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History of focus-concord constructions and focus-associated particles in Sinhala, with comparison to Dravidian and Japanese

Benjamin Slade

The University of Utah, Department of Linguistics, Languages and Communication Building, 255 S Central Campus Drive, Salt Lake City, UT 84112-0492, US
b.slade@utah.edu

This study traces the historical development of the focus concord construction of Sinhala from the language of the pre-second millennial graffiti on the Mirror Wall at Sigiriya to the modern colloquial language, with comparison to the historical development of focus concord constructions in the south Dravidian languages Malayalam and Tamil, as well as the focus concord (*kakari-musubi*) construction of Japanese. I argue that the Sinhala focus concord construction originated as one particular usage of impersonal verbal nominalisations in Old Sinhala, developed into a predicative clefting construction in Classical Sinhala, and in the modern colloquial language has become a phenomenon involving verb forms showing a sort of agreement with focussed elements.

Keywords: focus concord; language change; Sinhala; Dravidian; Malayalam; Tamil; Japanese

1 Overview

In this study, I examine the historical development of focus concord constructions – that is, constructions similar to Japanese *kakarimusubi*, where the verb appears with a special affix and a focus particle usually appears somewhere within the clause – in Sinhala, an Indo-Aryan language of the Indo-European family spoken in Sri Lanka; with comparison to similar constructions in neighbouring South Dravidian languages Tamil and Malayalam.

The comparison of Sinhala with Tamil and Malayalam here is not simply due to a desire for crosslinguistic coverage nor simply because they are all three South Asian languages. Sinhala has been effectively cut off from other Indo-Aryan languages for roughly two millennia and has for the same period of time been in contact with South Dravidian languages, specifically Tamil. It has in fact been suggested that the morphosyntactic structure of focus constructions in Sinhala is essentially a calque of South Dravidian focus constructions (Gair 1986[1998]b). The examination of the Sinhala focus construction at various stages, compared to both early and modern South Dravidian focus constructions shows that – even if Sinhala did in essence borrow a Dravidian-like focus construction – the underlying properties of focus concord structures in Sinhala and South Dravidian differ not only in their earlier stages but in fact seem to show increased divergence by the modern period.

This paper is concerned with various aspects of the evolution of focus-concord constructions, including: (i) the source of focus-concord verbal forms; (ii) the source of at least some of the focus-related particles; and (iii) how the relationship between focus-concord verbal forms and focus-related particles changes over time, and what these relationships

suggest with respect to the changes in the structure of focus-concord constructions diachronically.

In Sinhala focus-concord verbal forms originate from special-case uses of the “impersonal” nominalised construction in Old Sinhala, and develop from the originally “impersonal”/“existential” nominalised construction to a structure in Classical Sinhala where the nominalisation involved also creates an additional predicative structure, by putting the nominalised clause into a copular relation with the focussed element.¹ By the stage of Modern Colloquial Sinhala these structures have been reanalysed as another sort of monoclausal structure. In the Dravidian languages examined (Tamil and Malayalam), on the other hand, focus-concord structures appear to involve predicative clefting (as in the Classical Sinhala structures) throughout extant texts.

Special attention is also paid to the focus concord particles (e.g. *kakari*-equivalents) which occur at different stages of Sinhala, Tamil, and Malayalam, for – at least in Sinhala – the focus construction (the *musubi* equivalent) can be clearly shown to have originated as independent of focussing, and not as immediately connected to the “focus” (*kakari*-type) particles. It is rather that the association of the predecessor of the later true focus construction in Sinhala was indeed not originally specific to focus, but in fact only became strongly associated with focus and with the use of focus particles, including question/quantifier particles [henceforth Q-particles],² at a later stage. Examining the interaction of focus concord verbal forms and focus particles, particularly Q-particles, involves at some points the examination of occurrence of these particles in environments where they do not co-occur with a focus concord verbal form. Such cases are included in order to provide a fuller picture of the interplay of Q-particles and focus concord constructions.

This study therefore lays out a detailed examination of the history of the Sinhala focus concord construction, expanding upon the discussion of the evolution of Sinhala focus concord constructions in Slade (2011, 2013). I provide an overview of the evolution of focus concord constructions in Sinhala, and a somewhat less complete sketch of focus concord constructions in Dravidian – focussing on the South Dravidian languages Tamil and Malayalam – which can be usefully compared to the diachronic development of focus concord constructions in other languages, such as Japanese *kakarimusubi*.

Especially as concerns historical development and the linkage between focus concord constructions and focus particles, of particular interest in Sinhala and Dravidian is the original independence of *kakari*-type focus particles from the *musubi*-type focus concord construction (a situation which persists within present-day Dravidian), in contrast to the apparent situation in the earliest extant Japanese *kakarimusubi* constructions, where *kakari* particles originate as focus-associated particles which obligatorily trigger *musubi* verbal forms, with particles like *ka* only later developing into a true Q-particle.

The paper is organised as follows. Section 2 introduces the basic structure of the focus-concord construction in modern and Classical Sinhala, with comparison to Japanese *kakarimusubi* constructions. Section 3 examines the origins of the Sinhala focus-concord construction in Old Sinhala “impersonal” nominalised constructions. Section 4 pursues details of the development of focus-concord constructions in Sinhala. Section 5 examines the synchronic and diachronic distribution of (often focus-associated) Q-particles in Sinhala. Section 6 examines focus-concord constructions and focus-associating particles

¹ In earlier works, e.g. Slade (2011), I have referred to this as a development from “monoclausal” to “biclausal” in the sense that the latter involve a nominalised clause entering into a predicative relationship with the focussed element whereas for the former there is no additional predication structure created.

² Such particles have a wider range of usages than simply in questions; for further discussion see, amongst others: Jayaseelan (2008), Slade (2011), Szabolcsi et al. (2014), Mitrović (2014b), Szabolcsi (2015) [whence the label “quantifier particle”], Jayaseelan (2016).

in Dravidian, focussing on Malayalam and Tamil (both modern and early). Section 7 compares the development of focus-concord constructions and Q-particles in Sinhala and Dravidian. Section 8 provides a general discussion of focus-concord constructions in Sinhala and Dravidian, with comparison to similar constructions in Japanese and other languages.

2 Focus in Sinhala and kakarimusubi

Modern Colloquial Sinhala [MCS] possesses a morphologically-overt focus construction in which the finite verb appears with an -E “focussing” ending rather than the usual -A “neutral” suffix. The focussed element in the clause optionally (but preferably) appears dislocated right of the verb. Also optional is the use of a focus particle like -y immediately following the focussed element. Compare (1a), which contains no focussed elements and thus uses the neutral form of the verb, with (1b), where *potə* ‘book’ is focussed and where the verb appears in the -E focus concord form. The example in (1b) shows the typical rightward dislocation of the focussed element. Example (1c) shows that even when the focussed constituent remains in situ, it still triggers the focus-concord verbal form (Slade 2011: 44–47).³

- (1) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
- a. Mamə ē potə kiyewwa.
I.NOM that book read.A
‘I read that book.’
- b. [Mamə t_i kiyewwe] [ē potə(-y)]_i^{FOC}
[I.NOM t_i read.E] [that book(-FOC)]_i^{FOC}
‘It was that book that I read.’
- c. Mamə ē potə(-y) kiyewwe.
I.NOM that book(-FOC) read.E
‘It was that book that I read.’

Modern Literary Sinhala [MLS]⁴ is similar to its colloquial counterpart, except that (a) dislocation is obligatory; (b) the copula/form of ‘to be’ is obligatory; (c) subjects of focussed verbs appear in accusative case; and (d) focussed verbs display no overt subject-verb agreement (in contrast to non-focussed verbs).⁵ Compare the non-focussed (2a) with its focussed counterpart in (2b).

- (2) *Modern Literary Sinhala*
- a. Mama ema pota kiyevuvemi.
I.NOM that book read.PAST.1SG
‘I read that book.’
- b. [Mā t_i kiyevuvē] [ema potə]_i^{FOC} ya.
[I.ACC t_i read.PAST.3SG] [that book]_i^{FOC} 3SG
‘It was that book that I read.’

As has been noted elsewhere, the focus-concord construction of Sinhala is reminiscent of the *kakarimusubi* construction found in early Japanese (see Sansom 1928; Ogawa

³ From this type of rightward dislocation such constructions in Sinhala (and Dravidian) are often referred to as “cleft” or “clefting” constructions.

⁴ Modern Sinhala exhibits diglossia, where the colloquial/spoken form differs significantly in its grammar from the formal/literary/written form. E.g. colloquial Sinhala shows no overt agreement morphology on the finite verb, whereas literary Sinhala does. For further discussion of Sinhala diglossia, see Gair (1968[1998]), Gair (1986[1998]a), Gair (1992), Paolillo (1992).

⁵ In MCS there is no overt subject-verb agreement in any construction, so this contrast could not obtain.

