

Tamil Borrowings in Sinhala: a Linguistic Approach

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Abstract

Background: Sinhala is an Indo - Aryan Language. Tamil is a Dravidian Language. Although these two languages belong to separate linguistic families they have interrelationships. The main reason for this situation is clear. Sinhala is an Indo- Aryan Language separated from the other members of her family by the Dravidian language belt. That means Geographically Sinhala language is used amidst Dravidian languages. Therefore these two languages have co-existed for centuries. As a result of this, number of language borrowings can be identified in both languages. This language contact has made changes in the structure of Sinhala language. Sometimes, these changes misled even Linguists: Few decades ago Sinhala was named as a Dravidian language because of structural changes. Therefore Tamil borrowings in Sinhala should be identified in a Linguistic background.

Methodology: In this research, Results of Tamil language contact to Sinhala Language was analyzed linguistically. Morphological, syntactical and Lexical theories are applied to analyze borrowings. Finally, results show how Tamil borrowings have made changes in the major components of Sinhala Language.

Results: No new phonemes have been added to the phonemic component of Sinhala language due to Tamil contact.

Few changes can be seen in Sinhala Language regarding morphological component. Sinhala imperative suffixes are inspired by Tamil suffixes of that sort. As well several post positions in Sinhala also have a Tamil origin.

Very few syntactical changes can be also be identified. . One such evidence is "relative participles." In most of Indo Aryan Languages including Sinhala, usage of relative pronouns in complex sentences is a distinguish feature. On contrary, In Dravidian languages relative participles are used instead of relative pronouns. In modern Sinhala relative participles are a major syntactic category. This has happened due to Tamil contact. As well most of compound verbs in Sinhala have a Tamil origin. At the same time ancient Sinhala numeric compound pattern has also been changed by the inspiration of Tamil numeral compounds.

The most prominent area of Tamil borrowing is the Lexicon. Today number of Tamil words can be seen in Sinhala Lexicon. Tamil words in Sinhala Language can be categorized as loan words, loan blends or loan shifts.

Implications: The study provides a foundation for studies on Tamil language inspiration. to Sinhala language. Identifying structural changes due to borrowings will help to analyze genetical features of the language.

Key words: *Borrowings, Indo Aryan, Dravidian, structure, Linguistic.*