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A Corpus Based Study of the Role of Chinese Buddhist Loanwords in Teaching Chinese in South Asia

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Abstract

Chinese language has borrowed a large number of Indic loanwords through Buddhist *sūtra* translation from Sanskrit and Prakrit languages. Buddhist *sūtra* translation is a major pillar in the evolution of Chinese translation theory and philosophy and it has expanded the terminologies of many spheres in China including literature, art, politics and law. These words constitute the strongest linguistic relationship between East and South Asian languages since most Indo-Aryan languages were derived from Classical Sanskrit. Although much research has been conducted on Buddhist loanwords in Chinese, their linguistic relationship with the Indo-Aryan languages and how it could be utilized to develop the pedagogical implications for teaching Chinese in South Asia have been less addressed. The present study is a corpus based study which examines the prospects of utilizing phonological and lexical similarities between Buddhist loanwords in Indo Aryan languages and Chinese for teaching Chinese in the South Asian region. An algorithm has been employed to measure the similarity levels of phonological features at segmental level and it is recommended that words of higher similarity level be utilized in teaching Chinese phonetics. An amalgamated approach of intuitive-imitative and analytic-linguistic methods is perceived as most appropriate for teaching phonetics using Buddhist loanwords. Word formation strategies in Chinese language could be taught to students by using the most productive phono-semantic matchings of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language. Culture-sensitivity is perceived as the

core of cross-cultural translation and knowledge of Buddhist loanwords is an essential component of translating Chinese texts into South Asian languages and vice versa.

Keywords: *Buddhist Loanwords, South Asia, Teaching Chinese, Translation Methods, Pedagogical Implications*

Introduction

Mandarin Chinese absorbed a considerable number of Buddhist loanwords from Sanskrit along with the translation of Buddhist scripts patronized by Kumarajiva, Sarangadeva, Anshigao etc. translators. These scripture translations not only expanded the lexicon of Chinese language by introducing tens of thousands of new words into Mandarin Chinese, but also formed a bridge between the cultures of China and South Asia. Kenneth Chen argues while introduction of Buddhism into China had a multifaceted effect on China's native belief systems such as Taoism and Confucianism, quite a number of words and phrases of Chinese language owe their origin to Buddhism (Ch'en, 1973). The gradual Sinicization of Buddhist terminology in Chinese language paved way for phonological, morphological and lexical modifications and developments in Chinese language.

Sinhala language has its place in the Indo-Aryan language family which has its far roots in Prakrit languages of ancient Indian subcontinent. However, due to the phonological similarities between Sinhala and Sanskrit and far more due to the flooding of a large number of Sanskrit words into Sinhalese for centuries, Sinhala and Sanskrit share similarities in every linguistic aspect possible. Sanskrit loanwords account for the majority of Sinhala loanwords of the *Thathsama[i]* and *Thdbhava[i]* categories. There is a considerable amount of Buddhist terminology among these loanwords derived from Sanskrit. Therefore, Sanskrit loanwords become a strong linguistic bridge between Chinese language and Sinhala. Transliterated Buddhist words in Chinese language share phonological similarities with Sanskrit and thereby with Sinhala language. The present study is an attempt to investigate into how Buddhist loanwords could be utilized in TCFL in South Asia for more effective impact on the students' acquisition of phonology and lexicon with specific reference to Sinhala Language.

Teaching Mandarin Chinese phonology and morphology is one of the most arduous tasks in TCFL for speakers of South Asian languages including Sinhala. The substantial phonological and morphological differences between the two language families is the major reason behind these pedagogical constraints. As mentioned in the introductory section, Buddhist loanwords

accounts for the only strong phonological and morphological bridge between Chinese and Sinhala. Although this could be instrumental in designing pedagogical approaches to teaching Mandarin Chinese phonology and word formation to Sinhala speakers, this connection has not yet been approached and analyzed adequately. Substitution of voiceless sounds to voiced sounds, non-aspirated sounds to aspirated sounds etc. are common mistakes among Chinese language learners in Sri Lanka. Some sound substitution models can be extracted from the ancient scripture translations, although they are not very consistent in choice of sounds and characters. These models can be useful in identifying Mandarin sounds and distinguishing between them for South Asian learners since these words are familiar to them than words of other origins.

Literature Review

There has been much research done on Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language for over decades both in China and outside. These studies are largely concentrated on translation of Buddhist loanwords, Sinicization of Buddhist loanwords, evolution of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language etc. matters. Less attention has been paid to the role of Buddhist loanwords in TCFL and even lesser attention has been given to the role of Teaching Chinese in South Asian context in which Buddhist loanwords play an important role.

Translation of Buddhist Loanwords in Chinese Language

According to Sun translation of Buddhist scriptures into Chinese began in the last years of Emperor Huan of Eastern Han Dynasty and further developed during Wei Jin Dynasty (220-420) and saw its peak towards the Tang Dynasty (618—907). (Sun, 2013) Sun further claims that the struggle between “text” and “quality” is one of the most peculiar phenomena about translation process of Buddhist *sūtras* in China. Xia argues that during the period from Jin Dynasty to Tang and Song Dynasties there were two translation developments, namely the translation of diplomatic and political terms and translation of Buddhist scriptures and claims that out of these two translations, the most important is the expansion of Buddhist *sūtra* translation. The mainstream ideology of Chinese culture has had different mandates for Buddhist *sūtra* translations and non-Buddhist translations due to the differences in cultural communication (Xia, 2017).

