Question-particles and relative clauses in the history of Sinhala, with comparison to early and modern Dravidian

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1 Introduction: relative clauses and Q-particles

This paper examines the evolution of two separate but interrelated aspects of the grammar of Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language spoken in the island nation of Sri Lanka (the former Ceylon): the distribution of the Question-particle *da* and the formation of relatives clauses in the history of Sinhala. I also examine the structure of relative clauses and the distribution of Question-particles in genetically-unrelated but geographically-proximate Dravidian. The possible role of language contact in the evolution of certain Sinhala grammatical structures—including the employment of the particle *da*—which have no parallels in other Indo-Aryan languages—is also considered.1

Sinhala is the southernmost Indo-Aryan language (together with Dhivehi,2 a closely-related language spoken in the Maldives), and has been isolated from the Indo-Aryan languages of the north Indian mainland for over two millennia. It has, however, been in contact with southern Dravidian languages (forms of Tamil and the ancestor of Tamil and Malayalam) and exhibits some degree of convergence with Dravidian in terms of its phonology, syntax, morphology, and lexicon—but remains recognisably Indo-Aryan.3 See further Gair 1982[1998] for a general description of Sinhala and the

1Glossing abbreviations:

1 = 1st person; 2 = 2nd person; 3 = 3rd person; A = -a/-ā verbal suffix (“neutral”); ABL = ablative (case); ACC = accusative (case); ADJ = adjective; ADV = adverb; ANIM = animate; ART = article; COMP = complementiser; COND = conditional; CONV = converb; DAT = dative (case); DEF = definite; E = -e/-ē verbal suffix (“focussing”); EMPH = emphatic (particle); F = focus/focussed; FEM = feminine; FUT = future; GEN = genitive (case); GER = gerund; IMPV = imperative; INANIM = inanimate; INDEF = indefinite; INF = infinitive; INST = instrumental (case); LOC = locative (case); MASC = masculine; NEG = negation/negative; NEUT = neuter; NMLZ = nominaliser; NOM = nominative (case); PART = particle; PASS = past; PERF = perfect; PERM = permissive; PL = plural; POL = polite (form); PRES = present; PTCP = participle; Q = Q(uestion)-particle; REL-PRON = relative pronoun; QUOT = quotative; SG = singular; SUBJ = subjunctive; VN = verbal noun; VOC = vocative (case).

2On which see Cain (2000).

3See Gair (1976[1998]: 200–201) who notes “...the survival of Sinhala as a clearly Indo-Aryan language might be looked on as a minor miracle of linguistic and cultural history”; see also Karunatillaka (1977). On the potential for over-estimating
impact of Dravidian. I consider here four distinct stages/forms of Sinhala: (1) Old Sinhala [OS], represented by the graffiti texts on the Mirror Wall at Sihigiri (ca. 8th–10th c. A.D.); (2) Classical Sinhala [CS], represented largely by translations and commentaries on Pāli Buddhist texts (ca. 12th–15th c. A.D.); and two varieties of modern Sinhala: (3) Modern Literary Sinhala [LS], which differs from Classical Sinhala, but retains a number of archaisms such as overt subject-verb agreement morphology; and (4) Modern Colloquial Sinhala [MCS]. The latter two varieties co-exist in a diglossic relationship, with the literary variety being employed in written and formal situations, but the general archaic nature of the literary variety justifies its treatment as representing an earlier variety than does the colloquial—on Sinhala diglossia, see further Gair (1968[1998], 1986[1998]a) and Paolillo (1992).

Da is an instance of what are often termed “Question”-particles [Q-particles]—so-called because interrogatives are a crosslinguistically common environment for such particles—a class of particles which also includes Japanese ka, Malayalam -oo, Tlingit gé and sá, and Hungarian vagy, as well as Sinhala hari/hō (see, amongst others, Hagstrom 1998, Cable 2007, Jayaseelan 2001, Jayaseelan 2008, Slade 2011, Szabolcsi et al. 2012).

The full range of contexts for Sinhala da/də will be examined later in this chapter; first let us observe the structure of relative clauses in Sinhala. In modern colloquial Sinhala [MCS], the only extant type of relative clause is the prenominal modifying participle type exemplified by (1).

(1) [[ guruxwrayek wena ] mahattaya ] huŋgak dannawa.
[[ teacher.INDEF.NOM become.PRES.INDJ ] man.DEF ] much know.PRES
“The man who is becoming a teacher knows a lot.” (cited from Gair 1995[1998]: 245)
[Colloquial Sinhala]

However, ‘true’ relative clauses involving relative pronouns and correlative clauses are well attested in Classical Sinhala and in modern literary Sinhala. This type of relative clause is formed by using yam⁵ (possibly modifying a noun), co-referencing to a correlative demonstrative (expressed or implied) in the correlative main clause. Additionally, either the Q-particle da or the conditional particle nam must occur at the end of the relative clause.

In modern literary Sinhala, where we find relative clauses formed using the relative pronoun yam and either the Q-particle da or the conditional particle nam, such constructions always seem to have the sense of generalising relatives, i.e. to be of the type “whoever speaks thus is a fool”. Example (2) is representative.

(2) [[ yam kumariyak ohu duțuvā ]RC da [ oo ohu kerehi piliŋda ]RC da [ she him towards connected
[[ REL-PRON princess.INDEF him see.PAST.3SG.FEM ]RC da [ sit ñëtikara gattaya ]CC
mind developed get.PAST.3SG.FEM ]CC

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4 On the notion of Q-particles, see Baker (1970), amongst others.
5 Yam in fact descends from the Old Indo-Aryan relative pronoun base, ya-. Yam can act as an indefinite pronoun as well.

The role of Dravidian influence on the evolution of Sinhala phonology see Gair (1985[1998]).
“Whatever princess saw him fell in love with him.” (cited from Gair & Karunatilaka 1974: 295) [Literary Sinhala]

In Tamil—as noted above, a language with which Sinhala has long been in contact—we find constructions which are structurally similar to the relative clause constructions of Classical and modern literary Sinhala, as shown by examples like (3).