1976, 1977; Whitman 1997; Hagstrom 1998: 24–28; Watanabe 2002; Yanagida 2006; Aldridge 2009, amongst others). Both constructions involve a clause-internal (rather than clause-final) particle which induces a special marking on the verb. An example of an Early Middle Japanese *kakarimusubi* construction is given below in (3).

- (3) *Early Middle Japanese (Ise monogatari [900]: 82; cited: Whitman 1997: 162)*
 Tire-ba-**koso** itodo sakura-wa medeta-**kere**.
 fall-COND-**EMPH** the.more cherry-TOP wonderful-**M**⁶
 ‘It is because they fall that cherry blossoms are so fine.’

Similarly – as do focussing/emphatic particles such as *koso*, *zo*, and *namu* – we find that in Old Japanese the Q-particle *ka* also participates in *kakarimusubi*, as in (4).

- (4) *Old Japanese (Nihon Shoki [720]: 75; cited: Ogawa 1977: 221)*
 Sisi husu-to **tare ka** kono koto oomae-ni maosu.
 beasts lie-QUOT **who ka** this thing Emperor.DAT say.M
 ‘Who reported to the Emperor that beasts were lying?’

So too, in Sinhala, Q-particles like *də* trigger the use of the focus concord -E verbal forms, as shown in (5).

- (5) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Kau **də** ē potə kieuwe?
 who **də** that book read.PAST.E
 ‘Who bought that book?’

However, as discussed by Serafim & Shinzato (2000); Watanabe (2002); Aldridge (2009); Mitrović (2014a), amongst others, Japanese *ka* seems to have originated not as a Q-particle required by interrogatives, but rather as a focus particle (which could appear in questions and was associated with interrogation) and only later became (largely) obligatory in interrogatives. Old Japanese questions therefore can occur without *ka*, as in:

- (6) *Old Japanese (MYS 14.3418, l.5; cited: Aldridge 2009: 550)*
 Ima-fa ikani se-mo?
 now-TOP how do-SUPP.ADN
 ‘What should we do now?’

On the other hand, the Sinhala particle *də/da*, as discussed in Section 5, does originate as a Q-particle, apparently originally associated specifically with alternative questions, but did not originally trigger focus concord. The roots of what becomes a focus concord construction is traceable back to the era of the Old Sinhala of the Sihigiri graffiti (8th–10th c. A.D.) – examined in more detailed in Section 3. Not only is this construction not originally triggered by the use of a Q-particle, the construction itself is not specifically associated with focus in Old Sinhala.

Focus constructions in Classical Sinhala [CS] (ca. 12–15 c. A.D.) closely resemble those of Modern Literary Sinhala [MLS], differing in that: (a) focussed elements can be dislocated either to the right-edge, following the verb, as in (7a), or to the left-edge of the clause, as in (7b); and (b) focussed subjects, unlike in MLS, continue to control verb agreement, as in (7c).⁷

⁶ The gloss “M” (for *musubi*) indicates the special adnominal form that the verb takes in *kakari-musubi* constructions, and is thus the rough equivalent of the “-E” marking on Sinhala focus concord verbal forms.

⁷ Dravidian languages, including Malayalam and Kannada, also display variation with respect to the positioning of the focussed phrase. This variation is somewhat different from what we observe in Classical Sinhala, as in Malayalam and Kannada, under certain conditions, the cleft focus phrase can “float” into the

(7) *Classical Sinhala*

- a. *Amāvatura* 245; cited: Paolillo (1994: 161)
 Tāta **karuṇe** [mahat lābha]^{FOC} yæ.
 you.DAT **do.PAST.PTCP.NOM** [great fortune]^{FOC} 3SG
 ‘What has been done for you is a great fortune.’
- b. *Amāvatura* 107; cited: *Ibid.*
 [Ovun saṅdahā]^{FOC} yæ mā dan **denne.**
 [they.ACC for]^{FOC} 3SG I.ACC alms **give.PRES.PTCP.NOM**
 ‘It is for them that I am giving alms.’
- c. *Amāvatura* 152; cited: Wijemanne (1984: 171)
 [Mama]^{FOC} yæ maṅḍavā **piyemi.**
 [I.NOM.SG]^{FOC} 3SG **trample.PAST.PTCP.MSC.NOM.1SG**
 ‘It is I who trampled it.’

Old Sinhala presents a rather different pattern: the properties of the focus concord construction in Old Sinhala, the earliest form of Sinhala with significant texts, dating from the 8–10 c. A.D., are different enough from that of the other stages as to warrant its own section, and this account forms the body of the following section.

3 Origin of musubi focussing constructions in Sinhala

In this section I show that the Sinhala focus concord originates in the Old Sinhala impersonal nominalisation construction which happens to be compatible with – but does not require – the presence of a focussed element. At this stage the focus concord construction does not have the predicative “clefting” character it does in its later Classical or Literary guises.

In the **Old Sinhala** [OS] of the graffiti on the Mirror Wall at Sihigiri (ca. 8–10 c. A.D.), there is not yet a specialised focus construction, but we can identify the roots of what would later become the focus concord construction. In OS, it is to be noted that there are various ways of nominalising verbs: one of these nominalisations is used to form both participant-nouns (e.g. ‘go-er’ from ‘go’, as in example (8)) and “impersonal” nominalised verbs (Slade 2011). The latter of these is of interest for us for it is the “impersonal” usage of the nominalised verbal form that sometimes co-occurs with focussed elements and thus appears to constitute the origin of later Sinhala focus concord constructions.

(8) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 51)⁸

maga-**yanno** yati
 path-**goers** go
 ‘path-goers go’

Salient properties of OS clauses containing “impersonal” nominalised verbs include: (a) “subjects” of impersonal nominalised verbs, when expressed, appear in the genitive case; (b) no overt agreement element or form of ‘to be’ is required. (However, when such an element does appear, it always immediately follows the nominalised verb, rather than following the focussed element as is the case in later Sinhala); (c) focussed elements, when present, are not obligatorily dislocated.

Example (9) provides an example of an OS clause utilising impersonal nominalisations where there is no apparent focussing of any element. In fact, both impersonals in (9) seem

cleft clause and occupy various positions. See Jayaseelan (2001a) and Jayaseelan & Amritavalli (2005) for detailed discussion.

⁸ S.G. = *Sigiri Graffito* with the numbering following Paranavitana (1956).

to involve backgrounding. That is, the impersonal nominalisation here seems to foreground the verbal elements ('remaining', 'speaking') by backgrounding the agents.

(9) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 508)

[[No bæŋæ] **visi** mā gala]
 [[not speak.GER] **remain.PAST.PTCP.NOM** I.GEN rock.LOC]
kī ta.
say.PAST.PTCP.NOM you.GEN
 "Without speaking, I resided on the rock." Thus it has been said by you.' (Lit.
 "There was remaining of me on the rock without speaking." There was saying
 by you (of this).')

Nor at this time does *ya/yi*, the precursor of the modern colloquial Sinhala *-y*, yet behave as a focus particle, rather it functions as a sort of agreement clitic,⁹ standing in complementary distribution with the copula. This is unsurprising, given its etymological origin in the Old Indo-Aryan third-person singular present agreement morphology *-ti* (see Geiger 1941: 142; Karunatilake 2012: #9114).

Examples (10a)–(10d) illustrate *ya/yi*'s status as an agreement clitic rather than anything like a focus particle. In all of these examples, *ya/yi* occurs immediately following the nominalized verb, and in none of these examples does there appear to be any specially highlighted element.

(10) *Old Sinhala*

a. S.G. 44

Kit Saṁboyā bad sata-pada **yi**.
 K. S. compose.PAST.PTCP quatrain PRES.3SG
 '[This] is the quatrain composed by Kit Saṁboyā.'

b. S.G. 88

Mana maya, biyi kæræ hæ puḷahasu
 mind my fear do.ABS her broad-smile
 vījanina, tatanu
 spread.PAST.PTCP.INSTR, tremble.INT.PRES.PTCP.NOM.SG
ya.
PRES.3S
 'My mind, as her broad smile spreads, frightening me, is
 trembling exceedingly.'

c. S.G. 56

Ho udahanne **yi**.
 she show-anger.PRES.PTCP.NOM.SG **PRES.3SG**
 'She is showing anger.' (In context, 'She will be enraged.')

d. S.G. 547

Me me deyahi senne
 this this thing smile.PRES.PTCP.FEM.NOM.SG
 hindinne **yi**.
 stay.PRES.PTCP.FEM.NOM.SG **PRES.3SG**
 'She remains there smiling at this and that.'

In no case can *ya/yi* follow anything other than a predicate in Old Sinhala, and specifically in this class of construction, it always appears (when it appears, since it is optional)

⁹ See also Gair (1995[1998]: 242).

following the nominalised verb and never following a focussed constituent, unlike in later Sinhala.