Yan claims that Buddhist *sūtra* translations was the first major step towards developing Chinese translation methods. Initial Buddhist *sūtra* translations lacked systematism and were

mainly unorganized isolated translations (Yan,2016). Yan's proposition is justified by many examples in Chinese Buddhist lexicon. Poor translations such as 摩诃般若波罗密多经 [mó hēbōrěbōluómiduōjīng] for “*Prajñāpāramitā Hrdaya-sūtra* ” were results of the lack of translation skills and methods in the initial stages of Buddhist *sūtra* translations in Chinese. These multisyllabic words did not conform with the Chinese syllabic structure and underwent disyllabification in later translations. According to Liu, the first ever written record of Chinese translation methods appears in the preface of Zhiqian's translation of the Dhammapada. Later, translators such as Dao An (314- 385) and Kumarajiva (344- 413), Yan Cong (557- 610) also have attempted to lay a theoretical foundation for Chinese translation methods. Later Xuanzang (602- 664) helped create a “new translation style” and brought forth ground breaking new translation theories (Liu,2006).

Xuanzang was one of the most prominent translators in Chinese translation history and his travel records contributed much to construct at least an indistinct picture of the socio-cultural, economical and political ambiance of the sixth century East and West Asia. It could be assumed that Xuanzang's travel experience was much beneficial in characterizing his translation skills in contrast with the other early translators whose West Asian linguistic, socio-cultural and religious knowledge was limited. Xuanzang's “five non-translatable” theory was one of the most important translation theories. According to Ma Xuanzang developed this theory based on the accumulating the translation methods and principles adopted by previous translators. (Ma,2018)The “five non-translatable” regulates five conditions in which foreign words cannot be semantically translated into Chinese. This includes words with implied meanings, homonyms, words referring to things that are alien to China, words that stand for commonly known things and words that connote reverence.

Li divides Chinese Buddhist *sūtra* translation history into three periods, each of which had special characteristics. The early period, from Eastern Han Dynasty to Western Jin Dynasty, was mainly dominated by foreign translators such as Zhizhen, Zhiqian and Zhufahu. During the middle period from Eastern Jin Dynasty to Sui Dynasty, the local translators worked in harmony with foreign translators. Major translators of this period included Kumarajiva, Yan Cong, Dao An and Hui Yuan. The third period from early Tang Dynasty to middle Tang Dynasty was the period of local translators' dominance (Liu, 2006). One of the key characteristics of Chinese translation history is the continuous modification of the translation approaches. The early translators preferred transliteration and their translations consisted of

more foreign features and were generally intelligible to the locals. The major reason behind this was that a majority of early translators were foreign translators who lacked local linguistic knowledge. With the course of time, the local translators gradually gained knowledge of the Indic languages and produced more Sinicized loanwords.

The most common method of classifying Chinese Buddhist loanwords is their translation methods. Zhu categorizes them into four categories as transliterations, semantically translated words, phono-semantic matchings and newly constructed words (Zhu, 2014). Zhang categorizes them into four types as transliterations, semantically translated words, phono-semantic matchings and Buddhistized Chinese Words (Zhang, 2014). Feng in his categorization replaces the phono-semantic matchings category with Sanskrit-Chinese matchings (Feng, 2003). It could be concluded that the Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language is most commonly categorized into three types as transliterations, semantic translations and phono-semantic matchings.

Transliterations unfolded as the first set of words that were produced in the early *sūtra* translations. According to Wang, Buddhist *sūtra* transliterations mainly consist of given names, names of places, rivers, *sūtra* s etc (Wang, 2014). However, *sūtra* transliterations are not limited to proper names but many other tantric words such as 禅[chán] Dhyāna, 魔罗[móluō] Māra, 伽蓝[qiélán] Ārāma, 沙门[shāmén] Sramana, 袈裟[jiāshā] Kasāyawere also transliterated. Qiu claims that the first ever expert on *sūtra* transliterations was Fa Xiangzong, who was the master of Xuanzang. He further claims that transliterations are limited to the *sūtra* s and are rarely used in vernacular Chinese (Qiu, 2015). However, this statement also falls under dispute since 佛[fó], 菩[pút], 三昧[sānmèi], 瑜伽/juṭṭia/, 刹那[yújiā], 功德[chànà] etc. transliterations are widely used in Chinese vernacular and most of these words have entered modern Chinese dictionaries and word lists. Li and Yuan suggest that by using the transliteration method, one can not only directly reflect the original concept of the other culture, but also can avoid the strenuous process of selecting corresponding words from the target language to match with the original concepts. He further claims that due to the unavailability of the same concept in source and target languages, the use of transliteration is inevitable (Li & Yuan, 2009).

Semantic matchings account for a large number of Buddhist words in Modern Chinese. Zhao proposes that these free translations were of much advantage in the process of absorbing

Buddhist language although their original Sanskrit traces were lost in the Sinicization process. 过去[guòqù] past, 现在[xiànzài] present, 未来[wèilái] future, 知识[zhīshì] knowledge, 因果[yīnguǒ] karma, 众生[zhòngshēng] sentient beings, 世界[shìjiè] world etc. words fall under this category (Zhao, 2017). According to Zhang, there are two types of Chinese *sūtra* free translations. The first is using word-for-word literal translation and the second is using words that are already available in Chinese language to express the new concept. Zhang further states that free translations were more welcome among the general community for they were easy to comprehend and were circulated faster than transliterations (Zhang, 2018). Free translations are at the highest level of the Sinicization scale and were easily absorbed into modern Chinese than transliterations. However, many of the fully Sinicized words have already lost their Buddhist essence and become fully secularized.