(3) [yār aṅkē mutalil vantu ceru-v-ār ]RC-oo [avar țikeṭṭu vaṅkalām ]CC
ticket.nom perm

“Let whoever reaches there first buy the tickets.” [Modern Tamil]
(cited from Annamalai & Steever 1998)

As in Classical and modern literary Sinhala, we find here in Dravidian a relative clause headed by a relative pronoun (Sinhala yam : Tamil yār) and a final “clause-closing” particle (Sinhala da/nam : Tamil -oo). Note that—as discussed later—just as Sinhala da occurs in interrogatives, indefinites, and disjunctions, so too do Dravidian particles like Tamil -oo.

Turning to earlier Sinhala: in Classical Sinhala as well yam-da/nam relatives tend to have the free relative generalising sense typical of such constructions in modern literary Sinhala (see examples like (2) above), as in example (4).

(4) [yamak’hu paḷamu diṭim ]RC da [ohu marā gaṇan sapurami ]CC
[REL-PRON.msc.sg.acc firstly see.isg ]RC da [him kill.conv number complete.pres.isg ]CC

“Whichever person I see first, I shall kill him and complete the number.” (Amāvatura 133, cited from Wijemanne 1984: 210) [Classical Sinhala]

This is apparently not always the case, as evidenced by examples such as (5), where the relative appears to refer to a specific individual.

(5) [mam yamak’hu-ge savuyem ]RC da [ohu-ge guṇa asava ]CC
[I 1 REL-PRON.sg.gen follow?]RC da [his virtues listen.imp ]CC

“Listen to the virtues of the person whose follower I am.” (Amāvatura 93, cited from Wijemanne 1984: 210) [Classical Sinhala]

However, instead of da, we also find—in both Classical Sinhala and modern literary Sinhala—relatives formed with the conditional particle nam in place of the Q-particle da. The modern literary Sinhala example in (2) may have its da replaced by nam without change in meaning. An example of a nam-type relative from Classical Sinhala appears below in (6).
"They become the wives of any layman who may be able to refute their arguments." (Amāvatura 150, cited from Wijemanne 1984: 212) [Classical Sinhala]

The connection between the conditional construction and generalising relatives is transparent: (6) can also be interpreted as meaning “If a layman is able to refute their arguments, then they become his wives”. Herein, however, I am most concerned with the appearance of the Q-particle da in the formation of relative clauses. This is a feature confined to Classical Sinhala and modern literary Sinhala; neither in modern colloquial Sinhala nor in Old Sinhala (pre-dating Classical Sinhala) do we find da(/də) used in the formation of relative clauses. For the most part, as in modern colloquial Sinhala, relative clauses in Old Sinhala are of the prenominal modifying participle type; there are a handful of examples exhibiting use of the pronoun yam, which will be examined later in this chapter.

The next section examines the appearance of the Q-particle da in other syntactic contexts in the history of Sinhala.

2 The distribution of da in the history of Sinhala

The particle da (< earlier Sinhala də) is found (obligatorily) in a wide variety of syntactic contexts in modern colloquial Sinhala. Wh-questions in Sinhala employ this Q-particle də, and the verb takes the special “focussing” -e ending (following Kishimoto 2005, I refer to this as the -e ending, glossed as -E), distinguished from the neutral ending (the -a ending, glossed as -A).6 Compare the declarative in (7) with the corresponding interrogative in (8).

(7) Chitra potə gatta
    Chitra book bought.A
    “Chitra bought the book.” [Colloquial Sinhala]

(8) Chitra monəwa də gatte
    Chitra what də bought.E
    “What did Chitra buy?” [Colloquial Sinhala]

Wh-words along with their associated Q-particle (and any intervening material) may also be dislocated to the right of the verb of the clause over which they take scope, as in example (9). This movement is characteristic of focussed elements in Sinhala.

(9) Chitra gatte monəwa də?
    Chitra bought-E what də

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“What did Chitra buy?”

The particle *də* is obligatory in *wh*-questions, regardless of the form of the verb, as shown in (10).

(10) *Chitra monəwa gatta/gatte?
    Chitra what bought-A/bought-E
    “What did Chitra buy?”

The *-e* marking of the verb is obligatory in *wh*-questions, see (11) and (12), respectively.

(11) *Chitra monəwa *da* gatta?
    Chitra what *da* bought-A
    “What did Chitra buy?”

(12) *Chitra monəwa gatta *da*?
    Chitra what bought-A *da*
    “What did Chitra buy?”

Without the *-e* marking on the verb, a *wh*-word accompanied by a Q-particle is interpreted as an indefinite, as can be seen by the contrast in (13-a) and (13-b).8

(13) [Colloquial Sinhala]
    a. mokak *da* wætune?
       what *da* fell-E
       “What fell?” (Hagstrom 1998)
    b. mokak *da* wætuna.
       what *da* fell-A
       “Something (unidentified) fell.” (Gair & Sumangala 1991)

In yes/no-questions, *da* also appears obligatorily, normally in clause-final position, as in example (14); in which case the verb appears with the “neutral” -a inflection.

(14) Chitra ee *pota* kieuwa *da*?
    Chitra that book read-A *da*
    “Did Chitra read that book?” (Kishimoto 2005: 11) [Colloquial Sinhala]

The particle *da* may also appear after a constituent smaller than IP—in which case it marks that constituent as focussed (15), and, as expected, the verb appears in the *-e* form.

(15) Chitra ee *pota* *da* kieuwe?
    Chitra that book *da* read-E

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7Unless *da* appears clause-finally, which it cannot generally do when the *wh*-word is in the matrix clause.
8See Ramchand (1997), who discusses a similar situation in Bengali.
“Was it that book which Chitra read?” ([Ibid.])

Finally, *də* is also involved crucially in the formation of interrogative disjunctions (i.e. alternative questions), appearing obligatory after each of the disjuncts, as in example (16).

(16) Gunəpālə *də* Chitra *də* Ranjit *də* gaməṭə giyē?
Gunapala *də* Chitra *də* Ranjit *də* village.DAT go.PAST.E
“Was it Gunapala or Chitra or Ranjit who went to the village?” [Colloquial Sinhala]

Two other related particles are also found in Sinhala, *hari* (earlier *hō*), and *vat*, the former appearing in non-interrogative disjunctions and, like *də*, also in the formation of *wh*-based indefinites (though involving different pragmatics than *WH+də* indefinites); the latter acting as a negative polarity item [NPI]-counterpart of *hari*. Neither is discussed further here; on these, see Slade (2011), Slade (under review).

