

## **Grammatical Constraints in Tamil-English Code Mixing among the Urban Jaffna Tamils**

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### **Abstract**

This paper analyses the grammatical constraints of Tamil-English code-mixing (CM) among the urban Jaffna Tamils. Sri Lanka is a multilingual country where there is a tendency of mixing two languages as a communicative strategy used by the speakers. It has been observed that mixing of indigenous languages - Sinhala and Tamil and English is a common speech behaviour which occurs in the discourse of educated bilinguals in Sri Lanka. In recent years, researchers have increasingly focused on the linguistic constraints on code-mixing. From a syntactic point of view, it is proposed that code-mixing is governed by a host code/guest code principle. This principle says that in a code-mixed discourse involving languages L1 and L2, where L1 is the host code and L2 is the guest code, the morphosyntactic rules of L2 must conform to the morphosyntactic rules of L1, the language of the discourse. In order to determine the rules that govern Tamil-English CM and possible grammatical constraints, the researcher involved the mixed method of analysis. The present study drew upon data collected from a recorded spontaneous conversation between bilinguals in a language contact situation in which the two languages are syntactically not similar from each other, namely, Tamil and English. The study addresses the question whether there are grammatical constraints on Tamil-English CM. The researcher has examined the grammatical aspects of code-mixing and found that code-mixing is a rule governed phenomenon, that is, there are constraints that govern where in a sentence a code-mixing can occur and where it cannot occur.

**Keywords:** Tamil-English Code Mixing, Urban Jaffna Tamils, educated bilinguals, grammatical constraints, rule governed, morphosyntactic rules

### **Introduction**

Code mixing has been one of the popular studies in sociolinguistics since the mid-1970s, with numerous studies on bilingual Spanish-English communities in the United States and a few

studies on other bilingual and multilingual communities around the world. In a bilingual speech community, there is a natural tendency among speakers to mix lexical items, phrases, clauses, and sentences during verbal interaction. This is an essential part of their communicative competence, the "ability to switch linguistically and appropriately according to the situational changes" (Verma 1975:35). The elements mixed belong to the "host" (L1) language which, for historical and socioeconomic reasons, has acquired more prestige than the "guest" language which receives them. "Code-mixing", "code-switching", and "borrowing" are some of the labels used in linguistic literature (e.g., Bloomfield 1933, Haugen 1956, Kachru 1978, Sridhar 1978, Poplack 1980, among others) to describe various kinds of mixtures resulting from language contact.

The present study is concerned with linguistic study of Tamil-English code-mixing among the Jaffna urban bilinguals. In order to analyze the grammatical constraints of Tamil-English code-mixing, social factors contributing to code-mixing must be considered because structural similarity does not alone result in code-mixing. Social factors are equally responsible for its occurrence. Sociolinguistically speaking, it is the language which is considered more basic i.e. more important in a given discourse situation in a given social setting. In a given social setting one language is considered to be more important than the other depending on the sociological patterns of the society. It has been argued that fluency in two languages for a person is never equal; one language always dominates another. Similarly, in a society, one language is considered more important in determining discourse situation and that language is considered as the base language for that society.

### **Tamil in the Sri Lankan Setting**

The word "Tamil" refers both to the language and its speakers, and when it refers to the speakers, it does not denote them as speakers of a language, but refers to them as also an "ethnic" group, with an identifiable culture, and a consciousness among them that they belong to one group. In Sri Lanka, Sinhala, Tamil and English are the major languages. Of these, Sinhala is the language of the majority, Tamil the language of the largest minority, while English is the language used by the English educated among all Communities in Sri Lanka, in addition to its being the mother tongue of the Burger community. The Tamil speaking population in Sri Lanka consists of the Sri Lanka moors and the Indian moors. They thus constitute more than a quarter of the total population of the Republic of Sri Lanka. The Sri Lanka Tamils though found all over the island in scattered settlements; predominate in the Northern and Eastern Provinces that have been considered their traditional homelands from olden times. There is also a bulk of the Tamil population in the greater Colombo areas. Jaffna, Vavuniya and Mannar are the major towns in the Northern Province and Batticaloa and Trincomalee in the Eastern Province. The Indian Tamils are mostly employed in the plantations in and around the hilly districts in the central part of the island.

