

## *The Dominant Language and Mixing Patterns*

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates mixed discourse of Sri Lankan Sinhala-English bilinguals and attempts to describe the mixed patterns using Muysken's (2000) typology of code mixing (CM) and Myers-Scotton's (2002) Matrix Language Frame Model theory. The study treats insertion, alternation, and Congruent Lexicalization (CL) as manifestations of the same linguistic phenomenon.*

*This study will use the theories forwarded by both Muysken (2000) and Myers-Scotton (2002) to determine if there are differences in the manner of mixing. i.e. whether speakers alternate, insert or use CL patterns, and whether this is due to a dominant language. The MLF model will be used to analyze if a dominant language influences the patterns of mixing. The experiment contains samples of spontaneous speech productions of informants who are also interviewed.*

*The findings of the study will reveal whether there are mixed patterns in the Sinhala-English corpus and whether a dominant language influences mixed patterns. It will also reveal techniques that the bilingual employs when code-mixing which results in code mixes, hybrids, Sinhalizations and borrowings. The findings reveal that speakers resort to insertion, alternation and CL patterns when mixing codes and that one phenomenon may lead to another in the course of conversation. The findings of the study reveal that all types of mixing are present in the Sinhala-English corpus. In insertion, the presence of a dominant language can be determined whereas in alternation the participating languages share the structure. In CL, it is difficult to determine the dominant language as there is convergence of both grammars.*

**Key Words:** Code - Switching, Bilingual, Sinhalization, Codemixing, Congruent Lexicalization

### 1. INTRODUCTION

Though phenomenally used by most speakers in Sri Lanka today, mixing Sinhala and English in informal conversations remains the subject of controversial debate in linguistic circles.

While some researchers use the term Code-Switching (CS) for alternating or mixing two languages in speech, the term CM will be used in this study to refer to all types of mixing, based on Muysken's (2000) typology. A typical example of a mixed utterance is given below: