A Language Ideology-based Exploration of Ethnicity, Nationhood, and Power in Sri Lanka

by

Agra Rajapakse Lekamlage

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Doctor of Philosophy

Approved April 2022 by the
Graduate Supervisory Committee:

Doris Warriner, Co-Chair
Aya Matsuda, Co-Chair
Matthew Prior

ARIZONA STATE UNIVERSITY

May 2022

ABSTRACT

This dissertation study examined the language ideologies about the different languages used in Sri Lanka to understand how they may reflect and align with ideologies about ethnicity and national belonging and structures of power operating in Sri Lankan society. It was a qualitative study which gathered data by interviewing twelve participants from the four main ethnic communities of Sri Lanka. Through the analysis of data comprising observations about language evaluations and practices, three main themes were generated. First, the study showed that Sri Lanka is a complex multilingual context in which the status of different languages changes according to context, audience as well as the participants of an interaction and that therefore it is difficult to describe languages by static labels such as “first”, “second” or “link” language. Secondly, the study found the situation of English in Sri Lanka is still largely influenced by cultural practices introduced during colonial rule which has caused it to function as a basis for social division. The study also found that the situation of Sinhala and Tamil in Sri Lanka is shaped by ideologies about ethnicity and the social power that the two ethnic groups, the Sinhalese and Tamils, who speak the two languages, hold in society. Taken together these three main findings of the study showed that language ideologies in circulation in Sri Lanka as observed by the study participants were closely linked to and align with and sometimes even reinforce ideologies about ethnicity, national belonging and power in Sri Lankan society.

To

Professor Fernando and Dr Vivi

for making this PhD possible

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

There are many individuals without whose support I would not have been able to complete this dissertation. First, I want to thank the twelve participants who took part in the interviews with as much – or sometimes even more – enthusiasm than myself. Some of them were friends, but most of them were people that I had not seen or spoken to before. Yet, all of them shared their stories generously and without holding back. I am indebted to these men and women for opening up about life experiences – some of which were extremely sensitive and some even traumatic - without any reservation. It was an honor to be trusted with those stories and experiences and I tried to do my best to give voice to them in my study.

I had heard stories of many stressful experiences with supervisors from my colleagues before I embarked on this journey. This made me consider my options carefully before selecting my co-chairs Dr. Doris Warriner and Dr. Aya Matsuda. Today, I have no regrets whatsoever about the choice I made. Thank you Dr. Warriner and Dr. Aya for being two wonderful mentors and doing everything that you possibly could to make every stage of this experience run as smoothly as possible.

Dr. Warriner, I knew nothing about qualitative research before I met you and I am grateful for everything that I learnt about it in your class as well as the many other snippets of knowledge on research, various fields of scholarship and teaching that I gathered through working with you. I cannot say how much I appreciate the detailed and thoughtful feedback you provided and the time and energy you invested in it. I am also deeply touched by the gentleness with which you supervised me and the concern you

showed through follow-up emails, constant words of encouragement and genuine excitement about my progress. Thank you for showing that a great supervisor can also be a wonderful human being.

Dr Aya, I am grateful for your guidance, especially in matters related to World Englishes. I know I tend to get carried away and appreciate the good sense with which you put me back on track. I am also grateful for the sense of equanimity and professionalism that you showed throughout the supervision process.

I would also like to say a big thank you to my family for being there for me throughout this period. I am grateful to my brother for doing everything that he could to make my stay in the U.S. as comfortable as possible. My mother has always been a pillar of support and I would never have come this far in my academic life without her encouragement and the constant faith she had in me. Thank you *amma* for believing in me and showing me the way!

There were three people who kept me sane during the two long years that it took me to finish this study. My friends (and sisters) Tirzah, Rizana and Suharshi – thank you for listening to my woes and not letting me lose track. Those long chats on the phone where I vented out my frustration on you helped me keep going and I am forever grateful for your friendship.

Last but not least, a special thank you goes out to my three crazy non-human friends – Danny, Cody and Cookie – for easing my stress and providing me companionship as I worked long hours on this dissertation. Thank you for all your love and for helping me understand that life is bigger than a dissertation.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

CHAPTER Page

LIST OF FIGURES

CHAPTER 1

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

The seeds of my interest in this study were planted when, back in 2005 as a college student, I had read the world-famous memoir – *From Third World to First* - by Lee Kuan Yew, the visionary leader and founding father of Singapore. In his ponderings on the economic situation of Sri Lanka in the post-independent years, he says that the "English educated brown "*pukka sahib*"" prime minister Solomon West Ridgeway Dias Bandaranaike's decision to make Sinhala the national language of the country in 1956 had started the "unravelling of Ceylon" (Yew, 2000, p. 413). Until I read this, I had not seen the country's failure to achieve socio-economic development in the time after independence as having anything to do with language.

As an 80s kid I was witness to the gradual decline in the country's socio-economic situation over the years but had come to accept it as caused by the long-drawn out civil war, the military expenditure of which was projected as taking an enormous toll on the economy of the country. However, Yew's (2000) reading of Sri Lanka's failure to achieve socio-economic progress in its postcolonial years - which he had witnessed first-hand when he visited the country in 1966 - as connected to the "tragedy of making Sinhalese the official language" (p. 415) made me see the country's sociopolitical history in the time after independence in a completely different light. According to Yew (2000), "Ceylon was Britain's model commonwealth country" which "had been carefully prepared for independence" (p. 414), and when the British left in 1948, it "was a good middle-class country with fewer than 10 million people," "a relatively good standard of education, with two universities of high quality in Colombo and Kandy teaching in

English," and "a civil service largely of locals, and experience in representative government starting with city council elections in the 1930s" (p. 414). The idea that a language policy decision had reversed the promise that Sri Lanka had held for becoming a model postcolonial nation, and had instead become "the epitome of conflict, pain, sorrow, and hopelessness" (2000, p. 418) came to haunt me as a student of language and linguistics. My interest in the idea grew when I read about the language policy proposed and adopted by Lee Kuan Yew himself in Singapore in its post-independence years, which was in stark contrast to that of Sri Lanka. I continued to revisit and mull over it as a teacher and a student of language and linguistics in Sri Lanka, and when one of my professors in graduate school at Arizona State University who advised me on choosing a topic for my doctoral research told me to pick something that I would not easily lose interest in, I was certain that it was what I wanted to pursue.

The rest of this chapter carries four sections. In the next section, I present my research questions. Secondly, I provide a brief review of the literature relevant to the study through an examination of the role played by language policy and planning in the nation building enterprise of Sri Lanka in the period after independence and how it had got closely embroiled within the ethno-nationalist politics of the nation. It also looks at how language policy planning had contributed to other structures of power operating within Sri Lankan society. Next, I present an overview of the context and the historical background of Sri Lanka which served as the research context of the study. The final section of the chapter comprises an overview of the organization of the rest of the chapters of this dissertation.

Research Questions

Given below are the research questions that guided the study.

1. How do participants understand and evaluate their own language practices? What do they say about other language practices and speakers of other languages in Sri Lanka?

2. What do participants' evaluations of language reveal about existing power structures, relations between ethnic groups, and/or experiences of national belonging?

Review of Literature

Spolsky (2012) traces the origin of the field of study known as language policy and planning to the period after the Second World War "when linguists were hopeful of resolving the language problems of newly independent states" through language planning, the outcome of which was "an officially mandated set of rules for language use and form within a nation-state" (p. 3) or a language policy. Thus, as explained by Spolsky (2012), language planning and nationalism reinforced each other in Europe in the early nineteenth century at the end of the First World War.

The development of language policy and planning as a field of scholarship is therefore closely tied to the dissolution of colonial empires and the emergence of linguistically heterogeneous newly independent nations in Asia and Africa (Garcia, 2012, p. 82). Language policy and planning efforts were implemented in the territories that had formerly been colonies of various European states in their efforts at developing as democratic nation-states, which had become the dominant model of political organization

in Europe in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries and had been "subsequently exported to other parts of the world" (Wright, 2012, p. 59). Blommaert (2006) contends that the "Herderian 'one language–one culture–one territory' complex" which promoted monolingualism, the language of a particular group as a "pure standard" and their territory as "bounded" and "homogenous" had been propagated by European powers to colonial territories that they ruled (p. 518). Thus, language policy and planning is essentially linked to colonialism and the ideologies of political and cultural homogeneity that it sought to establish in the territories that they ruled as well as postcolonialism and its many challenges such as ethnic conflicts and ideas of national belonging.

According to the current language policy of Sri Lanka, both Sinhala and Tamil share equal status as official languages and English serves as what is defined as a "link language." The first formal language policy of Sri Lanka was introduced by the British during their rule. The recommendation made by the British-appointed Colbrook-Cameron Commission of 1832 to make English the official language of Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) "elevated the status of English, the language of the colonizer, above the two native Sri Lankan languages, Sinhalese and Tamil" (Herath, 2015, p.249) by implementing it as the working official language with the aim of integrating "the island's colonial administration with the rest of the empire" (Canagarajah, 2005, p. 421). Herath (2015) contends that the language policy adopted by the British in Sri Lanka reflects an attitude of "colonial celebration" of English (Pennycook, 2000, p. 108). The position of glory that the new policy elevated the language of the colonizer to, gradually paved the way to it being associated with social privilege and superiority.

The language policy of British colonial rule privileged the English-speaking minority Tamils and Burghers over the non-English speaking majority Sinhalese. As observed by Manogaran (1987), the number of Tamils having access to English education at this time was higher than that of Sinhalese which enabled more Tamils to gain employment in the British-run administration so that "even in predominantly Sinhala areas, a disproportionate percentage of Tamils were employed in the public sector and were earning higher incomes" (cited in Herath, 2015, p. 250-251). On the other hand, Sarvan (1997) contends that the British favored the Burghers over the Sinhalese and Tamils and thus "made use" of them "on the middle and lower rungs of administration and bureaucracy" (p. 528), leading to a majority of Burghers to be employed in the clerical, transport and communication services under British rule (p. 527). This linguicism (Phillipson, 1992) created by the first language policy of the British colonial government had caused the non-English speaking majority Sinhalese to feel socially marginalized and economically deprived (Herath, 2015).

The sense of disgruntlement that the new policy had caused amongst the Sinhalese had gradually grown stronger so that by the time of independence it had taken the form of animosity against the Tamils and the Burghers. Explaining the reasons behind the discrimination suffered by the Burghers at the hands of the Sinhalese during the nationalist campaign for independence from British colonial rule, Roberts et al (1989) claim that the sense of superiority which the Burghers adopted – at least in part due to the privileges that their fluency in English made available to them – was most keenly felt by "the Sinhala person at the margins of the middle class, the individual who lacked fluency in English and the social graces expected of middle class gentility" (p. 13). The harsh

disparagement and the mockery directed at the Burghers and their western ways of living during the time of the struggle for independence could thus be seen as related to, perhaps emerging from, the colonial language policy of elevating English over the two indigenous languages.

According to Coperahewa (2009), at independence, Sri Lanka, along with Pakistan and India, faced the "critical issue of deciding which language – or languages – should replace English as the official language(s)" (p. 70). Coperahawa (2012) explicates how a number of factors similar to those presented by Anderson (2006) in relation to the growth of nationalism in Europe had come together in Sri Lanka to create the strong sense of nationalism around which the Sinhalese leaders of the time rallied around in the campaign for independence. He presents the Donoughmore Commission of 1931, which granted universal suffrage to Sri Lankans and thereby placed the majority Sinhalese in a privileged position, as one of the many factors that led to the growth of nationalism. The idea of mother-tongue education was also gaining popularity at this time giving rise to an increase in literacy in the vernaculars and the consequent growth of a sizable reading public in Sinhala. The growing demand for and interest in the use of Sinhala in newspapers, journals, schools, textbooks and novels was further heightened by the government sponsorship of the publication of school textbooks and other reading material. Coperahewa (2012) contends that "perhaps the most important contribution to the spread of Sinhala during the second and third decades of the century was its increased use as a 'print language' and that there was an increase in the number of publishing houses and printing presses during the time after the 1920s in urban cities like Colombo catering to the new literati which in turn gave rise to "various scholarly movements and

linguistic work" (p. 860). Thus, language had contributed to the creation of a literate middle-class who were at the forefront of the nationalist struggle. Perhaps there is no surprise therefore in the fact that some of the prominent demands of the independence movement also centered around language.

Replacing English with Sinhala and Tamil as official languages of the new nation had been one of the key demands of nationalist leaders (of Sinhalese and Tamil origin) lobbying for independence. After the end of the colonial era, the language issue gained even more prominence in the debate on nationhood and eventually drove a wedge between the Sinhalese and Tamils. This is because the demands of the Sinhalese nationalists increasingly took the face of a "Sinhala Buddhist revitalization" movement (Roberts et al, 1989, p.14), pushing activists from non-Sinhalese ethnic minorities to the periphery of the struggle. If the colonial language policy had reflected an attitude of glorification of English, by the time of independence it had taken on the face of a glorification of Sinhala. For example, a group of Sinhalese nationalists, popularly known as *Hela Hawula*, initiated a movement which sought to purify the language by attempting to rid it of the Sanskrit and Pali borrowings which had entered the language in the twelfth century A.D. (Roberts et al, 1989, p. 14). The leader of *Hela Hawula* is supposed to have compared Sinhala with Tamil and claimed that the former should be the language of the new nation as Sri Lanka is the only country in which it is used as opposed to which there are "millions and millions of people to safeguard the Tamil language" in South India (Coperahewa, 2012, p. 884).

