

The Use of Sri Lankan English in Sri Lankan Fictions; A Morphological analysis

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Abstract- A Language often develops in to a new variety in order to manifest the new geo - socio- cultural phenomena. In the contemporary society, Sri Lankan English (SLE) has become the high yielding way of writing novels/ fictions which are based on Sri Lankan contexts as a result of the phenomenal usage of English by the Sinhala-English bilingual population. Thus, this study aims at emphasizing the fact that the Sri Lankan English writers tend to preserve the Sri Lankan culture and identity by incorporating the lexical items from Sinhala and Tamil languages; the official languages in Sri Lanka. Moreover, the primary objective of this study is to identify and analyze the use of Sri Lankan English in Sri Lankan fictions by referring to five morphological processes. Crucially, five fictions which contain Sri Lankan English lexical items are selected as the sample of the study. In the meantime, data gathering was done as a collaborative work by reading the five fictions in order to identify the Sri Lankan English lexical items and they were analyzed using grids. A qualitative data analysis approach was implemented to identify the use of Sri Lankan English lexical items in Sri Lankan fictions. Henceforth, this study investigates the manner in which the Sri Lankan English morphological processes expose the Sri Lankan culture and tradition whilst playing a functional role in developing the lexical items of Sri Lankan English fictions.

Key words: Sri Lankan English, Sri Lankan English fictions, Morphological processes

I. INTRODUCTION

An increasing attention is being given to the constructs of World Englishes and English as an international language (Jenkins, 2000 & Rajadurai, 2007). Thus, English language was spread to Sri Lanka as a result of the Second Diaspora of English which took place at various points during 18th and 19th centuries. Subsequently, as a consequence of this, English language was deeply rooted in Sri Lanka and it became one of the official languages in the country. Crucially, according to Gunesequera (2005), Sri Lankan English can be brought forth as a distinct variety which is spoken by Sri Lankans in all their English speaking situations. Moreover, it is referred to as a

new dialect in which the emergence of Sri Lankan English as a “national standard” has many positive aspects (Gunesequera, 2005, p.128). For example, Sri Lankans have come to accept the existence of their own variety of English and no longer look up to the British variety as the standard to which the educated English speakers aspire (Gunesequera, 2005). Henceforth, in order to fabricate SLE as an intrinsic variety which preserves the Sri Lankan culture and identity by incorporating lexical items from Sinhala and Tamil languages; the official languages in Sri Lanka, the use of distinct morphological processes in Sri Lankan fictions is apparent. Thus, the term “morphological processes” can be brought forth as a mean of changing a stem to adjust it’s meaning in order to be pertinent to its syntactical and communicational contexts with the incorporation of morphemes; the smallest part of a word. As instance, borrowing, compounding, affixation, abbreviations, reduplication and coinage can be manifested as the most prominent morphological processes in SLE. Crucially, the initial role of the aforementioned processes is to play a functional role in language by creating new lexemes or to create new word forms within the same lexeme. As a consequence of this, SLE has become the most productive way of writing novels which are based on Sri Lankan contexts. As Halpe (1964) states, “Sri Lankan writers in English are processing their own contribution to our critical awareness of Lankan reality and to the exploration of human potentiality that is the central art of any importance”. Hence, the sole reason for this is, as the English language being the second language in Sri Lanka, the Sri Lankan writers tend to expose the culturally bound novelties by incorporating the lexical items from their native language.

Therefore, for the achievement of the initial objective of this study; The Use of SLE in Sri Lankan fictions, the researchers have studied about distinct morphological processes which are used by the SLE writers, when narrating their fictions in a Sri Lankan context. Crucially, the study is interwoven around five selected SLE fictions in which their lexical items were analyzed according to the aforementioned morphological processes. Thus, Sri Lankan fictions are consisted of distinct

morphological processes such as borrowing, hybridization, compounding, coinage, reduplication and literal translations. Accordingly, this study is paramount as it is a clear portrayal of the usage of morphological processes that are used by the SLE writers in their novels which expose the Sri Lankan culture and tradition whilst developing new lexical items.

