

Distinguishing Borrowings from Code Mixes: An Analysis of English Lexical Items Used in the Print Media in Sri Lanka

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Abstract : Borrowing is the morphological, syntactic and (usually) phonological integration of lexical items from one language into the structure of another language. Borrowings show complete linguistic integration and due to the frequency of use become fossilized in the recipient language differentiating them from switches and mixes. Code mixes are different to borrowings. Code mixing takes place when speakers use lexical items in casual conversation to serve a variety of functions. This study presents an analysis of lexical items used in English newspapers in Sri Lanka in 2017 which reveal characteristics of borrowing or code mixes. Both phenomena arise due to language contact. The study will also use data from social media websites that comment on newspaper articles available on the web. The study reiterates that borrowings are distinguishable from code mixes and that they are two different phenomena that occur in language contact situations. The study also shows how existing morphological processes are used to create new vocabulary in language use. The study sheds light into how existing morphological processes are used by the bilingual to be creative, innovative and convey a bilingual identity.

Keywords : borrowing, code mixing, morphological processes

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