## **English in Sri Lanka**

Colonialism played a pivotal role in the development and promotion of English in South Asia, and Sri Lanka is no exception in this regard. The British Empire ruled the Indian Subcontinent for almost 200 years from 1757 to 1947. The origin of the impact of English on Sri Lankan languages can be traced back to the advent of British colonialism in the Indian subcontinent that brought English with it. With the passage of time, and as a result of their prolonged stay in the subcontinent, gradually the use of English extended in public domains and in a short time influenced the other languages in use in those domains.

The impact of English on Sinhala and Tamil started during the colonial period and this hegemony of English over these languages became evident in all the spheres of social life. The other impact of English was the result of its contact with these languages. As a result, the use of two languages almost inevitably affects the forms of the languages so used. The use of English by Sinhala/Tamil speakers has led to the functional elaboration of both English and Sinhala/Tamil. In turn; bilinguals show varying degrees of proficiency in the languages they use. Such disparities in performance have led to differing patterns of bilingualism manifested in different phonological, grammatical and lexical features.

## **Development of Bilingualism in Jaffna**

The Jaffna Tamil society in Sri Lanka comprises both bilinguals in Tamil and English and Tamil monolinguals. It is a common feature that these bilinguals and monolinguals in Jaffna use a number of English words in their day-to-day speech and writing in Tamil at home, in social interaction, in education, for administrative purpose etc. In case of the bilinguals, the use of English words may be through language contact situations like code switching, code mixing, borrowing etc.

The initial development of bilingualism in Tamil and English in Jaffna is the outcome of English education and civil administrative activities through the English medium during the British colonial rule in Sri Lanka. English is still taught as a second language in educational institutions and considerable part of the administration is carried out in English in Sri Lanka. As a result English still continues to be in contact with Tamil and this language contact situation has an impact in learning English as a second language.

## **Literature Review**

Canagarajah (1995) comments on code alternation activity among the Jaffna Tamils. He says that there are almost no L2-dominant or balanced bilinguals in the postcolonial context; grammatical competence per se in English is also declining. Tamil has taken over domains previously belonging to English; extensive use of unmixed English in conversations is reduced to a few formal contexts. However code alternation activity enables English to continue in a more

widely distributed and pervasive form than ever before, with both monolinguals and bilinguals using English in conventional and unconventional contexts with complex communicative competence. So code alternation behaviour will exist in Jaffna, gradually making Englishized Tamil a separate, independent code in its own right. This will exist parallel to unmixed Tamil and English, with sociolinguistic rules and communicative functions of its own. Although unmixed Tamil and English are becoming highly restricted in use, Englishized Tamil is widely used in the day to day communication. It is the unmarked everyday code in the Jaffna Tamil society.

Gunsekara (2005) provides an overview of the phonological, morphosyntactic and semantic characteristics of SLE. She focuses on the structural properties of the varieties of English spoken in the post-colonial Sri Lankan setting and reports CM as a discourse strategy among Sinhala-English bilinguals.

Kanthimathi (2007) states that code mixing is a kind of natural behavior of bilinguals and used as a linguistic strategy in informal styles of communication. Most of the time, the bilingual is not aware of the way he/she mixes the two languages. The mixed code is a natural consequence of languages in contact. In her study of the Tamil English mixed language used by people in Tamilnadu, people who live in a bilingual or multilingual communication environment usually have the tendency to use two or more codes as a strategy to facilitate communication while communicating with each other. The alternate use of Tamil and English within the same discourse has a pattern.

Wettewe (2009) focuses on the sociolinguistic features of code-mixing in the postcolonial Sri Lankan setting and presents a comprehensive analysis of the structural properties of the mixed language that has become a linguistic reality. She confirms that a mixed variety has evolved as a result of the language contact between Sinhala and English and this variety is mostly influenced by the host language (L1). She also discloses the structural properties of CM from the study of Sinhala-English code-mixing. She says that the analyses propose not only account for the structural properties of Sinhala-English code-mixing, but also explain the functions of language mixing in Sri Lanka. The structural analysis provides insight into the co-existence of English with Sinhala in Sri Lanka. The analysis shows the dominant influence of Sinhala on Sinhala-English code-mixing. She points out that most of the Sinhala elements such as nouns, complementizers, verbs, numerals, particles and plural markers facilitate the inclusion of English elements in the discourse of the Sinhala speaker.