The language policy of 1956 which replaced English with Sinhala as the only official language of the country marked the culmination of such nationalist demands and

divided the two ethnic groups. The promotion of the identity of the Sinhalese Buddhists as forming the foundation of the identity of the newly independent Sri Lanka was at the heart of the 1956 language policy, which is connoted through the term "Sinhala Only" bill that is commonly used to refer to it. The 'one language–one culture–one territory' ideology promoted by Herder is very much evidenced in the attempts made by both the Sinhalese and the Tamils to promote language as a key component of their nationalist movements. The language policies of both the Sinhalese dominant Sri Lankan government and the military regime of the LTTE used language as a symbol of nationalist unity.

It was perhaps ironic that the first language policy change made by independent Sri Lanka in 1956 was modeled upon the same principles as those promoted by the language policy of British colonial rule. According to Casinader et al (2018), "the movement of Sinhalese Buddhist reform and cultural revaluation" was unleashed by "the secular logic of the colonial State" promoted by the Colebrook Cameron reforms (p. 1). Interestingly, the subsequent language policy changes had promoted multilingualism and encouraged all citizens, both the Sinhalese majority and the minorities, to learn the language of the other. However, it is again ironic that this is presented as a solution based on Western models of social organization or recommended by western-educated bureaucrats or experts rather than being modeled upon the ideologies of plurilingualism and pluricentricity that were an essential part of the language practices in the precolonial period when people of different ethno-social allegiances lived together in harmony.

Although Tamil was also later accorded official status (in 1978), the move had come too late to prevent the disgruntled Tamil youths from forming a militant group

known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) who pushed the country into a full-scale civil war lasting twenty-nine years. Interestingly, when the LTTE established its de facto state in 1990, language again served as a rallying point for Tamil nationalism (Herath, 2015). That the Tamil language could be empowered only through the establishment of a separate Tamil state was one of the arguments put forth by the LTTE in favor of separatism (Canagarajah, 2005). The policies of "Tamil only" and "pure Tamil" adopted and promoted by the military regime and imposed through military power in the areas under their rule demonstrate that language was as much a key factor in the Tamil nationalist movement as it was in the Sinhala nationalist movement. Although the LTTE was militarily defeated in 2009, tensions between the two ethnic groups have not abated completely and language remains one of the key areas in which fissures in ethnic harmony keeps surfacing constantly. Additionally, the aftermath of the war has also seen tensions erupting between the majority Sinhalese and the Muslims who comprise the second largest minority group in the country, who are also Tamil-speaking. These reached a climax with a series of bomb blasts targeting Sri Lankan Christians in 2019 which were purportedly carried out by a fundamentalist Muslim group that caused the already prevalent tensions between the Muslims and the Sinhalese to come to a head.

A policy towards a trilingual state in which all citizens will be proficient in the three main languages was proposed in 2010 by the Lessons Learnt and Reconciliation Commission (LLRC) appointed by the Sri Lankan government to look back on the period of the civil war and make recommendations to resolve the tensions which caused it. Yet, one of the very first moves made by the current president of Sri Lanka who came into power on a majority Sinhalese vote base in 2019 was to do away with the Tamil version

of the national anthem introduced by the previous government as a gesture of commitment to ethnic harmony between the different groups. There were also many pictures in circulation on social media in the aftermath of the presidential election of the Tamil section of public sign boards containing information in all three languages having been vandalized by racist groups.

The statutory adoption of Sinhala as the official language also did not eliminate the dominance of English within the language ecology of Sri Lanka, the continued privileged position of which seems to have resulted in yet another set of socio-economic concerns (Canagarajah, 2005; Coperahewa, 2009, Herath, 2015). According to Canagarajah (2005):

> …many rural schools still lacked English teachers; while those traditionally possessing English proficiency passed on English to their children through childhood bilinguality, others had to strive through adolescent bilinguality; while the latter formulaically tried to master the grammatical rules in schools, the former developed communicative competence through everyday use at home and in social circles. The English-proficient also found a linguistic criterion to distinguish themselves from the rest in order to maintain their vested interests: even though both their dialects were different from British English, theirs was 'standard Sri Lankan English,' while the dialect of the lower status groups was stigmatized as 'non-standard Sri Lankan English' (Kandiah 1979). Despite efforts to raise the status of Sinhala and Tamil, then, the colonial social stratification still prevailed in a modified form - ensuring in turn the valued status of English. (p. 424)

Canagrajah (2005) also argues that the 1956 policy "drove Tamils further toward English" (p. 424) as it was seen by them as a culturally unmarked language as opposed to Sinhala which was indelibly marked with the ethno-nationalist ideologies that had come to play a central role in the politics of postcolonial Sri Lanka. Thus, the 1956 language policy had given rise to numerous tensions in the social, political and economic milieus of the country in the time after independence. The study was conducted in this backdrop where language-related issues co-exist alongside (and may contribute to) ethnic conflicts, ethnic tensions as well as other socio-economic challenges the country has had to contend with in its time as an independent nation.

Context and Background

In this section I provide an overview of the context of Sri Lanka which would be useful for understanding the points discussed in the data analysis chapters. The data related to the population presented in this section are taken from the Census of Housing and Population conducted in 2012.

Geographic location

Sri Lanka is a South Asian island-nation located near the tip of South India and home to roughly twenty million people of varying ethnic and religious affiliations. Officially known as the Democratic Socialist Republic of Sri Lanka, (Ceylon till 1972), Sri Lanka has a land area of 65,610 square kilometers, and lies south of the Indian peninsula separated from India by the Palk Strait. Its geographic location has served as a main factor influencing the key sociopolitical events taking place in the country from ancient times. Sri Lanka's proximity to India and it being located at a key juncture on the sea routes between the Far East and the West are crucial aspects of its geographic

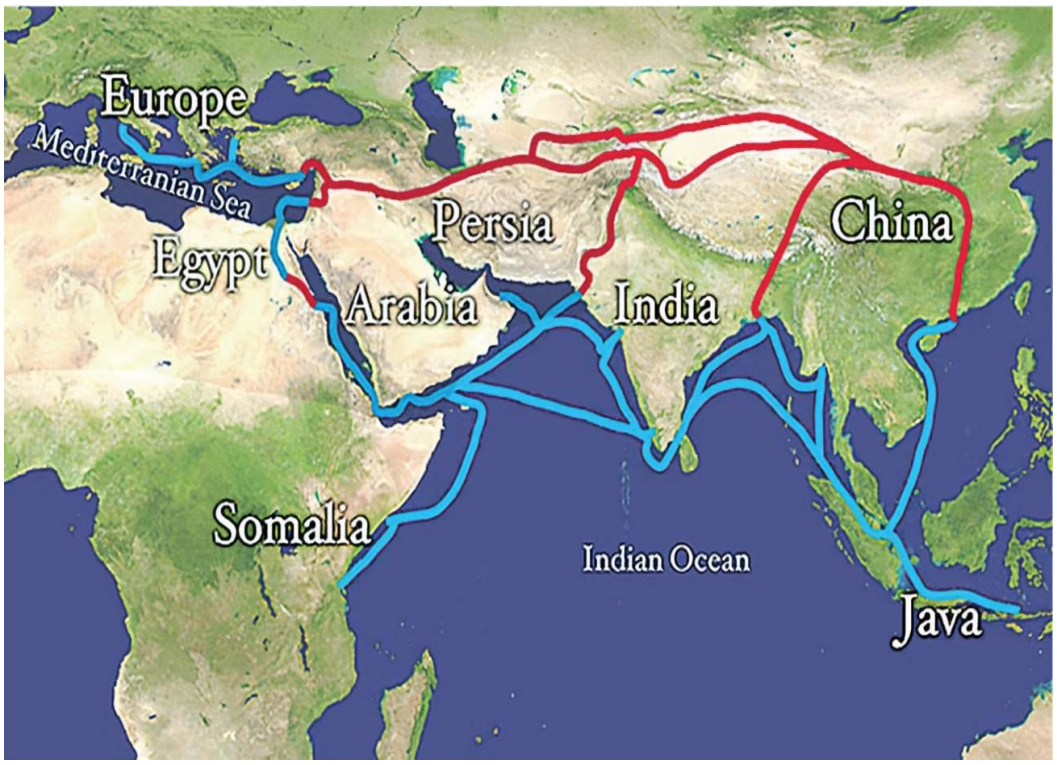
location that have opened Sri Lanka to various political, social and cultural influences through traders, travelers and political invasions from different parts of the world.

Due to its geographic proximity to India, Sri Lanka has been under the constant influence of its neighboring nation politically, commercially and culturally. Both the Sinhalese – the majority community - and the Tamils who comprise the second largest ethnic community are considered to have migrated from India at different points in history (Coperahewa, 2009). Being closely located to India also opened Sri Lanka to a number of invasions by Indian people of varying origins as well as trade relations with its neighbor. The introduction of Buddhism to the island through an emissary of the Mauryan king Asoka in the 3rd century BC is considered to have been a turning point in the lives of Sri Lankans due to the massive impact it has had on the cultural life of the country (Coperahewa, 2009).

On the other hand, its central location in the ancient trading routes such as the Silk Raod, which was an ancient trade network connecting the Far East with the Middle East and the West, had attracted traders and travelers from various parts of the world to the island-nation from ancient times, amongst whom have been well known figures such as the Chinese Buddhist monk and pilgrim Fa-Hien (5th century AD), the Venetian merchant cum explorer Marco Polo (13th century AD) and the famous Arabian trader Ibn Battuta (14th century AD). Its central location between the East and the West as well as its rare spices also attracted the attention of the European trading nations in the period between the 16th to the mid-20th century, resulting in it being colonized by the Portuguese, the Dutch, and the British respectively from 1505 to 1948. The Portuguese (1505 – 1658) held control over the maritime provinces of the country which they passed into the hands

of the Dutch in 1658. The British took over the areas under Dutch control in 1796 and later took complete control over the country in 1815 and continued to rule it till 1948 when the country was granted independence (De Silva, 2019). Figure 1 below shows the central location of Sri Lanka on the Silk Route.

Figure 1: Sri Lanka on the Silk Route

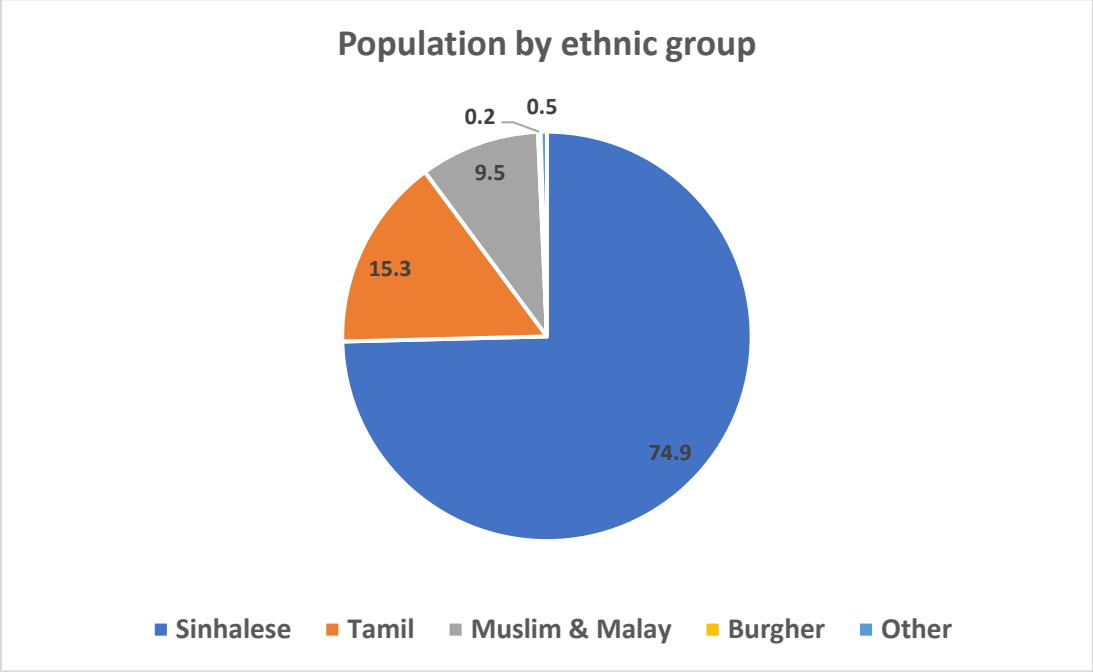


Ethnic, religious and linguistic composition

Sri Lanka is home to people of different ethnic, religious and linguistic groups. Sinhala is the language of the majority Sinhalese who comprise 74.9% of the population while Tamil is considered the language of Tamils who are the second largest ethnic group of the country and comprise 15.3% of the population. Tamil is also spoken by the Sri Lankan Moors and Malays, who together form 9.5% of the population. English is considered to be used as a first language by the Burghers who are descendants of the

three European powers who ruled the country and form 0.2% of the population. Although the Burghers are the only ethnic community for the entirety of whom English serves the purpose of a first language, it is also used as first language by an elite minority of Sri Lankans of all ethnic origins, as a result of which it is more commonly identified with the upper-middle class than the Burghers. In addition to the small minority of people who use English as a first language a larger number of people from all ethnic groups use it as a second language. Figure 2 below presents the percentage that each ethnic group comprises of the entire population.

