

# A Comparative Study of Prefixes in the Pāli and English Languages

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## Abstract

*Pāli* is included in the Indo-Iranian branch of Indo-European. English is comprised in the Germanic branch of Indo-European. Thus, according to the genealogical classification, they are sister languages descended from the Indo-European family of languages. According to the morphological classification, *Pāli* and English are inflectional languages. For *Pāli* and English are the same according to the genealogical classification as well as morphological classification, there is a close affinity between them. This paper presents the prefixes found in the *Pāli* and English Languages and attempts to explain them from the comparative point of view. It is believed that this paper will contribute to the understanding of language.

Keywords: Prefixes of *Pāli* and English, Indo-European, genealogical, Morphological.

## Introduction

There were many Languages over the world. Some languages are not used today and others are widely used. These languages can be classified in two ways: (1) genealogical (2) morphological. The genealogical ways consist of three divisions. They are (1) Indo-European Family, (2) Semitic Family, (3) Mongolian Family.<sup>2</sup>

The Indo-European is the largest family of Europe and many languages of India and South-West Asia. There are ten major Indo-European Languages. They are: (1) Albanian (the language of Albanian), (2) Armenian (Eastern Turkey and other in Russia), (3) Balto-Slavic (Lithuanian, Littlish, etc. and the Slavic, Russian, Bulgarian, Polish, Czech, Sorbs-Coriation, etc.), (4) Celtic ( Welsh, Scottish, Irish, etc.), (5) Germanic (German, English, Dutch, Flemish and Scandinavian languages as Norwegian, Swedish, Danish and Icelandic ), (6) Greek, (7) Hittite (Asia minor and Northern Syria), (8) Indo-Iranian ( the languages of India and South-West Asia ), (9) Italic ( Latin and Italian, French, Spanish, Portuguese, Romanian, etc.) and (10) Tocharian( the language of an ancient cultured people in habiting Central Asia until about AD 1000. It is preserved in Buddhist manuscripts discovered in Chinese Turkistan.)

*Pāli* is included in the Indo-Iranian branch and English is consisting of the Germanic branch of Indo European. Thus, the *Pāli* and English are related by the genealogical classification. Moreover, they are sister languages.

Morphological means that the study and description of how words are formed in language. According to morphological ways, *Pāli* and English are inflectional languages.

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<sup>2</sup> ပါဠိဘာသာနိဒါန်း, 1-2.

For example,

In *Pāli*,

āpucchā	= ā + pucchā
ā	= prefix
Pucchā	= feminine noun (a question)
āpucchā	= having asked permission or leave <sup>3</sup>
pucchitvā	= puccha + i + tvā
puccha	= verbal stem
i	= connecting vowel
tvā	= gerundial suffix
pucchitvā	= having asked, having questioned.
Pucchanta	= puccha + nta
Puccha	= verbal stem
nta	= the present participle suffix
pucchanta	= asking, questioning <sup>4</sup>

In English,

disagree	= dis + agree
dis	= prefix
agree	= verb
agreeable	= agree + able
agree	= verb
able	= suffix
agreeably	= agree + ably
agree	= verb
ably	= suffix

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<sup>3</sup> PED, 102.

<sup>4</sup> *Ibid.*

It was found that the languages of Indo European family are closely related if they are studied from the linguistic point of view for example,

English	German	Greek	Latin	Sanskrit	Pāli
mother	mutter	matar	matter	mātar	matā
brother	bruder	phrater	frater	bhāter	bhāta
new	neu	neos	novus	nava	nava <sup>5</sup>

In the sentence constructions of the languages of Indo-European family, they are related to the same characteristics. These characteristics are:

- (1) Suffix inflection;
- (2) Monosyllabic root built up into words by the addition of primary and secondary suffixes,
- (3) Originally synthetics in structure but getting more or more analytic in course of development
- (4) Power of making true compounds,
- (5) Vowel gradation,
- (6) Various kinds of inflection.

This paper comparatively studies and presents some prefixes used in *Pāli* and English Languages of Indo European family.<sup>6</sup>

### **The meaning of Prefix**

The prefixes are called *Upasagga* or *Upasāra* in *Pāli*. They are prefixed to both nouns and verbs. In general, they modify the meaning of the root or intensify it, sometimes, they totally alter it or give this opposite meaning. In other cases, they add a little to the original meaning of the root. There are twenty prefixes in *Pāli*.<sup>7</sup> *ati*, *adhi*, *anu*, *apa*, *api*, *abhi*, *ā*, *u* (*ad*), *upa*, *o* (*ava*), *du* (*dur*), *ni* (*nir*), *nī*, *pa*, *pati*, *paṭi*, *parā*, *su* and *saṃ*.<sup>8</sup>

Prefix is defined A dictionary of linguistics and Phonetics as a term used in morphology referring to an affix which is added initially to a root or stem.<sup>9</sup>

Moreover, Prefix is defined by learner's Dictionary as a letter or group of letters added to the beginning of a word to change its meaning. Such as un-in unhappy and Pre-in preheat. In English Language, there is not exactly number of prefixes.