Espinosa (1917), Mkilifi (1972), Labov (1972), Lance (1975) explain that the linguists who examined the aspect of CM as a language contact phenomena agree that CM is indeed a rule-governed phenomenon, that is, there are constraints that govern where in a sentence a code-

mix can occur and where it cannot. It was assumed in earlier studies of CM that CM was a random mixture of languages. However recent studies have shown that CM is rule-governed by certain restrictions. Before discussing some of these restrictions, it would be better to look at the historical background in which one can identify the different stages in the development and formulation of syntactic restrictions in CM.

Pfaff (1976), (1979), Poplack (1978), (1981), Sridhar and Sridhar (1980) state that studies of the syntax of CM suggest there are two categories of constraints which can be identified as language-specific constraints and the postulated language-universal constraints. Language-specific constraints are those which apply to CM in a specific bilingual community. Language-universal constraints are assumed to be those which can apply to CM across cultures and languages. Some universal constraints on code-mixing have been proposed in the literature.

Annamalai (1989) states that though there are many counter examples cited in the literature as to the proposed constraints and the underlying conceptual problems, universal constraints are likely to exist if code-mixing is considered as a universal phenomenon in the sense that any bilingual can mix his/her languages and any two languages can be mixed. The existence of universal constraints follows also from the assumption that the mixed code has the properties of host language (L1). The assumed linguistic properties in the mixed code are organizational, configurational and classificatory properties.

Marasigan (1983), Chishimba (1983), Pandit (1985), Myers-Scotton (1989) comments that there are over fifty language-specific constraints which have been proposed to account for the syntax of CM. Some of the proposed constraints are determiner constraints, the pronominal subject constraint, the number-of-switches constraint and the conjunction constraint. Code-mixes of this kind are common and can be found in many languages around the world.

Several constraints have been proposed on CM which are claimed to be universal. The constraints which are claimed to be general to account for CM patterns are given in this section. In recent years, research has increasingly pointed toward the universality of three linguistic constraints on code-switching: (1) an equivalence of structure constraint, (2) a size-of-constituent constraint, and (3) a free morpheme constraint.

### **Background of the Study**

The systematic use of code-mixing by bilinguals as an important strategy for communication has prompted scholars to study the phenomenon in all its details. Gumperz (1964, 1970, 1982), Verma (1975), Woolford (1983), and Dua (1984), among others, have dealt with its linguistic, sociolinguistic, and psycholinguistic aspects in order to solve some of the

theoretical issues relevant for a theory of bilingualism in general, and of code-mixing in particular.

In the light of the said views, the researcher has observed that code-mixing is a common phenomenon among the urban Jaffna bilinguals as it is found in the communities of the world. There have been number of studies which have been made on sociolinguistic aspects in Sri Lanka. The social aspects of code mixing i.e. the setting, addressee, and addressor as well as other social factors such as prestige attached to a particular language, social historical background of a language etc. determine the linguistic choices and preferences in the process of code mixing on the other hand the linguistic choices of items to be code mixed reflect the socio cultural context. So code mixing is a socio-linguistic phenomenon and social and linguistic characteristics of code mixing are interknitted.

Although there have been studies done on sociolinguistic and structural linguistic aspects of code-mixing in Sri Lanka, no studies have been made on grammatical constraints of code-mixing in Sri Lanka. The observation and experience of the researcher from the everyday discourse of the urban bilinguals in Jaffna gave strong base to the researcher to undertake a study on the grammatical aspects of Tamil-English CM especially in grammatical constraints of code-mixing among the urban bilinguals in Jaffna. The mixed discourse variety shares related as well as unrelated characteristics with Tamil and English.

Code mixing is very common among educated bilinguals in Jaffna Tamil society. The following is one example which is typical among them.

naan bank-ilay otu loan-ukku last month apply-paNNinaan.

I bank-loc. a loan-dat. last month apply-do, past.sg.

I applied for a loan in the bank last month.

In the above example, the Tamil case inflection – ilay has been added to an English noun “bank” and –ikku is another case inflection added to the English noun ‘loan’ and the word order in the sentence is Tamil syntactic SOV pattern. The English verb ‘apply’ is freely mixed and it is often used with the Tamil dummy verb ‘paNNu’ along with the Tamil tense markers as a compromise strategy to facilitate the insertion of English elements in Tamil dominant sentences.

A Jaffna Tamil bilingual often starts with a Tamil sentence and finishes with an English sentence.

nii ready-enTaal, give me a call. I’ll come.

you ready-nom. conj. give me a call.