While other Indo-Aryan languages do not employ particles resembling *də* (in their syntactic distribution), similar particles are found in Dravidian languages. In Malayalam, for instance, the particle *-oo* appears in yes/no and alternative questions, as in examples (17) and (18); declarative disjunctions,

9 as in example (19); and in the formation of indefinites, as in (20).

(17) John wannu-(w)oo?
John came-*oo*
“Did John come?” (Jayaseelan 2001: 67) [Malayalam]

(18) John wannu-(w)oo, illa-(y)oo?
John came-*oo*, not-*oo*
“Did John come, or not?” (Jayaseelan 2001: 67) [Malayalam]

(19) Mary John-ine-(y)oo Bill-ine-(y)oo cumbiccu
Mary John-ACC-*oo* Bill-ACC-*oo* kissed
“Mary kissed John or Bill.” (Jayaseelan 2008: 3) [Malayalam]

(20) ñaaṉ iṟṟṭ-il aar-e-(y)oo toṭṭu
I darkness-in who-ACC-*oo* touched
“I touched somebody in the dark.” (Jayaseelan 2001: 66) [Malayalam]

Finally, as in Classical Sinhala and modern literary Sinhala—and Tamil, see example (3) above—Malayalam employs the Q-particle *-oo* in the formation of relative clauses, as in example (21).10

(21) eetə daivam ellaa vastukkalilum unṭ-*oo* aa daivatte praarthikkunnu
which god all object.PL.LOC be.PRES-*oo* that god.ACC pray.PRES

9Here we may note an important difference between Sinhala and Malayalam: while Sinhala *də* is restricted to interrogative disjunctions (with *hari* or *vat* appearing in non-interrogative contexts), Malayalam *-oo* appears in both interrogative (18) and declarative disjunctions (19).

10The use of *-oo* in Malayalam relative clauses is in fact optional, as discussed below.
“I pray to the god who is in every object.” (cited from Asher & Kumari 1997: 53)[Malayalam]

The crosslinguistic employment of Q-particles in this set of syntactically-disparate contexts (interrogatives, indefinites, relatives) can be given a semantically-unified analysis if we recognise that what these contexts share in common is the presence of some element which denotes a Hamblin-type set—either a \( wb \)-word or a disjunction; the semantic function of Q-particles like Sinhala \( da \) can then be seen as that of selecting an element from this set. These issues are explored in detail in Slade (2011) (cp. Hamblin 1973, Hagstrom 1998, Alonso-Ovalle 2006, Cable 2007); here I am more concerned in distinguishing these environments:— in particular, in examining the historical development of Sinhala \( da \) with respect to the syntactic environments in which it is found.

In earlier forms of Sinhala we indeed find \( da \) (the source of MCS \( də \)) appearing in some of the crosslinguistically-typical contexts for Q-particles; Table 1 provides an overview.\(^{11}\)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Old Sinhala</th>
<th>Cl. Sinhala</th>
<th>mod. lit. Sinhala</th>
<th>mod. col. Sinhala</th>
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<td>( wb )-question</td>
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<td>X(?)</td>
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<td>( wb )-indefinite</td>
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<tr>
<td>rel. clauses w/ ( yam )</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>n/a(^{12})</td>
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Table 1: Appearance of \( da/də \) in various syntactic contexts in the history of Sinhala

In Old Sinhala, \( da \) is found occasionally in \( wb \)-questions—in contrast to its obligatory appearance in this syntactic environment in the modern forms of the language. Examples (22)–(24) provide examples of \( da \)-less Old Sinhala \( wb \)-questions; examples (25)–(28) provide representative examples of Old Sinhala \( wb \)-questions including \( da \).

(22) Digæsni kum koṭ sahannemi?
long-eyed.VOC what do.CONV endure.PRES.1SG
“O long-eyed one, what may I do to sustain myself?” (lit. “having done what, shall I bear myself up?”) [Sigiri Graffiti 123] [Old Sinhala]

(23) No balaya yanne kese?
not look.CONV go.PAST.PTCP.NOM how
“How does one go away without looking?” [Sigiri Graffiti 261] [Old Sinhala]

(24) Sav-abaranin saji giri-hisa siṭihi kumaṭa?
all-ornaments.INSTR adorned mountain-summit.LOC be.PRES.2SG what.DAT

\(^{11}\)(X) indicates optionality. X(?) indicates that no examples of that category have been found, but \( da \) is presumed to have occurred in that context.

\(^{12}\)Given that modern colloquial Sinhala has lost the \( yam \)-type relative clause formation, the absence of \( də/da \) in this context is due to the absence of this syntactic environment itself.
“Why do you, being adorned with all ornaments, stand on the summit of the mountain?”
[Sigiri Graffiti 3] [Old Sinhala]

(25) Sihin piḷi hann aga neli-pala vann liya tana kiya valā se pəneya fine cloth clad limb coconut like maiden breast say.IMPV cloud like appear.OPT?15 ke da?
what da?

“Of that maiden whose limbs are draped with fine-textured garments, her breasts are like coconuts; say, what appears like the clouds?” [Sigiri Graffiti 379] [Old Sinhala]

(26) Ayuyun hay tī kaḷa kima da?
come.PAST.PTCP GEN.PL with you GEN do.PAST what da
“What has been done by you with those who came here?” [Sigiri Graffiti 384] [Old Sinhala]

(27) Kum vi da?
What be.PAST.3SG da
“What happened?” [Sigiri Graffiti 490] [Old Sinhala]

(28) Ko ja (-da)15giye himiya yi balam siṭiyuyun where da go.PAST.PTCP NOM lord COMP looking be.PRES.PTCP PL OBL vanno?
seem.NOM.PL

“They seem as if they stood (there) looking backwards (wondering) ‘Where has their lord gone?’ ” [Sigiri Graffiti 109] [Old Sinhala]

In Old Sinhala, da is extremely frequent in yes/no questions, as in examples like (30)—being found in this environment much more frequently than it is in wh-questions. Where da is absent in yes/no questions, these often contain matrix negation no; however, even non-negative questions do not obligatorily require da, as evidenced by examples like (29).

