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The hybrid compound noun

A result of language change in Sri Lanka

Chamindi Dilkushi Senaratne English Language Teaching Unit, University of Kelaniya Kelaniya, Sri Lanka

Abstract— Mixing between the Sinhala and English languages reveals two manifestations: it not only adds new vocabulary to the repertoire of the speaker but also initiates structural changes in the emerging mixed variety. The mixed variety contains hybrid nouns, hybrid modifiers and hybrid verbs. The hybrid compound noun can be described as a bilingual noun similar to the hybrid or bilingual verb in mixed discourse. The strategy or the morphological process of compounding is used by the bilingual speaker in Sri Lanka to create hybrid compound nouns in a variety of domains from cultural and political to the religious in Sinhala-English mixed discourse. For teachers of English as a Second Language, it is imperative to understand the mechanism of processing these hybrids which reflect language change in Sri Lanka. A mixed form or a hybrid is described as one which is composed of elements from two or more different languages. Hence, a hybrid comprises two or more elements and at least one element will be from a local language. These hybrid forms are also referred to as Indianisms (Kachru 1983: 138). This paper presents an analysis of the hybrid compound noun using Kachru's (1983) theory on hybrids and Muysken's (2000) theory of Code Mixing. Data collected through informal conversations with 20 Sinhala-English bilingual speakers from a variety of domains and a newspaper survey will be used for the analysis. In this analysis of hybrids, a result of mixing, it is apparent that single words as well as extended linguistic units that are mixed in bilingual data are socially significant. This study reveals that the birth of the hybrid compound noun along with many other hybrids is due to the extensive contact between the Sinhala and English languages. The hybrids are a result of language change in Sri Lanka. The findings also reveal the creativity of the competent bilingual and the new words that have enetered Sri Lankan English as a result of language contact. The study reiterates findings by Senaratne (2009)¹.

Keywords-Hybrid, Compounding, Mixed code

I. INTRODUCTION

The constant contact with English for more than 200 years has left a lasting impact on both English and Sinhala languages in Sri Lanka. Sri Lankan English² has many of its characteristics aligned with the Sinhala or Tamil languages. The use of single word elements from English in matrix³ Sinhala utterances is phenomenally high in Sri Lankan bilingual discourse both in urban as well as rural settings in the country. It is a fact that many of the borrowings⁴ in Sinhala remain as borrowings in Sri Lankan English. This is reiterated by Senaratne (2009). Many reasons can be identified for this phenomenal use of English elements in informal discourse of the Sinhala-English bilingual. One of the most influential is the media, where the talk show hosts and radio hosts constantly mix codes⁵. The mixed code has been used to produce the most creative advertisements in Sri Lanka. One such example in recent times is 'to leave the kana out this avurudu season' 6. The matrix in this utterance is English. However, in a majority of mixed utterances where the hybrid noun is present, the matrix language can be identified as Sinhala. This has given rise to the assumption that the code mixed variety, characteristic with many insertions or single word code mixes, is a sub-variety of Sinhala. This study builds on the findings by Senaratne (2009) on Sinhala-English code mixing in Sri Lanka.

Hybridization is characteristic of language contact situations. It allows the competent speaker to produce lexical items that are creative. Hybrids are formed due to the extensive use of two languages in informal discourse.

¹ Senaratne, C. D. (2009) Sinhala-English code mixing in Sri Lanka. A sociolinguistic study. LOT publications. The Netherlands

² Sri Lankan English is the variety of English spoken in Sri Lanka.

³ The matrix language is identified as the base language of the utterance

⁴ Borrowings are words that are morphologically, syntactically and semantically integrated into the borrower language.