Phono-semantic matchings also account for a large number of Buddhist words in Chinese language. Guo suggests that there are three key forms of phono-semantic matchings in *sūtra* translations. First and the most common is the Chinese-Sanskrit combined words of which one part is a transliteration and the other part is an originally Chinese word. For example, words such as 念佛[niànfó] “*sūtra* chanting” consist of the 念[niànfó] part which is originally Chinese and 佛[fó], which is a newly constructed character owing to Buddhist influence. The second category of words are formed by the combination of a synonym each from the source and target language. For example, the word 魔鬼[móguǐ] consists of the 魔[mó] character which is a transliteration of the Sanskrit *Māra* which means “Lord of the Senses” or demon and the originally Chinese 鬼[guǐ] character which also refers to demon. The third category of words are the transliterations which have become root words in Chinese and produced more words in amalgamation with Chinese words (Guo, 2016). Sinicization of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language was an integral part of the translation process. Zhu proposes that extension and contraction of meaning are commonly observed in the Sinicization process of Buddhist *sūtra* translations (Zhu, 2013).

The Influence of Buddhist Loanwords on Chinese Language

Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language has had a multifaceted influence on Chinese language for centuries. According to Shi, the impact of Buddhist loanwords on Chinese, Tibetan and Mongolian languages is the most important aspect of the Buddhist influence on Chinese culture. He further claims that the influence of Buddhist loanwords on Chinese

literature and art was instrumental in characterizing Chinese poetry, figurative language and calligraphy (Shi, 2009). Shi's argument is testified by the high popularity of Buddhist characters in Chinese calligraphy such as 佛[fó]*Buddha*、禪[chán] *Dhyāna*、德[dé] *Guna* etc. Huang claims that Buddhist loanwords has influenced Chinese language in terms of daily vernacular, idiomatic language and allegorical sayings. He further claims that root words such as 佛[fó]*Buddha*、魔[mó]*māra* have largely contributed to enriching Chinese vocabulary by compound words (Huang, 2001).

There is much evidence to support Huang's proposition on compound words produced by Buddhist root characters. In Modern Chinese Dictionary there are 23 compound words of which the root word is 佛[fó] *Buddha*. Only a limited number of Buddhist words have been included in the Modern Chinese Dictionary and when referring to modern day electronic dictionaries more than 60 entries formed by the root 佛[fó]*Buddha* could be found. Wang claims that Buddhist loanwords expanded the number of productive root words in Chinese language. He categorizes these root words into two types, namely transliterated root words and Buddhisized Chinese words. The first category includes roots such as 魔[mó]*māra*, 塔[tǎ]*stupa*, 僧[sēng] *samgha* 禪[chán] *Dhyāna*, 佛[fó]*buddha* etc.

Although Buddhist loanwords have had little systematic impact on phonological and morphological constructions of Chinese language, some scholars such as Zhang (2006) argue that Buddhist loanwords have had a significant impact on the disyllabification of Chinese words which were mostly monosyllabic in old Chinese. The disyllabification process was the only substantial systematic influence of Buddhist loanwords on Chinese language. However, in modern Chinese both monosyllabic and disyllabic forms for same Buddhist word is available as in the case of many other Chinese words. For example, 佛[fo]; 佛陀[fotuo] for Buddha, 劫[jié]; 劫波 [jié bō] are Buddhist loanwords in modern Chinese that have monosyllabic and disyllabic counterparts.

Materials and Methods

Sample and Data

In an attempt to shed light on the similarity of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese and South Asian language, the present research utilizes a corpus-based method using Buddhist loanwords in Chinese as the sample. 600 Buddhist loanwords derived from Buddhist

Chinese-Sanskrit Dictionary by Akira Hirakawa and Old Chinese dictionary (古代汉语词典) were used as a sample for this study. These two dictionaries were selected as they contain a relatively high number of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese. The words were divided into three categories as transliterations, semantic translations and phono-semantic matchings.

Instrument

The main instrument employed by this study is the word similarity measurement algorithm demonstrated in table 1.

	Criteria	Metrics		
1	Number of syllables	If not equal = The syllable difference		
		Method	Condition 1	Condition 2
2	Consonants	Phonetically similar number of consonants divided by total number of consonants	Identical sounds = 1	Place or manner of articulation similar = 0.5
3	Vowels	Phonetically similar number of vowels divided by total number of vowels	Identical sounds = 1	Vowel height or front back positions similar = 0.5
Measurement				
≥ 2 = High				
1.5-1.99 = Medium				
1-1.49 = Low				
≤ 0.99 = Very Low				

Table 1: Word similarity measurement algorithm

Results and Discussion

South Asian Languages and Buddhist Loanwords in Chinese: Similarities of Linguistic Features

In order to develop pedagogical implications for teaching Chinese to students of South Asian context there are two important factors that must be considered. Firstly, it is of paramount importance to understand the roots of the relationship between Chinese and South Asian Indo-Aryan languages. This has very little been addressed in the South Asian Chinese language education research field. The major language families in South Asia are Indo-Aryan, Dravidian, Tibeto-Burman and Munda. One of the key features of South Asian languages is that they exhibit an extended tradition of diffusion, mutual contact, and convergence (Kachru et al. 2008). Out of these the largest branch of languages is the Indo-Aryan family which accounts for more than 74% of South Asian languages. Masica divides the history of Indo-Aryan languages into three major stages as Old, Middle and new Indo-Aryan. Early forms of Indo-Aryan could be divided into three stages as early old Indo-Aryan, later old Indo-Aryan and early middle Indo-Aryan (Masica, 1993). Vedic Sanskrit belongs to the early old Indo-Aryan stage and Classical Sanskrit belongs to the later old Indo-Aryan stage. It was mainly from Classical Sanskrit that Chinese borrowed Buddhist words, and this is the mainspring from which the Indo-Aryan linguistic features of have flowed into Chinese thereby completing the chain of linguistic relationship between Chinese and South Asian languages.

Secondly, it is equally significant to distinguish the differences between what is designated by the term “Buddhist words” in Chinese and South Asian language contexts. In Chinese language research sphere, there are three key terms used to refer to Buddhist loanwords. Firstly, the term 佛教词汇 *fójiào cíhuì* or 佛教词语 *fójiào cíyǔ* are the simplest term which is essentially translated as “Buddhist vocabulary” (i.e., Qiu 2006, Guofeng & Haiyan 2009, Shi 2009). The second most commonly used term is 佛源词汇 *fó yuán cíhuì*, which is translated as “words of Buddhist origin” (i.e., Guo, 2016, Ren, 2010). The term 佛教外来词 *fójiào wàilái cí* which literally translates into “Buddhist Loanwords” is also used by Chinese scholars (i.e., Zhang 2014, Zhu 2014) to refer to Buddhist words in Chinese language.

The term 佛教词汇 *fójiào cíhuì* is generally used for words that have a specific reference to religious and philosophical terms in Buddhism including proper names. However, words of

Hinduism such as 毘瑟紐[písèniù]Vishnu, 梵天[fàntiān]Brahman, 因陀罗 [yīn tuó luó]Indra are also categorized under the term ‘Buddhist words’. All these three words are included in the ‘A Dictionary of Chinese Buddhist Terms[i]’. To make things more complicate, the term 佛源词汇 *fó yuán cíhuì* is also used to refer to words such as 过去[guòqù] ‘past’, 现在[xiànzài] ‘present’, 未来[wèilái] ‘future’ and 世间[shìjiān] ‘world’ which are not generally considered as Buddhist words in Indo-Aryan languages or ideally in many other languages. There are two major reasons behind this skepticism, first being the lack of knowledge of early *sūtra* translators about Indic religious belief system and culture. Secondly, the strong linguistic relationship of both Hinduism and Buddhism with Sanskrit was also a strong reason behind this, and therefore there was a flow of Hinduist terminology along with Buddhist terminology into Chinese.

Phonological Features

Chinese	Sinhala	Hindi	Bengali	Nepali	Urdu	Tamil
佛陀	බුද්ධ	बुद्धा	বুদ্ধা	बुद्ध	بده	புத்தர்
/fo ^h uo/	/buðð ^h ə/	/buðð ^h ə/	/buðð ^h ə/	/buðð ^h ə/	/buðð ^h ə/	/puttər/
菩提	බෝධි	बोधि	বোধি	बोधि	بودھی	போதி
/p ^h ut ^h i/	/bo:ð ^h i/	/bo:ð ^h i /	/bo:ð ^h i/	/bo:ð ^h i/	/bo:ð ^h i/	/po:ti/
禅那	ධ්‍යාන	ध्यान	ধ্যান	ध्यान	دهيانا	திரியானம்
/tʂhanna/	/ð ^h ja:nə/	/ð ^h ja:n /	/ð ^h ja:nə/	/ð ^h ja:n ə/	/ð ^h ja:n ə/	/tija:na/
夜叉	යක්ෂ	यक्ष	যক্ষ	यक्ष	يکشا	யக்ஷா
/jetʂha/	/jakʃə/	/jakʃə/	/jakʃə/			/jakʃa:/

				/ja:kʃa:	/ja:kʃa:	
				/	/	
满怛罗	මන්ත්‍ර	मंत्र	मन्त्र	मन्त्र	منتر	மந்திர
/mantalu	/manθrə	/manθr	/manθrə	/manθr	/manθr	ம்
o/	/	ə/	/	ə/	ə/	/mantirəm/

Table 1 Buddhist loanwords in Chinese and their counterparts in some South Asian Languages

From the above table it can be observed that Buddhist terms of South Asian languages of the Indo-Aryan family which have originated from Classical Sanskrit have undergone little phonological changes in the process of domestication. In most languages in this table, the words have undergone no phonological changes in borrowing. We can observe that there is clear phonological adaptation in Tamil translation of these words. Tamil belongs to the Dravidian language family and although there are some phonological similarities between Dravidian languages and Indo-Aryan languages, there also exists clear differences such as replacing /ð^h/ with /t/ in borrowing.

Sanskrit loanwords have been instrumental in characterizing the language systems of South Asian languages specially in terms of phonological systems. The case of Sinhala is one of the most distinctive which has had a multifaceted linguistic connection with Sanskrit. Sanskrit has had a multifaceted impact on Sinhala language which has borrowed a large number of loanwords from Sanskrit accounting for more than 75% of its loanwords. Sanskrit loanwords in Sinhala language have played a vital role in the syllabification of loanwords due to the large number of Sanskrit loanwords in Sinhala (Weerasinghe et al., 2005). Sinhala language has two alphabets, namely the pure Sinhala alphabet and the mix-Sinhala alphabet of which the latter is solely rendered necessary for accommodating loanwords specially from Sanskrit and Pali (Geiger, 1995).

Apart from the major flow of lexical items and phonological features of Sanskrit other Prakrit languages such as Magadhi, Gandhari and Pali were also instrumental in characterizing Buddhist Chinese. According to Nattier (2006) substitution of -bh- > -h- in transliterations

such as 首呵 *shǒuhē*, in 道行般若经 *dàoxíng bōrě jīng* are a clear manifestation of Middle Indic linguistic features. Mahāyāna texts translated by Lokakṣema also testify that there were influences of North Western Prakrits, namely Gandhari on Buddhist *sūtra* translations in China (Karashima 2006). Similarly, although Sanskrit has had a multifaceted influence on many languages of the South Asian context, they all are not necessarily descendants of Sanskrit. Sinhala claim to be a descendant of the Prakrit family too which is believed to be derived from *Elu*.

Expansion of Lexicons

Buddhist loanwords were highly influential in expanding the lexicon of Chinese language. Borrowing of Buddhist terminology not only expanded the religious terminology of Chinese lexicon but also expanded the terminologies of other spheres. For example, Buddhist loanwords were directly borrowed or coined neologisms in Chinese philosophy, art and craft, traditional medicine, literature, psychology, architecture etc. areas. Chinese Buddhist characters are an essential aspect of modern Chinese calligraphy. Characters such as 经 [*jīng*]*sūtra*, 佛 [*fójiào*]*Buddhism*, 禅 [*chán*]*Dhyāna* are widely used in the field of Chinese calligraphy. These characters are embedded with deep philosophical meanings apart from their artistic shapes which have also attracted calligraphers.

Expansion of Chinese lexicon has occurred in few manners owing to the influence of Buddhism. The earliest form was foreignization which has mostly occurred through transliteration. Lokakṣema and Parthamasiris pushed foreignization to its limits in their translations and they attempted to register the differences by ‘keeping away from the norms of the target language’ (Chi, 2009). This strategy introduced many transliterated Buddhist terms to Chinese language although only a limited number of them have survived in modern Chinese language. Since many examples for transliterations are provided in previous sections, this section will not further discuss them.

Secondly, domestication of Buddhist terminology has occurred widely which produced more sustainable words than foreignization. Revival of local Chinese ideologies, namely Confucianism and Taoism were highly instrumental in expanding the Chinese Buddhist philosophical terminology. It is generally believed that Confucius was a contemporary philosopher of Buddha and Buddhism gained popularity in China at a time when Confucianism and Taoism were gradually being institutionalized in China. Confucian and

Taoist terminologies already had become popular among Chinese people by Tang Dynasty when Buddhist *sūtra* translations and literature were at full swing. This simultaneous revival of different philosophies resulted in mutual enriching of terminologies. According to Chi (2009), An Shi Gao's translation of the term *anapanasati* as '*anban shouyi*' is a clear manifestation of Buddhist translators borrowing Taoist terminologies into their translations.

It is generally accepted that Lord Buddha himself did not advocate the use of Sanskrit as the language of Buddhism but Indian Prakrits. According to ancient Sri Lankan traditions Buddha himself was proficient in Magādhī which was identical with Pāli (Johansson, 1981). Although the decline of Buddhism in India was a major setback, Ceylonese Theravada Buddhism saw a significant revival using Pāli as the vehicle of it. Pāli canon was written in Sri Lanka's Matale Aluvihara monastery by a council of monks in 1st Century BCE. Pāli has had an equally important influence as Sanskrit on expanding the lexicon of Sinhala. Although it is relatively easy to distinguish between Buddhist and non-Buddhist terms in Chinese at least in the case of transliterations, it is difficult to determine whether a particular term is of Buddhist origin or not in Indo-Aryan languages such as Sinhala since Buddhist terminology has penetrated into almost every aspect of these languages and had been domesticated into written and vernacular form.

The foregoing analysis validates that there are substantial phonological and lexical similarities between Chinese and South Asian languages triggered by Buddhist *sūtra* translations. The languages of Buddhism, largely Sanskrit and Indic Prakrits have had little structural impact on the language systems on the former and they have had multifaceted impacts including phonology, morphology, syntax and semantics of the latter. Out of all South Asian languages Buddhist terminology has had the largest greatest impact on Ceylonese languages, mostly on Sinhalese.

Utilizing Buddhist Terminology for Teaching Chinese to South Asian Students

From the above discussion, it is evident that Buddhist terminology is the strongest linguistic relationship between Indo-Aryan languages and Sino-Tibetan languages, by latter mostly referring to Chinese language. The importance of Buddhist loanwords in teaching Chinese as a foreign language could be perceived from two perspectives, namely from a linguistic perspective and a cultural perspective. According to Wang (2014), Buddhist vocabulary is a special category of words in the Chinese lexicon with great linguistic and cultural value. It is

evident that the phonological similarities between Indic loanwords in Chinese and the same loanwords in other South Asian languages could be instrumental in teaching Chinese phonetics to speakers of Indo-Aryan languages in South Asia. Secondly, from a cultural perspective, Buddhist loanwords are especially important for South Asian language learners due to their intimate cultural rapport with their respective languages.

This section examines how the Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language could be utilized to develop pedagogical implications for teaching Chinese language in South Asian countries. It is important to identify the importance of Buddhist terminology in Chinese language education in South Asian context. Firstly, as it has been discussed in the previous section there are strong phonological and lexical similarities in Buddhist terminology of Chinese and South Asian languages. Secondly, in contemporary South Asia-China relationship also Buddhist relations play a vital role and knowledge of Buddhist terminology would highly benefit students who involve in related bilateral relations. Thirdly, students, teachers and researchers of Chinese language sphere of South Asia would highly benefit from knowledge of Chinese Buddhist translations in developing translation methods.

