Creativity in the Use of Sinhala and English in Advertisements in Sri Lanka: A Morphological Analysis

Chamindi Dilkushi Senaratne

Abstract—Sri Lanka has lived with the English language for more than 200 years. Although officially considered a link language, the phenomenal usage of English by the Sinhala-English bilingual has given rise to a mixed code with identifiable structural characteristics. The extensive use of the mixed language by the average Sri Lankan bilingual has resulted in it being used as a medium of communication by creative writers of bilingual advertisements in Sri Lanka. This study analyses the way in which English is used in bilingual advertisements in both print and electronic media in Sri Lanka. The theoretical framework for the study is based on Kachru's analysis of the use of English by the bilingual, Muysken's typology on code mixing theories in colonial settings and Myers-Scotton's theory on the Matrix Language Framework Model. The study will look at a selection of Sinhala-English advertisements published in newspapers from 2015 to 2016. Only advertisements using both Sinhala and English are used for the analysis. To substantiate data collected from the newspapers, the study will select bilingual advertisements from television advertisements. The objective of the study is to analyze the mixed patterns used for creative purposes by advertisers. The results of the study will reveal the creativity used by the Sinhala –English bilingual and the morphological processes used by the creators of Sinhala-English bilingual advertisements to attract the masses.

Keywords—Bilingual, code mixing, mixed code, morphology, processes.

I. INTRODUCTION

THE growing spread of the use of English in all areas in Sri Lanka is mostly visible through advertising in both the print and the electronic media. The use of English in a variety of forms in advertising has become trendy and extremely customer friendly. It is a forgone conclusion that the language used in advertising is prompted by the language used by the masses in the country. However phenomenal it is, language mixing is under scrutiny as a phenomenon that significantly influences the development and acquisition of the standard varieties in any context. Sri Lanka is no exception. In Sri Lankan society, language mixing is one of the most undervalued phenomena [1]. It is stigmatized and the speakers are assumed as speakers who are not fluent in any language. Beyond being identified as speakers of a substandard variety, code mixers also face constant criticism as speakers who directly influence the standard varieties, be it Sinhala or English. Constant mixing in the electronic media by

Chamindi Dilkushi Senaratne is with the English Language Teaching Unit, University of Kelaniya, Colombo, Sri Lanka (e-mail: dilkush25@hotmail.com).

announcers and talk show hosts of programs has not helped the cause. The only justification that is offered by radio program hosts is that the language they use is the language that is spoken by the vast majority, mainly the youth of the country that is the target audience of most programs run during peak hours. Creative writers of advertisements use the mixed code especially in advertisements that target the youth. The justification given is 'this is the language they speak'. As language mixing is a speech activity, these advertisements reveal many of the mixing patterns used by urban bilingual speakers. These patterns are structurally identifiable.

This study looks initially at bilingual advertisements especially in the print and electronic media as evidence of language change in Sri Lanka. The bilingual patterns reflected in the content of the mixed advertisements reflect mixing patterns that are also present in the utterances in informal discourse amongst urban bilinguals. The language in marketing messages targeting the majority is the language used by the masses. The code[2] has distinct structural features.

II. OBJECTIVES

This paper presents an analysis of the language used in bilingual advertisements in Sri Lanka. The study focuses on the use of Sinhala and English languages. The main objective of the study is to identify the variety of patterns of bilingual language usage depicted in newspaper advertisements and electronic media advertisements. It attempts to present a morphological analysis of bilingual language use and identify the morphological processes used by creative writers to attract the masses in the country.

III. ADVERTISING- A CREATIVE ART

Advertising is a creative art used as a tool to connect a brand with a consumer. The language used when designing any advertisement takes into consideration the target audience, the products, the services and the image the advertiser wants to create in the mind of the consumer. Most importantly, the consumer needs to understand the message that is communicated. The language used should persuade and motivate the consumer. Hence, the advertisement needs to talk the language of the customer it wants to attract. In this context, the use of a mixed language in bilingual advisements is a deliberate and conscious decision made by creative writers, in order to reach the masses. In post-colonial Sri Lanka where

[2] Another term used for 'language'

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English words and phrases are understood by most speakers, bilingual advertisements include at least a word from English. Through English, advertisers in post-colonial settings have with them a language that is both global and that has the power to connect consumers across cultures, religions and politics.

