A study based on Sri Lankan English morphological processes identified in Text Messages

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Abstract

Standard Sri Lankan English is a distinct variety which exhibits distinctive features that differ from other varieties, particularly from standard British English and American English. These distinctive features can be visible in different aspects of language as in morphology, phonology and syntax. Thus, the current study deals with morphological processes which would exhibit the distinctive quality of Sri Lankan English. These morphological processes include Borrowings, code-mixing, omission, initialism, compounding, affixation and coinage. In fact, Sri Lankan Bilinguals of Sinhala/Tamil and English often tend to mix Sinhala/Tamil in English conversations or when communicating, which is most evident in colloquial speech. Consequently, the current study is based on text messages which can be identified as a prominent mode of communication that involves a considerable amount of colloquial speech. This study is designed as a qualitative study where the purpose is to identify the Sri Lankan English morphological processes adopted in text messages which distinguish them from other varieties of English. This study presents data from a random sample of 300 text messages collected from urban bilingual speakers from the age ranging from 20-25. The text messages were collected with the consent of the speakers and the messages were Whatsapp, Viber and messenger text messages which were group messages as well as private messages. The data will be analyzed by using thematic analysis based on the findings of the studies of Senaratne (2009) and Gunesekera (2005). The present study reveals that the most identifiable morphological process in text messages is omission while initialism, borrowings, code-mixing, compounding and coinage are also apparent to a considerable extent. This study will contribute to the knowledge of the field of Sri Lankan English Morphology.

Keywords: - Sri Lankan English, Morphological processes, text messages, thematic analysis, colloquial speech