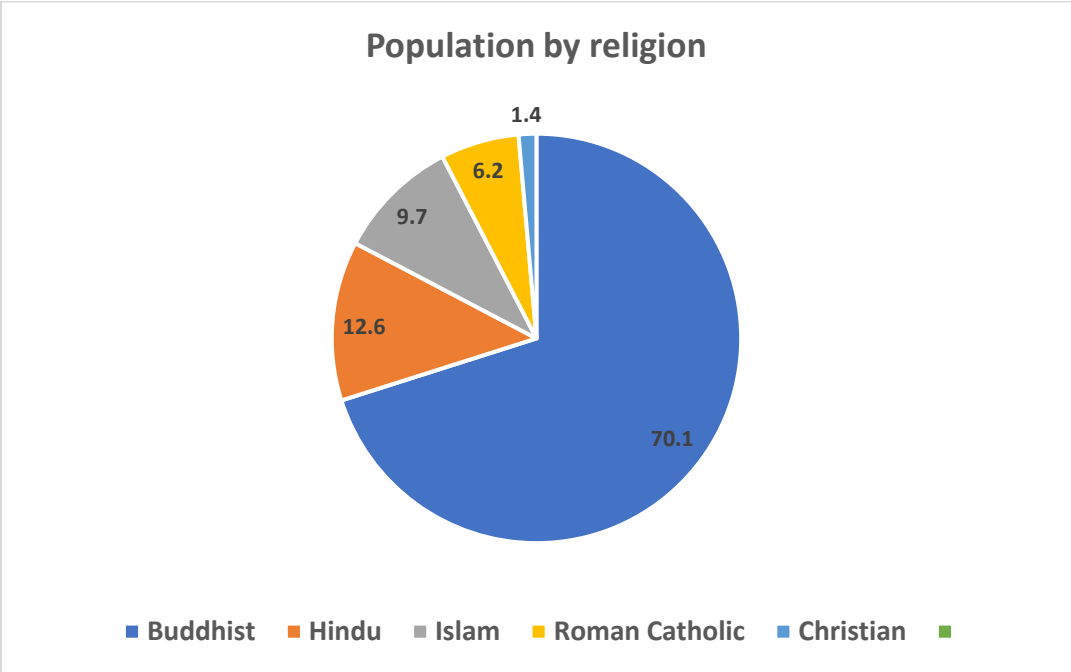
Figure 2: Population of Sri Lanka by ethnic group



When it comes to religious affiliations of Sri Lanka, a majority of the Sinhalese follow Buddhism, while a majority of the Tamils are Hindus. Buddhists form 70.1% of the population while Hinduism is followed by 12.6%. Islamists, who form 9.7% of the population comprise both the Moors and Malays of Sri Lanka. A percentage of 6.2 and

1.4 respectively comprise Roman Catholics and Christians. Followers of Catholicism and Christianity comprise a minority of the Sinhalese and Tamils and a majority of the Burghers. These figures are illustrated below in Figure 3.

Figure 3: Population of Sri Lanka by religion



The Sinhalese are scattered across all districts of the island with the highest concentration of the population seen in Gampaha (13.7%) and Colombo (11.7%) districts in the Western Province. They are considered to have arrived in Sri Lanka from North India in the 5th century BC. According to the *Mahavamsa*, the chief historical chronicle of Sri Lanka, Vijaya, the founding father of the Sinhalese and his companions landed at Thambapanni (present day Puttalam) after being banished for misconduct by his father Sinhabahu who reigned over Sihapura, a North Indian kingdom (De Silva, 2019, p. 6). Legend holds that the Sinhalese people carry lion's blood as Sinhabahu, Vijaya's father, is considered to have been fathered by a lion. The ethnic name "*Sinhala*" has derived

from "*Sinhale*," which means "the blood of the lion," with *Sinha* meaning "lion" and "*le*" meaning "blood." The fact that the flag of Sri Lanka carries an image of a lion holding a sword shows its symbolic significance to the Sinhalese people.

The ethnic community of Tamils comprises two distinct groups – Sri Lankan Tamil and Indian Tamil. The group known as Sri Lankan Tamils are considered to have arrived as traders, invaders and mercenaries in ancient times (De Silva, 2019, p. 13) while those known as Indian Tamils were brought from South India as migrant workers by the British to work on the tea plantations during their rule over the island. The Sri Lankan Tamils (earlier known as Ceylon Tamils) is concentrated in the North and East of the island while the Indian Tamils, occupy the Central Highlands on account of a large majority of them being workers on tea plantations (Britannica). The highest number of Sri Lankan Tamils are concentrated within the district of Jaffna (25.4%) in the Northern Province and Batticaloa (16.8%) in the Eastern Province, while the third largest Tamil population of 10.4% is found in Colombo (Western Province). Over 75% of the Indian Tamil population is found in the Central Province where there is a high number of tea estates. Although there is disagreement regarding it, the evidence currently available points towards the idea that Vijaya and his companions had arrived (De Silva, 2019, p. 14), and a "Sinhala and Buddhist state civilization" was already dominant in the island by the 4th century BC (Roberts, 2010, p.9), before the Tamils arrived there.

Ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamils had been a common feature in the politics of Sri Lanka after independence but they reached new heights in the July 1983 riots, which according to De Silva (2019) was a "ferocious episode of ethnic violence" of the kind never before seen in the history of Sri Lanka (p. 694). The anti-

Tamil riots of 1983 were a response on the part of the Sinhalese in the South against one of the attacks against the state security forces in Jaffna by the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Ealam (LTTE) – one of the separatist militant groups which had started gaining prominence in the North with the declining power of the Tamil political parties who held moderate views (p. 694). De Silva (2019) holds that although they were a reaction to an attack by the LTTE, in retrospect the initial attack appears "relatively minor" compared to the level of violence witnessed in the riots which marked a turning point in Sri Lankan politics and the ethnic relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils. The 1983 riots are also generally considered to have served as the immediate trigger for the twenty-six-year-long civil war which ensued between the LTTE and the Sri Lankan government.

The Muslims, who were given the name "Sri Lankan Moors" during the time of Portuguese rule in the 16th century (Kearney, 1978, p. 523), are of Arabian and Indian origin (Ali, 1981, p. 71). The highest concentration of Muslims/Moors of 14.9% is in Ampara in the Eastern Province while 13.2% is in Colombo (Western Province). Although both groups follow Islam, the Malays are ethnically distinct from the Moors or Muslims and are considered to have been brought as soldiers to Sri Lanka (then Ceylon) during the Dutch and British colonial periods (Nordhoff, 2012). A majority of the Malays are concentrated within the Western Province with 32.7% in Colombo and 28.8 % in Gampaha. The ethnic relations between the Sinhalese and the Muslims/Malays were relatively peaceful until a number of Christian churches were bombed on Easter Sunday of 2019, which were alleged to have been carried out by an Islamist terrorist group. This initiated a wave of Islamophobia across the country and significantly damaged the relations between the two groups. The attacks were especially condemned as Christians,

who were their targets, are considered to have led a largely peaceful existence within the Sri Lankan context.

The Burghers are descendants of the Portuguese, the Dutch and the British who ruled the country at different points of its colonial history. Like the Malays, a majority of the Burghers also live in Colombo (34%) and Gampaha (28.2%) districts in the Western Province. The Portuguese Burghers are at the bottom of the Burgher social hierarchy while the Dutch Burghers hold themselves as superior amongst their community (Roberts et al, 1989). According to Sarvan (1997), the British favored the Burghers over the Sinhalese and Tamils and "made use" of them "on the middle and lower rungs of administration and bureaucracy" (p. 528).

Figure 4: Districts and provinces of Sri Lanka

National identity

The national identity of Sri Lanka is founded upon the identity of the Sinhalese Buddhists. After Buddhism was introduced to the island in the 3rd century BC, it took root as the state religion. According to de Silva (2019), the conversion of Devanampiya Tissa (247 BC-207 BC) - who ruled over Anuradhapura Kingdom (which was the first kingdom of ancient Sri Lanka) when Buddhism was introduced - "was the momentous event" that led to "Buddhism and royal authority" to be linked together and support and draw strength from each other (p.60). The identity of the Sinhalese Buddhists was given further prominence when the national identity was re-established after gaining independence from the British in 1948. The constitution of Sri Lanka states that the State "shall give to Buddhism the foremost place" and "protect and foster" it (p.3).

The prominence given to the identity of the Sinhalese Buddhists is also depicted in the national flag, a picture of which is given below in Figure 5.

Figure 5: The national flag of Sri Lanka

As explained in "National symbols of Sri Lanka" (2018), the lion in the flag represents the might of the nation while the four *bo* leaves at the corners stand for "Buddhism and

its influence on the nation." They also stand for the Buddhist virtues, kindness, friendliness, happiness and equanimity. The maroon color represents the Sinhalese people while the green and orange stripes on the left-hand side of the flag stand for the two main ethnic minorities, the Moors and the Tamils. This shows the prominence given to the Sinhalese and Buddhism within the Sri Lankan state.

Overview of Chapters

In Chapter 2, I discuss raciolinguistics, language policy and planning, and postcolonialism - the three fields which form the theoretical framework of the study – and explain the usefulness of adopting these three theoretical lenses in its analysis of data. In the section on raciolinguistics, I examine the ideas of co-naturalization of language and race as well as "languaging race" and "racing language" which are proposed by Rosa and Flores (2017) and Alim (2016) as key ideas in their theorization of raciolinguistics. In the section on language policy and planning, I examine the ideas of linguistic homogeneity and nationalism which form an essential part of the development of the scholarly field of language policy and planning and show how they have played a significant role in the nationalist movements in Sri Lanka. I also introduce the concept of postcolonialism and show that raciolinguistics and language policy planning as they manifested within the Sri Lankan context are essentially linked to its postcolonial history. The key ideas that I examine in relation to these three fields of study/perspectives inform my analysis of data in chapters Four, Five and Six.

In Chapter Three, I formally state the research questions that guided the study, provide an overview of the context within which the study is situated, then describe the research design and present the limitations of the study. Chapters Four to Six comprise

the analysis of data. In Chapter Four, I examine the complexity of multilingualism in Sri Lanka paying specific attention to the status that different languages hold within the language ecology of the country and how they align with or deviate from the status assigned to them in the official language policy. In Chapter Five, I investigate the situation of English in Sri Lanka and the influence of colonization on beliefs, perceptions, attitudes, and practices related to it. In Chapter Six, I examine the role played by language in the construction of ideas of nationalism in the Sri Lankan context as well as how it has influenced ethnic tensions that have come to play a significant role in Sri Lankan politics in the aftermath of independence. Taken together, Chapters Four, Five and Six examine the ways in which language is closely tied to ideas of ethnicity, national belonging and structures of power operating within Sri Lankan society.

Lastly, in Chapter Seven I review the findings of the study and examine its methodological and theoretical implications. I conclude the chapter with an examination of directions for future research that the study indicates.

CHAPTER 2

CHAPTER TWO: CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

In this study, I examine language ideologies about different languages being used in Sri Lanka to understand how they may align with ideologies about ethnicity, national belonging and structures of social power. In this chapter I introduce and discuss the key concepts and terms related to language ideology, raciolinguistics and postcolonialism which form the theoretical framework of the study.

Theoretical Framework

The theoretical framework of the proposed study comprised theories of language ideology, raciolinguistics and postcolonialism which are examined in detail in the sections that follow. It should be noted that there could be overlap between these theories resulting from the fact that language ideology and raciolinguistics are interrelated fields.

Language ideology

The concept of ideology has been defined in various ways and it is thus necessary to establish within which of its parameters the study was conducted. According to Blommaert (2006) there exists "a track record of controversy, dispute, and conflict" over the meaning of the word "ideology" (p.510) which would explain the numerous meanings attached to it. There are two main strands of conceptualization of "ideology" expounded in the literature, an examination of which would be useful to explain which of them was used in the study. One of them, and the most dominant as contended by Woolard (1998), is the interpretation of "ideology" as tied in with society and culture resulting in identity formations related to ethnicity, race, religion and various other social groupings (Blommaert, 2006; Woolard, 1998). Blommaert (2006) explains that in this

conceptualization ideologies are “presented as the deeper layers of culture and society, the unspoken assumptions that, as some kind of ‘social cement,’ turn groups of people into communities, societies, and cultures” (p.510). According to Woolard (1998), in this particular interpretation of its meaning, ideology is seen as “derived from, rooted in, reflective of, or responsive to the experience or interests of a particular social position” (location 169). It is in this understanding of the term “ideology,” the perception of it as reflective of people’s beliefs about and attitudes towards their social experience and the subsequent commentary that it thus affords on the world we live in, that I adopt the term in the study. Thus, the study examines people’s perceptions, beliefs and attitudes about language, as well as their observations about their own and others’ language practices, which is commonly known as “metalanguage” or “talk about talk” in linguistics. Although this understanding of ideology sees it as manifested through people’s beliefs and attitudes, they should not be seen as “purely private and possibly idiosyncratic beliefs held by specific individuals” but as “culturally produced and collective” and therefore “expressed or represented in a social and public form” (Cameron, 2006, p. 141-142). This conceptualization of ideology, however, is inevitably linked to its second meaning as expounded in the literature, the definition of which perceives it as rooted in the interests of a particular social group or position and therefore offering “a direct link to inhabitable positions of power - social, political, economic” (Woolard, 1998, location169). Thus, as people’s beliefs and attitudes are never neutral and would be intertwined with the second, Marxian conceptualization of ideology as “tied to the interests of particular social groups and to processes of power and dominance” (Blommaert, 2006, p. 510), the adoption of the term ideology in the study naturally comprises both meanings.