The identification of the early and classical Sinhala *ya/yi/i* as an agreement element is clear in its pre-Colloquial distribution, where it appears as one out of a set of agreement elements, cp. (11a), (11b), (11e), (11f) with (11c), (11d).¹⁰

- (11) *Literary Sinhala* (Gair 1995[1998]: 240–241)
- a. Hē gamaṭa ya-yi.
he village.DAT go.PRES-3
'He goes to the village.'
 - b. Otomō gamaṭa giyā-ya.
she village.DAT go.PAST.FEM-3
'She went to the village.'
 - c. Ovuhu gamaṭa ya-ti.
they village.DAT go.PRES-3PL
'They go to the village.'
 - d. Mama gamaṭa ya-mi.
I village.DAT go.PRES-1SG
'I go to the village.'
 - e. Ovuhu govīyō-ya.
they farmers.NOM-3
'They are farmers.'
 - f. Hetema govīyek-ya / govīyek-i.
he.NOM farmer.INDEF.NOM-3 / farmer.INDEF.NOM-3
'He is a farmer.'

The function of *ya* as an agreement element rather than a focus marker is clear also in examples like (12), which contains an explicit focus marker *nu* immediately following the focussed phrase, with *ya* immediately following the nominalised verb *visi*.

- (12) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 32)
- Ma sova niva æ meseyi
my.GEN sorrow extinguish.ABS she.GEN this-manner
duduḷa-sela-aḍadarihi visi ya
fortress-rock-edge.LOC dwell.PAST.PTCP.NOM PRES.3SG
yaha-asaraṭa^{FOC} nu.
happy-companionship.DAT^{FOC} indeed
'It is indeed for the sake of happy companionship that she, having extinguished my sorrow, dwelt in this manner at the edge of the fortress rock.'
(Lit. 'Having extinguished my sorrow, there is her having dwelt in this manner at the edge of the fortress rock indeed for happy companionship.')

Quite frequently in the Sigiri graffiti texts, when impersonal-type nominalisations occur, there is no apparent focussed element. Example (12) is an unusually clear example of a focussed constituent (as indicated by use of the focussing particle *nu*) occurring with an impersonal.

As indicated above, (12) also illustrates the role of *ya* as an agreement clitic which appears immediately following the impersonal nominalised verb. Also notable in (12) is the (at this stage optional) dislocation of the focussed element to clause right-edge,

¹⁰ Alternations between *ya/yi/i* are phonological in nature; see further Gair (1995[1998]).

yesterday here **come-PAST-NOM** Kumar-EMPH
 ‘It was Kumar **who came** here yesterday.’

- b. Lehmann (1989: 301)
 Kumār inkē **va-nt-atu** tappu.
 Kumar here **come-PAST-NOM** mistake
 ‘Kumar’s **having come** here was a mistake.’

In Old and Classical Sinhala, on the other hand, it is clear that the focus concord *musubi* verbal forms are in fact nominalised verbs, and in Old Sinhala, as discussed earlier, we find a sort of “proto focus-concord” form. Since the construction in Old Sinhala is in fact an impersonal, the use of a nominalised verb is compatible with the presence of a focussed element, but does not require one. That is, in Old Sinhala the employment of this type of verbal form does not automatically correlate with the presence of a focussed element, as illustrated by examples like (9), repeated below as (16).

- (16) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 508)
 [[No bæṇæ] **visi** mā gala]
 [[not speak.GER] **remain.PAST.PTCP.NOM** I.GEN rock.LOC]
kī ta.
say.PAST.PTCP.NOM you.GEN
 ‘“Without speaking, I resided on the rock.” Thus it has been said by you.’ (Lit.
 ‘“There was remaining of me on the rock without speaking.” There was saying
 by you (of this).’)

In Old Sinhala, the position of the agreement clitic or form of ‘to be’ indicates that this “impersonal” nominalised verb construction – with a nominalised main verb and an (optional) agent in the genitive case – seems to generally be monoclausal, being generically paraphraseable as ‘there is X-ing (by Z)’. Examples like (12), however, where a clearly focussed element stands in a dislocated position would appear to invite the possibility of a reanalysis which seems to have fully taken place by the Classical Sinhala period. That is, in this later stage the focus structure would be roughly paraphraseable as ‘the X-ing is Y’.

Thus, by the Classical Sinhala period the “impersonal” construction of Old Sinhala appears to have been re-analysed as predicative clefting constructions, where the focussed element acts as a predicate for which the nominalised participial is an argument.

That such constructions involve predicative clefting in Classical Sinhala is suggested not only by the obligatoriness of an agreement clitic or form of ‘to be’, but also by the obligatory overt dislocation of the focussed element to either the clause left- or right-edge. And the shift to a predicative construction is suggested further by the fact that, unlike in Old Sinhala, the agreement element appears not after the nominalised verb but obligatorily after the focussed element. These features are all observable in (7b), repeated below as (17), with partial tree representations of the relevant pieces in (18a) and (18b) (showing the two movement steps), with the focussed phrase “normalised” to the right-edge.

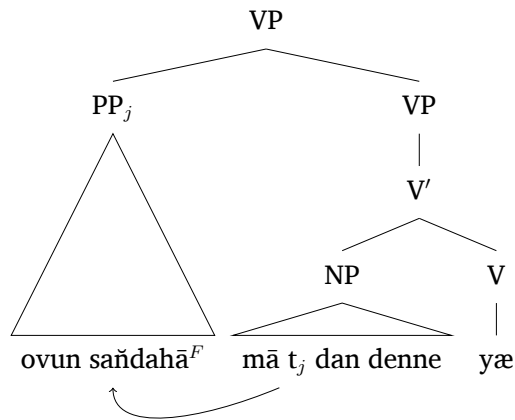
- (17) *Classical Sinhala* (*Amāvatura* 107; cited: Paolillo 1994: 161)¹³
 Mā dan **denne** [ovun saṅdahā]^{FOC} **yæ**.
 I.ACC alms **give.PRES.PTCP.NOM** [they.ACC for]^{FOC} **3SG**
 ‘It is for them that I am giving alms.’

First, as shown in (18a), the focussed element moves to a (VP-internal) focus position, adjoined to VP. Then, as in (18b), the nominalised clause moves to SpecTP, where it can

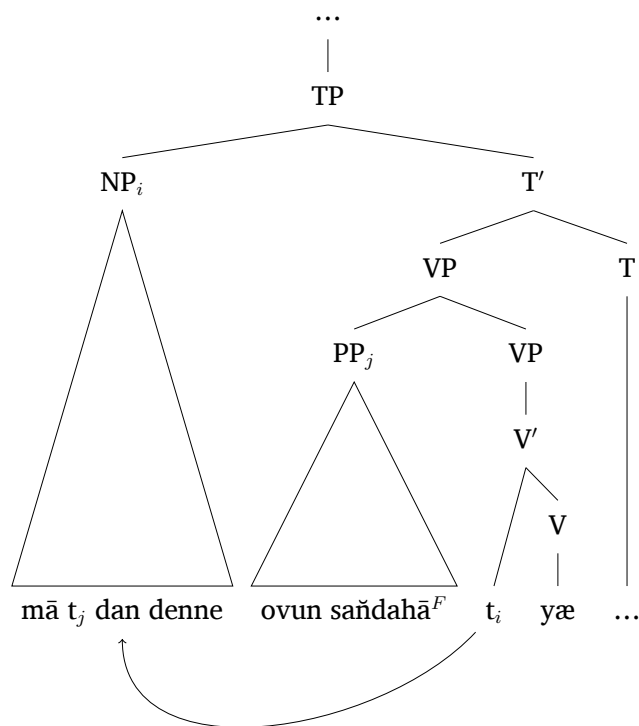
¹³ Example (17) has been altered from the original: the focussed constituent has been “normalised” to the right-edge.

enter into a predication relationship with the focussed element (= ‘the giving of alms by me is for them’).

(18) a.



b.



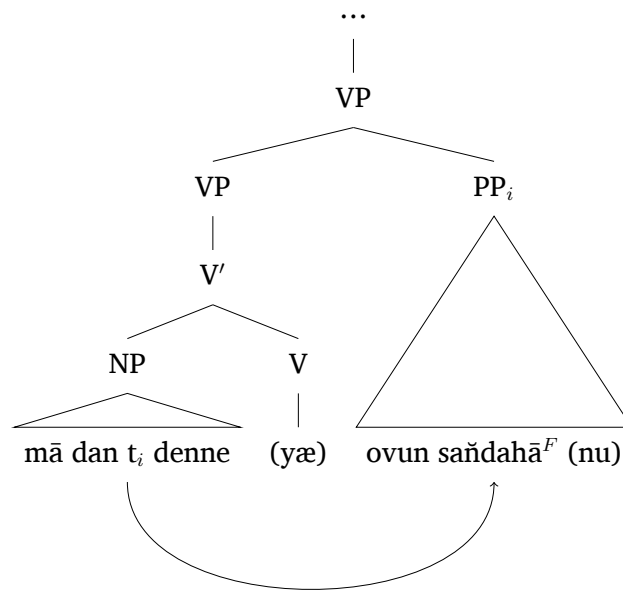
In contrast, the Old Sinhala equivalent of (17) would have the structure of the constructed example in (19), with a partial tree of the relevant pieces given in (20).¹⁴

(19) *Old Sinhala* (constructed)

Mā dan **denne** yæ [ovun saṅdahā]^{FOC} (nu).
 I.ACC alms **give.PRES.PTCP.NOM** 3SG [they.ACC for]^{FOC} (indeed)
 (Lit.) ‘There exists a giving of alms by me for them (indeed).’

