Language and Society Assignment – 1

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Language primarily used: Tamil

In general, the following phenomenon happen due to the influence of other languages. These influences took place as a result of cultural contact, such as: words borrowings, borrowings resistances, phonological inter-influencing of neighboring languages, phonological modification of borrowings, morphological borrowings, morphological resemblances.

Now while it is easy to separate out the different reasonings or influences, drawing a clear-cut line between borrowed words, loan words and nativization not so much. We can think of it as a three-way venn diagram with heavy influence on all parts. We shall still try to branch out the slight differences present between all of them.

- Lev-Ari and Peperkamp (2013) argued that a word that is borrowed from giver language is either inserted directly into the native language's lexicology without worry for the word's original pronunciation or word's adaption to the phonological structure of the native language to maintain or even enhance the giver language's form as much as possible.
- Khan, Koka, and Anwar (2013) showed that the degree of borrowed word's integration can be measured into the language by different factors such as: uses frequency, replacement of native synonymy, syntactical and morphophonemic integration, and finally acceptability of the borrowed word.

We shall use the above two point to argue the differences between that of loan words and borrowed words (which may be nativized).

1)Borrowing

Borrowing words from other languages is a common phenomenon found in many languages all over the world. According to Payne (2006), borrowing refers to "when speakers of a language treat a word, morpheme, or construction from another language as a lexical item in their own language" (p. 323).

We borrow words for the following reasons: lexical gaps, prestige, in need of simpler words or simpler representation. Other reasons like gloablization, semantic developments, different language community interactions, colonization may also play roles in the borrowing of words.

These words may or may not undergo through a process called 'nativization'. It is when a word is phonologically/ morphologically/ semanticaly changed to fit into the language the word was borrowed into.

It is also used for poetic tones, prestige, etc. In tamil, it is very common to see the use of borrowed words from Sanskrit. One may consider that the insertion of a Sanskrit collocation sometimes serves the purpose of powerful abstraction, slightly decontextualizing or reframing an utterance (as Latin can do in premodern English). An author's choice of Sanskrit or Tamil always reflects the particular, respective expressive advantages of the two languages, including issues of tone, intensity, emphasis, resonance, intimacy, and so on.

- **Nitāṉam**
  Borrowed from: Sanskrit – nidhāna
  Meaning in Tamil: Temperance
  Etymology: In Sanskrit, the word means a—literally, placing, putting down; a hoard or treasure; also (a rare meaning we find only in the old lexicons) a place of cessation or rest. Possibly this last meaning has generated the Tamil one of a dreamlike state, a lack of awareness.
- **uruvu / uruvam**
  Borrowed from: Sanskrit – rūpa
  Meaning in Tamil: Form
  Etymology: The words may have formed their close connections and eventual borrowing through religion, specifically that of hinduism. In hinduism, Lord Shiva is depicted to have arupa(aruvam) form (without a body), rupa(uruvam)form (with body) and rupa-arupa (aruvuruvam) form (with and without body).
- **Arūpaccāyalil**
  Borrowed from: Sanskrit – rūpa + chāyā
  Meaning in Tamil: an abstract form
  Etymology: It is a Tamil compound made up of (Sanskrit) arūpa, "formless," and cāyal (Tamil) < (Sanskrit) chāyā, "shadow," "shape," "beauty," "image": thus, more simply, "an abstract form."
- **Saukkiyamā**
  Borrowed from: Sanskrit – saukhyam
  Meaning in Tamil: daily courtesy phrase, "How are you? Are you well?"
  Etymology: In Sanksrit, saukhyam means 'happiness'. When the word got borrowed into tamil, it may have been used to ask if one was doing well or in a sense if one was happy or doing good. And eventually, it's been being used as a standard tamil courtesy to enquire about the well being of others.
- **Yehkàntham**
  Borrowed from: Sanskrit – ekānt
  Meaning in Tamil: Solitude
  Etymology: In Sanskrit, the word means secluded, lonely, private or secret which when after being borrowed into Tamil means a solitary place (secluded meaning) or rather, solitude.

