

## Abstract 7

### The Impact of Sinhalese on Muslim Tamil: A Study Based on the Muslims of Atulugama Area

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Language mixing is a common linguistic phenomenon practiced in bilingual or multilingual contexts. People who live in a bilingual or multilingual communication environment usually have a tendency to use two or more codes while communicating with each other. Most of the Sri Lankan Muslims are native speakers of Tamil Language. This study explores the way of using Sinhalese and Tamil mixed codes by Muslims and the sociolinguistic factors in relation to the cause. The selected sample, to carry out this empirical research was collected from Muslims in Atulugama area. The data presented in this paper were collected through observations, questionnaires, personal interviews, recordings and analysed descriptively. These people use Sinhalese words and word phrases even when equivalents exist in Tamil. They tend to borrow lexical items from Sinhalese when speaking in their mother tongue. For example: pæhiccə kata: sollə wəna:m, ahaməḍ maləgedərə po:ŋgə, na:n mahagedərəkku po:rən. So the structure of their own language has changed. It is obvious that there is an impact of the Sinhalese Language on Muslim Tamil. The study provides insight into the mixing strategies used by Muslims, and this research will be benefited to sociolinguists, and for further research on language studies.

**Key words:** bilingual and multilingual, impact, language mixing, lexical items native speakers

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