II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Todd (1987) claims "Morphology" as the study of morphemes which are the smallest significant units of grammar. Yet, Spencer (1984) defines "Morphology" as the interface between lexicon, phonology and syntax. Thus, Morphology has a vital impact on the development and perception of English lexical items. Morphemes, one of the crucial aspects of morphology, incorporate roots, stems, prefixes, and suffixes, are the smallest parts of words that convey significance. Crystal (1997) illuminates a morpheme as a smallest bit of a language which has a meaning. Crucially, morphemes have the capacity to use the moderate level of dialect which is integral to build an overwhelming vocabulary and grasping English content mostly in the field of literature. Henceforth, with the interrelation of morphemes, the morphological processes pave the way for the creation or formation of new lexemes. Subsequently, the term "morphological processes" can be defined as a functional process of creating new lexemes within the same lexeme. In the meantime, Gunawardana (2018) states that a morphological process is a method to form or expand the words. Thus, there are specific word formation or morphological processes which convert a morpheme in to a word in a particular language. According to Yule (2010), there are nearly nine morphological processes in English including coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronyms and derivation. Yet, Gunasekera (2005) demonstrates borrowing, compounding, affixation, duplication, abbreviations, acronyms, expressions, semantic change and semantic shift as the morphological processes which occupy a predominant place in documentation and when developing the lexical items in varieties of literary works in SLE. Consequently, whilst referring to Sri Lankan literature which is the masterpiece of literary tradition of Sri Lanka, the largest part of works can be seen in Sinhala language; one of the official languages in Sri Lanka, and a considerable amount of works are written in English. Thus, the use of SLE is more prevalent among the literary works such as fictions. Gunasekera (2005) defines Sri Lankan English as a distinct variety which is spoken by Sri Lankans in their all English speaking situations. In the meantime, this variety is used by people employing it as the second language rather than using it as their first language. Subsequently, Herat (2001) states that Sri Lankans took

English as a language of their own by using distinct terms of minor geographical variations such as the use of cultural specific lexical items for religious terms, kingship terms, food, clothing and the system of address. Hence, Sri Lankan writers develop SLE lexical items with the interconnection of the aforementioned morphological processes to preserve the Sri Lankan culture and identity. Moreover, they tend to expose the utility and perfection of Sri Lankan English lexical items to the literary world with the aid of those lexicons. For example, the Sri Lankan fiction "The Ginirella Conspiracy" (2005) which was written by an award winning writer, Nihal De Silva can be brought to light as a literary source which is composed of numerous SLE lexical items. Crucially, they were developed in collaboration with the above stated morphological processes. Henceforth, this study demonstrates the fact that the use of Sri Lankan English lexical items in Sri Lankan fictions by referring to distinct morphological processes is utterly a success.

III. METHODOLOGY

The aim of this study is to identify and analyze the use of Sri Lankan English in Sri Lankan fictions by referring to five morphological processes.

A. Population and sampling

The sample of the study was five fictions which contain Sri Lankan English lexical items namely, *The Jam Fruit Tree by Carl Muller (1993)*, *The Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai (1994)*, *The Road from Elephant Pass by Nihal De Silva (2003)*, *Golden Fields by Achala Rashmini Perera (2014)*, and *Stories by Charulatha Abeysekera (2017)*. Crucially, all of these novels were written by Sri Lankan writers which can be manifested as one of the vital factors that inspired the researchers to select the aforementioned novels as their sample. Moreover, the sample was selected under the random sampling method.

B. Data collection tools

The data gathering was done as a collaborative work by reading the aforementioned five fictions in order to identify the SLE lexical items and ultimately, they were analyzed using grids in order to measure the validity, reliability and efficacy of the data which was obtained from the sample.

C. Data analysis Procedure

The findings of the study have been analyzed by using the qualitative method which is appropriate for the nature of the study. Thus, the use of SLE lexical items were identified by using the aforementioned method and they were analyzed using the morphological processes such as borrowing, hybridization, compounding, coinage and literal translations.

Ultimately, all the data is tabulated in such a way as to analyze the results clearly and reliably.

IV. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

By skimming through five Sri Lankan fictions, the lexical items of SLE are identified and are categorized under five morphological processes which are listed below.