The scholarship on language ideology identifies it as an area of research that has received relatively less attention than other areas of linguistics (Kroskrity, 2007; Woolard, 1994). Kroskrity (2007) observes that while "the relationship between language and thought" has been studied extensively, language users' thoughts about language were "neglected, dismissed, denigrated, or proscribed as objects of study and concern" until recent times (p. 496). He goes on to claim that language ideologies were neglected and even dismissed as unimportant by key figures in anthropology like Franz Boas and Saussure and Bloomfield and Chomsky in linguistics – two fields of study that it straddles (Kroskrity, 2007, p. 496). Formulated as a field by Jakobson (1957, 1960) and further developed by Hymes (1964), the field of research now commonly known as language ideology was later enriched by the work of key scholars like Michael Silverstein, Kathryn Woolard, Judith Irvine and Susan Gal amongst others (Kroskrity, 2007, p.499-500). As such, the literature highlights the potential that language ideology comprises for more extensive research with Blommaert & Verschuren (1998) claiming that research on language ideology could afford an investigation of "elusive phenomena" like "ideologies, public opinion and ideas" (location 3339) and Woolard (1994) that it is a field which promises reward and is "in need of some coordination" (p. 56). The study adopted language ideology as one of the theoretical lenses which would allow the examination of how language policy planning in an under-researched, peripheral context like Sri Lanka could be linked to other ideologies operating in its larger social context.

As scholars in the field contend, language ideology is never about language alone (Woolard, 1998, location 113) and functions as a bridge between the sociocultural experiences of individuals and their "linguistic and discursive resources" (Kroskrity,

2007, p. 507). Described as "the situated, partial, and interested character of conceptions and uses of language" (Errington, 2001, p. 110) and "shared bodies of commonsense notions about the nature of language in the world" (Rumsey, 1990, p. 346), language ideologies may be either implied through communicative practices or conveyed overtly in statements about language as well as language practices (Kroskrity, 2007; Woolard, 1998), p. 496). Research has focused on how language ideology could be tied to group or individual interests and play a role in identity construction. According to Woolard (1998):

> …those working on more social and less formal linguistic concerns in ethnically complex societies, particularly in the west, often have taken the influence of language ideology as given. A Herderian view of language as the expression or definition of identity has been acknowledged as central in coming to terms with ethnic relations and nationalism. But the concerns of this camp were often rather distant from those interested in linguistic forms. (p. 239)

Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) discuss the role played by language in the construction of national identities in Europe in the nineteenth century where language, along with other features such as descent, history, culture and religion were used as sets of identity markers around which people were grouped together. They also show how these groupings worked in much the same way as animals are divided into species in the natural world and contend that "if feathers are predictive of beaks, eggs, and an ability to fly, so is a specific language predictive of a distinct history and culture" (Blommaert & Verschueren, 1998, location 3082). The lack of a distinct language is also shown to have "cast doubts on the legitimacy of a nation" in nineteenth century Europe, a point which

they explain through the example of Ukrainians, who were looked down upon by both Poles and Russians "as peasants, speaking jargon" (location 3084). Blommaert and Verschueren (1998) go on to illustrate how the nationalist ideology as it was conceptualized in nineteenth century Europe centered around an ideology of homogeneism which viewed differences in society "as dangerous and centrifugal" and a society without intergroup differences as ideal (location 3116). A similar conceptualization of linguistic homogeneity as the basis of national unity can be seen in Sri Lanka's 1956 language policy which upheld the language of the Sinhalese as the only national language and its attempt at constructing a national identity around it.

Woolard (1998) also identifies a sociolinguistic research tradition that has seen language ideologies in relation to "the identification of a language with a people and a consequent diagnosis of peoplehood by the criterion of language" (location 340). She sees such an approach as having been particularly useful for studies on multilingual communities in which "there have been self-conscious struggles over language" (location 331). The current study examines the connection between language ideologies and structures of power in society by tracing and analyzing the influence of language ideologies on the beliefs and practices of Sri Lankans of different ethnicities in relation to ideologies about ethnicity, national belonging and other structures of power in society. A considerable amount of research has been carried out in contexts outside of Sri Lanka on the relationship between language ideologies and how they contribute to the construction of various group identities. I present a brief overview of some of these studies below as it would help explicate how the current study would broaden the parameters of language ideology research.

Irvine & Gal (2000) look at three different contexts in which language ideological work operates to create social groupings based on linguistic differentiation. In the first of these, the Nguni languages of southern Africa which had originally acquired click consonants from the Khoi languages as a way of signifying foreignness is shown to have adapted it to create a register difference which indicates social distance and difference within Nguni (p. 46). The second case of ideological work involves the language mapping efforts of nineteenth century European linguists who had hierarchized the Senegalese languages Fula, Wolof and Sereer based on the popular European notion of the time that a language stood for ethnic and territorial identity. As such, they had linked language with "national and racial essences" through which the three languages and their speakers could be differentiated from each other and located on a map (p. 58). In their third example Irvine & Gal (2000) focus on how, upon its declaration of independence in 1991, Macedonia had to face claims to parts of its territory made by three of its neighboring countries - Serbia, Bulgaria and Greece. These territorial claims were all based on linguistic resemblances each country was invoking between Macedonian and their own language. Thus, Irvine & Gal (2000) contend how language ideological work is carried out in different contexts to construct social, ethnic and political differentiation based on linguistic differentiation carried out through three semiotic processes which they identify as iconization, erasure and fractal recursivity.

A study by Errington (2000) examines how the Indonesian language has served to shape the modern Indonesian nation (p. 205). It looks at how Indonesian – a language which does not belong to any one ethnic community of the country – was adopted as the language of independent Indonesia. The move to adopt Indonesian as the language of the

new nation was based on the one language-one nation notion promoted by European nationalist ideology. A more recent and perhaps better-known work on language ideologies is a study carried out by Rosa (2019) which examines the ways in which structural inequalities prevalent in society manifest in the form of racial and linguistic categories in relation to the Latino population in the US. His study shows how racial inequalities manifest through ideologies about language. In an examination of the ways in which the language of Barack Obama was ideologized by Americans in the aftermath of the presidential election of 2008, Alim (2016) shows how particular ethnoracial communities are racialized through language in the US. Hall (2019) also examines how racism against Black Bermudans is expressed through the parody of a sound associated with Black Bermudan speech by White Bermudans. Defending their racialized linguistic performance based on the claim that they are entitled to "make fun of their own people," the White Bermudans construct a stereotype which aligns with social hierarchies extant in contemporary Bermudan society. Thus, most studies on language ideology have found parallels between linguistic categories/structural patterns and sociocultural categories and have related such parallels to an unequal distribution of power in the social context in which the studies have been conducted. In the cases of Senegalese, Macedonian and Indonesian, language is invoked as a symbol of differentiation in nation-making projects or nationalist struggles. The studies by Alim (2016), Hall (2019), and Rosa (2019), on the other hand, show how language serves as the basis on which certain racial groups are marked as different from others. Thus, they all show how language ideologies are closely intertwined with ideologies of ethnicity/race, nationhood and power.

While numerous such studies have been/are being conducted in different parts of the world in contexts outside of Sri Lanka, the research potential of the field of language ideology has barely been tapped into in the Sri Lankan context. On the other hand, while numerous studies have been carried out on the topic of ethnicity as well as language in the Sri Lankan context, a study that has investigated how language ideologies may be tied to ideologies of ethnicity and nationhood and how they in turn may be connected to structures of power in society has not been conducted so far.

Raciolinguistics

The field of study now known as raciolinguistics was popularized through the work of Jonathan Rosa and Nelson Flores. Raciolinguistics is the practice of co-naturalizing language and race which Rosa and Flores (2017) see as an essential part of the "European national and colonial project" which posited Europeanness and whiteness as superior to non-Europeanness and non-whiteness (p. 623). The co-naturalization of race and language, linguistic enregisterment and seeing the practice of constructing groupings based on ethnicity to be of European origin are three of the key concepts that the study used from the field of raciolinguistics. These are looked at in detail in the following sections.

Rosa & Flores (2017) contend that in attempting to formulate a theory of raciolinguistics they were questioning "the historical and contemporary co-naturalization of language and race" and exploring its "analytical and practical implications" in the US and outside (p.622). In his introduction to a collected volume of work on raciolinguistics, Alim (2016) further elaborates on the raciolinguistic perspective by talking about how the way in which Americans spoke about Barack Obama's language use after being

appointed president in 2008 “revealed much about language and racial politics in the United States” (p.1). Thus, the metalanguage surrounding the first Black American president’s language use in the aftermath of the election had shown that there were certain structural features associated with African American speech that were absent in Obama’s language which caused people to claim that he was “talking White” (Alim, 2016, p.1). This practice of “languaging race” is defined by Alim (2016) as the central role played by language “in the construction, maintenance and transformation of racial and ethnic identities” (p.7). In a later work entitled *Looking like a language, sounding like a race,* Rosa (2019) also looks at the concept of “languaging race.” In it he talks about how a *Chicago Sun Times* story represents Latinxs in both negative and positive terms through the use of “contradictory tropes” which reproduce “normative American racial, class, gender and sexual ideals rather than empirical representations of Latinx’s fundamental character” (Dàvila, 2008 as cited in Rosa, 2019). Thus, it presents another instance of language being used to produce racialized subjectivities of a group of people. The concept of “racing language” on the other hand “is mainly concerned with using race theory to better understand the social and political process of sociolinguistic variation” (Alim, 2016, p. 12). Studies that examine the racing of language “aim to make race a central rather than marginal analytic category in the study of sociolinguistics” (p.12).

The ideas of “languaging race” and “racing language” comprise key components of the theory of raciolinguistics and were particularly useful for the current study. I was particularly alert to the participants’ observations, beliefs and attitudes about as well as practices related to languages used in Sri Lanka reflecting instances of language being raced and race being languaged. In other words, the twin concepts of “languaging race”

and “racing language” enabled me to observe if and how the participants’ talk on language and talk on race may be intermingled. As such, the two concepts, which comprises principal components of the theoretical base of raciolinguistics, afforded a useful lens for the analysis of the study participants’ talk about Sri Lankan languages as well as practices related to them.

Another aspect of raciolinguistics relevant to this study is the idea that the process of categorizing people along racial lines through language comprises a central part of the European colonialist project (Rosa & Flores, 2017, p. 622). The authors claim that “the modern world is profoundly shaped by the globalization of European colonialism” and that the distinction between Europeanness and non-Europeanness and whiteness and non-whiteness anchors “the joint institutional (re)production of categories of race and language, as well as perceptions and experiences thereof” (p. 622). This idea proposes an intriguing perspective through which the possible relationship between language ideologies and ethnic categorizations within the Sri Lankan context could be viewed. The efficacy of this aspect of raciolinguistics may appear irrelevant to the proposed study as an organization of social categories on the basis of Europeanness and non-Europeanness, or whiteness and non-whiteness may not be evident in the contemporary Sri Lankan socio-cultural context. However, in so much as the very practice of marking boundaries around artificially imposed notions of peoplehood itself is of European origin and colonial propagation the concept affords another useful lens that the study could adopt. As Blommaert (2006) contends, the “concepts that read through language to ethnic group to land were the stock-in-trade of ideologically useful ‘Standard

Average European' cultural policy sciences of the ages of empire and modernist postcolonialism" (p. 537).

Irvine & Gal (2000) note how the ideology of equating linguistic homogeneity with territorial unity was a key aspect of the nationalist project of nineteenth century Europe which influenced the processes of linguistic differentiation taking place in Senegalese and Macedonian examined in their work. This idea garners further weight through Blommaert's (2006) observation that "plurilingualism, pluridialectism" were very much a part of the "verbal competence of peoples in much of the so-called traditional world" (p. 537). A brief investigation of Sri Lankan history in pre-colonial times would show that various communities of people coexisted without conflict in those times. Roberts (2010) explicates this in no unclear terms.

> *Sihaladvipa, Ceilao, Ceylon* or Sri Lanka as the island has variously been called at different times, has always had diverse bodies of people, "communities" bearing labels that are reproduced subjectively, relationally and dynamically…The term *Sihaladvipa* (and its variants) embodied a notion of overarching ideational sovereignty, that is, what can be called a form of "tributary overlordship" understood in pre-modern Asian vocabulary informed by the *mandala* concept, that which Tambiah has called a "galactic polity." This situation was transformed when the British seized the island in two bites in 1796 and 1815 and proceeded to effect a thorough-going administrative unification underpinned by a modern communication system and the market principles of capitalism (p.100).

These observations suggest that while an ethnolinguistic/raciolinguistic categorization on the basis of Europeanness and non-Europeanness of the type evidenced in the western world may not be apparent in the modern Sri Lankan context, the very notion of categorizing people based on ethnicity and language which operates as the foremost principle on which the entire social fabric is organized today was introduced by British colonial rule. The elevation of Sinhala effected by the 1956 policy and the use of Sinhala language as one of the cornerstones on which the newly independent nation-state was founded was ideologically rooted in the western notions of aligning language with peoplehood. Language has been used as a dominant tool by the majority Sinhalese to establish hegemonic power over the minorities in the period after independence. The 1956 language policy and its establishment of Sinhala as the only national language of the newly independent nation can be seen as one of the prominent ways in which language was used to establish the supremacy of the Sinhalese at the outset of independence (Canagarajah, 2005; Herath, 2015). The fact that the policy led the Tamil led Federal Party to lobby for a semi-autonomous state, a demand which resulted in a civil war in the subsequent years and engulfed a large part of Sri Lanka's postcolonial history shows the 1956 policy's impact on ethnic relations between the Tamils and Sinhalese. It also led to the marginalization of the Burghers - a small minority population comprising descendants of various European powers that colonized the country at different points of its history – who had enjoyed various social privileges during colonial rule on account of the fact that English was their first language (Coperahewa, 2009). Thus, raciolinguistics was adopted as a theoretical lens in the study as it would allow the examination of the ways in which perceptions, beliefs, attitudes and practices related to

the three languages could reveal how language ideologies may be embedded with ideologies about ethnicity/race, ethnic relations and ethno-social hierarchies operating within the Sri Lankan context.

