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Code Mixing and Code Switching as a Strategy of Persuasion in Sri Lankan Television Commercials

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Language mixing is a common linguistic phenomenon practiced in bilingual or multilingual contexts. It is referred to as code mixing or code switching. Code mixing and code switching between Sinhala and English can be considered a common linguistic behavior in Sri Lanka. This is especially can be seen in marketing and advertising fields which need the most appropriate language in order to inculcate the desired out come. The present study aims to investigate the function of Sinhala – English code switching and code mixing as a persuasive strategy in Sri Lankan TV commercials. The sample of the present study contains fifty recordings of TV commercials broadcasted in two private TV channels. The data analysis has been presented both quantitatively and qualitatively. As a whole, the findings of the study revealed that, the code switching and code mixing phenomena have given an admirable support to strengthen the persuasive strategies used by the copywriters. The data analysis revealed that intra-sentential code mixing is frequently used and English nouns are commonly inserted in TV commercials. It is evident that through the usage of mixed language, the copywriters are targeting the youth to be the consumers of their products. Most of the inserted English words have their equivalent Sinhala words but are not a part of peoples' active vocabulary. The outcome of this study will help the copywriters to enhance their language strategies and the TV viewers to understand the persuasive language strategies used by the copywriters.

Key words: code mixing, code switching, persuasive strategies, Sri Lanka, TV commercials