Teaching Phonetics and Phonology

Most existing comprehensive Chinese language teaching material are mostly western oriented or East Asian oriented material and the examples, text and methods are designed oriented to the linguistic environments of the targeted regions. Teaching Chinese in South Asian region requires equal special attention in designing teaching material which unfortunately has not been paid adequate attention as yet. In the South Asian context where most languages share similar phonological features, teaching phonetics of a tonal language such as Chinese is an arduous task. Mandarin Chinese phonological features are particularly alien to the Indo-Aryan languages in several aspects. Mandarin Chinese phonological inventory consists of four retroflex sounds $zh/tʂ/, ch/tʂh/, sh/ʂ/, r/z/$ which most South Asian students find difficult to accurately articulate. Denti-alveolar $/z/ \widehat{ts}/$, $c/ \widehat{ts}^h/$ and Alveolo-palatal $j/ \widehat{tɕ}/$, $q/ \widehat{tɕ}^h/$, $x/ɕ/$ are also frequently mispronounced by international students. However, this does not necessarily mean that Mandarin Chinese phonology is difficult to master. Total of the labial set $/m/, /p/, /p^h/, /f/$, some of the denti-alveolar set $/n/, /t/, /t^h/, /s/, /l/$ and velar $/k/, k^h/$ which account for a 50% of the total number of sounds are identical with sound inventories of many Indo-Aryan languages. It is worth investigating how Buddhist terminology could be utilized to assist students overcome these difficulties. The strategies described below would be

beneficial in building towards a model for teaching phonology to South Asian students using Buddhist vocabulary.

Introducing the Chinese phonemic inventory using examples from Buddhist transliterations

Most Chinese language textbooks used in the South Asian region are using traditional approaches to teaching phonetics by taking examples from English. For example, the sound /p^h/ is introduced as similar to the ‘p’ sound in the English word ‘park’. In Chinese language there are aspirated and non-aspirated counterparts of the same sound such as b/p/-p/p^h/, d/t/-t/t^h/, g/k/-k/k^h/ and the English example ‘park’ distinguishes the difference between b/p/ and p/p^h/. Using Buddhist Chinese examples such as 巴利/bāli/‘Pāli’ for non-aspirated /p/ and 菩提/pútí/ ‘Bodhi’ for aspirated p/p^h/ would help students better distinguish between the sounds. In the case of aspiration, it is best that teachers resort to more examples from their mother tongue firstly because many South Asian languages consist of aspirate and non-aspirated counterparts of all these sounds and secondly because students always find examples from their mother tongue easily comprehensible. For example, in mix-Sinhala alphabet, both /t/ and /t^h/ sounds are available.

Generally, there are two approaches to teaching pronunciation in the field of foreign language teaching, namely intuitive-imitative approach and analytic-linguistic approach. The former students to listen and imitate the sounds and rhythms of the target language with less informative instruction and the latter involves informative instruction on the linguistic features of the target language such as phonetics and articulation (Celce-Murcia et al., 1996). A complex phonetic system like in Mandarin Chinese would hardly be imitated by intuition, at least not in the case of Teaching Chinese in foreign lands where a native-Chinese language environment is hardly available. Meticulous instruction on each sound would also result in too teacher centered sessions leading to boredom. An intuitive-imitative approach would more suit sounds which are identical with the mother tongue phonemic inventory, and for those sounds which are alien to the target group, an analytic-linguistic approach would be more suitable. Therefore, in the case of South Asian Chinese language students, a mixed method would be more appropriate.

In selecting examples for each word, two major factors need to be concerned.

(1) *Ease of comprehension*

In selecting examples, the first thing that has to be considered is their ease of comprehension. 菩提萨埵 *pútí sà duō* ‘*bodhisattva*’, 三昧地 *sānmèi de* ‘*samādhi*’, 释迦牟尼 *shì jiā móu ní* ‘*shakyamuni*’, 夜叉 *yèchā* ‘*yaksa*’, 罗汉 *luóhàn* ‘*arhat*’, 必哩多 *bì lǐ duō* ‘*pretha*’, 悉达多 *xī dá duō* ‘*siddhartha*’, 阿难陀 *ā nán tuó* ‘*Ānanda*’, 刹那 *chànà* ‘*Ksana*’, 林必尼 *lín bì ní* ‘*Lumbini*’, 楞迦 *léng jiā* ‘*Lanka*’, 檀那 *tánà* ‘*dāna*’, 炎摩 *yán mó* ‘*Yama*’, 魔罗 *mó luó* ‘*Māra*’ etc. words would be easily understood by South Asian students. By selecting words which are familiar to students, it is expected that the students would easily associate sounds with meanings increasing the chance of committing to memory.

(2) *Phonological similarity*

Although nearly all of basic Buddhist terminology have been transliterated in *sūtra sūtra* translations, not all of them are phonologically similar to the source language. For example, the word 佛陀 [*fótuó*] for *Buddha* has very little similarity with its Sanskrit counterpart when analyzed phonologically. Mere semantic similarity and familiarity will not suffice in choosing examples for teaching phonetics and a systematic approach is essential for measuring phonological similarity. The following algorithm could be utilized in this regard which will compare the Buddhist loanwords in Chinese and South Asian languages. The set of loanwords presented here has been analyzed with their counterparts in Sinhala language.

Chinese	Consonants			Total	Vowels			Total	Syllable Count		Total	Sub Total	Similarity Level
三昧地	1	1	0.5	0.83	1	0	1	0.66	3	3	1	2.5	High
<i>Samādhi</i>													
悉达多	0.5	0.5	1	0.67	1	1	0	0.66	3	3	1	2.33	High
<i>Siddhartha</i>													
扇底	1	1		1	1	1		1	2	2	1	3	High

Shanthi

林必尼	1	0.5	1	0.83	0.5	1	1	0.83	3	3	1	2.67	High
-----	---	-----	---	------	-----	---	---	------	---	---	---	------	------

Lumbini

梨车昆	1	0.5	0.5	0.67	1	1	1	1	3	3	1	2.67	High
-----	---	-----	-----	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	------	------

Licchavi

刹那	0.5	1		0.75	0	0		0	2	2	1	1.75	Medium
----	-----	---	--	------	---	---	--	---	---	---	---	------	--------