Postcolonialism

Postcolonialism is a theoretical perspective involving a discussion about a range of experiences common to the countries that were under colonial rule such as "migration, slavery, suppression, resistance, representation, difference, race, gender, place, and responses to the influential master discourses of imperial Europe such as history, philosophy and linguistics, and the fundamental experiences of speaking and writing by which all these come into being" (Ashcroft, Griffiths, & Tiffin, 1994, p. 2). The authors go on to observe that although the term has come to mean many different things, the concept of postcolonial studies is based primarily on the "historical fact" of European colonialism and "the diverse material effects to which this phenomenon gave rise" (p. 2).

The term 'postcolonialism' is "a dialectical concept that marks the broad historical facts of decolonization and the determined achievement of sovereignty - but also the realities of nations and peoples emerging into a new imperialistic context of economic and sometimes political domination" (Young, 2001, p. 57). Ashcroft et al (2013) explicate that although 'postcolonialism' was initially used in a chronological sense in reference to the post-independence period, in the years after the late 1970s the term has broadened to include the "various cultural effects of colonization" (p. 204). "Although the study of the effects of colonial representation" formed a central part of their work, the term 'postcolonial' was not used in the seminal works in the field such as Said (1978), Bhabha (1984) and Spivak (1985) and was first used in relation to

postcolonial literature. However, it has subsequently been widely used to refer to the "political, linguistic and cultural experience" of the people living in territories that were formerly under European colonial rule (Ashcroft et al, 2013, p. 204).

Taken in this sense, the concerns related to raciolinguistics within the context of Sri Lanka that were looked at in the previous sections also fall within the field of postcolonialism. Young (2001) contends that the newly independent nations sought to develop a culture which "radically revised the ethos and ideologies of the colonial state" and as such postcolonialism also refers to a "transformed historical situation, and the cultural formations that have arisen in response to changed political circumstances" (p. 57). In so much as the 1956 policy was projected as a response to the oppressive language policy of British colonial rule which established English as the official language of administration at the expense of relegating the indigenous languages to a peripheral position, it can be seen as a response to colonialism and a depiction of the postcolonial experience as it manifested in the Sri Lankan context.

Postcolonialism was adopted as a theoretical lens in the study because the ethnolinguistic issues that Sri Lanka has had to grapple with for most of its post-independence years are linked to and could even be seen to have been a direct result of the nationalist ideology that has worked as a key factor in the country's politics since independence. Woolard (1994) claims that the nationalist ideology which "structures state politics, challenges multilingual states, and underpins ethnic struggles" in post-colonial contexts was "exported through colonialism to become a dominant model around the world" (p. 60). Wright (2012) also contends that the development of the democratic nation-state came to have an immense effect on the language practices of people around

the world. Amongst a number of factors which Roberts (2010) identifies as having contributed to the fractures in the contemporary Sri Lankan polity are, the concept of "nation," the power of nationalism and the Westminster model governments elected after independence (p. 99). Although the sense of nationalism brought about by the administrative unification of the country under the banner of Ceylon during British rule caused the people of different communities to come together against colonialism, it proved to be a short-lived unity as the country was torn asunder along communal divisions soon after independence (Roberts, 2010, p. 109). Roberts (2010) also observes that the category "Ceylonese" was generally taken to comprise both the Sinhalese, who "reposed" within it as a "nation-within-nation," and the minorities who were considered "communities" (p. 110). Yet, the democratic principle adopted after independence paved the way for the execution of the will of the majority through which a Sinhalese nationalist government was elected in 1956. What is popularly known as "1956 ideology" was marked by a strong "thread of Sinhala chauvinism" which pushed the minorities to the peripheries of the newly independent nation and eventually drove the Tamils towards a separatist military struggle (Roberts, 2010, p.103). The ethnic tensions between communities and the development of separate strands of nationalism aligning with ethnic identity could both be seen as triggered by ideas of nationhood that were part of the post-colonial heritage of the country. Thus, nationalism was adopted as one of the concepts of postcolonialism which could be used to understand the way language ideologies function in the Sri Lankan context.

Summary

This study is situated within language policy and planning and draws from language ideology, raciolinguistics and postcolonialism which comprise its theoretical framework. It rests on the premise that language ideologies are not only about language but comprise a statement about the social world within which they are situated. Postcolonialism and raciolinguistics, which comprise its theoretical framework are interconnected and complement each other. As Sri Lanka is a postcolonial context, the ideas related to ethnicity and nationhood that may be embedded within the ideologies about the languages used there are necessarily linked to its post coloniality. The primary concerns raised in raciolinguistics are therefore inevitably linked to the fact of its colonial past in relation to the Sri Lankan context.

CHAPTER 3

CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH DESIGN AND METHODS

In this study, I examined observations, evaluations, perceptions and attitudes of Sri Lankans of different ethnic origins about the three main languages used in the country – Sinhala, Tamil and English – with the view of understanding the ways in which their beliefs and practices reflect ideologies of language, race and/or power circulating in the larger society. My goal was to unravel and bring to light how ideologies of ethnicity and national belonging may be embedded in or intertwined with ideologies of language, languaging and multilingualism in Sri Lanka .

In this chapter, I present the research design and methodological procedures I followed with the view of explaining their suitability to a study comprising an examination of the possible relationship between language ideologies and ideas about ethnicity and nationhood. First, I provide details about the process of data collection, methods of data analysis, and biographical sketches of the participants. Finally, I analyze the limitations of the study and my role as researcher which comprised a crucial element as I belong to one of the three ethnic groups from which participants for the study were drawn.

Prior to presenting my research design and methods, I state my research questions below, as they would help illustrate the appropriateness of the methodological procedures I followed in the study. My research questions are informed by ideas about language ideologies as well as theoretical contributions from the study of raciolinguistics and postcolonialism which I examined in the previous chapter. A principal tenet of the literature on language ideologies is that they are reflective of the social structures in

which they are embedded and therefore indicative of the realities of the larger social context that they are part of (Kroskrity, 2007; Woolard 1998). My research questions are premised within this principal understanding about language ideologies and informed by the theoretical underpinnings of raciolinguistics and postcolonialism.

Research Questions

Given below are the research questions that guided the study.

3. How do participants understand and evaluate their own language practices? What do they say about other language practices and speakers of other languages in Sri Lanka?

4. What do participants' evaluations of language reveal about existing power structures, relations between ethnic groups, and/or experiences of national belonging?

I conducted and analyzed interviews with the participants of my study in order to answer the two research questions. In the first round of interviews, I asked them questions about different beliefs, attitudes and practices related to the three languages and speakers of those languages with the aim of answering the first research question. In order to answer the second research question, I conducted a second interview with the participants in which I asked them questions about their evaluation of the changes brought about by language policies as well as how they have affected their own and others' lives. The first question is addressed in detail in Chapter Four which presents an overview of the multilingual context of Sri Lanka through an analysis of what the participants said about their own and others' language practices. The second research question is addressed in

Chapters Five and Six which focus on the relationship between participants' evaluations about language policy changes and power structures embedded in ideas about ethnicity and nationhood.

Research Design

The study used a predominantly qualitative approach as it carried the objective of understanding what meanings, beliefs, attitudes and perceptions Sri Lankans hold regarding the different languages being spoken in the country and how they might align with their ideologies about ethnic categories and nationhood. Merriam and Tisdell have defined qualitative research as being interested in "understanding how people interpret their experiences, how they construct their worlds, and what meaning they attribute to their experiences" (2016, p.6). A qualitative approach was deemed more suitable for a study examining ideologies regarding languages, as they are closely linked to people's innermost selves, involve their mental processes, and are tied in with their emotions. Mayan (2016) contends that, "from its formal beginnings in anthropology, qualitative inquiry has contributed to science by making the taken-for-granted world visible in unique and sometimes jarring ways" (p. 9). Language and ethnicity are often referred to as essential and even inevitable components of ideologies surrounding nationhood in the Sri Lankan context that the relationship between them is hardly questioned. The qualitative inquiry that the study made into this relationship revealed aspects of the role of language in the Sri Lankan socio-political make up that may not have been brought under scrutiny before.

The study used a critical perspective and was theoretically framed by raciolinguistics and postcolonialism. Critical research assumes that "all thought is

mediated by power relations that are historically and socially constructed" and that "Inquiry that aspires to the name 'critical' must be connected to an attempt to confront the injustice of a particular society" (Kincheloe, McLaren, & Steinberg as cited by Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p.10). An exploration of language ideologies required an inevitable exploration of the power dynamics operating in the larger socio-political context that were implicit in those ideologies. As discussed more fully in Chapter 2, "ideologies of language are significant for social as well as linguistic analysis because they are not only about language" (Woolard, 1994, p. 56). As such, the employment of a critical perspective within a theoretical framework comprising raciolinguistics and postcolonialism allowed an examination of the intricate ways in which ideologies of language construct and/or reinforce ideologies about ethnicity and nationhood and how these would be mediated by the oppressive power structures of post-colonialism. "Critical perspectives generally assume that people unconsciously accept things the way they are, and in so doing, reinforce the status quo" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 61). Although they mediate between social structures and language, language ideologies have not been examined in order to understand ideologies about ethnicity or nationhood within the Sri Lankan context. Thus, by exploring how talk about language may be used as a proxy for talk about ethnicity and nationhood, the study unraveled how their role in power relations pertaining to ethnicity and national belonging as operating in the larger socio-political fabric that language ideologies are embedded in and emanating from could be reflected through them.

Data Collection

Participant Selection

I used purposeful sampling for data gathering in the study. The sample population comprised a total of twelve Sri Lankans with three each drawn from each of the four main ethnic communities of the country, i.e., the Sinhalese, Tamil, Muslim, and Burgher. Drawing participants from each of the four ethnic communities ensured that all four main communities were represented. In addition, each of these four communities uses Sinhala, Tamil and English as their dominant language. Sinhala is the first language of a majority of the Sinhalese, Tamil is the dominant language of both the Tamils and Muslims, and the Burghers are the only community for the entirety of whom English serves as a first language. As the Tamils and Muslims both use Tamil as their first language, the recruitment of participants from both communities allowed their ideologies to be compared and contrasted based on their ethnic allegiances. The possibility of recruiting participants based on which language they were first language speakers of was also considered as it would have ensured the recruitment of an equal number of first language speaker participants of each of the three languages. However, this method of recruitment was not adopted as it subscribes to the assumption that all first language speakers of a given language would belong to the ethnic community that is commonly associated with it. For example, it assumes that all first language speakers of Sinhala would belong to the Sinhalese community and those of Tamil to Tamil and Muslim communities which may not depict the reality of language use in a multiethnic, multilingual context like Sri Lanka. As the study explored the possible ways in which language ideologies may align with ethnic categories and also whether there would be similarities in language ideologies between those belonging to each ethnic community, I decided it was more important to have the sample population represent all four ethnicities rather than the languages.

A first cycle of key participants comprising one member from each of the four ethnic groups was drawn from amongst family, friends and acquaintances known to me which comprised a convenience sample. According to Merriam and Tisdell, however, "selection based on this basis alone is not very credible and is likely to produce "information-poor" rather than information-rich cases" (2016, p. 98). As such, the study used snowball sampling to recruit the rest of the participants by asking the participants initially recruited to refer to others who would be willing to participate in the study. This method was particularly useful for the recruitment of participants from Tamil and Muslim communities as the number of acquaintances that I knew from those communities was limited.

Interviews

Data were collected through interviews with speakers of different Sri Lankan languages to examine their perceptions, beliefs and attitudes about the languages being used in Sri Lanka as well as their accounts of practices related to them to understand and explore ideologies regarding those languages. "A central characteristic of all qualitative research is that individuals construct reality in interaction with their social worlds" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 24). As such, I considered the interviews as a process through which the study participants and myself as the interviewer made meaning of the world in conjunction with each other. As argued by Crotty, (1998), human beings do not discover but construct meaning "as they engage with the world they are interpreting" (p. 42- 43). This was especially relevant to my study as it explored language ideologies which have been noted as an elusive phenomenon (Blommaert & Verschuren, 1998, location 3339).

I initially planned to gather data through participant observation, too, as that would help triangulate the data generated through the interviews. I planned to observe each of the twelve participants outside of the interview setting in order to gain an understanding about their language practices as well as find out how and if they would align with or contradict what they said in the interviews. However, the Covid pandemic started worsening at the time of my data collection and the country went into lockdown which posed practical difficulties to conducting the participant observations. As a result, I changed my initial plan and limited my data collection to interviews.

As the study looked to explore the perceptions and beliefs of participants in relation to language use which are closely linked with their lived experience, two semi-structured interviews[1] with open-ended questions were chosen for data generation. Based on the claim made by Merriam and Tisdell that "Less-structured formats assume that individual respondents define the world in unique ways" (2016, p. 110), the questionnaires used open-ended questions which provided participants the space to speak about language and languages freely and at length. A semi-structured interview was also chosen as it was felt that it would help guide the interview towards generating data that would be most relevant to the answering of the research questions of the study. As I am a Sinhalese, which is one of the ethnic communities from which the participants for the study were recruited, the use of open-ended questions helped minimize the possibility of my own ideologies influencing the interviewees' responses. The questions were flexible enough to allow participants to express their individual perspectives and experiences yet

[1] See Appendix 1

structured enough to ensure that they did not stray into territory unrelated to the topic which could happen in a study dealing with a topic as fluid as ideologies. The questions were formulated based on the suggestions made by Patton (as cited in Merriam and Tisdell, 2016, p. 118).