⁵ A code is a language

 $^{^{\}rm 6}\,{\rm This}$ is an advertisement campaign run by HSBC. The press release can be viewed at

 $http://www.hsbc.lk/1/PA_ES_Content_Mgmt/content/news_room/2013/Ushering_a_New_Year_of_Rewards.pdf$

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

To understand the presence of hybrids, it is necessary to comprehend the variety of mixing patterns existent in contact varieties. This study analyses the hybrid noun as a linguistic component that has originated as a result of language mixing patterns in colonial settings. Language mixing has given rise to code mixing, code switching and borrowing. Kachru (1978) defines CM as a strategy used for the 'transferring' of linguistic units from one language to another. This transfer results in a 'restricted or not so restricted code of linguistic repertoire' which includes the mixing of either lexical items, full sentences or the embedding of idioms. In this sense, there is no limit to insertion. Kachru (1986) re-emphasizes the theory later on in his Alchemy of English.

Kachru (1983: 163) recognizes hybrid formation as a characteristic feature of language contact situations. In Muysken's (2000) typology of Code Mixing, hybrids are analyzed as indicative of congruent lexicalization patterns in mixed discourse. This study makes use of Muysken's (2000) term to identify and categorize a variety of mixing pattern found in bilingual and multilingual settings. Hence, the term code mixing is used as an umbrella term to refer to mixed data, by identifying the variety of mixing patterns existent in the Sinhala-English corpus (Senaratne 2009). CM is more 'appropriate' than Code Switching (CS) to refer to mixed utterances. According to Muysken (2000), CM as a term is more 'neutral' than CS. He 'suggests the alternational type of mixing' and separates bilingual language mixing too strongly from the phenomena of borrowing and interference. Muysken (2000) further argues that mixing as a language contact phenomenon is on par with lexical borrowing, semantic borrowing, interference, switching and convergence. Hence, in his analysis of CM, borrowing patterns are observed in the each of the three mixing strategies. Many researchers consider borrowing code-switching (Myers-Scotton 1993a/1993b), while others argue that borrowing can be and is essentially distinguished

code-switching (Myers-Scotton 1993a/1993b), while others argue that borrowing can be and is essentially distinguished from CS (Poplack 1980). Grosjean (1982) proposes that borrowings are usually integrated lexical items as opposed to code-switches, and admits that in certain cases distinguishing the two phenomena is a complex task. In definition, 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 (Poplack and Meechan 1995) and because of the frequency of use become fossilized in the recipient language differentiating them from switches and mixes. Established loans become part of the language as opposed to 'idiosyncratic' or 'speech' loans (Grosjean 1995: 263) that are borrowed momentarily. Grosjean (1982) defines a code switch (whether it is just a word, phrase or sentence) as a complete shift to the other language whereas a borrowing is

a word or a short expression that is adapted phonologically and morphologically to the language being spoken' (Grosjean 1982: 308).

There are borrowing patterns in insertion, alternation and Congruent lexicalization. Accordingly, single word mixes in the Sinhala-English bilingual corpus are analyzed as corresponding to insertion, alternation and CL. Apart from single word mixes, multi-word mixes are also best described under CM. Hence, hybrid nouns (and verbs) correspond to both borrowing and CM. . Muysken (2000) observes that the insertional type of CM is frequent in post-colonial settings whereas the alternational type is more visible in stable bilingual communities. CL captures the creativity of the Sri Lankan bilingual, who makes use of this mixing strategy to create new vocabulary and to nativize foreign elements into Sinhala. Hence, it is appropriate to label urban Sri Lankan speakers as code-mixers (which involve all strategies) rather than code-switchers. In this backdrop, the formation of hybrids (both nouns and verbs) are characteristic features of the mixed code. Observe the following examples

- a. Datu ceremony
- b. *kadu* faculty
- c. paeduru party
- d. muddukku joint
- e. kasippu house
- f. poruwa ceremony

The above examples can be analyzed as hybrid compound nouns. A mixed form or a hybrid is described as one, which is composed of elements from two or more different languages. Hence, a hybrid comprises two or more elements and at least one element will be from a local language. Kachru (1983: 153) refers to hybrid formations as characteristic of South Asian Englishes⁷. According to him, such hybridized lexical items are used in all non-native varieties of English and represent linguistic evidence for the nativization process of English. These hybrid forms are also referred to as Indianisms (Kachru 1983: 138). The elements of a hybrid formation belongs either to an open-set (no grammatical constraints on the selected items) or to a closed-system (one of the elements belong to a closed-system of the local languages) in lexis. The following examples are from the Hindi-English bilingual corpus, which are register-restricted or bound in the local language taken from Kachru (1983: 154) his example 4.3.1.

