymologically cognate with the ex externo element from an Indo-European origin. Exploring these genetic relations is something beyond the scope of this research. Still, mention should be made of the fact that Cumaratunga (1941:136) had taken etymological information into consideration in coining PSMs in this manner. However, PSMs of this type do not count more than a handful.

### 3.2. PSM through Combined Pre-existent Forms (PSMCPF)

PSMCPF refers to PSM resulted by new forms created by the combination of at least two independent pre-existent TL forms in such a way they match the borrowed SL word both phonetically and semantically. In this case two otherwise independent forms are combined to create a new independent form which embodies the meanings of both. Consider the following examples from Cumaratunga's neologisms:

- a. Sinhalese *puwāsuru* (පුවසුරු) referring to English *professor* is produced by combining the otherwise independent Sinhalese forms *puwas* (පුවස්) and *kuru* (කුරු). Of these, *puwas* (පුවස්) is a verb root meaning 'to preach', and *kuru* (කුරු) meaning 'doer' is a verbal noun derived from the verb root *kārā* (කර) meaning 'to do'. Thus, *puwāsuru* (පුවසුරු) meaning 'preach doer' is phonetically as well as semantically matching with English *professor* derived from the verb root *profess* which means 'to declare publicly'.

- b. Sinhalese *mi'yæsi* (මියැසි) referring to English *music* is produced by combining the otherwise independent Sinhalese forms *mi* (මී) and *æsi* (ඇසි). Of these, *mi* (මී) is a noun root meaning 'honey/ pleasant' and *æsi* (ඇසි) meaning 'what is heard' is a verbal noun derived from the verb root *asə* (අස) meaning 'to hear'. However, *mi'yæsi* (මියැසි) has become an established lexical item even though it semantically differs from English *music* derived from the Greek compound *musikē* (*teknē*) which means '(art) of the Muses'.
- c. Sinhalese *redewuwa* (රෙදෙවුව) referring to English *radio* is produced by combining the otherwise independent Sinhalese forms *arə* (අර) and *dewu* (දෙවු). Of these, *arə* (අර) is a noun root meaning 'radius', and *dewu* (දෙවු) meaning 'giver' is a verbal noun derived from the causative verb root *dewə* (දෙව) meaning 'to give'. Thus, *redewuwa* (රෙදෙවුව) meaning 'giver from radius' is phonetically as well as semantically matching with English *radio* derived from *radius* which means 'centre of a circle'.
- d. Sinhalese *liwisærija* (ලිවිසැරිය) referring to English *literature* is produced by combining the otherwise independent Sinhalese forms *liwi* (ලිවි) and *særija* (සැරිය). Of these, *liwi* (ලිවි) is a verbal noun meaning 'writing' derived from the verb root *lija* (ලිය) meaning 'to write', and *særi* (සැරි) meaning 'moving' is a verbal noun derived from the verb root *sarə* (සර) meaning 'to move'. Thus, *liwisærija* (ලිවිසැරිය) meaning 'moving in writing' is phonetically as well as semantically matching in a metaphorical sense with English *literature* derived from Latin *litteratura* which means 'knowledge of books'.

Unlike the previous one, PSMs of this type are available in abundance among Cumaratunga's neologisms. Some of them not individually analysed in this paper are as follows:

කමිසුම ( <i>kamisumə</i> < <i>commission</i> )	දකුතුරු ( <i>dakuturu</i> < <i>doctor</i> )
කමිසුරු ( <i>kamisuru</i> < <i>commissioner</i> )	දියලකුව ( <i>dijalakuwə</i> < <i>geology</i> )
කිතුනු ( <i>kitunu</i> < <i>christian</i> )	නම්වරය ( <i>namwəraja</i> < <i>number</i> )
කිරම ( <i>kiramə</i> < <i>cream</i> )	සකසුරු ( <i>sakasuru</i> < <i>secretary</i> )
තලබණුව ( <i>talabaŋuwə</i> < <i>telephone</i> )	වැයළුව ( <i>wəjaɭuwə</i> < <i>violin</i> )

### 3.3. Partial PSM (PPSM)

According to Yair Sapir and Ghil'ad Zuckermann (2008:41) PPSM is such a formation, whose phonetic matching is limited to no more than one morpheme of the ex externo element. In more simple terms, they are fully matched in the semantics, but partially matched in the phonetics. These are also found among Cumaratunga's neologisms. Consider the following examples:

තලබණුව (*talabaṇuwa* < *telephone*)

තලදසුන (*taladasuna* < *telephone*)

මාරුපළ (*ma :rupala* < *market*)

අතුරුමැදි (*aturumægi* < *intermediate*)

As it is evident even from a mere glance, in these PSMs, phonetic matching is limited to the first morphemes only. The second and third morphemes of the PSMs are totally different from those of the ex externo elements. In extreme cases defining these as PPSM can be questioned.

### 4. Concluding Remarks

As it is clear from what has been discussed hitherto PSM is a complex process of neologisation by lexical borrowing as it involves both ex interno and ex externo sources simultaneously. In other terms, it is a blend of simultaneous importation and substitution. The credit of inventing and implementing this neologisation process for the lexical enrichment of the Sinhalese language righteously goes to Cumaratunga Munidasa. Even though this paper concentrated solely on PSM in adapting foreign common nouns, Cumaratunga has employed PSM even in adapting foreign proper nouns. An individual requires a sound knowledge in both SL and TL to employ this neologisation process to such an extent. However, PSM was continued till recent times as a neologisation tradition by Cumaratunga's followers of the Hela Havula movement, like Aelian de Silva, Areesen Ahubudu, and Sandadas Coperahewa. A good number of their PSMs, essentially not all, were well received by the speech community and achieved currency in everyday discourses. This is an interdisciplinary research area which could be approached from semantic, lexicological, sociolinguistic, anthropolinguistic and sociohistorical avenues alike. All these approaches will be considered in future research.



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