<sup>5</sup> ပါဠိဘာသာနိဒါန်း။ ၄-၅။

<sup>6</sup> ယင်း။ ၅၇။

<sup>7</sup> Grammar of the Pāli Language, 89.

<sup>8</sup> တိပိဓာန်။ ၃၇၉။

<sup>9</sup> Linguistics and Phonetics, 304.

### Related *Pāli* Prefixes between the *Pāli* and English languages

In <i>Pāli</i>	visama = vi + sama vi = prefix sama (adj) = equal visama = unequal*	In English	unequal = un + equal un = prefix equal = adj
In <i>Pāli</i>	virāga = vi + rāga vi = prefix rāga (Noun) = passion virāga = dispassion*	In English	dispassion = dis + passion dis = prefix passion = noun.
In <i>Pāli</i>	nipañña = nir + pañña nir = prefix pañña (adj) = wise nipañña = unwise*	In English	unwise = un + wise un = Prefix wise = adj
In <i>Pāli</i>	nibbhava = nir + bhava nir = prefix bhava (noun) = existence*	In English	non existence non = prefix existence = noun
In <i>Pāli</i>	dussīla = dur + sīla dur = prefix sīla (noun) = moral dussīla = in moral*	In English	in moral = in + moral in = prefix moral = noun
In <i>Pāli</i>	duccarita = dur + carita dur = prefix carita (noun) = behaviour, conduct duccarita = mis behavior, misconduct*	In English	misbehaviour = mis + behaviour mis = Prefix behaviour = Noun
In <i>Pāli</i>	apa kataññu = apa + kataññu apa = prefix Kataññu = ungrateful*	In English	ungrateful = un + grateful un = Prefix grateful = adj
In <i>Pāli</i>	adhipati = adhi + pati adhi = prefix	In English	overlord = over + lord over = prefix

	Pati (noun) = lord adhipati = overlord*	lord = noun
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	adhipuṇṇa = adhi + puṇṇa adhi = prefix puṇṇa (adj) = full adhipuṇṇa = overfull*	In English overfull = over + full over = prefix full = adj
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	atibhojana = ati + bhojana ati = prefix bhojana (noun) = eating atibhojana = overeating*	In English over eating = over + eating over = prefix eating = noun
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	atideva = ati + deva ati = prefix deva (Noun) = god atideva = (a) supergod*	In English (a) supergod = super + god super = prefix god = Noun
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	Paṭikriyā = Pāṭi + kriyā (kiriya) Paṭi = prefix kriyā (Noun) = action*	In English reaction = re + action re = prefix action = noun
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	avamaṅgala = ava + maṅgala ava = prefix maṅgala (adj) = lucky avamaṅgala = unlucky*	In English unlucky = un + lucky un = prefix lucky = adj
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	anusāvana = anu + sāvana anu = Prefix sāvana (Noun) = clamation anusāvana = proclamation*	In English Proclamation= Pro+clamation pro = Prefix clamation = Noun
In <i>Pāḷi</i>	avamāna = ava + māna ava = Prefix māna (Noun) = dignity avamāna = indignity* <sup>10</sup>	In English indignity = in + dignity in = Prefix dignity = Noun

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<sup>10</sup> PED, BEPD, EPD.

## Conclusion

In fact *Pāli* is an indigenous language spoken by the ordinary people of India and English is the language spoken by the natives of England. However, both *Pāli* and English, according to the genealogical classification as well as morphological classification, are the same. Therefore, they have a close relationship in both grammar and vocabulary. *Pāli* has prefixes as if English has prefixes. It is found 20 prefixes in *Pāli* languages but there are not exactly number of prefixes in English language. Here, 9 prefixes are the same in meaning both in *Pāli*, in English and other 11 prefixes, i.e. *api*, *abhi*, *ā*, *u* (*ud*), *upa*, *nī*, *pa*, *pari*, *parā*, *su* and *saṃ* are found only in *Pāli* can be said that there is a close affinity between Pāli and English.

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