¹⁴ With respect to the position of *yæ*; the focussed phrased *ovun saṅdahā* could stand in different positions, as discussed above.

(20)



Here the V head in which *yæ* appears, if vocalised, remains associated (and right-adjacent to) the nominalised participle, with optional movement of the focussed element to a focus-associated position. But this V does not serve to create a new predicate as it were, unlike in (18); *ovun saṅdahā* ‘for them’ does not stand in a predicative relationship with the nominalised *mā dan denne* (lit.) ‘a giving of alms by me’, but is rather an extracted focussed adjunct of the NP.

The comparison between (17) and (19) illustrates the shift from the non-predicative “impersonal” construction in (19), compatible with the focussing of a particular constituent but not inexorably tied to this type of highlighting function, to the true predicative “cleft” construction of (17).

MLS focus-concord constructions closely resemble those of the Classical period, except that the dislocation of focus is restricted to the right edge. However, in MCS we find the old agreement clitic *-y* (<*ya*) being re-analysed simply as a focus marker.¹⁵ Modern Sinhala also shows that the focus concord verbal form became distinct from verbal nominalisation.¹⁶ With these changes, the dependency between the focussed element and the verbal form has become something like agreement (i.e. the verb takes a special morphological form when an exhaustive-focus element originated within its scope). Thus the MCS sentence in (21) would be associated with the partial tree structure given in (22).

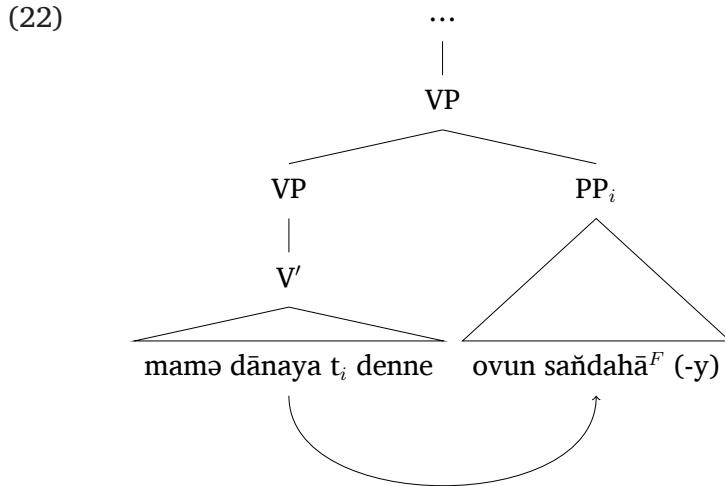
¹⁵ One of the arguments Kariyakarawana (1998) gives for a biclausal analysis of MCS focus-constructions (i.e. equivalent to a predicative cleft) is that only one particle-marked focus element is allowed per clause. However, in other languages, focus particles have similar restrictions, e.g. in Hindi, where such constructions are clearly monoclausal (both synchronically and historically – in the sense that the focussed element does not undergo any sort of predicate-formation in contrast to what occurs in clefting), we find a similar restriction on focus particles:

(i) *Hindi* (Sharma 1999)

- a. Uske-**hī** jūte mere kamre-mem paḍe the.
his-**EMPH** shoes my room-in lie.PAST.PTCP.MSC.PL be.PAST.MSC.PL
‘His shoes were lying in my room.’
- b. Uske jūte mere-**hī** kamre-mem paḍe the.
his shoes my-**EMPH** room-in lie.PAST.PTCP.MSC.PL be.PAST.MSC.PL
‘His shoes were lying in MY room.’
- c. *Uske-**hī** jūte mere-**hī** kamre-mem paḍe the.
his-**EMPH** shoes my-**EMPH** room-in lie.PAST.PTCP.MSC.PL be.PAST.MSC.PL
‘His shoes were lying in MY room.’

¹⁶ See discussion around (14a) & (14b) above.

- (21) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Mamə dānaya denne ovun sañdahā (-y).
 I alms give.PRES.E them for (FOC)
 ‘It is for them I am giving alms.’



Thus the MCS focus construction is similar in some ways to the early structure we find in OS, with the difference that no nominalisation is involved.

That -y (<ya/yi) is no longer a (verbal) agreement element in MCS is also attested by the difference in the structure of clauses with non-verbal predicates in MCS as opposed to earlier varieties. In MCS, there is no overt realisation of agreement on verbal forms; and in clauses with non-verbal predicates no copula or agreement appears whatsoever:

- (23) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala* (Gair 1995[1998]: 241)
- a. Mamə govīy-ek.
 I.NOM farmer.NOM-INDEF
 ‘I am a farmer.’
 - b. Ē mahattəya guruwəṛəy-ek.
 that gentleman.NOM teacher.NOM-INDEF
 ‘That gentleman is a teacher.’

Whereas, in MLS, clauses with non-verbal predicates require some sort of overt agreement element, either an agreement clitic (of which *yi/ya* is a member), as in (24), or a form of ‘to be’, as in (25).

- (24) *Modern Literary Sinhala* (Gair 1995[1998]: 242)
- a. Mama govīy-ek-mi.
 I.NOM farmer.NOM-INDEF-1SG
 ‘I am a farmer.’

- b. Hetema govii-ek-ya/govii-ek-i.
 he.NOM farmer.NOM-INDEF-3
 ‘He is a farmer.’¹⁷

(25) *Modern Literary Sinhala (ibid.)*

- a. Mama govii-ek vemi.
 I.NOM farmer.NOM-INDEF be.PRES.1SG
 ‘I am a farmer.’
- b. Hetema govii-ek veyi.
 he.NOM farmer.NOM-INDEF be.PRES.3SG
 ‘He is a farmer.’

Note also in Modern Colloquial Sinhala that the focus construction now behaves identically to non-focussed constructions with respect to the case-marking of the subject (as opposed to the accusative subjects of literary Sinhala “musubi” verbs). The loss of overt subject-agreement morphology on the finite verb in Modern Colloquial Sinhala may be one reason for this difference.¹⁸

Table 1 lays out the properties of focus concord structures in these four stages of Sinhala, including the location of the agreement element (i.e. forms of ‘to be’ or agreement clitics, when present), the case of the subject of the focus-concord clause, the dislocation of the focussed element, and the status of the verb which appears in the focus-concord clause (as identical or non-identical with a nominalised verb). Note that the “accusative” of Classical and Literary Sinhala is the erstwhile genitive (see fn. 19).

The next section provides a brief overview of the properties of Q-particles in Sinhala, before turning to the comparison with Dravidian in Section 6.

5 Quantifier-particles in Sinhala

This section examines constructions in Sinhala containing the particle *dā*, focussing on Modern Colloquial Sinhala, but including some examples from earlier varieties as well, in order to provide an overview of the full distribution of the interrogative focus-association particle, and how it interacts with the “musubi” verbal form. I first begin by examining the historical predecessors of Sinhala *dā*.

¹⁷ Note that *ya/yi/i* does not show number agreement, cp. (24b) with:

- (i) Ovuhu govii-ō ya.
 they.NOM farmer-NOM.PL 3
 ‘They are farmers.’

(Although, historically *ya/yi/i* does derive from a morphologically singular form; see discussion below example (9)).

¹⁸ One way in which accusative subjects in focus concord constructions differ from nominative subjects in non-focussing finite clauses in literary Sinhala is the fact that the latter but not the former control person/number agreement on the verb. In Modern Colloquial Sinhala, verbs do not overtly show person/number agreement morphology, and so one of the “cues” that subjects in focus concord structures are different from subjects in regular finite clauses is missing from colloquial Sinhala, and it seems likely that this contributed to the reanalysis of focus concord subjects as “normal” nominative subjects in MCS.

Table 1: Properties of focus concord structures in various stages of Sinhala.

	focussed element dislocates	case of subj. of focussed clause	presence of agreement element	status of focus-concord verb
Old Sinh.	optionally	genitive	optional, after nominalised verb	nominalised verb
Class. Sinh.	either to left- or right-edge	accusative ¹⁹	obligatory, after focussed element	nominalised verb
Lit. Sinh.	right-edge	accusative ²⁰	obligatory, after focussed element	distinct from nominalised verb
Colloq. Sinh.	optionally to R-edge	nominative	none (optional focus marker after focussed element)	distinct from nominalised verb

The Sinhala particle *da/də* ultimately derives from Old Indo-Aryan *utáho*, which is made up of two particles, *áho* and *uta*.²¹ In Sanskrit (as a representative Old Indo-Aryan language), particularly in the late Vedic period, these two particles appear in alternative questions, as (26).