When you are ready, give me a call. I’ll come.



In the above example, the code switching takes place within one complex sentence, which has a main clause are command followed by another statement.

Apparently, the examples discussed above show how a bilingual speaker alternates between English and Tamil constituents and how code-mixing is facilitated by structural features of both Tamil and English. Thus, a bilingual speaker can involve in code-mixing using different strategies to facilitate communication. This alternate use of Tamil-English within the same discourse has a pattern. So the grammatical features Tamil-English CM will be further discussed and analyzed throughout the study to find out whether there are grammatical constraints and a rule governed phenomenon.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Code-mixing is considered as one of the most debatable linguistic phenomena among the bilinguals and it is the subject of controversial debate among scholars who study the language contact phenomena. However, because of its popularity and phenomenal usage among speakers, there is a tendency which people look at mixing two languages where speakers are not using both languages properly. It is noticed that there are many English words and the grammatical features used in the day to day speech patterns of the Jaffna Tamils. The mixing of languages is found so common and the concept of ‘pure’ language is slowly becoming obsolete. English is increasingly used in spoken Tamil discourse nowadays. Though this study is intended to analyze that if code mixing is practiced as a strategy for effective discourse, CM is a better term to describe Tamil-English mixed data in relation to the different language variables such as linguistic and sociolinguistic variables play a role in determining the constraints in mixing to facilitate communication among the bilinguals of Jaffna Tamils.

### **Objective of the Study**

This present study tries to elucidate the code mixed speech produced by the Jaffna Tamil bilinguals and the study also addresses whether there are grammatical constraints on code mixing based on ruled governed phenomenon in determining the types of grammatical units such as words, phrases, clauses and sentences for effective communication.

A number of questions have been raised by the researcher: How two distinct languages, such as Tamil and English, can narrow their differences in such a way as to result in discourse involving language mixes within a single sentence. In other words, how the units of another code integrate into the systems of the absorbing code and how the units from two codes can be organized into a cohesive relationship, where these units of another code fit in the absorbing code, If not, what the appropriate places for these units are, How we can construct a formal account of the grammatical mechanism which underlies discourse containing code-mixing. It is with these questions in mind that the present study is conducted. For the purpose of the study, the research questions were formed by the researcher to take forward the study.

## **Research Question**

In order to take forward the present study on Tamil-English CM, the following hypotheses were formed based on the background, observation and experience of the researcher. Code mixing is an inevitable strategy for an effective discourse and manipulation of linguistic components in compliance with socio cultural situations.

The following question gets importance in the present study.

1. What are the grammatical constraints of communication facilitations and how does one go about in establishing such constraints?

## **Methodology**

Research methodology is an important part of any research work carried out in any field of study. Therefore the type of research method, the techniques and the instruments used in the research differ depending on the disciplines in which the research is to be done. As the present research on the field of contact phenomena such as CM/CS, the researcher has made efforts to look for the views of the different scholars in relation to the research methodology and the methods of collecting data for the analysis to derive findings of the study and to find the effectiveness of the research method and techniques in relation to the validity and reliability which can provide consistent results when it is repeated by researchers in any number of times. From the discussion of the methods used in the previous studies, the researcher has chosen the mix method and the types of method associated with the qualitative study of the research topic.

## **Instruments for Linguistic Data**

As the study mainly focuses on the grammatical constraints of the Tamil-English mixed discourse, collecting linguistic data is very important for the analysis. The actual occurrences of mixed speech and constraints surrounding these mixings were found in the natural setting where speaker's inhibitions in language mixing were less prevalent. In order to collect data, the researcher designed bilingual elicitation tasks and spontaneous conversations and used tape recorder to record the speech of the respondents. The data collections for the linguistic analysis were based on the recorded speech in storytelling, picture description, and informal discourse with the respondents in natural setting. Oral narration was preferred as it is natural, spontaneous, innovative and unconscious process compared to writing, which is a highly conscious act.

## **Picture Description**

In the picture description, respondents were given different pictures and they were asked to describe the pictures. First of all, they were given time to go through the pictures and figure out the facts for description. After that, they were asked to describe each picture given to them and their language output was recorded.



## **Storytelling**

In the storytelling, respondents were selected and asked to narrate a story which they have read in their lifetime. They were given time to recall the story for the spontaneous narration.