2)Loanwords

While Loan words are very similar to borrowed words if not a subset, Kadim (2016) mentioned Svobodová (1998) who referred to a number of terminology reasons behind loaning foreign words into the native language: -
a) Terminologically, there is no equivalent existent of the borrowed word in the recipient language of the speaker.
b) International communication especially in the academic world which require international effort to ease transmission of important information.
c) Using foreign terms instead of native terms is a very common way of trendiness and lifestyle.
These above reasons befit more to the meaning of the loan words. In simple terms, it it those words borrowed from other languages when we do not have terms for them in our own or for the above other reasons. They are usually used as such without much changes.
- **Jyoti**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit - Jyoti

Meaning in Tamil: Diya (lighted lamp)

Etymology: In colloquial Tamil, the word 'cuṭar' is used for shine, luster, light, etc. But Tamil today borrowed the word Jyoti from Sanskrit, which also orginally meant light, shine, lustre, but has now also taken up the meaning of the lighted lamps mostly used in temples. One can reason that religion could have also caused the usage of this word in Tamil from Sanksrit, especially the religion of Hinduism which is know to hold heavy influences in both the languages.

- **Jyotagam**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit – Jyotish
  Meaning: astrology
  Etymology: In Sanskrit, the word Jyotish, translated as "science of light," refers to the profound and mathematically sophisticated form of astrology originating in the ancient Vedic traditions of India. While colloquial Tamil used the word 'kaniam', spoken tamil of today used the word 'Jyotagam'.

- **Jeevan**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit – *jīv + ana*
  Meaning in Tamil: Life, God Given Life
  Etymology: While the word 'Uyīr' is normally used for life in Tamil, the Sanskrit word 'jīvaná' is typically used in poetic keys or speeches to produce more of a gratitude effect, perhaps to connect with God for giving this gift of Life.

- **Jākkiradhai**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit – *jāgrat*
  Meaning in Tamil: Careful
  Etymology: In colloquail Tamil, 'Vizhippu' is usually used for waking up, vigilance, watchfulness. The Tamil word today, *jākkiradhai* comes from Sanskrit *jāgrat*, which means to be attentive, watchful, awake, careful. According to Hindu philosophy, *jāgrat* (waking state) is one of the four states of being, others being *svapna* (dream state), *suṣupti* (deep sleep) and *turīya* (the fourth, supreme state beyond all three).

- **Jati**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit
  Meaning in Tamil: Caste
  Etymology: The Tamil word 'Jati' borrowed from Sanskrit can mean caste (divisions under the religion of Hinduism), family, kin.

- **Varusham**
  Loaned from: Sanskrit
  Meaning in Tamil: Year
  Etymology: "ANdu" is the pure Tamil word and it is used in writing poetry, songs, texts and oratory. "ANdu" is not generally used in conversations/talking. "Varusham" is a Samskrit word derived from original "varsha-वर्ष". This word is used in conversations/talking in a modified form "varusham". It is used in religious texts too like narration of Hindu scriptures, wedding invitation, etc.

3)Nativisation

Nativization is the process through which in the virtual absence of native speakers, a language undergoes new phonological, morphological, syntactical, semantic and stylistic changes. It can also be described as the process whereby a language in a new region acquires localised features, as by contact with pre-existing languages of the region, or in response to the local environment.

In simpler words, we can say that when we borrow or loan a word into a language, speakers of that language must be able to pronounce that word or use that word in such a manner that it does not feel foreign any longer. The word need not be from another language. It could be from the same language, perhaps different regions or different dialects. It can also take place in the same language from one generation to another. There could be various underlying causes from, say, mordernization of pronounciations, globalization, migration, intermingling of languages, etc.

The process of nativization is not only a linguistic process, but also a social one. The transfer of features from other languages into a target language may stem from 'cultural embedding'.