- a. Sarvodaya leader
- b. Satyagraha movement
- c. Swadeshi cloth

⁷ Emphasis is the authors'.

2.1 CLASSIFICATION OF HYBRID FORMS

Kachru (1983) classifies hybrid forms according to the units and elements which operate in their structure, and groups them as follows:

- a. South Asian item as head
- b. South Asian item as modifier.

Table 1 illustrates the classification of hybrid forms where the modifier is from English and the head is from a local language in India (taken from Kachru (1983: 157), his examples 4.5.1).

Noun+ Noun	Adjective + noun	ing as a modifier
Christian Sadhu	Eternal upavasi	Burning ghee
Evening bajan	Imperial raj	
Tamarind chutney	Swadeshi cloth	

Table 1: Classification of hybrid forms

Table 2 provides examples taken from (Kachru 1983: 157) his examples 4.5.2, where an English item functions as a head.

Derivative noun	ing as head	Agentive	Verb as head	Noun+Noun
kashi	beedi	beedi	ghee	ahimsa
pilgrimage	smoking	seller	fried	soldier
bazaar	durri	sarvodaya	sari	ayurveda
musician	weaving	leader	clad	system

Table 2. Classification of hybrids

2.2. CONTEXTUAL DISTRIBUTION OF HYBRID FORMS

Kachru (1983) also provides a contextual classification and identifies a variety of semantic areas in which hybrids occur. Accordingly, the hybrid items are classified into agriculture, administration, flora /fauna, art/music, buildings, clothes, concepts, edibles, drinks, education, habits, medicine, modes of address, occupations, politics, religion and rituals, and vehicles. In classifying all the mixed lexical items contextually, Kachru acknowledges hybridization as an innovative lexical process brought about by the linguistic and cultural contact with English. Kachru considers this a creative process born out of contact situations and acknowledges the significant influence it has on the development of languages.

In this analysis of hybrids, a result of mixing, it is apparent that single words as well as extended linguistic units that are mixed in bilingual data are socially significant. Kachru observes that code mixing is used for register identification as a 'foregrounding' strategy to 'attract attention'. It is used as a discourse strategy for specific communicative purposes such as style, elucidation, neutralization and interpretation. A function is assigned for each code (Kachru 1983). An

important observation made by Kachru's proposal is the fact that it is educated Indians that employ mixing in conversation.

Observe Kachru's positive attitudes towards language mixing in his argument that CM with English is pan-South Asian. In attitudinal and functional terms, it ranks highest and cuts across language boundaries, religious boundaries and caste boundaries. Referring to the special names that have been associated with mixing languages, Kachru (1983) observes that this is also characteristic of the phenomenon of CM not only in Asia but also in Europe and cites that CM has been labeled as Hinglish (Kachru 1979), Singlish (Fernando 1977) and Tex Mex (Gumperz 1970) by scholars.

Observing hybrid patterns in mixed data Muysken (2000) proposes that Congruent Lexicalization, one of the mixing strategies identified in his CM typology, produces many hybrid compound nouns.

3. METHODOLOGY

To conduct the study, 20 speakers were selected from a selfassessment questionnaire. The respondents are from Colombo. The 20 speakers were chosen based on their self-assessment of informal language use. Speakers who chose Sinhala as their L1 were selected for the study. The justification for this sample selection was due to the fact that the study focused on Sinhala-English hybrid constructions. The selection of the sample was also based on the self-assessment of their English proficiency. Those who identified themselves as fluent speakers of English and Sinhala were selected for the study. The interviews were semi-guided. The conversations were recorded while the respondents answered the questionnaire. For the newspaper survey, English newspaper advertisements published in 2012 and 2013 were scrutinized for data. The newspaper data was collected to substantiate spoken data gathered from the interviews. This is due to the assumption that most mixed constructions used in advertisements portray the language used by the masses. It was also used to identify whether there are differences in hybrids that occur in written data and spoken data. The study did not look into hybrid compounds in Sinhala newspapers.