(29) Minisek vemi?
man.INDEF be.PRES.1SG
“Am I a man?” [Sigiri Graffiti 240] [Old Sinhala]

(30) Damak kaṇḍa hāt nigæḷi pat mahanel chain.INDEF break.PAST elephant fetter.PAST.PTCP NOM petal blue water-lily kaṇḍanne da?
break.PRES.PTCP NOM da
“Does the elephant, having broken a chain (by which it is) fettered, break (then) the petals of the water-lily?” [Sigiri Graffiti 39] [Old Sinhala]

A rough count shows da occurring in approximately half of all yes/no-questions (and approximately two thirds of non-negative yes/no questions), but in only about a quarter of wh-questions.

In the next stage of Sinhala, Classical Sinhala, it appears that yes/no-questions usually include da, as in example (31).

(31) To me sutta Budun desañā āsūhu da? 2SG-PRN this sermon Buddha preach.PRES.PTCP.NOM hear.PAST.2SG da

“Did you hear the Buddha preaching this sermon?” [Amāvatura 228, cited from Wijemann 1984: 71] [Classical Sinhala]

Wh-questions in Classical Sinhala still display optionality in the use of da; compare the da-less (32) and (33) with examples (34) and (35) which include da.

(32) Kotaṭa giyehi?
where.DAT go.PAST.2SG

“Where did you go?” [Amāvatura 136]

(33) Mohu koyaṭa yeti?
these (people) where.DAT go.PRES.3SG

“Where are these people going?” [Amāvatura 189] [Classical Sinhala]

(34) Dën paevii jā ārahaṭa kiyam da?
now ordained been what.DAT say.PRES.1SG da

“Now that I am a monk, why would I say it?” [Amāvatura 76] [Classical Sinhala]

(35) Mese da vaḍane kumaṭa ñeyi da yi kīha. thus also go.PRES.PTCP.NOM what.DAT da QUOT say.PAST.3PL

“ ‘Why do you go thus?’ they asked.” [Amāvatura 145] [Classical Sinhala]

Finally, like in modern Sinhala, alternative questions show the use of da after each disjunct, as in example (36).

(36) mā . . . nuvaṭahu arabhayā kī dē nipaṇa da nipaṇa da? my . . . religious mendicant about said things QUOT born da NEG born da?

“Did my predictions regarding the religious mendicant prove correct or did they not?” (12th century, Amāvatura 178) (Wijemanne 1984: 75) [Classical Sinhala]

Though I have not found examples of da used in interrogative disjunctions in the Old Sinhala Sihigiri graffiti texts, I presume that it would have been used in this environment in this stage of the language—given not only the Classical Sinhala use as in examples like (36), but also the fact that the Old Indo-
Aryan source of *da/də*, namely Old Indo-Aryan *utābo*, appeared only in this context and thus it is presumably from this context that *da* spread into other interrogative contexts. This and other aspects of the earlier history of the particle *da/də* are explored in the next section.

3 The pre-history of *da*

The Sinhala Q-particle *da/də* derives ultimately from Old Indo-Aryan *utābo* (Turner 1962–1966: #1701), which is itself made up of two particles, *āho* and *utā*.

*Utā* is a particle used in Vedic with the sense ‘and’ (Klein 1978), with both *X utā Y* (37) and *X Y utā* (38) orders.

(37) mitrō dādhāra pṛthivīṁ utā dyāṁ
contract.masc.sg.nom hold.pres.3sg earth.sg.acc *utā* heaven.sg.acc
“Contract holds (together) earth and heaven.” [RV 3.59,1b] [Sanskrit]

(38) divās pṛthivyā utā carkirāma
heaven.sg.gen earth.sg.gen *utā* praise.subj.1pl
“Heaven and earth we shall praise.” [RV 4.39,1b] [Sanskrit]

In Classical Sanskrit, this conjunctive sense of *uta* is obsolete (Speijer 1886: §424), though *uta*—like *api* “too, also, moreover, and; even; though”—may stand at the beginning of a clause as in (40), functioning as a Q-particle like Sanskrit *kim*, see (39).16

(39) kim śaknoṣī? / śaknoṣi kim?
Q be-able-pres.2sg / be-able-pres.2sg Q
“Can you?” (Speijer 1886: §412) [Sanskrit]

(40) *uta* dandaḥ patisyati?
*uta* stick-nom.sg. fall-fut.3sg
“Will the stick fall?” (Kāśikā on Pāṇini 3.3.152)(Speijer 1886: §412) [Sanskrit]

The particle *āho* first appears in late Vedic Sanskrit, positioned at the front of the second clause in a

16Sanskrit *kim* is the nominative/accusative case-form of the neuter interrogative *wh*-pronoun which also is used as a *wh*-interrogative pronoun in the sense “what”. Modern Hindi displays a similar phenomenon: the inanimate *wh*-interrogative pronoun *kyā* “what” can also optionally stand at the beginning or end of a yes/no-question:

(i) [Hindi]
   a. Rām yahā hai kyā?
      Ram here be-pres.3sg Q
      “Is Ram here?”
   b. Kyā Rām yahā hai?
      Q Ram here be-pres.3sg
      “Is Ram here?”
disjoint ‘either...or’ construction, see (41). Note here that utá appears at the front of the first clause of the disjunction.\(^7\)

(41) utá _avidvā́n amúṁ lokáṁ prétya kaścanā

utra one who does not know.NOM.SG yonder.ACC.SG world.ACC.SG depart.GER anyone
gacchatī / āho vidvā́n amúṁ lokáṁ prétya
go.PRES.3SG / āho one who knows.NOM.SG yonder.ACC.SG world.ACC.SG depart.GER
kaścit sámaśnutāṭi / anyone reach.PRES.3SG

‘Does anyone who does not know, having died, go to yonder world, or does anyone who knows, having died, attain yonder world?’ (Tāttirīya Upaniṣad 2.6, cited from Böhtlingk & Roth 1855–1875)\(^8\)

