

THE IMPACT OF HEGEMONIC MASCULINITY ON ENGLISH LANGUAGE LEARNING IN A SRI LANKAN CONTEXT

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An English language learner is a person who is learning the English language in addition to his or her native language. In Sri Lanka, a language learning classroom comprises a majority of a female population than a male population. Since Sri Lankan society possesses a misconception that learning a language, specifically English, will only open the path to a profession such as teaching which is believed to be a 'female profession', and the majority of the male population are hesitant to engage in the field of learning English language. The males in society fear the harm that would be caused to their hegemonic masculine identity by learning English as a language instead of a subject like Mathematics which is believed to be a 'masculine subject'. Raewyn Connell's concept of hegemonic masculinity serves as an analytical instrument to identify those attitudes and practices among men that perpetuate gender inequality, involving both men's domination over women and the power of some men over other (often minority groups of) men. This paper examines the impact of hegemonic masculinity on English language learning in a Sri Lankan context and the reasons for the aforementioned. It was found out that the majority of the male population held into the conception that their hegemonic masculine identity would be detrimental by choosing to learn English language over a subject such as Mathematics.

Key words: Hegemonic masculinity, English language learning, Sri Lankan context

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