IV. THE USE OF ENGLISH IN BILINGUAL ADVERTISEMENTS

In this context, it is important to consider the use of English in bilingual advertisements. English is global. It has reached every nook and corner of the globe [2]. Many are proficient in it [3] and others know at least a word or a phrase in it. It is the language of entertainment, trade, economics, and business and of computers. It is the language of the youth and the social media. It is the language of power and the powerful in society. Wherever you visit, you will find English, visible in notices, manuals, instructions, magazines, books, advertisements and signs on the roads. It is heard in politics, on TV channels and in entertainment. It is the language that we all 'recognize' [2]. Hence, using it in any form gives an advantage especially in bilingual advertising. There is evidence that bilingual advertisements or 'code-switched slogans' [4] motivates attitudes and associations. English is frequently used in advertisements to achieve the goal of persuasion [5]. English is also used to produce a 'favorable psychological effect' in the target audience [6], [7] and to 'satisfy' the desire to associate with a modern and cosmopolitan identity [8]. Hence, English in bilingual advertisements serves many purposes. This study therefore focuses on the mixing context between two typologically different languages and how patterns of mixing are depicted in bilingual advertisements in Sri Lanka. Sinhala is both a national and an official language along with Tamil in Sri Lanka as declared by the Official Languages Act of 1956 [9]. Though legislated as a link language English continues to enjoy power and prestige in the country similar to situations in other colonial settings. It is understood by most speakers in the country. Hence, its impact on the national language used by bilingual speakers is significant. As this study is between Sinhala and English bilingual advertisements other language use will not be considered.

V. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Mixing has many definitions and terms. Linguists researching patterns in language mixing mostly focus on a dominant language impacting the utterance of the bilingual. Explaining the effect of the L1 in mixed utterances, Myers-Scotton [10] suggests that there is an abstract frame governed by a dominant language in bilingual data. Accordingly, the Matrix Language Framework Model (MLF) proposes that there is a dominant language that provides the morpho-syntactic frame for the bilingual utterance and this dominant language is named the 'matrix language' (ML). The other language that acts as a guest in the utterance is the 'embedded' language (EL). The model presumes that the CS[3] utterance

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[3] Myers-Scotton prefers to use the term Code switching to define bilingual utterances.

contains ML islands and EL islands. In the MLF model, the word order of the utterance is governed by the matrix language. The theory presupposes that in bilingual speech production, one language is always more activated than the other.

The MLF model is based on the asymmetry between the languages where the asymmetry acts as an indicator to the matrix language of the utterance. Accordingly, there are three types of mixing: intersentential, intra-sentential and tag switching that occurs. The MLF model is based on the theory that intra-sentential CS is an unmarked choice where the identity of the speaker is not alluded to. Here, the ML will always be one of the local/native languages which will be mixed with an international language. Single EL forms are revealed as a feature of unmarked CS. The type referred to as 'unmarked CS' is 'very common' [11] in Hispanic, African and South East Asian communities. Note that in most of these communities, one of the languages in the bilingual utterance is an internationally powerful prestigious language such as English. Momentary borrowings or random mixes are defined as code-switches in Myers-Scotton's theory. This study makes use of the MLF model as most of the bilingual advertising catch phrases are in the Sinhala newspapers. The matrix frame is provided by the native language while the EL forms are borrowed from the donor language. The singly occurring EL forms are mostly nouns, verbs and adjectives. The theory of the MLF model provides insight to analyze the morphological processes at work in bilingual advertisements, where the dominant language is Sinhala.