It is from this utá ABC . . . āho XYZ construction that the form utābo seems to derive. Since utá may appear at the front of an interrogative clause (functioning as a Q-particle), it could also immediately

\[\text{Graßmann (1873) notes one example where utá co-occurs with ā but is separated from it:} \]

\[(ii) \text{idám āpaḥ prá vahata yát kim} \]

\[\text{here/(this side/this place) water.VOC.PL away drive.IMPV.2PL REL-PRON.NEU.NOM/ACCG.SG what.NEU.NOM/ACCG.SG} \]

\[\text{ca duritām máyi / yát vá _ahám abhidudrōha} \]

\[\text{and/moreover fault me.LOC.SG REL-PRON.NEU.NOM/ACCG.SG OR I.NOM.SG hurt.PERF.ISG} \]

\[\text{yát vá āpaḥ devīḥ ihá mām avantu //} \]

\[\text{clear.ADJ.NOM.PL those.NOM.PL water.NOM.PL goddess.NOM.PL here me.ACC.SG watch-over.IMPV.PL //} \]

\[\text{Those waters which are divine, or those which flow dug up from the earth, or those which are self-produced, with the ocean as their goal, shining and clear, may those water-goddesses watch over me here.”} \text{[RV 7.49.2] [Sanskrit]} \]

\[\text{[Geldner (1951–1957: 23) appears to prefer to treat utá as separate from ā and renders it as “and”: “Ihr Gewässer, führet all das fort, was von Fehle an mir ist, sei es dass ich treulos war, oder dass ich geflucht habe und jede Unwahrheit!” (“You Waters, drive off all this, what fault is in me, be it that I was disloyal or that I cursed, and every untruth!”)]} \]

However, in these examples utá does not signal a question, and so there appears to be little connection between the early Vedic constructions with utá và and the later Vedic prose construction utá . . . ābo (which later becomes utābo, the ancestor of Sinhala da/də).

\[\text{\(\text{\^7 Disjunctive constructions involving utá exist in earlier Vedic verse (pre-dating the Vedic prose discussed above) where we also find utá combining with vā “or” in the sequence utá vā, as in (i); however, it is not clear if or how this differs semantically from vā alone.} \]}

\[\text{\(\text{\^8 17, e.g. in gacchatī, marks pluti, the ‘overlong vowel’.} \]}

\[\text{\(\text{\^9 3, e.g. in gacchatī, marks pluti, the ‘overlong vowel’.} \]}

11
precede the ābo standing at the front of the second part of a disjunction, with the application of sandhi becoming utābo. And it is in this form (utābo), that it appears in Classical Sanskrit, as in (42) below (note that here in addition to utābo, we find the normal disjunction vā).  

(42) kiṁ mama vadhopāyakramaḥ kubjasya vā utāho anyasya vā kasyacit
Q me-gen murder-plot nom.sg hunchback-gen or utābo other-gen or someone-gen
“Is it I, against whom the murder-plot is laid, or is it the hunchback or somebody else?”
(Pañcatantra 332) (Speijer 1886: §415) [Sanskrit]

In Classical Sanskrit utābo may also occur without kiṁ (or vā), e.g. as in (43).

(43) buddhi-bhedah para-kṛta utāho te svato
intellect-pollution nom.sg enemy-do past.ptcp.nom.sg utābo you self-gen
’bhavat become-past.3sg
“How has the pollution of your intellect been brought about by enemies or by you yourself?”
(Bhāgavata-Purāṇa 7.5.10) [Sanskrit]

And ābo by itself may appear in place of utābo, e.g. (44).

(44) teṣāṁ niṣṭhā ... kā ... sattvam āho rajas tamaḥ?
they-gen state-nom.fem ... what-nom.fem purity ābo passion darkness/ignorance
“What is their condition? Purity, passion or ignorance?” (Bhagavadgītā 17.1) [Sanskrit]

In Pāli, the distribution of udābo (< utābo) appears to be similar, cp. the Pāli example in (45) with the Sanskrit example in (42).

(45) kiṇ amhehi saddhiṅ āgamissasi udāhu pacchā?
Q us with come-fut.2sg udāhu later
“Will you come with us or later?” (Buddhaghosa’s commentary on the Dhammapada ii.96) [Pāli]

Pāli udābu also appears with uda (cognate with Sanskrit uta, see above) as the question particle:

(46) attharingato so uḍa vā so natthi ... udāhu
he who has reached the end Q or he not exist ... udāhu
ve sassatiyā arogo
he for eternity free from disease
‘He who has reached the end: does he not exist, or is he for eternity without disease?’
[Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series p. 330] [Pāli]

*Speijer (1886: §414) remarks that instead of utābo or ābo, we may also find utasvit or āhosvit. However, it is specifically from utābo that Sinhala ɗs develops.
As in Sanskrit, Pāli udābu also occurs without the question particle kiṃ, as in the examples below.  

(47) saccāni sutāni bahunā nānā udābu te takkam anussaranti 
truths heard many various udābu they follow conjecture

“Have they learned many various truths or do they follow conjecture?” [Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series p. 280]  

(48) ettāvata _aggaṁ no vadanti ha _eke yakkhassa suddhiṁ idha 
to that extent highest NEG say[PRES.3PL EMPH ones yakkha.GEN purification in this place
paṇditāse udābu aṇṇampi vadanti etto 
pundits udābu other say[PRES.3PL from this

“Do not some of the wise in this world tell us that the purity of the yakkha is the highest to this extent, or do they say something different from this?” [Pali Text Society p. 171]  

When we examine early Sinhala, we find that, in addition to frequently appearing in yes/no-questions, da also is used in disjunctive interrogatives, as in example (36), repeated below as (49).

(49) mā ... nuvaṭahu arabhayā kī dē nipaṇ da no nipaṇ da? 
my ... religious mendicant about said things QUOT born da NEG born da?

“Did my predictions regarding the religious mendicant prove correct or did they not?”  

(12th century, Amāvatura 178) (Wijemanne 1984: 75)  

In additional to its extension to other interrogative contexts, da also exhibits other syntactic changes from its Sanskrit and Pāli precursors. Specifically, note that in Sanskrit and Pāli utāho/udāhu precede the disjunct, while in Sinhala da follows its disjunct. Thus the particle has undergone change from being a proclitic-type element to an enclitic-type element. The motivation for this change is not  

20 Occasionally the question particle uḍa itself seems to function as a disjunction, at least in interrogative contexts, as shown below:

(i) nirāsaso so uḍi āsasāno pāññāṇavā so uḍa pāññakapapi without desire he uḍa(?) desiring discerning he uḍa still acquiring discernment

“Is he without desire, or desiring? Discerning or still acquiring discernment?” [Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series p. 316]  

(ii) na brāhmaṇo no ’mhi na rājaputto na vassāyano uḍa koci no ’mhi not brāhmin not be.[PRES.3SG not king’s son not vaishya’s son uḍa any not be.[PRES.3SG

“I am not a brāhmin (=priestly caste), nor a king’s son, nor any vaishya’s (=agricultural caste) son. (Lit., ‘I am not a brāhmin, nor a king’s son. And I am not any vaishya’s son.’ Or perhaps, treating uḍa as ‘and’: ‘I am not a brāhmin, not a king’s son, not a vaishya’s son. And I am not anybody.’) [Sri Lanka Buddha Jayanti Tripitaka Series 457]
entirely clear, though one suspects that Dravidian influence may have played a role, given that Dravidian Q-particles are post-clausal enclitics. The status of Q-particles as proclitics vs. enclitics is not a major concern of the present study, so I leave further investigation of this matter to future research.