Nativisation can take place at different levels of linguistics such as phonology, morphology, semantics, discourse, structure etc. Let us look at the first two with more examples

Phonological Nativisation
- **Eridhyam**
  Originally from: Sanskrit – Hridhyam
  Meaning in Tamil: Salutations to the Sun God
  The phoneme [h] does not exist in Tamil. Hence the sound 'Hr' cannot be pronounced in Tamil. So, we instead delete 'Hr' and elongate the 'e' in the start of the word. When this word was borrowed first from Sanskrit, it was nativized phonologically to fit into the vocabulary of native Tamil speakers.
- **Maesai**
  Originally: Tamil – Maejai
  Meaning in Tamil: Table
  In Tamil, there are 6 alphabets called Grantha letter or "Vada mozhi ezhuttugaL" which means "letters of Northern language i e., Sanskrit. These include ja, sha, sa, ha, ksha, sree. These alphabets originally do not belong to the Tamil alphabetic system but have been borrowed from Sanskrit and kept seperately in case of need. The word 'Mejai' used the sound 'ja' from these Grantha letters. Now, many Tamil speakers may not pronounce the 'ja' alphabet [d͡z] and may instead pronounce it with a 'sa'. The reasons for this might range from speakers believing that Grantha alphabets are not real Tamil alphabets or being unable to pronounce the sound or generational influence or mordenisation or perhaps an easiness to pronounce only 'Tamil alphabets' .
- **Tamil**
  Originally: Tamizh
  Meaning in Tamil: Tamil (the name of the language)
  The letter 'zh - ழ' representing the phoneme [ɻ] is very unique to dravidian languages such as Tamil or Malayalam. It is a retroflex sound and hence very difficult to pronounce for non-native speakers. Due to most english speakers (and other language speakers) not being able to pronounce the word properly, the phoneme [ɻ] got nativised to [l] to fit the vocabulary of these speakers. For pronounciation of Zha ('ழ' - [ɻ]), the tongue has to be folded upward thoroughly and the tip of the folded tongue should be well below the soft palate (velum). If the tip of the tongue touches the soft palate (velum), it will result in the pronounciation of Tamil letter 'ள' which is [ɭ].
- **Palam**
  Originally: Tamil – Pazham

Meaning in Tamil: fruit

Just like the above given example, the 'zh - ழ' representing the phoneme [ɻ] in the middle of the word is hard for some to pronounce and hence it got nativized to [l] in many Tamil speaker's speech. Reasons such as british colonization and mordernization also play a huge role in this.

- **Valakai**
  Originally from: Vazhkai
  Meaning in Tamil: Life

  Similar to the above two examples, the 'zh - ழ' representing the phoneme [ɻ] in the word is nativized to [l] to fit the needs of certain speakers of the language. It is also common to head children use the the phoneme [l] commonly in their speech. Other examples of this sort with the phoneme [ɻ] include Mazhai (meaning: rain), Keezh (meaning: down) and Vazhai Pazham (meaning: banana fruit).

Morphological Nativisation

- **Adhikamaka**
  Originally from: Sanskrit – Adhika
  Meaning: More / Excess
  The morpheme 'maka' added to the word is nativized to make into a Tamil word that is used for comparison.

- **Abhivirudhi**
  Orginally from: Sanskrit – vrudhi
  Meaning: Expand
  The morpheme 'Abhi' is added as a prefix to the Sanskrit word to nativize it to get a Tamil word which means to expand or develop.

- **Amasangal**
  Originally from: Sanskrit – Ansh
  Meaning: Part
  The 'Ansh' morpheme is changed to 'Amas' to nativize the Sanskrit word to Tamil. And the morpheme 'angal' is added a plural marker. So, the tamil meaning now is 'parts'.

- **Elatchyam**
  Orginally from: Sanskrit - Lakshya
  Meaning: Target
  The morpheme 'Laksh' is nativized to Tamil to get 'Elatch' and the morpheme 'Yam' added to the end of the word to get a Tamil nativized word which means ambition, target or goal.

- **Uchcharippu**
  Originally from: Sanskrit – Uchcharan
  Meaning: Pronounciation
  The morpheme 'arippu' replaces the morpheme 'aran' in Sanskrit to nativise the word to Tamil to make it pronounceable for native language speakers.

References Used:

1. Tamil: A Biography, David Shulaman, 2016
2. Differences and Classifications of Borrowed and Loan Words in Linguistics Context: A Critical Review, Shurooq T Jafar, Dipima Buragohain, Harshita A Haroon