The bilingual's creativity is further exemplified in Kachru's analysis [12] of Englishization, which is visible in the language used by creative writers in bilingual advertising in Sri Lanka. The Englishized mixed code is indicative of a high social class. It alludes membership to the elite and is an expression of power and prestige by the Indian middle class and sometimes by the lower classes as well. According to Kachru [13], the Englishized mixed code is typical of the Indian middle class. This is also true of Sri Lankan society. The evidence is in the bilingual advertising that caters to the masses. Kachru's [12] analysis of the mixed language defines CM as a marker of modernization, socio-economic position, and membership in an elite group. In stylistic terms, it marks deliberate style. Mixing languages is defined as a productive and grammatical process. His observation that varieties of English spoken in former Anglo-American colonies are not a 'mistake' but a 'deviation' [14] from the standard variety of English is significant to the later development of world 'Englishess' as a whole [15]. Kachru observes that language mixing results in nativization, hybridization and neutralization processes. These observations are justified in the data analysis of the present study. The mixing contexts with English are observed as stylistic innovations, characteristic of the non-native varieties of English in post-colonial societies. This paper presents data, where words from English are nativized into the borrower language. Nativization reveals morphologically and phonologically marked items. In many instances, the ML is Sinhala and this enables creative writers

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to use the process of nativization when embedding foreign elements in the borrower language. Kachru's theory on the formation of hybrids sheds light on compound elements in the data. Hybridization has resulted in adding many new lexical items in the mixed variety.

Muysken's [16] theory on CM also used in this study to analyze bilingual data presents three strategies: insertion, alternation and congruent lexicalization. These three strategies are governed by different structural, psycholinguistic and social constraints. The three strategies are used to elucidate bilingual data in a variety of contexts ranging from colonial settings to stable bilingual communities. Functional elements are used to elucidate insertional CM where there is asymmetry in the mixed structures. Alternation is plausible where speakers hybridize mixed elements. For Muysken and Kachru, whenever languages are mixed, the patterns are reflective of CM. In Myers-Scotton's theory of the MLF, the mixed elements result in Code Switching. The present study elucidates bilingual data using the term CM as it provides the basis to explain all possibilities prevalent in mixed data.

This paper presents mixing patterns where bound morphemes from English are used in bilingual advertisements. These can be analyzed as displaying CL patterns of mixing based on Muysken's theory. Bilingual verbs or hybrids (compounds) are analyzed as indicative of all the three types of CM strategies by Muysken [16]. Creative writers frequently use bilingual verbs to communicate a message as indicated in the data. Proposing an approach based on the notion of an interaction between the grammars and the lexicons of the bilingual speaker, Muysken [16] suggests that both insertion and alternation are strategies that are constrained and that those same constraints do not apply in CL. In items that display CL mixing patterns, nonce borrowings (haphazard mixing), code mixes and word internal mixing occurs. In CL, bilingual data reveals the mixing of bound morphemes that belong to the closed-set. Structural characteristics of insertions proposed by Muysken [16] are that they are usually single, content words (such as nouns and adjectives) which are morphologically integrated.

VI. THE METHODOLOGY

This study presents data from a corpus of 50 Sinhala and English bilingual advertisements collected from both the print and electronic media from 2015 to 2016. From the 50, 36 bilingual advertisements are trailers documented during peak hours (news hours) from the electronic media. Apart from four advertisements in English newspapers, the rest are from Sinhala newspapers. The study also conducted a survey of bilingual advertisements available on websites of three leading advertising agencies [17]-[19] in Sri Lanka to collect bilingual data. A questionnaire was circulated amongst 10 creative writers to collect opinions on bilingual advertisements. The creative writers were selected based on their preference for bilingual advertising. A prior survey of advertisements revealed that most of the bilingual advertisements were published in Sinhala newspapers, and thus, bilingual advertisements were collected mostly from the Sinhala newspapers.

When presenting data in this study, English words are written in bold and Sinhala words are written in Italics. The gloss in English is provided below the bilingual phrase for clarity. Wherever the original phrase is lengthy, only the bilingual phrase was documented for analysis. The ads under investigation contain either singly occurring English words, English words written in Sinhala and combined structures used as catch phrases. The data also includes complete phrases from English written in Sinhala targeting the Sinhala speaking audience. The target audience of these advertisements may vary depending on the product and the language used by consumers of the product. Bilingual advertisements mostly cater to an audience in the age group between 16 years to 40 years. For example, advertisements of insurance companies may not use bilingual language as the target audience is not the youth in many instances.

