**SRI LANKAN ENGLISH BORROWINGS IN CONTEMPORARY SRI LANKAN ENGLISH POETRY: LINGUSITC FEATURES**

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1. **Introduction**

As the prime and the versatile medium of communication, language plays a vital role due to its often changing trajectory. Currently, owing to globalization, language can always be affected by other languages due to one of them being dominantly or globally used. A language may absorb the other language’s words to be used and inserted into its grammatical structure. Basically, language contact breeds linguistic borrowing. The borrowed elements are usually lexical items, known as loan words. Accordingly, Muysken (2000) in his theory of CM, the behavior of the single word is important because it can be either a borrowing or a code-mixing depending “on the nature of integration and structural elements” (Senaratne,2009. p.126). In contrast, scholars like Myers-Scotton (1993b) and Joshi (1985) point out (as cited in Senaratne,2009, p.126) “that there is asymmetry between the languages when switching and assume that a dominant or a base language determines the structure of the utterance where words from another language are ‘inserted”. Grosjean (1982), in his psycholinguistic analysis, differentiates borrowing from code-switching as follows: “single words are categorized as borrowings or code-switches depending on the *base language* effect on the word” (Senaratne,2009. p.127). Linguistically, borrowing refers to “the process of importing linguistic items from one linguistic system to another, a process that can be occurred at any time two cultures are in contact over a period of time” (Hoffer,2002, p.1). The present study seeks to investigate the linguistics features of SLE borrowings used in contemporary (2000-2019) SLE poetry. The study by Huagen (1950) on ‘the analysis of linguistics borrowings’ defines precisely the terminology of borrowing and the linguistic analysis of borrowings as loanwords, loan shifts and loan blends, which has been taken as the main theoretical framework of the present study. This study seeks to address the following research questions:

**Research Question** **1**: What are the types of the borrowed lexical items in contemporary SLE poetry? **Research Question 2**: What are the linguistic features of SLE borrowings in contemporary Sri Lankan English poetry?

The literature review of the study will demonstrate that there is a paucity of studies on the linguistic features of SLEBs with regard to contemporary SLE literature, particularly SLE poetry. It should be noted that as a New English, the vocabulary of SLE develops everyday as it coexists with the local languages. This attempt is to extend the linguistic analysis on SLEBs correlating with the field of literature. This study has made a number of significant contributions to the field of Sri Lankan English morphology, especially for borrowings and in fact, will prompt the scholars and researchers who are interesting in the field of linguistic and as well as Sri Lankan English to carry out further experiments.

1. **Methodology**

A qualitative content analysis (CA) method with the theoretical framework of Haugen (1953) was employed in order to address the two research questions. The data source here refers to the contemporary Sri Lankan English poetry which were published from 2000 to 2019. The selection of the data is purposively based due to its availability and the inclusion of Sri Lankan English borrowings. The selected four collections of poetry were *Borrowed Dust* by Vivimarei Vanderpoorten, *Bherunda* by Lakshani Willarachchi, *Precarious* by Aparna Halpḗ and *Sri Lankan Tamil poetry*: an anthology by S. Pathmanathan (Sopa). Twenty poems were selected five from each. The researcher preserved a qualitative CA as the fundamental for a textual interpretation in a qualitative oriented procedure as follows; predominately, identified the lexemes of the selected poems along with the classification of Haugen’s theoretical framework: loanwords, loan shifts, loan blends and loan creation and thus, developed the content (subject) categories and defined in terms of the research objectives and coded into the categories in order to conduct an analysis on linguistic features of the classified units.The meanings and the etymology of the lexicons were investigated and conducted an in-depth linguistic feature analysis of the classified units, based on the illustrated linguistic features of the framework of Haugen (1953).