Turning back to the developments in the distribution of this particle, the general path of change appears to be that the ancestor of दा (cognate with Sanskrit utāho, Pāli udāhu) was reanalysed in Classical Sanskrit and Pāli as a disjunction used specifically in interrogative contexts. In prehistoric Sinhala, it was reanalysed as being a Q-particle; the distribution would have originally been restricted to alternative and yes/no-questions—representing a widening with respect to its Sanskrit and Pāli precursors. Later, दा was extended to the construction of relative clauses (existing as an alternative to the “conditional” particle नम), as in the modern literary Sinhala example in (2), repeated below as (50).

(50) \[
\begin{align*}
[yam & \text{kumariyak} \text{ ohu duṭuvā}]_{\text{RC}} \ [da \ \text{oo ohu kerchi piliññā}]
\end{align*}
\]

“Whatever princess saw him fell in love with him.” (cited from Gair & Karunatilaka 1974: 295) [Literary Sinhala]

And later still (in modern colloquial Sinhala) दा (>) दा also began to be used in the construction of certain types of indefinites, as indicated in Table 1 above.

It is of some interest that utā itself seems to have earlier been bimorphemic, where the initial element, ū, originally functioned as a focussing particle. 21 More immediately relevant for the distribution

21 Though Klein (1974) calls ū ‘anaphoric’ (referring to an element already present in the discourse, rather than deitic), his discussion makes it clear that he analyses its original function as being that of focus: “we can render the u [in an English translation–BMS] by ‘that very one’ or simply by stress” (Klein 1974: 165). (Klein’s notion of “anaphoricity” of ु may be compared to Rooth’s (Rooth 1985, 1992, 1996) idea that focus semantic values make reference to entities which are somehow already in the background of the discourse (the “alternatives” to a focussed element).) Examples of ु in this focussing function follow below:

(i) \[
\begin{align*}
\text{yāṁ} & \ \text{tvāṁ} \ \text{agne} \ \text{samādahas} / \ \text{tāṁ} \ \text{u} \\
\text{REL-PRON} & \ \text{MASC/NEUT.SG.ACC} \ \text{yāṁ} \ \text{nom.sg} \ \text{agni} \ \text{voc} \ \text{burn-down.PAST.2SG} / \ \text{pron.MASC/NEUT.SG.ACC} \ \text{u} \\
\text{nir} & \ \text{vāpayā} \\
\text{EXTINGUISH.IMPV.2SG} & \ \text{again}
\end{align*}
\]

“The one which you, O Agni, have burnt down, that very one extinguish again.” [RV 10.16,13ab] [Sanskrit]

(ii) \[
\begin{align*}
\text{tāṁ} & \ \text{u} \ \text{ṣṭuhi} \ \text{yō} \ \text{ha} \ \text{sātvā} / \\
\text{REL-PRON.MASC.SG.ACC} & \ \text{u} \ \text{praise.IMPV.2SG} \ \text{Indra} \ \text{MASC.SG.ACC} \ \text{REL-PRON.MASC.SG.NOM} \ \text{part warrior.SG.NOM} / \\
\text{yāḥ} & \ \text{śūro} \ \text{maghāvā} \ \text{yō} \ \text{ratheṣṭhāḥ} \\
\text{REL-PRON.MASC.SG.NOM} & \ \text{hero.SG.NOM} \ \text{generous one.SG.NOM} \ \text{REL-PRON.MASC.SG.NOM} \ \text{chariot-standing.SG.NOM}
\end{align*}
\]

“Praise that very one, Indra, who is a warrior, who is a hero, generous, who stands in a chariot.” [RV 1.173,5ab] [Sanskrit]

(iii) \[
\begin{align*}
\text{tāṁ} & \ \text{u} \ \text{ṣṭavāma} \ \text{yāṁ} \ \text{gīra} / \ \text{indram} \ \text{ukthāni} \\
\text{PRON.MASC.SG.ACC} & \ \text{u} \ \text{praise.IPL} \ \text{REL-PRON.MASC.SG.ACC} \ \text{hymn.PL.NOM} / \ \text{Indra} \ \text{MASC.SG.ACC} \ \text{hymn.PL.NOM}
\end{align*}
\]
of the later reflexes of utābo in Sinhala, it seems that the original environment of this element is specifically interrogative disjunction. Whatever the exact relationship between interrogative disjunctions and yes/no-questions, they at the very least share numerous properties and thus the fact that da appears more fully established in yes/no-questions than in wb-questions in early Sinhala is unsurprising. Once established in alternative and yes/no-questions, da appears to have gradually been generalised to all interrogative contexts, including wb-questions. In very recent history, it subsequently spread to appear in wb-indefinites as well. The revised Table 2 provides a hypothesised pattern of expansion of da from its origin as a particle specific to alternative questions.