4. SINHALA ELEMENTS AS HEAD

In the mixed hybrid compound nouns comprising a Sinhala and an English element discussed in this analysis, most of the Sinhala nouns occur as heads. In these mixed constructions, English elements that are mixed are nouns, verb stems, present tense verbs, modifiers and reduplicated items. In other words, they belong to the open class set. The Sinhala noun that behaves as a head may usually be a singular noun or a plural noun. In the example 'alms giving *pinkama*⁸' an English modifier is attached to a Sinhala noun. This is the most frequent hybrid construction process where Sinhala nouns

⁸ A *pinkama* is a religious ceremony where merit is offered.

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occur as heads, in the Sinhala-English bilingual corpus (Senaratne 2009: 186). This hybrid compound noun construction is recurrent in mixed data. Observe the examples such as 'alms giving *pinkama*', 'matching *porandam*', 'playing *chakkudu*', 'observing *sil*', 'staging *satyagraha*', 'reciting *gata*', 'offering *dana*'.

Another hybrid construction reveals the combination of English modifiers with Sinhala plural nouns as heads. In 'play *pandu*' the English element occurs as a modifier that is attached to a Sinhala plural noun.

- a. real *gonas* (English modifier + Sinhala noun + English plural marker)
- b. hindu *devalas* (English modifier + Sinhala noun + English plural marker)
- c. Indian *sereppus* (English modifier + Sinhala noun + English plural marker)
- d. real *parippu* (English modifier + Sinhala noun)
- e. party *pisso* (English modifier + Sinhala noun)
- f. special pooja (English modifier +
- Sinhala noun)
- g. dance *kaeli* (English modifier + Sinhala noun)

Observe the following examples where the same construction is used to create hybrid compound nouns. In these cases, the Sinhala head is a singular noun. The examples are from spoken and newspaper data.

- a. We know him. He is a very talented baas.
- b. Did you see the kandy perahera?
- c. It will always be considered a sacred bodhiya.
- d. Just next to the small *chetiya*.....
- e. Lea Burnett avurudu kamatha brings out....

Another hybrid compound noun construction contains the combination of an English noun with a Sinhala head. Examples include 'television yantraya', 'van riya', 'cassette recoderaya', 'photocopy kolaya'. Hybrid compound nouns are also created using an English verb as a modifier combined with a Sinhala head. The mixed English verbs appear as verb stems and without inflection. Examples such as 'attain nirvana', conduct pinkama' recite gata', 'preach bana, 'offer dana' can be cited from spoken data.

Hybrid compound nouns also contain reduplicated noun forms from English that are combined with Sinhala heads such as 'hot hot *appa*' and small small *kaeli*'. These examples were taken from spoken data. The examples discussed so far contain hybrid compound nouns present in informal discourse and newspapers. Most of these hybrids appear in newspapers especially in the domains of religion and culture. Based on the analysis, the hybrid compound noun where the Sinhala element is head contains the following constructions.

- a. English modifiers + Sinhala noun
 b. English ing as modifier + Sinhala noun
 - English noun Sinhala noun
- d. English verb stem + Sinhala modifier
- e. English reduplicated noun + Sinhala noun

It is apparent that most of the Sinhala heads that appear in the hybrid compound noun are Sinhala nouns. From the hybrid constructions, the most productive construction makes use of the Sinhala noun as head of the hybrid compound.