Ksana

私建陀	1	0	0.5	0.5	0	0.5	0	0.16	3	2	0.67	1.33	Low
-----	---	---	-----	-----	---	-----	---	------	---	---	------	------	-----

Skandha

讷瑟吒	0	0.5	0	0.17	0	0	0	0	3	2	0.67	0.83	Very Low
-----	---	-----	---	------	---	---	---	---	---	---	------	------	----------

Dushta

Table 2 Similarity Level Analysis of Buddhist Loanwords in Chinese and Their Sinhala Counterparts

It is suggested that words of higher similarity levels be used for teaching Chinese phonetics to students. This method could not only be utilized for an analytic-linguistic approach but also when using an intuitive-imitative approach. Mother tongue and L2 influence are crucial factors hindering the accurate acquisition of pronunciation in foreign language learning. According to Cenoz et al. (2001) two bidirectional relationships could occur in third language learning, namely cross-linguistic influence between L1 - L3 and L2 -L3. In the South Asian region most common 2nd language is English and it has had a heavy influence on the 1st language and foreign languages of South Asian countries.

The negative influence of English as a second language on Chinese as a foreign language learning is triggered by few factors. Firstly, the instruction language of most TCFL teaching material used in the South Asian region are English. As mentioned previously, the examples

for sound articulation given in these materials are from English language and are often misleading which has been explained using examples in a previous section. Some examples given for Chinese sounds in such material are far too different from the actual sounds and their articulation. Secondly, since pinyin transcription also uses symbols in English language, students often substitute the English sounds for Chinese. For example, the sound /p/ is transcribed using the symbol [b] in pinyin and students often tend to substitute English /b/ for /p/. The use of native sound systems coupled with appropriate examples from Buddhist loanwords in Chinese will help students better grasp accurate pronunciation of Chinese phonemes.

Using Buddhist loanword lists for practicing pronunciation

In pronunciation exercises sections of existing Chinese language teaching material, most words used are randomly selected considering their rhyming patterns. Since pronunciation teaching occurs at the preliminary level of programmes, meanings of many words used for pronunciation practice are not understood by the students. Using Buddhist transliterations have a strong sound-meaning relationship and the students will have a better chance of grasping the pronunciation of the sound system through them. It is further suggested that two lists of words be prepared, namely a table of transliterations and a table of phono-semantic matchings.

Selecting transliterations could be done using the proposed algorithm. It is important to identify the role of phono-semantic matchings in teaching Chinese phonetics in the South Asian region. There is a considerable number of phono-semantic matchings of Buddhist origin in Chinese language. Most phono-semantic matchings in Chinese language consist of a root word, which is usually a transliteration of foreign origin and one or two characters with native Chinese linguistic features. 佛学[fóxué] ‘Buddhist studies’, 佛像[fóxiàng] ‘Buddha statue’, 佛名[fómíng] ‘Names of Buddhas’, 佛光[fóguāng] ‘Buddha’s rays’, 佛塔[fótǎ] ‘Buddhist stupa’. These words could be used for in the second stage of sound practice exercises which will enable students to comprehend the sound patterns of compound words.

Teaching Vocabulary

Teaching Chinese vocabulary has also been an issue of concern for teachers and researchers in the field of TCFL in South Asia. Word formation in Chinese language is different from that

of many Indo-Aryan and Indo-European languages since the writing system is based on logograms which has no alphabet.

Root	Forms				
佛Buddha	佛像 Buddha statue	佛学 Buddhist Studies	佛教 Buddhism	佛经 <i>Sūtra</i>	佛寺 Buddhist Temple
禅Dhyāna	禅门Zen School	禅师Monk	禅堂 Meditation hall	禅学 Meditation	禅房 Meditation Hall
魔Magic	魔鬼Demon	魔术Magic	魔法Sorcery	魔力Magical power	魔王 King of Underworld
菩提Bodhi	菩提树 Bodhi Tree	菩提道场 Bodhi Mandala	菩提心 Bodhi Citta	菩提萨埵 Bodhisattva	菩提道 Buddha marga

Table 3 Word Formation Using Phono-semantic Loanwords

Packard (2000) argues that the concept ‘word’ in Chinese language does not appear to be an ‘intuitive notion’. Chinese tend to believe that the listeners can grasp meanings of utterances without them being specifically parsed into word-sized units. Most students limit themselves to words that have been prescribed to them and their vocabulary power is more likely to depend on retaining ability rather than vocabulary skills. Buddhist loanwords could be utilized in several ways to improve the vocabulary skills of students.

(1) Teaching word-formation skills using Buddhist loanwords

According to Guo (2016) there are three major types of phono-semantic matchings in Buddhist loanwords. The first is transliteration + native Chinese word category. These words are formed by a combination of foreign root such as 佛[fójiào] *Buddha* and native Chinese

words. The second category forms words by a combination of similar words in source and target languages which is similar to a reduplication. The third method is coining neologisms when appropriate words are not found in the target language. Out of these three categories, the first category accounts for the largest number of phono-semantic matchings in Chinese language and could be utilized in teaching Chinese word formation strategies to students. The major reason behind using phono-semantic matchings is the high productivity of their roots. This attribute could be utilized for teaching word formation for disyllabic and trisyllabic compound words. Existing textbooks consist of word formation drills in beginner level lessons using examples which are less familiar to beginner students.

(2) Expanding the Lexicon: Introduction of a Glossary of Basic Buddhist Vocabulary

As emphasized in previous sections, Buddhist terminology play a vital role in the context of South Asia as well as in China thereby becoming a key component of cross-cultural communication with China. This will specially be useful for Chinese language students of South Asian countries such as Nepal, India and Sri Lanka which have long established Buddhist relations with China. The introduction of a Buddhist vocabulary list will also be useful for students working in the tourism industry in regions such as Sri Lanka where Buddhist relics and attractions are abundant.

