

Diversity in the Varieties of Global English Used in the Current Ethnic Setting of Sri Lanka, From an Ecological Perspective

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This paper explores the unique nature of super diversity in the varieties of English spoken in the current ethnic setting of Sri Lanka. Since, historically Sri Lanka has been colonized thrice respectively by the Portuguese, Dutch and British, the impact bestowed by the British colonization from 1796 until the fall of the Kandyan kingdom in 1815 is noteworthy. With a lot of socio economic and socio political and linguistic changes occurred in the course of time for many centuries, paving the way for English to merge with several local languages such as Sinhala and Tamil along with productively being used by diverse ethnicities as in Sinhalese, Tamils, Muslims and Burghers, standard and sub standard varieties of English have been emerged. Thus, the researcher has analyzed disciplinary aspects that she has encountered in this study such as Sri Lankan English in the public domain, Sri Lankan English in English Language Teaching and Sri Lankan English literature at a local exposure with the sample of about 60 undergraduates in a national university in the country for a period of about six months. With such a historical background of English which has been existing in the country for more than 21 years maintaining a peculiar position as a lingua franca, according to Prof. Manique Guneseekara (2010), 'In Sri Lanka today, most people are quite happy to speak English, and are not interested in which variety they speak. This attitude is spurred by the immense power of English in today's postcolonial Sri Lanka. "The importance of advocating a standard for the language" in terms of Sri Lankan English has been reiterated by many academics especially in a challenging ELT class room setting in a context, where "many Englishes" idea have been accommodated (Wasala,2010) Sri Lankan English and Standard Sri Lankan English also shown further sub standards of the language such as Malay English, Sinhala English and Tamil English and also the type varied in terms of the user's home town with their own distinguished characteristics as morphology and syntax with their unique practices. However, this variation does not block a local's understanding of the communication taking place. According to 45 students of the total, while the controversy has been prevailing for decades now whether to believe in such an existence of sub varieties and accommodating them or not in their day to day academic and professional work, the researcher found out that it is proven to be a very creative and productive process throughout, but the need for validation is a compulsion of the day, since the student population has faced a considerable difficulty in following the 'best practice'.

Key Words: Standard Sri Lankan English, Sri Lankan English, Morphology, Syntax, Standards and Varieties, Ethnic Setting