

Mixed Language in the Print and Electronic Media in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

As the 'Kohas' cry heralds the dawning of another Avurudu season, HSBC looks forward to an exciting time of rewarding customers. The Bank announced its latest campaign 'Leave the 'Kana' out this Avurudu' which offers customers an opportunity to celebrate... (The Island: March 18, 2013)

English is the language of globalization. Being a language of power and solidarity, its influence on a bilingual society is immense. Sri Lanka has lived with this international language for more than 200 years and hence, the impact of English can be seen in all spheres. One can hardly find any Sri Lankan who will not use at least one single word from the English language in their daily conversations. The language spoken by a majority of urban Sinhala- English bilinguals in Sri Lanka is characterized by many inclusions from English. Language mixing is a mechanism that reflects change in the bilingual speaker and is an essential feature of the identity of the post-colonial urban Sri Lankan, whose exposure to multi-cultural and multi-linguistic contexts is reflected in his/her verbal repertoire. It is this mixed code that the media uses to attract a majority of consumers in current Sri Lankan society. The reasons to use this mixed code maybe due to the fact that it is the most attractive and the easiest way to reach a majority in society.

A survey of language used in both the print and electronic media will reveal that a mixed language is dominantly used by advertisers.

The use of English in the media whether it is just by the inclusion of single lexical items or whole sentences reinforces and reveals the social changes that are taking place in Sri Lankan society today. It also reveals the different cultural dimensions and power relationships that exist within society. It can be assumed that the mixed language is a type of code that is used as a tool for creative advertising. Muysken (2000) cites Congruent Lexicalization (CL) as a mixing strategy where elements from two languages merge to create a new form. An analysis of the bilingual data provided in this study reveals that a few advertising logos reveal CL patterns.

One of the main features of an advertisement along with the visuals is the language that is used to attract the consumer. In essence, the effectiveness in advertising is defined as the 'extent to which advertising generates a certain desired effect' (Corvi 2010). Hence, the communication effect of the

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