<table>
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</tr>
</tbody>
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Table 2: Appearance of da/də in various syntactic contexts in the history of Sinhala (expanded)

Later ā was reanalysed as a conjunction; examples with this function are given below:

(iv) agniṁ vaḥ pārvyaṁ huve / hötāraṁ caṣaṇinām // tām
   Agni.masc.sg.acc you.pl.dat first invoke.isg / priest.masc.sg.acc person.pl.gen // pron.masc.sg.acc
   ayā vācā gṛṇe tām u va śuṣe
   this.sg.inst speech.sg.inst sing.isg pron.masc.sg.acc u you.pl.dat praise.isg
   "I invoke Agni, the priest of the folk, for you. I sing (of) him with this speech. That very one [=Agni] I praise for you." [RV 8.23,7] [Sanskrit]

(v) tām v abhi prārcata / indram sōmasya pītāye
   masc.sg.acc u over praise-forth.impv.2sg / Indra masc.acc.sg soma sg.gen drink.impf.sg.dat
   "Unto that very one, Indra, sing forth the praises for the drinking of the soma." [RV 8.92,5ab] [Sanskrit]

Later ā was reanalysed as a conjunction; examples with this function are given below:

(vi) saṁ te pāyāṁsi sām u yantu vājāḥ
   together you.sg.gen milk.nom.pl together u go.impv.3sg loot.nom.pl
   "May the milks and the loots unite for you." [RV 1.91,18] [Sanskrit]

(vii) svār yād āśmann adhipā u āndhāḥ
   sunlight.nom.sg when rock.sg.loc master.sg.nom u darkness.sg.nom
   "When the sunlight is in the rock, and darkness is master." [RV 7.88,2c] [Sanskrit]

The particle utā seems to have been composed of this focussing particle u combined with *tē (the clitic form of the demonstrative pronoun), originally meaning "that (very one) there" with later weakening to "and that" and finally to simply "and" (see Brugmann (1904: 100ff.) and Klein (1974: 179–180)).
As noted previously, Dravidian languages like Malayalam also possess particles with similar distribution (e.g. Malayalam -oo, see above), and—given the length of contact between Sinhala and some form of Tamil—the spread of da to the wide range of contexts in which it is found in modern Sinhala could reflect convergence with Dravidian; however, it is important to note that though the gross distribution of Sinhala da and Dravidian Q-particles like Malayalam -oo is similar, there are numerous important differences between Sinhala Q-particles and Dravidian Q-particles (on which see Slade 2011).

The use of da in relative clauses is difficult to position within this larger pattern of expansion of the environments of da, since it appears only in Classical Sinhala and modern literary Sinhala, but not in earlier Old Sinhala or in the modern colloquial language. This part of the development of da seems likely to represent a strong language contact phenomenon. The next section explores the relationship between Sinhala and Dravidian and other complications regarding developments in the structure of relatives clauses.

4 Back to relative clauses

The use of the Q-particle da in Classical and modern literary Sinhala relative-correlative constructions parallels the employment of the Dravidian Q-particle -oo, and the appearance of da in this syntactic environment is likely due to Dravidian influence, although the evidence is not entirely clear.

There is an additional complication regarding the status of such relative-correlatives in Classical Sinhala. As discussed below, Old Sigiri graffiti contain vanishingly few examples of yam relative constructions and none which involve the Q-particle da. The Classical Sinhala texts are largely translations of or commentaries upon Pāli Buddhist texts. And Wijemanne (1984: 212) remarks that “[a]lmost all the relative constructions in the Amāvatura [the text from which her examples are drawn—BMS] are exact renderings of Pali relative constructions”. This raises the question of the status of such constructions in Classical Sinhala: would they have been possible in ordinary language or do they represent a construction which is only part of the specialised “translation/commentary” register? However, even if this were to turn out to be the case, the basis for their syntactic structure would still remain to be explained:— neither Sanskrit nor Pāli employ any element resembling da in relative clauses.

In both Old Sinhala (see Paranavitana 1956: clxvii) and Old Tamil (see Hock 2008, referring to p.c. w/ Th. Lehmann) we find vanishingly few examples of relative-correlative structures (four examples in Old Sinhala; five to ten examples in Old Tamil).

Again, it is much more typical of Old Sinhala to use prenominal modifying participles rather than relative-correlative constructions, as in Modern Colloquial Sinhala (see above example (1)); (51) is a typical example of a prenominal modifying participle type “relative” in Old Sinhala.

(51) Næge rise. conv this.loc [ [ ma senehi ] himabianeta ] tupa no neg 2pl-prn.gen love.past.ptcp lady.dat.pl 2pl-prn.gen neg

See fn. 12 above.
Turning to an examination of the handful of true relative-correlative constructions found in Old Sinhala: da is not found in any of these and the conditional particle nam occurs in but a single example: graffito 251, see (52)\(^\text{23}\); the remaining three examples (graffiti 240, 305, 682) employ no particle.

(52) [Pere yam haṭin nam ma] \(\text{RC} [\text{pahani-j}]
[formerly REL-PRON know.PAST COND-PTC 1SG-PRN.ACC/GEN] \(\text{RC} [\text{satisfy.PAST}
nam alalæ mā] \(\text{RC} [\text{e yat me et }
\text{COND-PTC love.LOC 1SG-PRN.GEN}] \(\text{RC} [\text{3SG.ACC go.COND this come.PAST 3PL}]
“Who was known (to me) earlier, who was satisfied in her love of me, when I go to
her, these (people) are coming (from her).” \[Sigiri Graffiti 251\] \[Old Sinhala\]

In (53) is shown an example of an Old Sinhala relative clause involving the pronoun yam, but with no “clause-closing” particle like nam or da.

(53) Sihigiri aṅgnak baṇavat me yannā var sera se ho Sihigiri.LOC woman.INDEF speak.COND.CAUS this going occasion thief like 3SG.FEM-PRN

\[^{23}\text{Interestingly, (52) involves a “stacking” of left-peripheral relative clauses, observed also in Sanskrit examples like (i) and found in some varieties of “elevated” Hindi like (ii), as discussed by Hock (1989a, to appear).}\]

(i) [yó hatvā āhim ariṇat sapta sindhūn] \(\text{RC} [\text{slay.conv dragon.ACC.SG.MASC make-flow.IMPF 3SG seven river.ACC.PL.MASC}]
[yó gā udājad apadhā valāsa] \(\text{RC} [\text{go.up.IMPF 3SG cave.ABL.SG.FEM Vala.GEN.SG.MASC}]
[yó aśmanor antār aṅgnak jajāna] \(\text{REL-PRON.SG.MASC stone.LOC.DU.MASC between fire.ACC.SG.MASC create.PERF.3SG}
saṁvţ̥k samātsu] \(\text{RC} [\text{sā janāsa indraḥ overpowering.NOM.SG.MASC battle.LOC.PL.FEM}]
\[CP.NOM.SG.MASC people.VOC.PL.MASC Indra.NOM.SG.MASC]\] \[CC\]
\[CC\]
“Who, having slain the dragon, made the seven rivers flow; who drove up the cows from the cave of Vala; who
created fire between the two stones, overpowering in battle; he, O people, (is) Indra.” \[RV 2.12.3\] \[Sanskrit\]