Chinese philosophical terminology has been predominantly characterized by Taoist, Buddhist and Confucian terminologies. In fact, many terminologies have been shared between these doctrines for over centuries and in the case of some religious terms, it has become difficult to identify to which doctrine they belong to. Many cultural terms in Buddhist vocabulary are also shared between languages of South Asia. Words such as 卫塞节[wèisāijié] *Vesak*, 布萨日[bùsàrì] *Poson*, 埃萨拉[āisàlājié] *Esala*, 佛牙 [fóyá] Tooth Relic etc. are commonly used cultural terms in the South Asian region. Therefore, introducing a Buddhist vocabulary list will have a multifaceted influence on Chinese language students. Many Buddhist-monastery-based institutions in the South Asian region offer Chinese as a foreign language to Buddhist monks who major in Buddhist studies and a glossary of Buddhist vocabulary would be of much use to these students.

(3) Teaching Translation Methods

As emphasized in a previous section, Buddhist *sūtra* translation was a major step in the development of translation theory in China specially in terms of transliteration and phono-semantic matching. By carefully observing the evolution of Buddhist *sūtra* translation methods, one could get a fair knowledge of Chinese translation methods. For example, early translations such as 菩提萨埵[pútísàduō] *Bodhisattva*, 窣堵波[sūdǔbō] *Stupa* have been retranslated later in simplified forms as 菩萨[púsà], 塔[tǎ]. Change of translation method has also frequently occurred where the more accepted and appropriate method has dominated the other. For example, the word *Dhyāna* has two forms, namely the transliteration 禅[chán] and the free translation 定[dìng], of which the former has dominated the latter. Dominance of the stronger translation method is also one important aspect of the Sinicization of Buddhist terminology in Chinese.

Hogg et al. (2014) claim that translators' ability to exploit the three spaces namely textual space, socio-cognitive space and social space based on sensitivity to the target culture decides the effectiveness of their translations. Buddhist terminology is an essential aspect in incorporating culture-sensitivity into Chinese translation since it is an important component of Chinese culture. Knowledge of Buddhist loanwords will assist the students to conduct more culturally sensitive translations thereby bridging the gaps between target and source culture.

It would be reasonable to ask the question how these strategies could be utilized in a multi-religious environment where the Chinese language classroom comprises of students from different ethnicities and belief systems. Firstly, although the words discussed in this paper are generally called Buddhist loanwords in Chinese language, many of these words have been gradually secularized and absorbed into modern day vernacular (Zhang, 2007). Therefore, many Sinicized Buddhist words belong to general philosophy terminology rather than particularly to Buddhism. For example, words such as 功德[gōngdé] which is derived from the Sanskrit term *Guna* is widely used in Chinese language to refer to 'virtue'. Secondly, Buddhist vocabulary in Chinese language includes many words from other religions such as Hinduism such as 私建陀[sījiàntuó] *Skandha*, 罗摩[luómó] *Rāmā*, 尾瑟努[wěisènnǚ] *Vishnu*. According to Qiu (2006), a considerable number of Buddhist words have been borrowed by the Islamic Hui ethnic group in China into their religion. Finally, it is solely

in the hands of the teacher to carefully manipulate language content to fit to different groups of students avoiding conflicts of interest.

Localizing CFL teaching material to cater to the specific requirements of Sri Lankan students is a critical issue that has to be addressed through meticulous research and planning. Dziuba & Eremina (2020, p. 111) argue that the national cultures should be represented as part and partial of global cultures in order to incorporate “linguo-cultural” and country specific information into foreign language textbooks. Melliti (2012, p. 137) recommends the production and adaptation of local textbooks, promoting teacher autonomy and recommending suitable localized textbooks from recognized publishers in order to cope with the hegemony of global textbooks. Indic vocabulary in Chinese language could be instrumental in enhancing the socio-linguistic and intercultural communication skills of Sri Lankan Chinese language students

Conclusion

While Buddhism is traditionally perceived as a cultural tie between South Asian and East Asian regions, Buddhist relations have also left its linguistic traces for over centuries parallel to the Buddhist *sūtra* translations from Indic languages into Chinese. Although there is an abundance of researches conducted on the former, the latter has been given minimal attention. The present research attempted to examine the possibility of utilizing the phonological and lexical features of Buddhist borrowings into Chinese from Indic languages. Phonological similarity between the lexical items could be measured using the segmental features as indicators and words of higher similarity level could be utilized in teaching phonology. Students would benefit from an amalgamated method of intuitive-imitative approach and analytic-linguistic approach towards teaching Mandarin Chinese pronunciation using Buddhist loanwords in the context of South Asia. While introduction of Buddhist loanwords would inevitably expand the students’ lexicon and incorporate culture sensitivity into cross-cultural communication, they could also be utilized for teaching translation. The present research has only examined the prospects of utilizing Buddhist loanwords for teaching phonetics and translation. There is room for further research in this area in terms of the role of supra-segmental features of Buddhist loanwords in Chinese and South Asian languages.

List of Abbreviations

TCFL – Teaching Chinese as a Foreign Language

L1 – First Language or Mother Tongue

L2 – Second Language

L3 – Third Language

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Endnotes

[i] Thathsama : Refers to the words absorbed into Sinhala from other languages as they are without undergoing phonological or morphological changes.

[ii] Thdbhava : Refers to the words derived from other languages into Sinhala after undergoing phonological or morphophonemic adaptations.

[iii] Soothill, William Edward & Hodous, Lewis. 1997. A dictionary of Chinese Buddhist terms. Dehli: Motilal Banarsidass Publishers.