

Contextual issues in translating Tamil Loan Words in Sinhala to English Language

Thilakarathne, Tekla Chulangani,¹ - Department of Linguistics

Abstract

Loanwords are the words adopted for a language by speakers from another language. Modern Sinhala language has the influence of many foreign languages. Tamil, which is one of the major languages in the process of language borrowing, has made a huge impact on the Sinhala language since the past. This borrowing of Tamil words to Sinhala was originated with the Indian invasions. This study is to bring forward the contextual difficulties a translator deals with when translating Tamil loan words in Sinhala into English. It is always the colloquial language that often challenges translators when it comes to translation. This research is based on quantitative data analysis. Resources for this research are gathered observing the words of Tamil origin used by the contemporary Sinhala speaking society in Sri Lanka. Moreover, interviews are conducted with the persons related to the field and data are collected from novels and short stories as well. Translator, whose intention is to bring forward a successful outcome, has to do much observation on the Tamil words used in Sinhala language and find the suitable meaning of those words. This is a challenging task for the translator as the context and meaning used for the Tamil loan words in Sinhala are totally different from the meaning in the original Tamil language. Hence, the translator has the responsibility of presenting solutions in order to overcome those challenges in presenting a successful translation in the process of translating Tamil loan words in Sinhala. Eventually, a translator deals with two cultures and two specific societies in the process of loan translation or calque.

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¹teklathilakarathne97@gmail.com