A. Borrowing

The term “borrowing” can be defined as the interrelation of the features of a foreign language in to a native language by the speakers of that language (Thomason et al., 1988, p.37). Yet, Gal (1979) conveys loan words or borrowing as the consistency of the introduction of single words or short idiomatic phrases from one language to another (p.79). Crucially, it is a process that occurs anytime when two cultures are in contact over a period of time. The word that is borrowed is called a borrowing, a borrowed word or a loan word. Accordingly, whilst referring to the use of the process of borrowing in SLE, Haugen (1950) manifests “adaption” in borrowings. “The morphology shows a similar range from partial to complete adaptation” (Haugen, 1987). Subsequently, he asserts that this can be further divided in to sub categories such as phonological, morphological and syntactic substitution (Haugen, 1950, p.75). Thus, SLE borrowings demonstrate the examples for those three sub categories. For example, the kinship term “aunty /ɑ:nti/ or aunt /ɑ:nt/” is imported to Sinhala and in to SLE with an inconsiderable phonological substitution as /ænti/ (Fernando, 2012, p. 12). Accordingly, Sri Lankan English writers tend to preserve the Sri Lankan culture and identity by borrowing the lexical items from the two official languages of the country; Sinhala and Tamil, whilst giving rise to a mixed code with identifiable morphological characteristics which are more prevalent in SLE fictions.

Table 1: Examples for “Borrowing” in Sri Lankan English Fictions

Borrowed from	Term	Meaning	Language from which the term is drawn

	to show surprise and endearment		
The Road from Elephant Pass by Nihal De Silva	Talagoya (243)	Refers to the Bengal monitor or common Indian monitor, and widely distributed over the Indian Subcontinent, as well as parts of Southeast Asia and West Asia.	S
	Wanni (197)	The name given to the mainland area of the Northern Province of Sri Lanka. It covers the entirety of Mannar, Mullaitivu and Vavuniya Districts, and most of Kilinochchi District.	S
Golden Fields by Achala Rashmini Perera	Caju Malu (59)	Refers to the cashew nut curry in Sri Lanka.	S + S
	Bathi Gee (102)	Buddhist hymns.	S + S
	Amma, Achchi amma Taththa (31)	Terms use to address mother, grandmother and father respectively in Sri Lanka.	S S + S S

Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai (1994)	Ammachc hi, Appachchi (3) Budu ammo (36)	Terms used to refer mother and father in the Central Province. An expression which is used to	Sinhala (S) S S + S
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	Patiya (11)	A term of love and endearment which is commonly used to address the kids.	S
	Mallung (3)	A salad like food item.	S

When referring to the abovementioned borrowed lexical items, it is noteworthy that both the writers endeavor to preserve the culturally bound novelties and provide the readers with a clear portrayal of the context that they refer to by directly importing the lexicons from Sinhala and Tamil languages.

B. Hybridization

In linguistic morphology the term “hybrid” refers to a word formed by combining elements that are originated from two or more languages (Carey, 2011). Thus, this new variety shares the qualities of both languages, yet it has its own independent grammar and vocabulary. In the meantime, hybridization is defined as a process whereby separate and disparate entities or processes generate another entity or process (the hybrid), which shares certain features with each of its sources which is not purely compositional. For example, the word “heterosexual” from Greek (heteros) meaning “different” or “other” and Latin (sexus) meaning “norm” can be demonstrated. Crucially, this study manifests the manner in which the Sri Lankan writers used this morphological process with the incorporation of the two languages “Sinhala and English” in order to generate new lexical items.

Table 2: Examples for “Hybridization” in Sri Lankan English Fictions

Borrowed from	Term	Meaning	Language from which the term is drawn
Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai (1994)	Brass Karaya (48)	The person who either polishes or sells brass items.	English (E) + S
	Araliya flowers (6)	Temple tree flowers.	S + E

The Road from Elephant Pass by Nihal De Silva (2003)	Kubuk trees (107)	Arjun tree, Botanical name: Terminalia Arjuna.	S+E
Golden Fields by Achala Rashmini Perera (2014)	Achchiamma’s room (144)	Refers to Grandmother’s room.	S+E
	Kandyan dancers (104)	The Kandyan dancers are regarded as the classical dancers of Sri Lankan tradition.	S + E
Stories by Charulatha Abeysekar a (2017)	Spicy sambar (36)	A lentil vegetable curry cooked in tamarind broth which is spicy.	E + Tamil (T)
	Suddha’s witchcraft (36)	Refers to the Europeans. Literarily, it refers to a person who is White in complexion.	S + E

C. Compounding

The term “compounding” can be brought to light as the process of combining two words (free morphemes) to create a new lexical item; commonly a verb, noun or an adjective. The elements can be characterized as words, stems, or lexemes, depending on the language and on the theoretical framework adopted. Subsequently, compounds can occur either with both words joined together or occurring apart from each other, whether they are hyphenated or not. For example, your+self-**yourself** (pronoun) and where+by- **whereby** (conjunction) can be elucidated. Crucially, in Sri Lankan literature, the use of the abovementioned morphological process is evident. The initial reason for using this processes in Sri Lankan English fictions is;

whilst composing their literary works according to a particular Sri Lankan context, the use of SLE lexical items is inevitable. Thus, in this type of a situation, the writers tend to use the process of compounding in order to convey the meaning of the

context that they refer to.