- (26) *Vedic prose (Taittirīya Upaniṣad 2.6; cited: Böhtlingk & Roth 1855–1875)*
 Utá _avidvān amúm lokám
uta one who does not know.NOM.SG yonder.ACC.SG world.ACC.SG
 prétya kaścáná gacchatī³ / *áho* vidvān
 depart.GER anyone go.PRES.3SG / *áho* one who knows.NOM.SG
 amúm lokám prétya kaścit sámaśnutā³ⁱ /
 yonder.ACC.SG world.ACC.SG depart.GER anyone reach.PRES.3SG /
 ‘Does anyone who does not know, having died, go to yonder world, or does any-
 one who knows, having died, attain yonder world?’

¹⁹ The development from genitive to accusative marking on subjects of focus concord verbs, as in example (i), represents the result of changes in the pattern of Sinhala nominal morphology. Already in Old Sinhala, the old case system was starting to break down, in the sense that the distinction between accusative and genitive was being eroded, with the extension of genitive endings to accusative case nouns and pronouns.

(i) *Classical Sinhala (Amāvatura 107; cited: Paolillo 1994: 161)*
 [Ovun sañdahā]^F yæ mā dan **denne**.
 [they.ACC?/GEN? for]^F 3SG I.ACC alms **give.PRES.PTCP.NOM**
 ‘It is for them that I am giving alms.’

By the period of Classical Sinhala, the distinction between accusative and genitive caseforms began to be renewed by the addition of *-ge* to the now ambiguous genitive/accusative forms of animate nouns and pronouns, with the old simplex form becoming restricted more and more to accusative-case only. Etymologically, *ge* derives from the locative form of (vulgar) Old Indo-Aryan *gehá* ‘house’ (loc. *gehe*) < older *ghá* ‘house’. Thus *ge* originates as a locative used with reference to physical location. Even in Old Sinhala *ge* is found, though almost always in proper names, e.g. (ii).

(ii) *Old Sinhala (S.G. 263)*
 Diyavāṇa Sivala-Malun-ge Siri-devu gī
 Diyavana.GEN Sivala Mala.GEN-**of the house of** Siridevu.GEN song
 ‘The song of Siridevu **of the house of** Sivala Mala of Diyavana’

This thus looks like an instance of re-analysis of the underlying case-feature/status of an inflectional affix. However, as an anonymous reviewer points out, another interesting possibility is that some sort of case-stacking may be going on at some stage of Sinhala; cf. Jayaseelan (2013) on case-stacking in Dravidian, and Caha (2009) on the theoretical treatment of case-stacking.

²⁰ The subject of a verb in focus-concord form is accusative unless the subject itself is focussed, see discussion around example (7b) above.

²¹ Cf. Turner (1962–1966: #1701), who agrees with the etymology of *da/də* given here; see further Slade (2011). Pace Karunatilake (2012: #4541), who connects this particle to Old Indo-Aryan *ca* ‘and, but’.

²² 3, e.g. in *gacchatī³* and *sámaśnutā³ⁱ*, marks *pluti*, the ‘overlong vowel’.

The particle *āho* is of unclear origin in this usage. *Uta* appears in early Vedic Sanskrit with the sense ‘and’ (Klein 1978; see also Klein 1974), as in (27).

- (27) *Early Vedic verse (Rig Veda 3.59, 1b)*
 Mitró dādhāra pṛthivím utá dyám.
 contract.MSC.SG.NOM hold.PRES.3SG earth.SG.ACC *uta* heaven.SG.ACC
 ‘Contract holds (together) earth and heaven.’

It is from this *utá* A B C ... *āho* X Y Z construction that the form *utāho* seems to derive. Since *utá* may appear at the front of an interrogative clause (functioning as a sort of interrogative marker), it could also immediately precede the *āho* standing at the front of the second part of a disjunction, with the application of sandhi becoming *utāho*. And it is in this form (*utāho*), that it appears in Classical Sanskrit, as in (28) below.

- (28) *Classical Sanskrit (Panc. 332; cited: Speijer 1886: §415)*
 Kim mama vadhopāyakramah kubjasya vā **utāho**
 Q me.GEN murder-plot.NOM.SG hunchback.GEN or **utāho**
 anyasya vā kasyacit?
 other.GEN or someone.GEN
 ‘Is it I, against whom the murder-plot is laid, or is it the hunchback or somebody else?’

In later Pali, we find the cognate form *udāhu*, as in (29).

- (29) *Pali*
 Saccāni sutāni bahuni nānā **udāhu** te takkamanussaranti.
 truths heard many various **udāhu** they follow conjecture
 ‘Have they learned many various truths or do they follow conjecture?’

By the earliest extant Sinhala texts containing questions, it seems that the descendent of *utāho/udāhu*, i.e. the Sinhala particle *da/də*, has been generalised from alternative questions and has begun to appear (though apparently optionally) in *wh*- and *yes/no*-questions as well.

Sinhala *da* (later *də* in MCS) appears obligatorily in interrogatives in modern Sinhala (both literary and colloquial), triggering the use of the focus concord E-verbal form. Additionally, it is always the case in literary, and often in colloquial, that the *wh*-phrase is dislocated to the right of the verb. *Da/də*, as do other focus-associated particles, triggers the focus concord E-verbal form whenever it originates inside of the *c*-command domain of the verb (regardless of whether later dislocating/clefting operations later move it outside).

- (30) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 a. Chitra potə gatta.
 Chitra book bought.A
 ‘Chitra bought the book.’
 b. [Chitra t_i gatte] [monəwa **də**]_i?
 [Chitra t_i bought.E] [what **də**]_i
 ‘What did Chitra buy?’

- (31) *Modern Literary Sinhala*
 a. Mama ema pota kiyevuvemi.
 I.NOM that book read.PAST.1SG
 ‘I read that book.’

- b. [Mā t_i kiyevuvē] [kumak **da**]_i?
 [I.ACC t_i read.PAST.E] [what **da**]_i
 ‘What did I read?’

In “neutral” yes/no-questions (i.e. where there is no focussed element) the particle *də* originates outside of the c-command domain of verb, and the verb therefore occurs in the neutral (“A”) form, as in (32a). Where a yes/no-question contains a focussed element, the particle *də* follows it, as in (32b) (and the focussed element together with *də* may optionally be dislocated to the right clause-edge).

- (32) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 a. Chitra ē potə kieuwa **də**?
 Chitra that book read-A **də**
 ‘Did Chitra read that book?’
 b. Chitra ē potə **də** kieuwe?
 Chitra that book **də** read-E
 ‘Was it that book which Chitra read?’

In alternative questions, each disjunct is followed by an instance of the particle *də*, and the verb appears in the E-focussing form, as shown in (33).

- (33) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Gunəpālə **də** Chitra **də** gaməṭə giyē?
 Gunapala **də** Chitra **də** village.DAT go.PAST.E
 ‘Was it Gunapala or Chitra who went to the village?’

In Modern Colloquial Sinhala, but not in earlier varieties, *də* can combine with a wh-word to form an indefinite (cf. Slade 2015). N.b.: the verb never appears in E-focussed form with wh-indefinites, as shown in (34).

- (34) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Kau **də** ē potə kieuwa.
 who **də** that book read.PAST.A
 ‘Someone read that book.’

In non-interrogative disjunctions, a morphologically distinct Q-particle *hari* (*hō* in literary Sinhala) appears rather than *də*.²³ *Hari/hō* does not trigger focus concord E-verbal forms, as shown in example (35).

- (35) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Gunəpālə **hari** Chitra **hari** gaməṭə giyā.
 Gunapala **hari** Chitra **hari** village.DAT go.PAST.A
 ‘Gunapala or Chitra went to the village.’

In Modern Literary Sinhala, and earlier forms, we find similar disjunctive structures, but with the particle *hō* rather than *hari*, as shown in (36).

²³ See Amritavalli (2003) for a somewhat parallel case in Dravidian: the use of specialised particles in interrogative and declarative disjunctions in the Dravidian language Kannada, with reference to a similar phenomenon in Tamil.

- (36) *Modern Literary Sinhala*
 Rahul **hō** Amin **hō** gamaṭa giyāya.
 Rahul **hō** Amin **hō** village.DAT go.PAST.3SG
 ‘Rahul or Amin went to the village.’

Both literary and colloquial Sinhala can form wh-based indefinites by combining a wh-word with the particle *hari*, in MCS, as in (37), or *hō*, in MLS, as in (38).

- (37) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 Kauru **hari** ē potə kieuwa.
 who **hari** that book read.PAST.A
 ‘Someone read that book.’