## **Informal Discourse**

In the informal discourse, the researcher involved in eliciting natural conversation with respondents. In order to elicit natural conversation, the researcher had an informal discourse on their life experience, work, and entertainment.

## **Respondents for the Linguistic Data**

The respondents of the study were locally-born Tamil speakers who were brought up and educated in Sri Lanka. Their age ranges from 20 to 50 years. For the purpose of this study, 25 respondents were selected from the urban areas where the researcher identified the Tamil English bilinguals rather than the rural areas where most of the people were monolinguals. In relation to the types of education, all the respondents had completed their primary and secondary education in their local settings, and few had their tertiary education at different universities in Sri Lanka. Most of them were familiar to the researcher. It should be noted that as the proposed study involves with analysis of grammatical constraints of code mixing among the urban educated bilinguals, the caste, religion and region of the respondents do not cause any impact in this study. At the same time, the respondents from the religious places such as temples/kovils and church were not considered for data collection because the respondents from the religious places deliberately avoid code mixing in their day to day ritual communication.

The respondents were employed in different working places and occupying different positions. The researcher's familiarity with the respondents eased the task of collecting data freely. The respondents' consent to record their speech was obtained from them and they were told that the data would be used for research purpose.

## **Procedure for Data Collection**

The respondents were shown a picture-story consisting of eight pictures arranged sequentially on a sheet of paper. They were given time to look at the pictures and figure out the story. They were then asked to narrate it in the form of a meaningful story. Oral narration was preferred as it is a natural, spontaneous, innovative and unconscious process, compared to writing, which is a highly conscious act. The language output produced by the respondents based on the picture story shown to them was recorded. Respondents were heard discussing among themselves that the aim of the study was to find out who narrated the story accurately. The respondents were unaware that it was the language that was being taken into consideration and not the accuracy of the facts. Hence, this method was very close to recording natural conversation which is done in most of the researches of this kind.

## Transcription of Data

The recorded speech obtained through various techniques was analyzed. After collecting the language data, the recorded speech was transcribed. In the transcription of the recorded speech, each orthographic unit was coded as Tamil, mixed or English. The total number of words in each recorded speech was counted. The word count was established on the basis of transcription. The percentage of English words in each sample was calculated. For the purpose of analysis, each orthographic unit in Tamil was considered as one word. The English words occurring in the code-mixed corpus were separated. A percentage count of the type of mixing was also performed to check which English unit was more preferred in mixing with Tamil.

## Calculation of Percentage of Code-Mixing

The recorded text was analyzed to check the percentage of code-mixing in the actual context. A simple percentage method was adopted in the analysis to determine the frequency of code-mixing among Tamil English bilinguals. The total number of words in the recorded speech was calculated and the total number of English words and mixed words were also calculated. The percentage of code-mixing was calculated as follows,

$$\text{CM \%} = \frac{\text{Total number of English words} + \text{total number of mixed}^1 \text{ words}}{\text{Total number of words}} \times 100$$

The analysis shows that there are 629 mixes out of 1694 words. This proves that the corpus consisted of 37.13 % of code-mixing.

## Data Coding Procedures

Recorded speech of the 25 respondents was available for the syntactic analysis. Data collected from all techniques were used in the analysis with the exception of repetitions and mixes with similar patterns. Speech data was transcribed to find out the mixed elements at various points. The syntactic elements which preceded and followed the mix were coded according to the syntactic categories. The transcribed data for the syntactic analysis to find out the constraints in Tamil-English mixed discourse were analyzed.

## Significance of Study

The theoretical value of this research rests in its attempt to describe a major linguistic phenomenon that reflects language change due to the contact between English and Tamil especially in the post war conditions in Jaffna. The theoretical analysis provides insight into how

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<sup>1</sup> For example, where the morphemes were from two languages (as in loanukku- loan-Accu.case) the word was counted as a mixed word.

the structures of the participating languages have evolved to create a mixed discourse variety, claiming that this is a result of language change in progress.

Furthermore, the theoretical analysis provides evidence that the mixed language is rule-governed, maintaining that it has inherited structural elements from both English and Tamil and that there are various factors that influence the use of English in a mother tongue discourse and reasons for code mixing. Thus, this research makes a significant contribution to the advancement of sociolinguistics, and in general is important to the Sri Lankan bilingual.