Table 3: Examples for “Compounding” in Sri Lankan English Fictions

Borrowed from	Term	Meaning	The language from which the term is drawn
Funny Boy by Shyam Selvadurai (1994)	Girlie-boy (25)	The one who expresses emotions or acts in a way that is considered to be feminine to the modern society.	E
	Great – grandfather (60)	The father of one's grandmother or grandfather.	E
	Ammachi(Amma+acchi) (7)	The term used to address “the mother”.	T

D. Coinage

The term “coinage” can be elucidated as the word formation process in which a new word is created either deliberately or unknowingly without using the other word formation processes. According to Guneseckera (2005) coinage is the inventions and the manner in which proper nouns become the part of the study. Crucially, as neologism or coinage, it is apparent that the word formation process is inventing entirely new words. Henceforth, in Sri Lankan English fictions, the writers have used this process in order to generate new lexical items and to expose the essence of Sri Lankan culture and literal identity.

Table 4: Examples for “Coinage” in Sri Lankan English Fictions

Borrowed from	Term	Meaning	The language from which the term is drawn
Stories by Charulatha Abeysekera (2017)	Un – Kandyian (102)	Here the word un – kandyian is not an English word. Yet, it is a new lexical item which is composed by the writer. Thus, this lexical item emphasizes the meaning as not kandyian in order to demonstrate the meaning of the word effectively in a bilingual community.	E

E. Literal translations

The terms “Literal translation, direct translation or word-for-word translation” can be brought forth as rendering text from one language to another language at a time. Newmark (1982) states that this technique is the best methodology for translating texts where the form is as important such as the content such as great speeches, autobiographies and literary works. Thus, the primary use of this process is either to understand the mechanics of the source language or to construct a difficult text as a pre-translation process. Henceforth, in Sri Lankan English fictions, the writers use the aforementioned process; the word by word translation of English lexical items primarily to Sinhala language; the native language of the country, in order to ameliorate the reader’s competency level of discerning the context that the writer

refers to. Moreover, the translated lexicons demonstrate the culturally inbound novelties by referring to the features of closely knit society.

novels in which we analyzed the use of Sri Lankan English by referring to five morphological processes. Ultimately, nobody has been more important to us in the pursuit of this project

Table 5: Examples for “Literal Translations” in Sri Lankan English Fictions

Borrowed from	Term	Meaning	Language from which the term is drawn
Stories by Charulatha Abeysekera (2017)	“That sounds like a good name for a flower spirit” (138)	“ <i>ekanam mala perethayektama galapena namak</i> ”/ <i>e:kanam malapere: d̄ajaktamə gælapənə namak/</i>	E
Golden Fields by Achala Rashmini Perera (2014)	“I will skin you off” (31)	“ <i>mama ubawa hamagahanawa</i> ” <i>/mamə ubəwə haməgahanəwə:/</i>	E
	“I will teach you a good lesson” (39)	“ <i>mama ubata honda padamak ugannanawa</i> ” <i>”/mamə ubətə hoðə pa: d̄amak ugannənəwə:/</i>	E

V. CONCLUSION

This study has provided a wider knowledge about five morphological processes which are prevalent among “Sri Lankan English” novels namely, “borrowing, hybridization, compounding, coinage and literal translations. Henceforth, this research which was conducted through the analysis of five Sri Lankan English fictions which reflect the Sri Lankan writer’s creativity of developing Sri Lankan English lexical items in their literary works. Crucially, in the post-independence era, the linguistic, social and counter pressures were much stronger, where vocabulary was expanded in more categories of word formation. Thus, Sri Lankan writers tend to use the cultural terms with reference to the native languages in the country; Sinhala and Tamil, in order to expose Sri Lankan culture and tradition to the

contemporary world of language and literature. Moreover, this research reflects the fact that “the Sri Lankan novelists have been successful in taking Sri Lankan literature to the world of literature with the use of their own language system whilst preserving the Sri Lankan identity with the incorporation of the country’s rich culture”.

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