All interviews were one-to-one interviews, conducted in person or via Zoom and audio recorded. Although the initial plan was to conduct all interviews face-to-face, the worsening pandemic situation made this impractical as the country was in lockdown at several points during the data collection period and also because some of the participants were unwilling to take part in one-to-one interviews due to health concerns. Therefore, only two participants were interviewed in person and all of the others were interviewed via Zoom.

The interviewing took place in two sessions which allowed an opportunity for clarifications and/or further investigations to be made regarding findings or insights yielded through the data generated in the first session. The interview setting (in the case of face-face-interviews) and times were decided based on the participant's preference. All interviews were conducted in either Sinhala or English. Although I had planned to conduct interviews in Tamil if the participants chose it as their preferred language by using a Tamil speaker, none of the participants opted to be interviewed in Tamil. All interviews were conducted and transcribed by the researcher.

The Sinhala interviews required the original interview questions in English to be translated into Sinhala. The Sinhala interview transcripts also had to be translated back into English. The translation of the interview questions into Sinhala and that of the Sinhala transcripts into English were done by me. A Sinhala-English bilingual was

recruited to back translate the interview questions as well as the transcripts in order to verify the accuracy of the first translation. The translator was provided specific instructions to ensure that the original meaning of the interview questions and the response of the participants had not got altered in any way in the process of translating.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using a five-columned table on Microsoft Excel. The first column of the table carried information about the participant from whom the data were gathered and the data and time the interview took place. This information made it easier to go back to the interview if and when a clarification regarding a data segment needed to be made. The second column comprised segments of the data on thoughts, feelings, beliefs, attitudes, perceptions and practices related to the three languages which potentially answered the research questions. I used the third column of the table to note down my initial thoughts about the data segment such as how they may relate to the research questions and what connections they may have with the relevant literature. One this process was completed I coded the data segments using open coding based on the observations/notes I had made about them on the third column. Next, data segments that had similar codes were grouped together. These open codes on the interview transcripts were examined for any inconsistencies and notes were made on any contradictions between codes made on the two interviews. In addition, after the initial coding of each interview, analytic memos were written about the process of open coding. The codes were further analyzed to formulate themes.

The data were initially categorized under three main themes: linguicism, linguistic imperialism and elitism of English. However, upon examining these themes against the

initial codes, overlaps were observed between the three themes. Thus, the initial codes emerging out of the transcript and observation notes on each interview were closely examined again before they were categorized under new themes (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 205). The data displaying matrix suggested in Maxwell (2013, p. 109-111) was adapted to bring together the initial codes, the data segments they were based on, the axial codes and the memos on each interview. The visual display of all these components on a matrix allowed a constant comparison between open codes and axial codes as each interview transcript was coded. The categories emerging through axial coding were examined to see if similar categories occurred across interview transcripts in order to identify themes. Finally, the codes were all grouped under three main themes: multilingualism, the situation of English in Sri Lanka and the association of Sinhala and Tamil with racism. The analysis of data related to these three themes were presented in the three data analysis chapters of the dissertation.

Interviews conducted in Sinhala and English were both analyzed in English. The interview data gathered in Sinhala were not translated into English for analysis. This decision was made to minimize the possible distortion of what was said by the participant. The initial memos on the data segments on column three of the table used for data analysis and the codes were also in English. The codes on the data segments in Sinhala were carefully examined against the initial analytic memos as well as the codes on the data segments in English to ensure that the codes captured what the participants said.

The transcription and analysis of interview transcripts was done simultaneously with data collection and not after data collection was completed. However, Merriam &

Tisdell (2016) highlight the importance of analyzing each interview as soon as it happens so that the ideas and themes emerging from it could inform the subsequent interviews as well as the second interview session. As such, the transcription and analysis of the first interview with each participant was done before the second interview. This made it possible to clarify any questions raised during the process of transcription and analysis of the interview data during the second interview. As the "process of data collection and analysis is recursive and dynamic" (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016, p. 195) in qualitative research, the data analyzed at the start of the data analysis process were revisited as new themes emerged.

Participants

Ranasinghe

Ranasinghe was a seventy-nine-year-old, male, Sinhalese participant. He is a Sinhala graduate and has worked as a Sinhala teacher in a government school. He is now retired from government service and works as a Justice of Peace. He is a monolingual Sinhala speaker as he said he does not speak either Tamil or English. I was introduced to Ranasinghe by a common acquaintance and the interviews were conducted in Sinhala via Zoom. He was the only participant of his age group and was able to share his own experiences related to the language policy of 1956 as he had been a schoolboy at the time.

Sumanadasa

Sumanadasa was a Sinhalese male participant and fifty-seven years old. He works as a taxi driver after retiring from work in the military police. He is a dominant speaker of Sinhala but said that he can understand a little bit of English as well as say a few words in

it. The interviews with him were conducted face to face in Sinhala at his home. He had lived in Galle in the Southern province before migrating to Colombo for work. The experiences he shared about learning English at his village school provided useful insights into the situation of English outside of Colombo.

Geethika

Geethika was the only female Sinhalese participant and is thirty-two years old. She works at a government ministry. She is the only Sinhalese participant who has knowledge in all three languages. She is a Sinhala dominant speaker but is also fluent in English as she uses it frequently in the workplace as well as for higher education. She also has a basic knowledge of Tamil as she has learnt it as a second language at school and is interested in improving her knowledge in it as her job requires her to show fluency in it by taking a Tamil proficiency exam which is a mandatory requirement for all government servants. The interviews with Upeka were conducted in Sinhala via Zoom.

Dino

Dino was a thirty-five-year-old female Tamil participant. Her dominant language, which she also considers her first language is English, and the interviews were conducted in English via Zoom. Although she identifies Tamil as her mother tongue, she is not very fluent in it as she has used English as her home language from childhood. Dino also speaks Sinhala but is not a very confident speaker of it. She has followed a degree in international relations and works as a political officer on a diplomatic mission, where the fact that she is trilingual is valued.

Saranya

Saranya was a female Tamil participant who is fifty-five years old and uses English as her first language. She is an English graduate and works as an English teacher at an elite private girls' school in Colombo. She is married to a Sinhalese, and her two children have been educated in the Sinhala medium. This has made her lose contact with Tamil and made her a less fluent speaker of Tamil than Sinhala. Although she is able to speak Sinhala, she is not fluent in it which makes it difficult for her to manage her day-to-day life in the public sphere, especially when she has to visit government offices where Sinhala is the dominant language. The interviews with Saranya were conducted in English via Zoom.

Revathi

Revathi was a forty-two-year-old female Tamil participant whose dominant language is Tamil. She is also fluent in both Sinhala and English and conducts Tamil classes in both Sinhala and English medium. Although she was given the choice of taking part in the interview in either Tamil or English, she chose English. She also said that although her dominant language is Tamil, English is her home language as both her children and husband are not fluent in Tamil. She uses Tamil to speak with her mother and sister while Sinhala is used predominantly in the public sphere. Revathi was interviewed via Zoom.

Shameena

Shameena was a female Muslim participant and is sixty-two years old. She is equally fluent in all three languages, has a degree in English and works as an English teacher at an international school in Kegalle in the Central Province after retiring from

serving as a Teacher of English in a government school. She considers Sinhala her dominant language as her secondary education had been in Sinhala medium and she considers Tamil her mother tongue. She is also fluent in English as she has followed her higher education in the English medium and works as an English teacher. She was the only participant from outside of Colombo and the interview with her was conducted via Zoom in English.

Mumtaz

Mumtaz was a forty-one-year-old female, Malay participant who holds an English degree. She has recently joined the corporate sector as an ESL instructor after working as a French teacher at an elite private school and an international school. Her dominant language is English, but she knows five other languages: Tamil, Malay, Hindi, French and Arabic. She is fluent in Sinhala, Tamil, Malay and French, but cannot speak Arabic very well although she is able to read and write it. She can read and write Hindi too and can also manage a conversation in it although not very fluently. I interviewed her via Zoom in English.

Shakira

Shakira is a thirty-four-year-old, female Malay participant who has obtained her college education in India. She is employed as a photographer and also conducts English classes part-time. Her dominant language is English, and her second language is Sinhala as she can read, write and speak it whereas she can only speak in Tamil and not read and write in it. As she had been educated in Mumbai she also has a colloquial knowledge of Hindi. The interviews with Shakira were conducted in English via Zoom.

Patricia

Patricia was a female Burgher participant who is sixty years old. She is an English graduate and has worked as an English teacher in an elite private girls' school, after retiring from which she now teaches English at another well-known elite private school for boys in Colombo. Although Burghers are generally considered to use English as their first language, Patricia said Sinhala was hers although she is equally fluent in English as well. Although Sinhala is her first language, she opted to take part in the interview in English. Patricia does not have any knowledge of Tamil and she said she does not require it in her day-to-day life. The interviews with Patricia were conducted via Zoom.

Sharon

Sharon was a thirty-two-year-old, female, Burgher participant whose dominant language is English. She is also fluent in Sinhala but has only a basic knowledge of Tamil as she can only read and write in it from having learnt it as a second language in school but cannot speak it. She has a bachelor's degree in English as well as gender studies and works at an editing company.

Margie

Margie was a female Burgher participant and is sixty years old. She teaches English at the Sunday School attached to her church and also conducts English classes for students who are keen to learn English in her neighborhood. Her dominant language is English, but she is also fluent in both Sinhala and Tamil. She said she has acquired fluency in Sinhala through living in Sinhalese dominant neighborhoods her entire adult life, while her Tamil fluency has been acquired through being exposed to Tamil in her childhood, a predominant part of which had been spent on the upcountry tea estates

where Tamil is the dominant language. The interviews with Margie were conducted in person in English.

Limitations of the Study and Role of the Researcher

A primary limitation of the study stemmed from my subjectivity as the researcher. Merriam & Tisdell (2016) highlight that, as the "primary instrument for data collection and analysis, the researcher plays a crucial role in qualitative research" (p. 16). My role as the researcher in this study was subjective as I belong to one of the ethnic communities from which participants were drawn for the study. I was aware of the fact that my own ideologies about languages being spoken in Sri Lanka would inevitably be colored by the privileged position of being a member of the majority community – the Sinhalese - as well as being a speaker of English, which would have inevitably influenced the decisions I made in relation to data collection and analysis. As argued by Maxwell (2013), "it is impossible to deal with these issues by eliminating the researcher's theories, beliefs, and perceptual lens" (p.124). However, the limitations imposed on the study by the subjective position of the researcher were acknowledged and steps were taken to minimize its influence right at the outset of the study.

The subjective position of the researcher came into play significantly in the process of data collection when conducting the interviews. It is due to my position as a member of the majority Sinhalese community that I have been able to choose not to learn Tamil although multilingualism has been encouraged through language policies in the period after the civil war between the Tamil militant group – Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) and the Sri Lankan government. However, I was aware that the choice to not learn the other main local language was a privilege that may not have been available

to the minorities and as such my lack of proficiency in Tamil comprises a bias caused by the researcher's subjectivity. If I was fluent in all three languages, it would have been possible for me to conduct the interviews myself in either of the three languages according to the preference of the participants. However, my lack of knowledge in Tamil made it necessary for me to go for the use of a Tamil interviewer to conduct Tamil interviews if the participants chose to be interviewed in that language and a Tamil/English bilingual to translate those interviews into English when designing the study. However, it was not necessary to conduct any interviews in Tamil as all three of my Tamil participants opted to be interviewed in English.

I adopted these measures in designing the study to minimize the negative consequences that the bias that the subjectivity of my role as the researcher could bring to the data collection and analysis processes of the study. For example, although one solution to the problem of my lack of proficiency in Tamil would have been to conduct the interviews in English, I decided against this because it would have required all participants to be fluent speakers of English. As speakers of English across the ethnic communities are generally considered to belong to an elite social class, this would have limited the scope of my inquiry in unproductive ways.

The inability to triangulate the data by conducting participant observations also imposed a limitation on the study. The initial plan for data collection included interviews as well as participant observation as methods of data collection. However, as mentioned above, participant observation was not possible to be carried out due to the Covid pandemic which reached a peak in Sri Lanka during the period of data collection. While a few of the participants were willing to cooperate in participant observations, the country

being locked down during data collection made it practically impossible to conduct them. Participant observations would have enabled the real-life observation of the language practices, attitudes and perceptions that the participants talked about in the interviews, which would have been interesting to consider (and which may have confirmed or disconfirmed interview data).

Summary

In this chapter, I presented the methods and procedures I followed in conducting the study. Each of the methods and procedures followed in conducting the study was selected with the aim of understanding how language beliefs, perceptions, attitudes and practices may reflect and correlate with ethno-social power structures in operation in the Sri Lankan context as well as ideologies about national belonging. I firstly presented details about the research design in which I explained my reasons for selecting qualitative inquiry as my research approach, the data collection methods and the procedures followed in analyzing the data. I also provided a brief overview of the participants of the study, in which I presented general information about them such as their ethnic identity and language use. Finally, I discussed the limitations of the study as well as my role as researcher, emphasizing how my subjectivity as a member of one of the communities from which participants were drawn could impact upon the study. In the next three chapters I present my examination of data under three main themes.

