

Use of English Vocabulary in the Jaffna Tamil Society –A Socio Linguistic Study

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Abstract

It is intended through the present study to throw some light on the impact of the use of English borrowings in the Jaffna Tamil Society in Sri Lanka, with empirical support. Following the British Colonial rule in Sri Lanka, due to the language contact situation, the practice of borrowing thrived. Several English words have been borrowed to Tamil and the process of borrowing has been increasing as a number of new objects and concepts are introduced in Sri Lanka day by day, due to scientific, technological and trade developments, in the world. The English borrowings are frequently used by the Jaffna Tamils in their interaction. The features and functions of English borrowings have been studied particularly among the Jaffna Tamil monolinguals in this research. Because of the phonological dissimilarities between English and Tamil, the English borrowings have been used with phonological deviation by the Tamil monolinguals. There are certain factors that influence the use of English borrowings in Tamil. They are the prestige motive, need filling motive, concealing social identity, register influence, interpreting facility, neutralization, marker of modernization and economy of usage. It has been found in the research that the English borrowings have facilitated communication to a good extent. Borrowings cause a good effect in the exchange of ideas and expression of feelings. The scope of the Tamil language has been expanded subsequent to the addition of borrowings. It has been suggested in the study that together with the existence of English borrowings, creation of technical terms in Tamil for popular concepts would be beneficial so that such technical terms can be used in speech and writing in literary form of Tamil.