- (38) *Modern Literary Sinhala*
 Kaluvarē kaurun **hō** mā ælluvēya.
 darkness-in who **hō** I.ACC touch.PAST.MSC.3SG
 ‘Someone (unknown) touched me in the darkness.’

In NPI contexts *vat* is employed instead of *hari/hō*, both in disjunctive contexts as shown in example (39a), and in the case of wh-based indefinites, as in (39b).²⁴

- (39) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 a. Gunəpālə **vat** Chitra **vat** gaməṭə giyē nā.
 Gunapala **vat** Chitra **vat** village.DAT go.PAST.E’ NEG
 ‘Neither Gunapala nor Chitra went to the village.’
 b. Kauru **vat** ē potə kieuwe nā.
 who **vat** that book read.PAST.E’ NEG
 ‘No-one read that book.’

The Sinhala Q-particle *də/da* thus did not start out with inherently focal semantics, though it acquired association with focus by the period of modern literary language. In Modern Colloquial Sinhala, we find that – alongside its use as a Q-particle – *də* is also used in the formation of a certain class of indefinites and thus in these cases does not trigger verbal concord “musubi” forms, and therefore the particle *də* itself is not always focus-associated in the Modern Colloquial language.

In Old and Classical Sinhala, questions do not require the *kakari*-type particle *da*, and *da* does not automatically trigger the use of a nominalised “musubi” verb. In Modern Literary Sinhala, on the other hand, questions do require the appearance of *da*, and *da* always triggers the use of a nominalised “musubi” verb (when *da* appears in its domain). While in Modern Colloquial Sinhala, questions do require *də*, but *də* does not trigger *musubi*-type focus-concord verb forms when it occurs in the formation of an indefinite (as discussed in the previous paragraph).

Table 2 shows the patterning of association of *də/da* and *hari/hō* with verbal focus forms.

In the next section, I discuss focus concord constructions and associated particles in the South Dravidian languages Tamil and Malayalam.

²⁴ Note that in (39a) and (39b) the verb, *giyē*, appears to take the E-form associated with focussing sentences. Historically, the E-form in (38) is doubtless identical with the focus-associated E-form. However, synchronically, the E-forms in (39a) and (39b) have none of the properties associated with the focussing E-form. These negative-associated E-forms do not require or indeed allow a focussed element in their scope, and consequently do not carry any focus-related presupposition. See Slade (2011: 55–57) for further discussion. Thus I gloss these forms as E’ forms to distinguish them from the “true” focussing E-forms.

Table 2: Co-occurrence of particles and focus verbal forms in various of Sinhala.

	<i>hari/hō</i> trigger “musubi” verbal form	<i>də/da</i> trigger “musubi” verbal form
Old Sinh.	never	optional
Class. Sinh.	never	always if in c-command domain
Lit. Sinh.	never	always if in c-command domain
Colloq. Sinh.	never	always if in c-command domain, except for indefs.

6 Focus concord constructions and kakari particles in Dravidian

Focussing/cleft constructions in Dravidian involve a nominalised verb, often with dislocation of the focussed element to the right-edge, and are thus reminiscent of focus concord constructions in Sinhala. In this section I focus mainly on the Dravidian languages Tamil and Malayalam, with comparison to Sinhala.

Compare the Tamil “neutral” (no focus) example (40a) with example (40b), where the verb shifts from a finite form to a nominalised form (again, similar to earlier Sinhala), with optional marking of focus on the focussed element via a particle *-tāṇ*.

- (40) *Tamil* (Lehmann 1989: 367)
- a. Kumār nēṛṛu iṅkē vantāṇ.
Kumar yesterday here come.PAST.3SG.MSC
‘Kumar came here yesterday.’
- b. Kumār(-tāṇ) nēṛṛu iṅkē vantatu.
Kumar(-EMPH) yesterday here come.PAST.NOM
‘It was Kumar who came here yesterday.’

As in Sinhala, focus constructions in Tamil can often involve “clefting” of the focussed element, dislocating it to the right-edge of the clause, as shown in example (41).

- (41) *Tamil* (Lehmann 1989: 367)
- Nēṛṛu iṅkē vantatu Kumār(-tāṇ).
yesterday here come.PAST.NOM Kumar(-EMPH)
‘It was Kumar who came here yesterday.’

The Tamil focus particle *-tāṇ* can be replaced with another focus particle such as *-ē* or with the interrogative particle *-ā* in focussing yes/no-questions like (42).

- (42) *Tamil* (Lehmann 1989: 370)
- Kumār Maturaiyil-ā piṛantatu.
Kumar Madurai.LOC-Q be-born.PAST.NOM
‘Was it in Madurai that Kumar was born?’

The Tamil interrogative particle *-ā* does not obligatorily trigger clefting or the use of a nominalised (“musubi”) verb form, as shown by the grammaticality of (43).

- (43) *Tamil* (Lehmann 1989: 232)
- Kumār nēṛṛu Rājā-v-ai aṭi-tt-āṇ-ā?
Kumar yesterday Raja.ACC beat.PAST.3SM-ā
‘Did Kumar beat Raja yesterday?’

Differing from the Sinhala pattern, *wh*-questions in Tamil do not appear with an interrogative particle, and they do not usually employ a nominalised “*musubi*” verb form; an example of a typical Tamil *wh*-question is given in (44).

- (44) *Tamil* (Lehmann 1989: 234)
 Yār nērru va-nt-āṇ?
 who yesterday come.PAST.3SM
 ‘Who came yesterday?’

Tamil stands in contrast with Malayalam on this point. In Malayalam, *wh*-questions normally appear using a focus concord verbal form, as in (45).²⁵

- (45) *Malayalam* (Jayaseelan 2004: 7)
 Ārə āṇə [niṇ-ṇe talle-(y)atə]?
 who COPULA [you.ACC beat.PAST-NOMINALISER]
 ‘Who was it that beat you?’

The Tamil particle *-ō* appears in the formation of non-interrogative disjunctions, as shown in (46a), and in the formation of *wh*-based indefinites, as shown in (46b), both of these being reminiscent of the behaviour of Sinhala *hari/hō*, in the appearance of the particle on both disjuncts in (46a) as well as the non-triggering of a focus-concord form.

- (46) *Tamil*
 a. Lehmann (1989: 156)
 Kumār-ō Rājā-v-ō varu-v-ārkaḷ
 Kumar-ō Raja-ō come.FUT.3PL
 ‘Kumar or Raja will come.’
 b. Lehmann (1989: 155)
 Nērru yār-ō uṅkaḷ-ai-k kūppiṭ-ṭ-ā-ṇ
 yesterday who-ō you(pl).ACC call.PST.3SM
 ‘Someone called you yesterday.’

In modern Malayalam, the particle *-ō* also occurs in these two contexts (non-interrogative disjunctions and in the formation of indefinites), but additionally occurs also in the formation of yes/no-questions, in place of Tamil’s *-ā*; an example is given in (47).

²⁵ Malayalam *wh*-questions can appear without a focus concord verbal form (though this is not as typical), but in this case the *wh*-word must appear immediately adjacent to the left-edge of the verb:

- (i) *Malayalam* (Jayaseelan 2004: 7)
 a. Niṇ-ṇe ārə talli?
 you.ACC who beat.PAST
 ‘Who beat you?’
 b. *Ārə niṇ-ṇe talli?
 who you.ACC beat.PAST

Whereas, if a focus-concord form is employed, the *wh*-word has much greater freedom, as in (ii) (= (45)), where the focussed *wh*-word together with the copula can occupy various positions.

- (ii) *Malayalam* (*Ibid.*)
 a. Ārə āṇə niṇ-ṇe talle-(y)atə?
 who COPULA you.ACC beat.PAST-NOMINALISER
 b. Niṇ-ṇe ārə āṇə talle-(y)atə?
 you.ACC who COPULA beat.PAST-NOMINALISER
 c. Talle-(y)atə niṇ-ṇe ārə āṇə?
 you.ACC beat.PAST-NOMINALISER who COPULA

- (47) *Malayalam* (Jayaseelan 2001b: 67)
 John wannu-(w)ō?
 John came-ō
 ‘Did John come?’

In Old Malayalam, -ō additionally occurs in the formation of *wh*-questions (making it more closely resemble Sinhala), as in example (48).

- (48) *Old Malayalam* (“Ambarrīshōpākhyānam”, Narayanapilla 1971: 21)
 Entu-kil-ō rājya-ttinnu want-a upadrawam?
 what-be-ō kingdom-DAT came-RELATIVISER trouble
 ‘What is the trouble that has come to the kingdom?’

Old Tamil²⁶ resembles Malayalam in not possessing a distinction between -ā and -ō, and further resembles Old Malayalam in (optionally) employing -ō in *wh*-questions as in (49a), and in *yes/no*-questions rather than -ā (in variation with -kol, and the apparently composite form kollō) as in (49b).²⁷

- (49) *Old Tamil*
 a. aka 50.14 (cited: Lehmann 1998: 91)
 Yāṅ eṅ cey-k-ō?
 I what do.NONPAST.1SG-ō
 ‘What shall I do?’
 b. aink 241.2–4 (cited: *Ibid.*)
 Vēlan ... kēṅmai ... ari.y-um-ō ...?
 priest ... friendship ... know.NPST.3S-ō ...
 ‘Does the priest know friendship?’