5. ENGLISH ELEMNTS AS HEAD

Similar to the hybrid construction of English modifier plus Sinhala head, the data revealed the construction of Sinhala modifiers attached to English heads. Examples taken from newspaper data include 'shramadana activities', 'vaadiya meeting', 'bheeshanaya era'. Spoken data include hybrids that can occur in bilingual speech where the matrix is English. They are 'pissu bugger', 'naekat time', 'jataka story', 'malwatte chapter', 'sigiri graffiti', 'seva vanita movement', 'mahaveer speech', 'perahera period'. Observe that most of the hybrids are from the political, religious and cultural domains. A few hybrid compound nouns that can be categorized as derogatory terms used by speakers of Sri Lankan English are also revealed in the Hybrid constructions where the Sinhala modifiers are attached to English elements ending in ion as head are also found in the data. Examples include 'sammanera ordination', 'ganja plantation', 'randoli procession', 'magul bera procession'. Another hybrid compound noun construction found in the data is combination of Sinhala modifiers and English ing forms a head. Observe the following examples taken from informal discourse recorded by Senaratne (2009: 192).

- a. bana preaching
- b. *pirit* chanting
- c. baila dancing
- d. wadimbu decorating
- e. suruttu smoking
- f. bana talking
- g. kolam dancing

The hybrid compound noun which contains an English element as head reveals the following constructions.

a. Sinhala modifiers + English noun
 b. Sinhala modifiers + English agentive

c. Sinhala noun + English noun

The data reveals that the noun +noun hybrid construction is the most popular in compounds where the English element is the head. The noun + noun combination of hybrids headed by an English word contains the highest number of constructions as reported by Senaratne (2009: 239). In the hybrids that contain a Sinhala word as the head, the English 'ing' +

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modifier construction is the most frequent pattern reported. In these hybrid compounds, the extension of the register-range is revealed. The hybrid compound noun construction can be considered a productive process where most Sinhala elements are joined with English elements. Mixed collocations such as 'mudukku joint', (unsuitable place), 'pooruva ceremony' (traditional marriage ceremony), 'Vesak lantern' (lanterns lit during the Vesak festival) are used by fluent speakers of English in Sri Lanka.

Importantly, a variety of hybrid compound nouns are present in the discourse of the Sri Lankan English speaker. This study describes the hybrid compound noun as one of the main linguistic features of the variety of English used in Sri Lanka. They can occur in almost all domains and are most frequent in the domains of religion, politics and culture. Observe the hybrids and non-hybrids in the following caption taken from a popular Sunday newspaper in Sri Lanka:

More than 50 elephants and 2,500 dancers will grace the *Kelaniya Rajamaha Vihara Duruthu Perahera* on Friday. The *Dewadutha Perahera* and *Uda Maluwa Perahera* will be held on January 22, 23 and 24, followed by *the Maha Perahera* on January 25. Folk dances *of Udarata, Pahatharata* and *Sabaragamuwa* will be performed.... supports the *Aloka Poojas* of the temples that honour the four guardian gods of Sri Lanka: *Kelaniya Raja Maha Viharaya honours* God *Vibishana; Ruhunu Kataragama Maha Devalaya honours* God *Kataragama; Saman Devalaya Ratnapura* God *Saman, and Devundara Uthpalawarna Sri Vishnu Maha Devalaya* God *Uthpalawarna Sri Vishnu.* (20/01/2013. The Sunday Times)

Events related to daily life such as funerals, marriages, auspicious occasions and religious events may always carry mixed compounds in the discourse of the urban bilingual speaker in Sri Lanka. Observe the following example from a newspaper:

This function took place in the morning with a traditional Sinhalese *Poruwa* ceremony, Kandyan dancers and drummers according to Sinhalese customs. In the afternoon the couple was dressed in traditional Hindu dresses, the bride in a colourful *saar*i. (21/02/2012, The Daily News)

Hybrid compounds are an extremely productive and creative process similar to the hybrid verb construction. The following grid gives a list of hybrid compound nouns in different domains.

Religious	Traditional	Political	Social
Jataka	Avurudu	Jayasikuru	Matching
stories	festival	campaign	porondam

Sacred	Naekaet	Mahaveer	Ganja
bodhi	times	speech	plantation
Sansaric	Poruwa	Chintana	Thambili
journey	ceremony	movement	sellers
Vesak	Walakulu	Bheeshanaya	Vadimbu
pandol	walls	era	decoration
Esala	Ayurvedic	Jathika bikku	Kasippu
pageant	doctors	front	party

Sinhala Noun + the English plural marker

It is evident from the data that the Sinhala nouns are used dominantly in English utterances with the help of the English plural marker in both spoken and written data. Observe the following examples.