VII. DATA ANALYSIS

This paper identifies nominalization, compounding, hybridization and nativization as the main morphological processes used by creative writers in bilingual advertisements in Sri Lanka. In addition, coinage can be analyzed as a less productive process as revealed in the corpus. The bilingual advertisements cater to the 2nd and 3rd bilingual speaker types listed in Table I [1]. Although it is phenomenal and used by the masses, questionnaire data indicates the extent of bilingual language usage (or 'Singlish' as referred to by creative writers) in advertisements as less than 50%. To facilitate understanding of bilingual speakers and their language use in Sri Lanka, this study uses the bilingual speaker categorization from [1].

VIII. NOMINALIZATION

Nominalizers are grammatical forms used in the process of nominalizing. One of the most productive processes used in bilingual advertising is singular English nouns followed by *eka*, which acts as a nominalizer. In code mixed data, most inserted singular English nouns follow this pattern, while *eka* is syntactically productive and its nominalizing capacity is phenomenal. In Sinhala, they occur as affixes or independent lexical forms [1], while *eka* also acts as an independent nominalizer in colloquial Sinhala. The process of using *eka* is analyzed as a strategy that is indicative of insertional CM. Observe the examples in (1) where English items are written in Sinhala. Since most speakers hear the words in English and understand the meaning, creative writers in most instances use Sinhala to write the whole phrase. The whole purpose of producing a mixed phrase in the local language is to communicate the message effectively. These advertisements cater to speakers belonging to type 3 in Table I. If speakers are unaware of the English word, this strategy of writing the entire slogan in Sinhala assists them to comprehend the message effectively, which is the ultimate goal of the advertiser. Questionnaire data indicated that native speakers of Sinhala

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recognize the English words written in Sinhala. The plausible argument is that these advertisements cater to speakers who can read efficiently in Sinhala and not in English. Hence,

when creating such advertisements, the proficiency of speakers in all four skills in both languages are taken into consideration.

TABLE I
CATEGORIZATION OF BILINGUAL SPEAKERS

Bilingual speaker type	Social class	Comments	Characteristics of speech
(1) Monolingual English speakers	Upper and elite class	Forms a minority. Mostly belong to the upper elite rich class and hold high positions in society. Speakers reside in cities and urban areas.	A few words in Sinhala mixed in conversation with peer groups but mostly functions in English.
(2) Bilingual speakers	Middle class and upper working class	Forms a substantial majority. Mostly from the working class or the middle class. Speakers scattered around the country from urban to rural areas.	Speakers use English predominantly at work and both English and Sinhala in general discourse. These speakers form a special group as they can move back and forth from being a monolingual in English to a monolingual in Sinhala and bilingual when the occasion demands.
(3) Monolingual Sinhala speakers	Lower class and working class	Forms a majority and mostly belong to the lower class. Speakers reside predominantly in the rural areas of Sri Lanka and in urban and suburban slum areas. Most speakers are in the low-income groups.	Speakers use predominantly Sinhala in their discourse with frequent inclusions in English. These inclusions are register-specific. Many English inclusions are nativized into Sinhala.

Examples (1):

a. *Power cut eka atharathuredi*
   (during the power cut)
   Power cut eka ta pera
   (before the power cut)

In the examples in (2), the inserted English word followed by the nominalizer retains its morphological identity in English. These are indicative of insertional CM.

Examples (2):

a. *aruma puduma kathawak, puduma hithena* **mobile** *ekak*
   (an incredible chat, an incredible mobile)

b. **Mobile phone** *ekee ethi…*
   (the mobile phone has…)

c. **AC** *ekata wiyalena obee soduru ruwa*
   (your beautiful face that gets dry due to the AC)

d. **The face pack** *ekak*
   (a face pack)

e. *Visha vidyalayata hondama* **laptop** *eka*
   (The best laptop for the university)

f. *Kamata pasu* **cup** *ekak*
   (an ice cream cup after lunch)

IX. HYBRIDIZATION

In language contact situations, hybridization is a common occurrence. This study considers it as an extremely productive morphological process used in bilingual advertisements in Sri Lanka. Based on Kachru's analysis of bilingual data, a hybrid comprises of two elements, at least one of which is from the native language and the other from English. In Muysken's theory, hybrids are analyzed as indicative of the CL mixing strategy. Hybridization is one of the main strategies of the emerging code mixed. Hybrids may occur as hybrid nouns, hybrid verbs and hybrid modifiers.