Note that in modern Malayalam, unlike in modern Tamil, a form of ‘to be’ is generally required to follow the focussed element, as in (50).

- (50) *Malayalam* (Asher & Kumari 1997: 181–2)
 Rāman-āṅṅə innale Kṛṣṇa-ṅṅə raṅṅə pustakam
 Raman-be.PRES yesterday Krishnan-to two book.ACC
 koṭutt-atə.
 give.PAST.3SG.NEU
 ‘It was Raman that gave two books to Krishnan yesterday.’

While -ō appears in the formation of *wh*-based indefinites in Old Malayalam and in the modern forms of both Malayalam and Tamil, such forms do NOT occur in Old Tamil (p.c. Thomas Lehmann), and so the appearance of these forms in later stages of Dravidian represents an extension, similar to what we see in Sinhala, where *hō* appears in the formation

²⁶ The labels “Old Malayalam” and “Old Tamil” invite the assumption that these are roughly contemporaneous. This is not the case; Old Tamil is in fact the ancestor of both (later) Tamil and Old Malayalam.

²⁷ In Old Tamil, as in other stages of Dravidian, -ō is also used in the formation of interrogative disjunctions, as:

- (i) *Old Tamil* (*Kuṟontokai* 75: 1; Thomas Lehmann, p.c.)
 Nī kaṅ-ṭ-aṅ-ai.y-ō kaṅ-ṭ-ār kēṭ-ṭ-aṅ-ai.y-ō?
 you see-PAST-EUPH-2SG-ō see-PAST-3PL hear-PAST-EUPH-2S-ō
 ‘Did you see [it] or have you heard [it] from those who have seen [it]?’

However, unlike the case in later Tamil and Malayalam, -ō does not occur in the formation of *wh*-based indefinites or in the formation of non-interrogative disjunction.

of *wh*-indefinites only from Modern Literary Sinhala onwards, and *da/də* does not appear in this environment until the Modern Colloquial stage.

Thus it can be seen that in early South Dravidian the “clefting” focus-concord construction remains independent of the use of focus particles (including Q-particles) and vice versa. This remains the case in modern Tamil, but not in modern Malayalam, where Q-particles do trigger the use of focus-concord verbal forms. Both early and modern Tamil then have a somewhat similar state of affairs as in Old Sinhala, as discussed above in Section 3, though the clause structure differs (i.e. plain “impersonal”/“existential” nominalisation in Old Sinhala, against predicative clefts in Dravidian) as shown by the positioning of agreement elements (i.e. forms of ‘to be’ or agreement clitics).

Thus – unlike in varieties of Sinhala from the Classical period onwards – Q-particles in early South Dravidian as well as in modern Tamil do not trigger nominalised “musubi” verb form or clefting of the focussed element. Interestingly, modern Malayalam is somewhat more similar to post-Old Sinhala in that focus particles do trigger the focus concord verbal forms. And as in Classical & Literary Sinhala, Dravidian clefting/focus constructions (at all stages) appear to be copular/predicative.

7 Development of focus concord constructions in Sinhala & Dravidian

Thus, in recapitulation and summary, the development of focus concord constructions in Sinhala and Dravidian can be described as follows.

In Old Sinhala, we find nominalised verbal forms used in what might be described as “impersonal” constructions, of the type ‘there was X-ing (by Y)’, as in (13), repeated below as (51).

(51) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 526)

Vayane ma^{FOC} Sihigiriye taṭa an
play-music.PRES.PTCP.NOM I.GEN^{FOC} Sihigiri.LOC you.DAT other
 no piya da ā gaṇan?
 not dear *da* come.PAST.3SG number
 ‘It is by me that music is played, to you at Sihigiri (Lit. ‘There is playing of music by me to you at Sihigiri.’); but are not all others who have come (here) dear (to you)?’

Such structures were compatible with focussing, and we do sometimes find clear instances of focussed elements used in this nominalised impersonal construction in Old Sinhala, as in example (12), repeated below as (52).

(52) *Old Sinhala* (S.G. 32)

Ma sova niva æ meseyi duduḷa-sela-aḍadarihi
 my.GEN sorrow extinguish.ABS she.GEN this-manner fortress-rock-edge.LOC
visi ya yaha-asaraṭa^{FOC} nu.
dwel.PAST.PTCP.NOM **PRES.3SG** happy-companionship.DAT^{FOC} **indeed**
 ‘It is indeed for the sake of happy companionship that she, having extinguished my sorrow, dwelt in this manner at the edge of the fortress rock.’ (Lit. ‘Having extinguished my sorrow, there is her having dwelt in this manner at the edge of the fortress rock indeed for happy companionship.’)

In terms of the structure, the Old Sinhala nominalised impersonals do not involve any copular clefting; where a form of ‘to be’ is overt, it always immediately follows a nominalised impersonal verb, and thus it is not “copular” in the sense of being a clause linker (as the function of such verbs in focus-concord constructions might be described in later

Classical and Modern Literary Sinhala), but can be seen as part of the deverbalisation of the impersonal.

In Classical Sinhala and Modern Literary Sinhala such constructions do in fact appear to involve predicative clefting, perhaps under Dravidian influence. At this stage focus-concord constructions thus take the form of a nominalised clause joined to the remainder by an obligatory copula or agreement clitic, as in (7a), repeated below as (53).

- (53) *Classical Sinhala* (*Amāvatura* 245; cited: Paolillo 1994: 161)
 Taṭa karuṇe [mahat lābha]^{FOC} yæ.
 you.DAT do.PAST.PTCP.NOM [great fortune]^{FOC} 3SG
 ‘What has been done for you is a great fortune.’

Modern Literary Sinhala is quite similar to Classical Sinhala, with the exception that focus concord constructions show less variation and can be regarded as more frozen,²⁸ since the focussed element obligatorily dislocates to the right of the verb.

By the period of Modern Colloquial Sinhala, the agreement element is reanalysed as a focus marker, and so focus concord constructions in Modern Colloquial Sinhala once again become non-predicative (though in a rather different fashion than their Old Sinhala precursors). Overt dislocation is thus optional, allowing for both (54a) and (54b) (repeated from above (1b), (1c), respectively):

- (54) *Modern Colloquial Sinhala*
 a. [Mamə t_i kiyewwe] [ē potə(-y)]_i^{FOC}.
 [I.NOM t_i read.E] [that book(-FOC)]_i^{FOC}
 ‘It was that book that I read.’
 b. Mamə ē potə(-y) kiyewwe.
 I.NOM that book(-FOC) read.E
 ‘It was that book that I read.’

The Modern Colloquial Sinhala focus concord construction is no longer “copular” (predicative clefting), thus differing from its Literary and Classical counterparts. In Modern Literary Sinhala, *ya* or a form of ‘to be’ must appear in focus constructions, while in Modern Colloquial Sinhala, *-y* (<*ya*) is optional, and can be substituted by a different focus particle (or no post-focus element may occur at all).

The Sinhala Q-particle *də/da* did not start out with inherently focal semantics, though it acquired association with focus by the period of the Modern Literary language. In Modern Colloquial Sinhala, we find that — alongside its use as a Q-particle — *də* is also used in the formation of a certain class of indefinites and thus in these cases does not trigger verbal concord “musubi” forms, and therefore the particle *də* itself is not always focus-associated in the Modern Colloquial language.

In Old and Classical Sinhala, questions do not require the *kakari*-type particle *da*, and *da* does not automatically trigger the use of a nominalised “musubi” verb. In Modern Literary Sinhala, on the other hand, questions do require the appearance of *da*, and *da* always triggers the use of a nominalised “musubi” verb (when *da* appears in its domain). While in Modern Colloquial Sinhala, questions do require *də*, but *də* does not trigger *musubi*-type focus-concord verb forms when it occurs in the formation of an indefinite (as discussed in the previous paragraph).

²⁸ “Frozen” in the sense of allowing less variation, given that Classical Sinhala allowed dislocation to either edge of the clause. Possibly this formal variety which maintains various features archaic in comparison to the Modern Colloquial variety is less tolerant of variation as a more prescriptive variety.

Table 3 presents a concise summary of the properties of particles in various stages of Sinhala and South Dravidian.

As discussed above, the distribution of “*kakari*”-type Q-particles also differs between languages, and between language stages, as summarised in Table 4.²⁹

8 Conclusion and discussion

The Modern Colloquial Sinhala focus concord construction is no longer “copular” (predicative clefting), thus differing from its Literary and Classical counterparts. In Modern Literary Sinhala, *ya* or a form of ‘to be’ must appear in focus constructions, while in Modern Colloquial Sinhala, *-y* (<*ya*) is optional, and can be substituted by a different focus particle (or no post-focus element may occur at all).