- a. As the *Kohas* cry heralds....
- b. Giving daanas wont help....

The English plural marker also follows Sinhala plural nouns. The Sinhala element undergoes double pluralization, similar to the popular pattern found in the mixing of English plurals in Sinhala sentences. Most of these Sinhala nouns which are combined with the English plural marker are in social, cultural and religious domains.

Hybrid modifiers

In addition to the hybrid compound noun, there are also hrybrid modifiers in the Sinhala –English mixed data. Consider the following hybrid modifiers found in the Sinhala-English corpus, formed by compounding a Sinhala modifier with an English derivative suffix. Observe that the English suffix is attached to Sinhala modifiers to create new words that are most often used by English speakers in Sri Lanka. The examples are from spoken data.

a. poling + less = free of queues
 b. karadara + less = Free of problems
 c. kurukuru + less = free of disturbances

Observe that word internal mixing has taken place between Sinhala modifiers and English suffixes clearly demonstrating instances where the Bound Morpheme Constraint has clearly been violated. The Free Morpheme Constraint proposes that code-switches will not occur within a word such as between two affixes and a stem and an affix (Poplack 1980). Importantly, patterns of CL in the SLE speaker are indicative of a creative process of mixing employed by the competent bilingual. CL in the Sinhala-English corpus is indicative of the competence of the speaker to be creative in order to convey nuances of meaning by creating an entirely different word that does not exist in the vocabulary of either Sinhala or English. These new words are used for humor and satire and are indicative of the speaker's superior knowledge of both languages. Note that these mixed words are characteristic features of SLE.

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6. SRI LANKANISMS

Based on Muysken's CM typology, the data from the Sinhala-English corpus reveals congruent lexicalization patterns. These are termed as 'Sri Lankanisms' (Senaratne 2009: 239). In the formation of the hybrid compound noun, described as the most regular pattern in the mixed discourse, the patterns consists of English lexical items as head in the mixed construction. However, this pattern is in no way indicative of the dominant language of the speaker. In other words, the mixed hybrid noun formation does not reveal the dominant language of the utterance where the construction occurs. Interestingly, most of the hybrids where Sinhala is the head item occurs in the domains of the English speakers.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

This study reveals that the birth of the hybrid compound noun is due to the extensive contact between the Sinhala and English languages. Many hybrid compound noun formations are found in the domains of religion, culture and politics and are used phenomenally by Sri Lankan bilinguals who are proficient in both languages. Due to the extensive use of both languages in informal discourse, a vast number of compounds that contain elements from both English and Sinhala are found in the Sinhala-English bilingual corpus. This study categorizes hybrid compound nouns as *Sri Lankanisms* (a term coined by Senaratne (2009)). *Sri Lankanisms* are revealed as results of an extremely productive and creative process of mixing to elements from two languages in a rule governed manner.

This study claims that there are structural and contextual constraints in the formation of Sinhala-English hybrid compound nouns. The mixing of closed-system items from Sinhala with English elements is infrequent or non-existent in the Sinhala-English corpus. In most hybrid compounds, the English item appear as the head element. In the hybrid compound noun construction, what is revealed is the impact of English on Sinhala rather than the other way around. These elements are both contextually and culturally based in the sense that a native speaker of English, unaware of the Sri Lankan traditions and culture may not comprehend what the terms mean. The structural features also suggest that there are structural constraints that govern the formation of hybrid compounds (these same rules apply to hybrid verbs and hybrid modifiers not discussed in this paper). Many of the hybrid formations are fixed collocations in specific registers such as avurudu sale, avurudu sweetmeats, avurudu games and avurudu fun. Most of the hybrids are found in the traditional, religious, cultural, and socio-political domains, which emphasize language acculturation as a result of continuous language contact.

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