Examples (1):

a. **Diamond** *hedethi dath burusuwa*
   (a tooth brush designed like a diamond)

b. *Biovita samaga* **selfie** *pinthura*
   (a selfie with Biovita)

c. *Echcharatama* **simple**: *sellit.lk*
   (its that simple)

d. **Sunsilk thick and long** *samaga oyagee konde*
   (your hair with Sunsilk thick and long)

e. *Tikiri* **chicke**
   (small chicken)

g. **Tourism** *sadaha wisheeshay*
   (specially for tourism)

h. *niyama* **malt**
   (Special malt)

i. **Laptop** *deemanawa*
   (a gift of a laptop)

j. **Hutch** *internet package*
   (Internet package from Hutch)

k. *hadunwadena* **mountain dew** – *doo da dew*
   (Introducing the mountain dew- do the dew)

l. **Outgoing** *amatum*
   (Outgoing calls)

m. **Incoming** *amatum*
   (Incoming calls)

n. **Simple** *weada*, **original** *rasa*
   (Simply, an original taste)

o. **Awesome gift** *dinaganna*
   (win an awesome gift)

p. *Pahasu* **leasing**
   (easy leasing)

Observe the examples in (2) where word internal mixing has taken place.

Examples (2):

a. Kadara**less**
   (less trouble)

b. Poling**less**
   (less queues)

c. viyadam**less**, **bell wireless**
   (less money spent, a wireless telephone)

X. NATIVIZATION

Based on Kachru's definition of borrowing from English in Asian contexts, nativization is a productive morphological process used by the bilingual to adapt foreign elements in mixed discourse. As mentioned earlier, in nativization, speakers may mark the mixed items morphologically or

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phonologically. In the present bilingual corpus, the mixed English items carry Sinhala case marking suffixes. Observe the examples in (1) where the Sinhala suffix *ya* is used to nativize the English words 'printer' and 'toffee'. In (1c), the English word 'super' is nativized as *supiri*. These elements occur in the speech of the 3rd speaker type in the grid and also in the speech of the 2nd speaker type when the speech is deliberately phonologically and morphologically marked. Speakers may 'mark' their code when they want to deliberately convey a social identity.

Examples (1)

a. *all in one ink jet* **print***arayak*
(a printer with an all in one ink jet)
b. *Amuthuma rasayak musukala* **toffee***yak*
(a toffee with a unique taste)
c. *supiri thyagaya*- TVS
(the super prize)

XI. ALTERNATION

Alternational mixing patterns are also visible in the bilingual corpus. This study categorizes bilingual data where the Sinhala auxiliary verb *karanawa* and *venawa* follow and English verb stem. This strategy is indicative of hybridization where elements from two languages are brought together. The mixed items create a bilingual verb.

Examples (1):

a. **Mood fix** *karanna maru inguru*
(the best ginger taste to fix your mood)
b. *Hutch mithuran danuwath karanna* **share** *karanna*
(Share with your Hutch friends)
c. **FB** page *ekata* **login** *venna*
(login to the FB page)
d. **Sunsilk thick and long** *style guide eka* **download** *karanna*
(download the Sunsilk thick and long style guide)
e. **Phillips LED[4] change** *karanna* **save** *karanna*
(change to Phillip LED to save)
f. **Knorr[5] change** *vela obath* **change** *venna*
(Knorr has changed, you too can change)
g. **Naughty** *vunath* **nice munchee nice[6]**
(Munchee nice is nice even if it's naughty)

XII. COINAGE

The examples in (1) reveal a few new entrants to the mixed language through bilingual advertising. These new words are mostly brand names, many of which are compounds. They are extremely popular with the consumer.