While in Japanese focus concord constructions appear to have originated as focus-associated, the construction which eventually becomes a focus concord construction in Sinhala did not originally obligatorily associate with focus. Further, particles (including the Q-particle *də/da*) which end up triggering the appearance of a verbal focus concord form in later Sinhala did not originally require the use of a special verbal form. In

Table 3: Summary of Sinhala & Dravidian focussing constructions and focus particles.

	Q-particles force “musubi” V	focus particles force “musubi” form	musubi clause-type
Old Sinh.	no	no	“impersonal”/“existential” nominalisation
Class. Sinh.	no	yes	predicative cleft
Lit. Sinh.	yes	yes	predicative cleft
Colloq. Sinh.	yes (unless indef.)	yes	“focussing” non-predicative
Old Tamil	no	no	predicative cleft
Modern Tamil	no	no	predicative cleft
Modern Malayalam	no	yes	predicative cleft

Table 4: Distribution of Q-particles in various stages of Sinhala, Malayalam, Tamil & Japanese.

	Old Sin	Class Sin	Lit Sin	Colloq Sin	Old Tam	Old Mal	Mod Mal	Mod Tam	Jap
y/n-ques.	(da)	(da)	da	də	-ō, -kol, -kollō	-ō	-ō	-ā	ka, no, kai, kadooka
wh-ques.	(da)	(da)	da	də	(-ō)	-ō	-	-	ka, no, ndai
wh-indef.	-	-	hō [a. + n.], vat [n.]	də [a.], hari [a.], vat [n.]	-	-ō	-ō	-ō	ka
decl. disj.	hō	hō	hō [a. + n.], vat [n.]	hari [a. + n.], vat [n.],	-	-ō	-ō	-ō	ka
interr. disj.	da	da	da	də	-ō	-ō	-ō	-ō	{ka}

²⁹ a. = affirmative contexts; n. = negative contexts. (O)s indicate optionality. The {}s around *ka* in the interrogative disjunctions row indicates additional complexity, as a further Q-particle must also appear clause-finally, see further Fukutomi (2006). The variation between different particles in y/n-questions and *wh*-questions in Japanese is largely a function of politeness and other sociolinguistic factors, see further Miyagawa (1987); Ginsburg (2009).

Dravidian, both contemporary and earlier, Q-particles do not force the appearance of the special “clefting” (focus concord) construction; focus particles do not trigger the focus concord/“*musubi*” form either in early South Dravidian nor in Modern Tamil, but they do in Modern Malayalam.

Sinhala and Dravidian Q-particles stand in contrast to Japanese *ka*, whose extant forms are all focus-associated, up until the 17th c., when it becomes a question operator without any overt focus-association, i.e. it no longer triggers *musubi* focus-concord verbal forms (Serafim & Shinzato 2000; Aldridge 2009; Mitrović 2014a). Sinhala *da/də* appears to show the reverse development, originating as a question-associated particle which later becomes focus-associated. The Dravidian Q-particles *-ā* and *-ō*, on the other hand, never appear to become obligatorily focus-associated.

Intriguingly, although the Sinhala, Dravidian, and Japanese focus concord constructions overlap in some of their features, Sinhala and Japanese appear to show largely opposite paths of development in terms of the association of “*musubi*”-type particles with questions and focus, but in both languages focus-concord constructions develop out of earlier predicative “clefting” focus constructions.

Though the development of Sinhala focus-concord constructions thus differs on many points from that observed in Japanese, there are some similarities, especially in the later developments. Sinhala focus-concord constructions have been reanalysed as non-predicative focus-marking in the Modern Colloquial language. So too, while Japanese *kakarimusubi* constructions seem to have originally been predicative clefts, later examples are not necessarily analysable as such (Akiba 1978: 77; cp. Harris & Campbell 1995: 161–162), in part due to the fact that some *kakari* particles like *zo* no longer require the nominal form and the fact that other *kakari* particles, like *nan*, have more or less disappeared (Sansom 1928: 266). Parallels exist elsewhere: present-day monoclausal focus constructions in Somali which developed from earlier biclausal constructions (Hetzron 1974; Antinucci & Publielli 1984); and Breton shows a similar development (Harris & Campbell 1995: 155–158).

The earlier development of the “monoclausal” impersonal construction of Old Sinhala – which was not directly tied to the presence of focus, but was certainly compatible with it – to the “biclausal” predicative clefting focus-concord construction of Classical Sinhala may seem on the face of it an unusual change, as it involves the innovation of a complex structure out of a simpler one. However, it too finds parallels elsewhere. Harris & Campbell (1995: 311–312) provide an example of a biclausal structure developing from an earlier monoclausal structure in Udi, a Lezgian language. Aside from Udi, Lezgian languages lack finite relative clauses, as do sister languages in the other branches of the Northeast Caucasian language family. In Udi, in very recent times, finite relative clauses have developed, and out of an earlier monoclausal structure:

- (55) *Udi* (Harris & Campbell 1995: 311)
 Azak'e xinär-ax gölöšp-i.
 I.saw girl-DAT dance-PAST.PTCP
 'I saw the dancing girl' OR 'I saw the girl who danced'.

As discussed by Harris & Campbell, the deverbal adjectival modifier *gölöšpi* ‘danced’, derived from the verbal *gölöšp-* ‘dance’, could be re-analysed as a finite verb (since Udi permits clauses consisting of a surface structure containing just a finite verb). So the AdjP *gölöšpi* ‘danced’ could be reanalysed as a clausal ‘(s/he) danced’, thus deriving a biclausal structure from a monoclausal one. As Harris & Campbell (1995: 310–311) say, ‘[n]on-finite verbal forms – deverbal nouns and adjectives – have an inherent dual nature,

which can lead naturally to dual analysis [...] being at once substantival and (de)verbal, they have the potential for being diachronically *reanalyzed* as having a complex initial structure’.

The situation in Sinhala is slightly different. Here we do not find the reanalysis of a deverbal form by itself, but rather the reanalysis targets the combination of a deverbal form with an agreement clitic or form of ‘to be’. That is, the reanalysis involves whether the agreement element (actually optional in Old Sinhala) is associated with the deverbal nominal simply as an agreement element, as it is in Old Sinhala, or whether it acts as a sort of predicative linker, as it does in Classical Sinhala. This reanalysis takes advantage of a somewhat different inherent duality, namely whether the agreement clitics or forms of ‘to be’ function purely as expressions of morpho-syntactic features (as in “impersonal” nominalised constructions in Old Sinhala), or as predicative/equative linkers between elements (as in the “cleft” focus constructions in Classical Sinhala).

Abbreviations

1 = first person, 3 = third person, A = ‘neutral’ verbal suffix, ABS = absolutive, ACC = accusative, ADJ = adjective, ADN = adnominal, COND = conditional, DAT = dative, E = ‘focussing’ verbal suffix, E’ = non-‘focus’-associated verbal suffix, EMPH = emphatic, EUPH = euphonic, FEM = feminine, FOC = focus, GEN = genitive, GER = gerund, INDEF = indefinite, INT = intensive, LOC = locative, MSC = masculine, MCS = Modern Colloquial Sinhala, MLS = Modern Literary Sinhala, NEU = neuter, NOM = nominative, NPST = non-past tense, OS = Old Sinhala, PAST = past tense, PL = plural, PRES = present tense, PTCP = participle, Q = question marker, QUOT = quotative, S.G. = *Sigiri Graffiti*, SG = singular, TOP = topic.

Acknowledgements

I would like to thank three anonymous reviewers for *Glossa*, as well as to Edith Aldridge as supervising editor, for their insightful comments and helpful suggestions, all of which I have attempted to integrate. I would also like to thank the organisers of the International Workshop on “Kakari-musubi from a Comparative Perspective” at the National Institute for Japanese Language and Linguistics (NINJAL), from which this particular study originated. I owe much to Jim Gair, Hans Henrich Hock, K.A. Jayaseelan, Thomas Lehmann, Ed Rubin, and Anna Szabolcsi for helpful discussion of various points of the paper and for additional data of relevance to the analysis. Thanks are also owed to Lalindra De Silva for a Modern Colloquial Sinhala judgement. Any remaining errors and infelicities however remain mine alone.

This paper is dedicated to the memory of James Gair, whose vast body of work on Sinhala – and whose kind and content-rich discussions with me – inspired this study, as well as many previous investigations into the structure and development of Sinhala.

Competing Interests

The author has no competing interests to declare.

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How to cite this article: Slade, Benjamin. 2018. History of focus-concord constructions and focus-associated particles in Sinhala, with comparison to Dravidian and Japanese. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 3(1): 2. 1–28, DOI: <https://doi.org/10.5334/gjgl.241>

Submitted: 28 August 2016 **Accepted:** 18 July 2017 **Published:** 05 January 2018

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