### **CM Grammar and Tamil-English CM**

The code mixed structures in Tamil-English CM are not unique or special but they are uniform. A code mixed structure has a form which is repeated again and again and this recurrence of uniform structure is what made this study to systemize such recurring forms in a rule. When an English content morpheme is mixed in Tamil ML it is always in a particular systematic way and never randomly. This is the systematicity which has been considered here in the form of CM rules of Tamil-English CM.

### **Hierarchy of Mixed Constituents**

Code-mixing in the form of lexical insertions is frequently found in the discourse of Tamil English bilinguals. It has been observed that full sentence switches are very rare and are done only by fluent bilinguals. Less fluent bilinguals resort to mixing of English words alone or English words with Tamil inflections. The details of the distribution of English and mixed types in different grammatical classes based on the recorded speech are given hierarchically.

Mixed Type	No. of Occurrences	Percentage (%)
Noun phrase <sup>2</sup>	388	61.71
Verb phrase <sup>3</sup>	102	16.21
Adjectival phrase <sup>4</sup>	43	6.83
Conjoined clause <sup>5</sup>	41	6.52

<sup>2</sup> It includes Det+NP and N possessive N.

<sup>3</sup> It includes single verb, N+Verbalizer and Adj + Verbalizer.

<sup>4</sup> It includes both attributive and predicative/com. Adj.

<sup>5</sup> It includes co-ordinate and subordinate clauses.

Noun + Postposition <sup>6</sup>	36	5.72
Adverb	11	1.74
Sentence	04	0.63
Pronoun	00	0
Preposition +NP <sup>7</sup>	04	0.63
Total	629	99.99

Table 1. Hierarchy of mixed constituents

According to the table 1, the most frequently mixed type is the noun phrase which accounts for 61.71% of the total mixes as they are relatively free of syntactic restrictions. There is also relatively large proportion of classes like verb phrase, adjectival phrase, conjoined clause, noun + postposition and adverb respectively.

### Findings of the Study

This study is based on two typologically different languages. The speakers under study revealed a code-mixed variety containing linguistic features of both Tamil and English. The language used by the respondents is the normal day to day standard spoken Tamil which was interspersed with English words, phrases and sentences. The English words used by the respondents were single lexical items, phrases, or mixed words with English roots and Tamil inflections. In the contact of two languages, Tamil and English, the following were observed.

1. The use of English words is very common when speaking Tamil.
2. Tamil is the dominant language in case of code-mixed structures.
3. Most of the data reveal that the English elements are assimilated into the Tamil grammar. The lowest degree involves the use of English lexical items singly in the Tamil context in harmony. But there are cases where more than two English words are used, they usually occur as phrases, often grammatically English internally but bearing remarkable resemblance to the Tamil syntax.

<sup>6</sup> It is equivalent to prepositional phrase.

<sup>7</sup> It is the whole phrase switched from English.

4. Though both Tamil and English are basically SOV and SVO languages respectively and share different morphological and syntactic constructions, they involve in code-mixing easily.
5. Tamil has the SOV word order whereas English follows the SVO pattern. The word order differences do not prevent language mixing.
6. The application of the word order in Tamil in which English words and phrases are inserted without affecting the rules of both linguistic systems.
7. The combination of Tamil and English morphemes, within the word boundary.
8. Above all, there are constraints which indicate the impossible occurrences of code-mixing.
9. Code-mixing is a ruled governed behavior and not random.
10. Tamil-English CM has been observed to follow different approaches to constraints proposed by different scholars as discussed below.

It has been revealed that English switched word classes are patterned like the structure of their Tamil counterparts and occur according to the word order of the Tamil language. Though the two languages have different grammatical patterns, code-mixing takes place very smoothly between these languages as would be the case in languages with a similar typology. Single words are inserted more often than entire clauses.

According to the theoretical aspects of code-mixing, any linguistic units in a sentence can be switched depending on the bilingual ability of the speaker and provided that it obeys the two constraints-Free morpheme and equivalence constraints, which were proposed by Poplack (1978). The two constraints in relation to Tami-English code-mixing are discussed and the following are major mix types found in the data.