Examples (1):

a. Arstalk- written in both Sinhala and English \
(the name of a political satire)
b. *Heladiva gotta* – a Sinhala compound written in English
(Advertisement promoting tea)

c. **Prima[7] kottu mee** – a bilingual compound written in English
(a brand of noodles)
d. *Kalin***Cash** – a hybrid compound noun written in Sinhala and English
(bank advertisement)
e. *Kalawanata kalaeliyak* – a Sinhala phrase written in English
(new to a village in Kalawana)
f. ***Shop****in mangalya* – written in Sinhala
(Shopping spree)

XIII. EMPHATIC FORMS AND PARTICLES ACCOMPANYING ENGLISH ITEMS

Another mixed pattern used by the creative writer in Sri Lanka is the pattern using the question marker from Sinhala. Focus marking forms in Sinhala include the question marker *da* and emphatic *thamai*, frequently found in phrases used in bilingual advertisements. The question marker *da* is an interrogative particle. In Sinhala, a question can be asked simply by using a single word ending with *da* as in *kohomoda* (How?). The creative writer uses this strategy in the following examples indicative of insertional mixing.

Examples (1):
a. **Hot** *da* **spicy** *da?*
b. **Sure** *da?*
c. **Hungry** *da*

Similarly, the examples in (2) are bilingual catch phrases with '**no**', '**more**' and *thamai.*

Examples (2):
a. **Fun** *thamai*
(a lot of fun)
b. **No** *katha* **more** *sina*
(a lot of laughter and less talk)
c. **More** *sina* **more** *katha*
(More laughter and more talk)
d. *massanta* **no** *ida*
(not a chance for flies)
e. *Maduruwant* **no chance**
(not a chance for mosquitoes*)*

XIV. ADVERTISEMENTS CARRYING THE SINHALA AND ENGLISH TRANSLATIONS

Another strategy used in bilingual advisements is to carry both Sinhala and the English versions in the content. Observe the example in (1).

Examples (1):
a. **Real coconut milk** – *niyama pol kiri*

XV. ADVERTISEMENTS WITH MIXED LEXICAL ELEMENTS WRITTEN ONLY IN SINHALA

The examples in (1) are written only in Sinhala and appear in Sinhala newspaper advertisements. This may be due to that fact that the appearance of the words in Sinhala has more

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[4] Name of brand
[5] Name of brand
[6] Name of brand

[7] Name of brand

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effect on the reader. They are able to relate to the language and the message is effectively communicated.

Examples (1):

a. *Sea food rasa*
    (the taste of sea food)
b. *Vitamin rasa*
    (the taste of vitamin)
b. *Selfie pintura*
    (selfies)
c. *Bonus mudalak*
    (bonus money)

XVI. SINHALA SYNTACTIC STYLES IN ENGLISH ADVERTISEMENTS

The most effective method of communication according to the questionnaire data is to adopt Sinhala syntactic styles. However, the entire advertising slogan will be written in English. Creative writers believe that using syntactic styles in Sinhala communicates the message more effectively.

Examples (1):

a. Food city – on your way home
b. Ceylinco- on the spot
c. Big or small- Ceylinco protects them all
d. Development lottery keeps its promises
e. This stain, that stain, any stain

XVII. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study reiterates that language change in Sri Lanka is visible in the language used in bilingual advertising. The contact between English and Sinhala has resulted in morphological extension apparent in the variety of processes used by the speakers, visible in the ads. It reveals the co-existence of English with Sinhala, and how English is acculturated in Sri Lankan society. Advertisements using the mixed variety cater to speakers whose social identity is bilingual. The mixed code used reveals the impact of the phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of Sinhala, the matrix language. Nominalization, hybridization, nativization and coinage are morphological processes used by creative writers when designing the content of the bilingual advertisements. The processes in the bilingual data reveal that flexible features from Sinhala syntax are borrowed, especially in nominalization, nativization and hybridization processes. Nominalization, hybridization and nativization are revealed as the most productive morphological processes used by creative writers. These processes are used in informal speech of the urban bilingual in Sri Lanka. Accordingly, the language used in bilingual advertisements is the language used by the bilingual speaker. Despite the stigma it carries, language mixing reveals language change in society. This study sheds light on the interaction between language and society and language change revealed in the discourse of speakers. It also contributes to research on the creativity that is inherent in the bilingual to adapt to changes in society.

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Senaratne Chamindi, Dilkushi is a professor attached to the English Language Teaching Unit of the University of Kelaniya. She completed her doctoral studies at the Radboud University, Nijmegen, Netherlands. She is currently the Director of the Staff Development Centre of the university. She was the former head of the English Language Teaching Unit. Her research interests are on Contact linguistics, bilingualism and Sociolinguistics. She has published extensively in the field.