CHAPTER 4

CHAPTER FOUR: THE COMPLEX MULTILINGUAL SITUATION OF SRI LANKA

The current study looks at the comments made by people from four different ethnic groups in Sri Lanka about different languages used in the country in order to understand how they may align with ideologies about ethnicity, nationhood, and other structures of power that may be embedded in them. In this chapter, I examine what the participants said about the roles and functions played by different Sri Lankan languages in their lives, the language practices pertaining to them, as well as their evaluations of and attitudes towards them to understand their status within the complex multilingual context of Sri Lanka. The participants spoke about the three main languages used in the country, Sinhala, Tamil and English, as well as Malay and Arabic which are used within the Muslim community. I examine their observations about these five languages to show how developments in the socio-political context of the country in the time after independence bear down on the situation of different languages and shape ideologies about and practices related to them.

The data analysis in this chapter is presented in three sections. In the first section, I examine what the participants said about the role played by Sinhala and Tamil in their lives to show how the 1956 policy has impacted upon the situation of the two languages. Through examining the participants' observations, I show that the hegemonic power garnered by the majority Sinhalese in the years following independence have come to affect the language practices and ideologies surrounding the two main indigenous Sri Lankan languages, Sinhala and Tamil. In the second section of this chapter, I examine what the participants said about language practices, perceptions and attitudes related to

English to show how the situation of English in Sri Lanka seems to be affected by ethnic allegiances and appears to vary from context to context as well as based on the audience and/or participants involved in an interaction. Thus, the analysis of data in the second section shows the fluidity of English within the complex language ecology of Sri Lanka and that labels such as "first", "second" or "link" language that are frequently used to describe its status fall short of capturing the many subtle nuances underlying its situation. Lastly, I examine what the participants said about Malay and Arabic – two languages used by the Muslims of Sri Lanka. In my examination of the participants' observations in this final section of the chapter I show how the advent of Sinhala, Tamil and English as dominant within the local context and the expansion of English in the global context seem to have diminished the status of Malay and Arabic within the Muslim community. Together, the three sections of data analysis paint a picture of the diversity of the language ecology of contemporary Sri Lanka as well as the complexities it derives from being inherently linked with the socio-political events taking place in its post-independent years.

In examining the participants' comments on the status of these five languages within the language ecology of Sri Lanka, this chapter also serves as a springboard for the next two chapters. Chapter Five examines the language practices and evaluations about English in more detail and shows how the structures of power introduced during colonial times continue to shape the situation of English in Sri Lanka in contemporary times. Chapter Six, on the other hand, examines what the participants say about the role played by Sinhala in the relations between the majority Sinhalese and the minorities in order to understand the ethnicity-based power-dynamics underlying the language practices,

attitudes and perceptions related to Sinhala and Tamil. The analysis shows that an examination of how language practices and evaluations may go hand in hand with ideas about relations between ethnic groups, existing power structures in society and experiences of national belonging. By showing how the local status of the five languages seem to be influenced by policy changes, the nature of relations between ethnic groups, ethnic allegiances, context, audience and the advent of English as a world language, this chapter provides an overview of the complexity of the multilingual context of contemporary Sri Lanka prior to the more detailed analyses of the three main languages which follow in the next two chapters.

The status of Sinhala and Tamil

In this section I consider the different roles and functions performed by Sinhala and Tamil in the language ecology of Sri Lanka by examining what the participants say about which of the two languages is dominant and what role the other language plays in their lives. The participants come from four different ethnic communities, and Sinhala and Tamil are considered the native languages of the Sinhalese and Tamils respectively. It should be noted here that the observations made by the participants about the roles and functions played by the two languages seem related to the changes introduced by the language policy of 1956 and the amendment to it made in 1987. Many of the participants commented on the language policy of 1956 (which assigned official status to Sinhala) and how this policy resulted in its predominance within the public sphere. According to more than one participant, after Sinhala was declared the sole official language of Sri Lanka, Tamil came to hold less prestige or value. All of the non-Sinhalese participants also observed that the dominance of Sinhala brought about by the 1956 policy is directly

responsible for the ethnic tensions which developed into one of the central concerns Sri Lanka has had to grapple with in the period after independence (examined in more detail in Chapter Six). Therefore, the observations made by the participants in relation to the role of Sinhala and Tamil in their lives which are examined in this section are closely linked to the issues discussed in Chapter Six in relation to the 1956 policy's impact on ethnic relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils and ideas about national belonging. Thus, the role of the two languages as described by the participants seems to be influenced by the nature of the relations between the different ethnic groups and ideas about nation-building as manifested during the time after independence as well as structures of power operating within the socio-political context of Sri Lanka.

The observations made by the participants about their knowledge of Sinhala, Tamil and English showed the influence of the 1956 language policy which implemented Sinhala as the sole national and official language of the country on their language practices. For example, an examination of what the participants said about their proficiency in the two languages showed that whether they were Sinhala/Tamil bilinguals or not was linked to their ethnic identity. All three Sinhalese participants said they lack proficiency in Tamil, the other indigenous language. Although they are from three different age groups, 28, 59 and over 79, they all claimed that they do not speak Tamil. Sumanadasa and Ranasinghe said that Sinhala is their dominant language in both the domestic and public spheres and that they do not have any knowledge of Tamil. Geethika is the only Sinhalese participant who has some knowledge in Tamil which she has learnt in school, but she also cannot speak it. Tamil started being taught in schools after the 1987 amendment to the language policy of 1956 which made it a national and official

language, which could explain the fact that only Geethika, who is the youngest of the three participants who are Sinhalese, knows it. She said that she is continuing to improve her skills in it as she is employed in the public sector where proficiency in Tamil is a mandatory skill that all public servants have to provide proof of by facing an exam in order to progress in their career. Sumanadasa and Ranasinghe, the other two Sinhalese participants said that they are able to get their day-to-day work done with only a knowledge of Sinhala and therefore do not feel the need to learn Tamil. Geethika said that although she is interested in learning Tamil there is very little contact with the language in her life as the only instances that she would come across it are in encounters between people from the Tamil and Muslim minority communities who use it when communicating with each other, but such encounters do not provide her an opportunity to practice her skills in the language. This shows that the Sinhalese do not feel that they have to learn Tamil to manage their day-to-day activities, perhaps because they belong to the majority community whose language plays a dominant role in the public sphere. Thus, the Sinhala monolingualism of Ranasinghe and Sumanadasa seem to be directly related to the prerogative of belonging to the majority community. This shows that the elevation of Sinhala by the 1956 policy seems to have privileged the majority Sinhalese by making it possible for them to survive within the diverse language ecology of Sri Lanka as Sinhala monolinguals.

Apart from the Sinhalese, Patricia and Sharon - two of the Burgher participants - also claimed to have no knowledge of Tamil. They both said that they use English at home and Sinhala a majority of the time in their day-to-day activities outside of the domestic sphere as it is rare that they come across Tamil. Patricia said:

> If I go to the market, a කඩේ (boutique), with the කඩේ මුදලාලි (boutique owner) I would have to speak Sinhala. If I go to a supermarket there, maybe I can use English. So, for us it'll be either Sinhala or English. I would not feel the need to learn Tamil, or I don't use it anywhere."

This excerpt taken from one of the interviews with Patricia shows the predominance of Sinhala in the public sphere, which could explain the fact that two out of each of the three Sinhalese and Burgher participants have no knowledge of Tamil. Out of the three Burgher participants only Margie claimed to have a knowledge of Tamil. She had acquired it in her childhood, most of which she had spent on the upcountry tea plantations where she had been in constant interaction with Tamil as it is usually the dominant language on estates on account of a majority of the workers being Tamil[2]. Despite English being generally considered the first language of Burghers, Patricia said that Sinhala is her dominant language because her parents had imposed a rule on her to speak in Sinhala at home when she was growing up. She said that this had been because her parents had been strong supporters of the 1956 "Sinhala only" policy and not wanted her to acquire the language of the colonizer as her first language. Although she had acquired English later in life and uses it now frequently both at home and in the public sphere, Sinhala is still the language that is closest to her heart, and she uses it to express herself when she talks about "sensitive things." These observations made by Patricia show that her language practices have been shaped by the nationalist ideologies that gained prominence within the socio-political context of Sri Lanka in the period after

[2] Tamils from South India were employed as migrant workers to work on tea estates during the time of British colonial rule.

independence (when the 1956 policy was enacted). Thus, the fact that two of the Burgher participants have no knowledge of Tamil as well as that Sinhala is used by Patricia as her dominant language both could be evidence of the 1956 policy's elevation of Sinhala and the political events surrounding it.

The above observations about the language practices of the Sinhalese and Burgher participants show that the Sinhalese and Burghers seem to be able to manage without learning Tamil. However, in contrast, it seems mandatory for the Tamil-speaking minorities to learn to speak Sinhala in order to navigate through daily activities in the public domain. Patricia observed during an interview that although she does not have a "quarrel" with it, the language policy of 1956 made the minorities have to "compromise and learn Sinhala to survive." The Tamil and Muslim participants' comments about the role of Sinhala and Tamil in their lives further illustrates this observation made by Patricia. For example, all three of the Tamil and Muslim participants said that they had a knowledge of Sinhala and some of them said that their knowledge of it is either equal to or better than that of Tamil. Of the three Tamil participants, Dino and Saranya have a limited knowledge in both Sinhala and Tamil as English is their dominant language, but their Sinhala is better than Tamil. Saranya said that she uses Sinhala in day-to-day activities such as to "get work done in a government department," "buy a ticket on a bus," "talk to the maid" and "talk to the guy who comes to check the electricity meter," whereas her husband, who is Sinhalese, would be unable to do the same in Tamil even if it were required. This shows that the dominance of Sinhala within the language ecology of Sri Lanka has made it a more dominant language in Dino's life than Tamil, which is her mother language. Dino recalled how her parents had to impose a rule that she and her

sister speak in Tamil at home when they were children because she believed that their poor knowledge in the language caused them difficulties in school. Revathi is the only Tamil participant who said that she uses Tamil as her dominant language. This shows that Tamil plays a secondary role even in the lives of some Tamils which indicates the dominance enjoyed by Sinhala and the lower status held by Tamil within the language ecology of Sri Lanka.

Although two of the three Muslim participants, Shakira and Mumtaz (both also first language speakers of English) said they are more comfortable with Sinhala than Tamil, Shameena (the other Muslim participant) explained that she is equally fluent in all three languages because she had studied in the Sinhala medium and uses Tamil and English at home. She said that in her family, Tamil is used for communication with elderly family members and also at family get-togethers, weddings, and funerals while Sinhala is used on all other occasions. In contrast, Mumtaz said that the only instances that she uses Tamil at home are when she talks to "domestics" because they are the "only Tamil-speaking people" in her home domain. Mumtaz also said that the minorities had to learn Sinhala to join the workforce as it is difficult to survive in the workplace without Sinhala which is the dominant language. All these observations show that the dominance of Sinhala has undermined the status of Tamil and pushed it to a peripheral position even amongst the Tamils and Muslims who have traditionally used it as a home language.

The need for knowledge of Sinhala in the workplace was also expressed by Saranya, who works as an English teacher in a private school in Colombo and said:

> At work in the staff room with Sinhala speaking teachers, I will speak in Sinhala. And I notice that there is a lot of allowance given where my bad grammar and my

> weak vocabulary are concerned. So, I have absolutely no concern or embarrassment talking in Sinhala. I am a little embarrassed at how bad my Tamil is, that is a little embarrassing because I am Tamil, and it ought to be better.

The excerpt shows that although she works in one of the elite private schools where English is used as the language of instruction, the dominant language of informal interaction amongst teachers in the staffroom is Sinhala. Although her dominant language is English, and she is not comfortable in her use of Sinhala because her knowledge of it is limited, Saranya says she uses Sinhala to blend in with the staffroom culture perhaps because speaking in English could make her stand apart from the general chatter in the staffroom and mark her as different. Her Sinhalese colleagues making leeway in relation to her "weak" pronunciation and vocabulary could be a demonstration of their appreciation of her effort to recognize and accommodate their dominant language. Thus, the excerpt shows how a knowledge of Sinhala seems necessary for the minorities, not only to accomplish simple tasks of daily life, but also for making connections with people and establishing one's professional identity in the workplace. The role played by Sinhala and Tamil in the lives of the Tamil and Muslim participants as described by them therefore shows that, although these participants belong to two Tamil-speaking communities, Sinhala plays a dominant role in all of their lives. The fact that they are Tamil/Sinhala bilinguals seems to be directly related to their membership in minority communities which makes it difficult for them to survive without a knowledge of the language of the majority community. This shows that their Tamil/Sinhala bilingualism has resulted from the lesser social power they have compared to the Sinhalese, who, as looked at in a previous section, are able to survive as Sinhala monolinguals. This also

shows that ideologies about Sinhala and Tamil are linked to and reflect structures of power operating in the social context of Sri Lanka.

Observations made by Saranya also showed that the dominance of Sinhala within the language ecology of Sri Lanka has also reduced the use of Tamil in society. She said that her knowledge of Tamil has become rusty due to the fact that she has limited opportunities for speaking it within the public sphere due to the dominance of Sinhala and English there. Her comments showed that unlike in the case of the other Tamil and Muslim participants who said that they use Tamil in their interactions with family, her chances for using it in the home domain have been eliminated as her husband is a Sinhalese and cannot speak her language. Given this and the lack of opportunities for speaking Tamil in the public sphere, the only times when Saranya uses Tamil are in rare instances when it may be required for her to communicate with someone from her own or the Muslim community who does not speak Sinhala, or in her interactions with friends when they talk about things that they do not want their children to understand. However, the close association between the language and the people was shown when she spoke about how other Tamil people address her in their language when they identify her as a Hindu from the *pottu* which she wears outside of the home domain. She said:

> I might have a trishaw driver who sees my *pottu* and talks to me in Tamil. The thing is I wear a *pottu* when I go out and that's a very strong ethnic marker. So, I go into a shop, somebody who would normally talk to me in Sinhala would talk to me in Tamil.