(ii) [jis viṣṇu ne jagat ki śr̥ṣṭi kī] \(\text{RC} [\text{jo}]
[REL-PRON.OBL.SG Vishnu AGT world.OF.FEM creation.NOM.SG.FEM do.PERF.SG.FEM}\[\text{RC} [\text{REL-PRON.NOM.SG viṣṇu uski rākṣa kartā hai}]
Vishnu.NOM.SG.MASC DEM-PR.SG.MASC.GEN protection.NOM.SG.FEM do.IMPF.MASC.SG be.PRES.3SG]\[\text{RC} (\ldots) [\text{Vah viṣṇu phir uskā vināś karegā}]
\[CP.NOM.SG Vishnu.NOM.SG.MASC again DEM-PR.SG.MASC.GEN destruction do.FUT.3SG.MASC]\] \[CC\]
“Which Vishnu created the world, which Vishnu protects it, . . . that Vishnu will again destroy it.” \[cited from Hock to appear: 9–10\] \[Hindi\]
When I, while passing by, speak to a lady of Sihigiri, she herself, roguishly²⁴, looked in the direction (where) I (was). Women are like this. [Sigiri Graffiti 305] [Old Sinhala]

Not only is (53) lacking a “clause-closing” particle, the correlative pronoun has also been elided, but presumably must be understood as in the reconstruction in (54).

(54) [yam desekæ mā ]i; (e;) ho bæli [ REL-PRON direction.LOC.INDEF ISG-PRN.GEN look.PAST REFLX-PRN.FEM ]

“In which direction I (was), that direction she looked at.” [Old Sinhala]

The absence of a “clause-closing” particle is not unparalleled in Dravidian:— observe that in all of the Old Tamil examples, we in fact find that no particle follows the relative clause, as in example (55). Hock (1988, 1989b, 2008) points out that the same is true for Old Malayalam (see example (56)).

(55) [e-var̤i nall-avar āṭavar ]RC [ a-var̤i nall-ai ]CC
[ which-place good.MASC.3PL men.MASC.3PL ]RC [ that-place good.2SG ]CC
“At which place men are good, at that place you are good.” (cited from Lehmann 1998: 94) [Old Tamil]

(56) [yātonṯu mahārajaniyōgam ]RC [ atu a-vaṇṇam ]CC
[ what.NEUT maharaja-order ]RC [ that.NEUT in-that-manner ]CC
“What is the king’s order, (let) that (be done) in that manner.” (cited from Pillai 1973: 165) [Old Malayalam]

Also lacking in post-relative clause particles are Old Kannada (Hock 2008), and a number of modern “northern” Dravidian languages (Pengo, Kuvi, Kolami, Parji, Kurukh), on which see Hock (1988, 1989b, 2008). Hock (2008) also notes that even in modern Malayalam the post-relative clause -oo is optional (cf. Asher & Kumari 1997: 53).

However, Hock (p.c.) points to the appearance of -oo in Old Tamil in example (57) where it seems to form an indefinite or generalising pronoun, so it would seem that Dravidian -oo from an early stage begins to appear with non-interrogative functions.

(57) e-nāḷ-oo . . . ni celvatu a-nāḷ konṭū ir̤akkum ival . . .
[ which-day-oo . . . you go.NONPAST.NOM that-day from die.NONPAST.3SG.NOM she . . .
uyir-ē
life

“On which day you will go, from that day (onwards) her life will die.” (Kalittokai 5.18-19,

²⁴Perhaps sera se bo yam desekæ mā bæli could be more idiomatically rendered as “she stole a glance in my direction”.

18
5 Conclusions

It is tempting to view the development of relative-correlative constructions involving Q-particles in both Sinhala and Dravidian as representing convergence\(^{25}\), with changes in both Dravidian and Sinhala resulting in similar structures. Phenomena of this sort are far from unknown in South Asia: other examples of convergent developments in South Asia include SOV as an unmarked word order, the use of converbs where other languages would employ dependent or co-ordinate clauses, and a phonemic contrast between dental and retroflex consonants, on which see Hock (1986/1991: 491–512, esp. 498–504) and Hock & Joseph (1996/2009: 370–391, esp. 374–377, 383–389).

However, the use of -oo in relative-correlative constructions appears to date to an early period in Dravidian, which precedes the appearance of da in relative clauses (or indefinites) in Sinhala; see the Old Tamil example in (57) above, as well as the remark by Krishnamurti (2003: 419) that “all uses of -o in Modern Telugu were already there in the inscriptive and literary varieties beginning from the seventh century”, and, in addition, the fact that structures of this type are widespread in modern Southern and South Central Dravidian languages. These facts would suggest that the appearance of da in Sinhala relative-correlative constructions in the Classical period (12\(^{th}\)–15\(^{th}\) c. a.D.) likely reflects Dravidian influence.\(^{26}\)

In summary, the Sinhala Q-particle da/دو originates from the Sanskrit alternative question conjoiner utāḥo, which in Sinhala was extended into other interrogative contexts from an early period—see Table 2 above. In Classical Sinhala (as well as in modern literary Sinhala), da appears also in the formation of relative-correlative constructions. This parallels the use of the Dravidian Q-particle -oo, which is also employed in the formation of interrogatives, relative clauses, and indefinites, and thus the distribution of da/دو in Sinhala apparently at least in part reflects the influence of Dravidian. That is, the use of -oo in Dravidian in relative clauses appears to pre-date the appearance of da in relative clauses in Sinhala, and clearly pre-dates the appearance of Q-particles in the formation of indefinites in Sinhala.\(^{27}\)

There remain a number of issues yet to be more fully explored regarding the relationship between Q-particles and the formation of relative clauses. In particular, the distribution of the particle -oo in early Dravidian requires additional investigation.

References


\(^{25}\)With later divergence of Sinhala in the modern period.

\(^{26}\)Thanks to Hans Henrich Hock for helpful discussion on these points.

\(^{27}\)Do does not appear in indefinites until modern colloquial Sinhala; the particle ḅo, which appears to be a precursor of modern colloquial Sinhala hari, appears in the formation of indefinites only from modern literary Sinhala; see Slade (2011).


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