Language Planning and Future of the National Languages of Sri Lanka

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Language planning is a deliberate effort to influence the function, structure, or acquisition of languages or language variety within a speech community. It is often associated with government planning. The goals of language planning differ depending on the nation or organization, but generally include making planning decisions and possibly changes for the benefit of communication. Planning or improving effective communication can also lead to other social changes such as language shift or assimilation. This research paper discusses how English is established as a Link Language and how Sinhala and Tamil National Languages are given the Official Language status as described in the 13th amendment of the Constitution of the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka of 1987, and how that affects the future of the language planning in Sri Lanka.The problems are studied through a description of the language situation and language policy in Sri Lanka. This study is an attempt to relate the political agenda underlying its introduction and contents originating from political, national, religious and other ideologies. Data will be analysed in three areas: the language situation, the language planning ideologies of the language policy makers and ideas of the linguists. Information about the language situation includes the essential social, political, religious and economic structures which condition the language policy and which constitute the setting for its implementation. Data will be collected from official reports. This study will view English as a Link language affecting the allocation of different functions of varieties in a community including the medium of education and how that affects the use of National Languages in such a function of varieties in future. Finally it examines the extent to which language policy in Sri Lanka is aimed at achieving multilingual problems.

Key Words: Language Policy, Language Planning, Language Shift, Language Situation, Link Language