1. In case of NP as a subject and object of a sentence, the following pattern of code-mixing is possible- Det. + N. The patterns of Det. + N and Det. + N are not possible.
  - a. inta picture mikavum alaka-aka irukkiratu  
this picture very beautiful be.pre.sg  
This picture is very beautiful.
  - a. \* this paTam mikavum alaka-ka irukkiratu  
this picture very beautiful be.pre.sg  
This picture is very beautiful (**never heard**)
2. Mixing of nouns denoting plurality by the addition of plural markers is possible due the compatibility between Tamil and English. The English nouns with the Tamil plural marker ‘-kal as in puttakamkal (books)’ were not found in the data collected.

- a. teachers matum parents-ikitay-il otu discussion organize paNNa venTum  
 teachers and parents-prep det. discussion organize – do-modal Aux.  
 A discussion must be organized between parents and teachers.
3. Though pronouns are free morphemes, mixing pronouns from English to Tamil is not possible.
- a. avan studies-ilay atika time spend-paNNu-kiraan  
 he studies-loc. more time spend-pre.sg  
 He spends more time on studies.
- \* b. he studies-ilay atika time spend-paNNu-kiraan  
 he studies-loc. more time spend-pre.sg  
 He spends more time on studies. (**never heard**)
4. In case of possessive NP, only the noun is found to be mixed and mixing of possessive pronoun and possessive case marker (–inray) is not possible.
- a. avarkaluTaiya wedding nikalavillai  
 Their wedding happen-past. neg  
 Their wedding did not happen
- \*a. Their tirumanam nikalavillai  
 their wedding happen-past. neg  
 Their wedding did not happen (**never heard**)
5. Attributive and predicative adjectives are freely mixed with noun. While switching, the nominalizers –ana and –aaka are added with English adjectives in order to facilitate mixing process.
- a. otu alakaana picture / otu beautiful picture  
 a beautiful picture  
 It is a beautiful picture
- b. avan inta matter-ilay satisfied-aka illai  
 he this matter-loc. satisfied-nom. be-pre. sg-neg  
 He is not satisfied in this matter.
6. Single verbs are freely mixed. Mixing of verb base is possible and the mood, tense, gender, number, person and case are marked by the dummy verb ‘do’ in Tamil.
- a. accident-ay avoid paNNa-laam  
 accident-acc. avoid-do-modal aux  
 One may avoid accident
- b. avarkal subject-ay comprehend paNNura-tillai  
 they subject-acc. comprehend do-pre. neg.



They do not comprehend the subject.

7. Adverbs are freely mixed as they are free morphemes. In some cases, adjectives with Tamil suffix ‘-aa’ are mixed.

a. students careful-aa listen-paNNi-kont-irrukkinam  
students careful- aa listen-do-pre. prog.  
Students are listening very carefully.

8. As far as mixing of prepositional phrases is concerned, prepositions are not mixed with N or NP. As there are differences between Tamil and English in the use of prepositions, the whole phrase is mixed in order to avoid discrepancy at surface level. Prepositions alone are not mixed.

avar office-ilay illai.  
he office-prep. be- pre. neg.  
He is not in the office.

9. In case of co-ordinate and subordinate clauses are concerned, the mixing patterns of Conj. cl conj. conj. cl and Conj. cl conj. conj. cl are possible.

a. If they do so, avarkal in̄ta disease-ay destroy-paNNalaam.

If they do so, they this disease-Acc. destroy-do-modal aux.

If they do so, they can destroy this disease.

b. teachers tamatu arivay petukkavenTum but they don't read books.

Teachers their knowledge-Acc. enhance-modal aux but they don't read books.

Teachers must enhance their knowledge but they don't read books.

10. A small percentage of full sentence type mixing is found in the data.

On the whole, major constituent boundaries within the sentence such as those between NPs as subject and object, verb phrases are favourable switch points. The other constituents are found as Smaller-sized elements within the sentence. A few constraints are operating through the behaviour of mixing resulted in grammatical code-mixed sentences.

## Conclusion

On the whole, the analyses of Tamil-English CM revealed that linguistically, the analyses confirm that Tamil-English Code-mixing is rule governed behaviour. There are constraints which prohibit the possible mixing of linguistic units of both languages under study. To date there have been very few studies done on this issue. It is said that these constraints might be language specific constraints or universal constraints because societies differ from each other but there are

certain things in all societies which are general if not universal. Thus this study supports the generality of certain constraints although it does not reinforce the notion of the universal constraints. As the present study of Tamil-English CM is a maiden effort of the researcher, further research is expected on this topic in order to validate these constraints and whether they are language specific or universal.

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