1. **Results & Discussion**

Considering the collected data, this section is divided into two main subsections. The first illustrates the natures of the lexical borrowings used in selected poems. Accordingly, four types of lexical borrowings were identified: loanwords (pure loanwords), loan shifts, loan blends and loan creation. The second subsection identifies the linguistics features of lexical borrowings. Noticeably, loanwords are by far the largest category of lexical item that could be found in the poetry collections. The present study has divided the *pure loanwords* into categories, including loanwords from Sinhala and other South Asian languages, especially considered Tamil and Sanskrit. The present study is comprised of 41 pure loanwords from Sinhala and interestingly, including kinship terms (amma, maama, nangi), religious terms (sansaara, gauthama), places, proper names (Menike, Yashodara, Saliya etc), cultural terms (gok kola, vipatha, koha, kartha kolombang etc). The loanwords that appear in the data are mainly nouns and also there are adjectives and verbs as well. Besides Tamil pure loanwords, loanwords from other south Asian languages (OSAL), such as Sanskrit and South Indian Tamil can be discovered in the data, because Tamil language have borrowed and nativized pure lexicons from Sanskrit and South Indian Tamil. The present study has identified 21 pure loanwords which are mostly nouns in Tamil and OSAL. The Tamil loanwords consisted of kinship terms (Machal, Periyamma, Rama[[1]](#footnote-1) etc.), religious terms (Mahabaratha, Ganapathy, Lord Muruga[[2]](#footnote-2)), places and cultural terms such as pottu, chuunam, beeda, kitti[[3]](#footnote-3). Loan blends in the present study is divided into two main groups: blended derivatives and hybrid compounds. Blended derivatives have been formed with the morphological substitution /s/ and /es/. For examples: Murunga(s) (drumstick tree) – S+E plural suffix, Jyshesta(s) (seniors) – S+E plural suffix. Hybrid compounds are mainly constructed of six patterns in the current study; Sinhala noun + English noun as head (*Geta-bera* rush), English noun+ Sinhala noun as a head (temple *araliya*), Tamil noun+ English noun as a head (*Poovarasu* leaf), English adjective+ Sinhala nouns (wet *amude)*, English adjective + Tamil noun (Nine *rasas*), Sinhala adjective + English noun (*Nari* dog).

**Table 1: English noun + Sinhala noun as a head**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English noun | Sinhala noun as a head | Hybrid | Meaning |
| temple | *araliya* | temple *araliya* | frangipani |

**Table 2: Tamil noun + English noun as a head**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Tamil noun | English noun as the head | Hybrid | Meaning |
| *Poovarasu* | leaf | *Poovarasu* leaf | A dark green heart shaped leaf |

**Table 3: English adjective + Sinhala Nouns**

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| English adjective | Sinhala nouns | Hybrid | Meaning |
| wet | *amude* | wet *amude* | *amude* refers to the traditional span cloth worn by the farmer (Gunesekara,2005,p.167) |
| red | *kekulu* | red *kekulu* | One of the varieties of rice which is red color by its anthocyanin |
| free | *kiribath* | Free *kiribath* | *Kiribath* is a rice cooked in the traditional way to serve on special occasions |

Haugen (1972, p.65) describes loan shifts as “morphemic substitution without importation. These include what are usually called ‘loan translation’ and ‘semantic shifts’; the term ‘shift’ is suggested because they appear in the borrowing language only as functional shifts of native morphemes”.In the present study, Sinhala and Tamil morphemes are not imported but, they are substituted by their English forms. According to Huagen (1953), loan shift is categorized as creation and semantic shift. Creation concerns two sub categories which are literal and approximation translation. The present study has concentrated only on the process of creation; in terms of literal translation, that is referred to loan translation or neologism and semantic shits or semantic loans due to the availability of the data in the poems.In terms of semantic loans, three words were identified; Roadside Romeos, Midnight Venuses, Residential beggars. The poets have borrowed proper nouns from BE and distorted the original meaning by modifying the meaning with the purpose using adjectives. In terms of loan creation, six words have been identified; Gentaas, Donkey-bed, Trice bent, Roadside Romeos, Midnight Venuses, Residential Beggars, are coined by adapting and substituting the meaning of Sinhala terms.

**Table 4: Loan Creation**

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Term | Meaning | Language from which the term is drawn |
| Gentaas | A Sri Lankan university slang, refers to well-dressed males | The English morpheme “Gent” from the word gentleman and added suffix “aa” and the plural marker suffix “s”. |
| Donkey-bed | A bed that is made up with gunny bags | English  |

1. **Conclusion**

The present study shed light on Sri Lankan English Borrowings in contemporary SLE poetry that have been examined linguistically. The findings of the present study provide that, the vocabulary of Sri Lankan English is nurtured mostly from the borrowings of the indigenous varieties; Sinhalese and Tamil as one of South Asian Englishes. The researcher has identified that contemporary SLE poets also have incorporated and nativized SLEBs from Sinhala and Tamil into their creative writings. Additionally, it is realized that many linguistics strategies have used to reproduce the borrowings in accordance with the bilingual speech discourse of Sri Lanka. Noticeably, the researcher has uncovered four main borrowings categories: loanwords, loan blends, loan shifts and loan creation based on the classical model of Haugen (1953).

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**List of Abbreviations**

SLA Sri Lankan English

WE World English

CA Content analysis

SLEBs Sri Lankan English Borrowings

OSAL Other South Asian Languages

1. Sanskrit [↑](#footnote-ref-1)
2. South Indian Tamil [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
3. Jaffna Tamil [↑](#footnote-ref-3)