This excerpt from Saranya's interviews suggests that Tamil, like the *pottu,* is closely associated with the ethnic and cultural identity of the Tamils. Although Tamil is not

required in a practical sense to carry out the tasks of daily life in the public, Saranya's comment above shows that it carries a sense of community and culture in the public sphere. Saranya went on to say that what she feels when she is addressed in her language upon being identified as Tamil from her *pottu* is similar to the sense of camaraderie one would feel at being addressed in one's own language when in a foreign country. This comparison clearly depicts that the situation of Sinhala and Tamil within the language ecology of Sri Lanka is clearly linked to the majority and minority status of those who speak the two languages. Thus, the dominant and secondary positions held by Sinhala and Tamil seem to correlate with the social power enjoyed by the communities depending on their majority and minority status within Sri Lankan society.

Although the observations examined above showed that Tamil holds a secondary position in the public sphere, Sharon and Dino also talked about specific contexts in which Tamil is valued. Attempting to explain the low status of Tamil within the language ecology of Sri Lanka, Sharon, one of the Burgher participants, said:

> Sadly, we're set up to aspire to be useful within the private sector and the world of work no, and in that world of work it's not important to know Tamil unless you're working for a Tamil newspaper or like a specific area where Tamil is needed.

This quote from Sharon's interview shows again that the lack of importance attached to Tamil within Sri Lanka is linked to the fact that it is not dominant in the public sphere as it is a language spoken by minorities. However, the excerpt also shows that although a knowledge in Tamil is not in high demand in the employment sector in general, it is required in certain specific job contexts. Dino, who is employed as a political officer in a

diplomatic mission which requires her to work in coalescence with both government institutes in the South and various organizations in the North-East said that her Tamil skills are very much valued within her work environment. She said:

> …at work I use Tamil because I work as a political officer, and I cover the North and East and so my Tamil skills are very important in that sense. So, when I speak to, sort of like, state coalesce there, it's a kind of very dominant kind of thing in my work.

This shows that a knowledge of both Sinhala and Tamil is needed in jobs that require communication between organizations in the Tamil dominant North and East and the Sinhala dominant South. Many such NGOs located in or working in collaboration with civil society organizations and government institutes in the North and East set up operations in Sri Lanka during and in the aftermath of the civil war to provide relief to victims of the war. The mandatory requirement for fluency in Tamil for positions in NGOs and diplomatic missions therefore may stem from an attempt to avoid ethnicity and language-based discrimination in recruitment policies and practices in a context fraught with ethno-linguistic tensions. This shows that the status of Tamil is closely bound with the ethno-nationalist tensions which became prominent in the time after independence.

The role played by Sinhala as the dominant medium of instruction in education also seems to contribute to its dominance within the language ecology of Sri Lanka. For example, all three Burghers said that Sinhala was their medium of instruction and also that they studied it as mother tongue in school because although they used English in the

capacity of mother tongue at home, it is only available as a second language in the school curriculum in government schools. As Sinhala and Tamil are the only mother tongue options available in the school curriculum, all three Burgher participants said they took the former as their mother tongue. The fact that they chose Sinhala instead of Tamil could also be related to the dominant position enjoyed by it within the public sphere which makes a knowledge of it more useful than Tamil. All three Muslim participants also said that the Muslims predominantly use Sinhala as the medium of instruction in education. Shameena – one of the Muslim participants – observed that the prominence gained by Sinhala within the education sector after the 1956 policy caused a lot of Muslim parents to choose Sinhala as the medium of instruction for their children's school education. She recalled how her father had chosen Sinhala-medium education for her out of the fear that she would not be able to find a job if she were educated in Tamil or English. She was proud of the fact that she was fluent in Sinhala and said that she could "read, write and argue" in it which she finds difficult to do in Tamil. Shameena also said that her two sons, who were a doctor and a businessman, were also educated in Sinhala and therefore not fluent in Tamil. She noted this as common amongst many Muslims of the younger generations, which has caused their use of Tamil to be restricted to interactions with older family members who are not fluent in either Sinhala or English. Mumtaz also said that she completed her "entire education in Sinhala" up to the Ordinary Level. These observations show that the fact that it has served as their medium of instruction has made Sinhala a dominant or second language amongst the Muslim and Burgher participants. Thus, the language policy of 1956, after which Sinhala was adopted as the medium of

instruction in education, seems to have contributed to an increase in the prestige of Sinhala and a devaluing of minority languages such as Tamil.

According to the observations made by Saranya, the teaching of Tamil as a second language within the school education system is affected by the nature of the ethnic relations between the two communities and the social power surrounding them, which in turn seems to affect the status of Tamil within the language ecology of the country. The government introduced teaching each other's language as a second language to Sinhala and Tamil students after the language policy was amended in 1987 and official status was then also accorded to Tamil. However, Saranya observed that, at Winston Girls' School where she teaches, although the Tamil students are keen to learn Sinhala, the Sinhalese students show a considerably low interest towards learning Tamil as a second language. She said that although English is given the official title of "link language" in the constitution, Sinhala and Tamil are taught as "link languages" within the school curriculum in government schools. Thus, Tamil medium students are taught Sinhala while Sinhala medium students are taught Tamil as the "link language." However, Saranya said that at Winston Girls' School she has had Sinhalese students hand in blank scripts at the exam for Tamil as a link language because their parents had told them not to learn "that language." This shows that although both languages are equal in official status, they are not equal in practice, perhaps because the ethnic tensions between the Sinhalese and Tamils seem to influence the teaching of Tamil, thus contributing to the continued lower status of Tamil within the language ecology. Saranya also said that in contrast to the Sinhalese students, the Tamil students show a keen interest in learning Sinhala which she illustrated through the example that the prize given for proficiency in

all three languages at her school's annual prize giving always goes to a Tamil or Muslim student. Shakira spoke about her experiences at an international school for Muslim girls that she had studied at and said that the students showed a largely positive attitude towards learning Sinhala there. She said that although both Sinhala and Tamil were offered as "mother tongue" options at her school, Sinhala was given more prominence than Tamil.

> They really pushed Sinhala. A majority of us learnt Sinhala and we learnt the government standard Sinhala. That's how my writing improved a lot because I was doing the same textbooks as government schools. …It counted for our final grades, so we had to take it seriously. So out of a class of six, five did Sinhala, so a majority did Sinhala as a second language. Tamil was available but only a minority of the students chose Tamil as a second language.

International schools are not required to follow the curriculum offered in government schools and are free to design their own curriculum for students up to grade ten at which point they start following the British curriculum in preparation for their Ordinary Level exam. Although Sinhala and Tamil are offered in international schools, most of them have a lenient policy when it comes to these two subjects as they are not main subjects in the British curriculum. The fact that her school taught Sinhala at the same standard as government schools may therefore be related to the fact that it was a Muslim girls' school where the administration may have prioritized Sinhala as an essential language for the Muslim students to learn. Only a minority of the students in Shakira's class took Tamil as a second language, possibly because they were already familiar with the language as

Tamil is commonly used as a home language by Muslims. The interest amongst minority students to learn Sinhala revealed by these observations made by Saranya and Shakira could show that the Tamil and Muslim students do not have the privilege of refusing to learn the language of the Sinhalese as the latter comprise the majority community of the country.

Revathi and Mumtaz brought up the possibility of the lack of interest shown by Sinhalese students towards learning Tamil as being related to the fact that most people in the two Tamil-speaking minorities speak Sinhala well, making it pointless for the Sinhalese to learn Tamil in order to communicate with people from the two minority communities. Mumtaz pointed out that many Sinhalese people are not interested in learning Tamil because they do not use it at home and do not feel a need to learn it as their Tamil friends already know Sinhala. Thus, although it may appear that the reluctance or lack of interest on the part of the Sinhalese to learn Tamil could be related to the fact that they comprise a larger portion of the population, the point made by Mumtaz shows that it could also be because the need for them to learn it has been rendered unnecessary as most members of the minority communities speak Sinhala. Either way, members of the Sinhalese ethnic group have the option of learning Tamil but do not have to do so for survival.

Some of the participants indicated that the lack of interest on the part of Sinhalese students to learn Tamil is also linked to the weak methods adopted in teaching the language. Mumtaz spoke about the fact that Tamil is taught by native speakers of the language who are specialized in other subjects but are not necessarily qualified in language teaching and therefore fail to engage the students, thus worsening the students'

lack of interest in learning the language. Saranya observed that the teaching of Tamil in the school system was focused on reading and writing skills which were not essential as the primary purpose of teaching it as a link language is to help Sinhalese students communicate with Tamils and Muslims, and for them to be able to work in Tamil dominant areas. She felt that it would be more useful to focus on teaching students to speak Tamil which would also ease the burden of studying for it which makes the experience of learning the language stressful for students. However, Saranya said that this practical aspect seems to be ignored in the way it is taught in schools. On the other hand, Geethika, the only Sinhalese participant who has some knowledge of Tamil, blamed her lack of fluency in the language on the fact that it was not taught as a compulsory subject when she was in school. In contrast to all the other participants who claimed that Sinhalese students are not interested in learning Tamil, she said that she and her friends were very much interested in Tamil and would have learnt it if it was taught as a compulsory subject up to O/Ls. These opinions expressed by Saranya and Geethika suggest that the Sinhalese students' lack of fluency in Tamil could be related to the kinds of methods used to teach it at school level. However, Sharon claimed that the students' attitudes towards and responses to Tamil were often also influenced by the common perception of it as an unimportant subject that one could afford to neglect. She said:

> I think it also goes down to the mindset, no? Because you feel like Tamil won't be very important or that's what you're made to think. "Ah we'll just do this and finish it off who cares" kind of thing…And also, as children we're not, from how a language is taught also you learn to appreciate a language and give it some importance no? So, then if you're not, if it's taught as something insignificant like

> it's not going to be of much use to you, you're not going to think too much about it no? That's how we were taught. It wasn't given much importance sadly, but now as an adult I realize the importance of learning the language.

According to the observations made by Sharon in the above excerpt, the language ideologies about Tamil prevailing within the society at large seem to influence the students' feelings about learning the language in school. As such, the poor methodology which Saranya, Geethika and Mumtaz spoke about earlier seem to indicate and also further facilitate the low status that Tamil holds, and the general sense of unimportance attached to it within the language ecology of the country. This shows that ideologies about language that devalue Tamil and that are bolstered by the language policy of 1956 have contributed to the status of Sinhala as the predominant language within the language ecology of Sri Lanka. The ethnic tensions that followed upon its heels and developed into a prominent concern within the socio-political context of independent Sri Lanka may both reflect and contribute to the dismissive attitude towards learning Tamil expressed by Sharon. When considered in relation to observations made by Saranya, Mumtaz, Geethika and Sharon about the challenges associated with learning or teaching Tamil in schools, these comments about the value or place of Tamil in Sri Lankan society raise questions about its long-term viability and vitality. Although Tamil was made a national and official language in 1987 through an amendment to the 1956 language policy and various measures were then introduced to ensure its implementation, such as the promotion of bilingualism in state schools, the ideologies existing at that time were robust and seem to still hold sway, making such measures unsuccessful. The following excerpt from one of the interviews with Mumtaz adds credence to the idea that the

persistence of ideologies that devalue Tamil and Tamil speakers may be related to Sinhala having functioned as the only national and official language for a long time. According to Mumtaz:

> Sinhala is spoken very widely even among the people at large. Even when you go to a most remote area Sinhala is spoken very widely whatever segment of society they come from, whether they have been to school or not, whether they have completed their primary or secondary education or not, they all speak in Sinhala because that was, Sinhala was, introduced and widely known as the only national language of Sri Lanka for a long time.

The excerpt associates the predominance of Sinhala within the language ecology of Sri Lanka with the fact that it was officially the only national language of the country from 1956 till 1987. It also seems to make the point that Sinhala is spoken by everyone regardless of their social or educational status. Although the same would hold true for Tamil amongst its speakers, the fact that it is spoken by a minority population seems to contribute to the difficulties of implementing it as a national and official language on par with Sinhala. The observations made by the participants show that the Sinhalese and Tamil students' attitudes towards learning each other's language are governed by various factors such as the nature of the relations between the two communities, the social power that each community has as a majority or minority community, the practical value of learning the languages, the weak methods used in teaching Tamil as well as the ideologies about Tamil that prevail in society at large. Thus, the participants' talk examined above shows that the teaching of the two languages in schools and their

situation within the language ecology of the country are closely linked and influence each other.

In summary, while both Sinhala and Tamil are defined as official and national languages of Sri Lanka in the constitution, what the participants said about their own and others' language practices as well as their evaluations about the two languages show how the situation is different in actual practice and Sinhala enjoys a much higher status and plays a far more dominant role than Tamil in the public sphere. The dominant role played by Sinhala seems to go hand in hand with the lack of interest in learning Tamil shown by the Sinhalese who, because they comprise a majority of the population, have the power to either directly refuse or choose not to learn the other indigenous language as a lack of fluency in it would not impede their day-to-day activities in the public domain. The situation of the minorities, however, seems different as they cannot survive without a knowledge of Sinhala, which is dominant on account of it being the language of the majority. The analysis of the participants' talk about the situation of the two languages in their lives examined in this section of the chapter therefore shows that their practices related to these two languages are shaped by structures of power operating within the larger social context as well as ideologies about ethnicity. This suggests that the language practices that the participants talk about as well as the language ideologies behind those practices go hand in hand with and reflect the ethno-social hierarchies prevailing in the larger socio-political context of Sri Lanka.

The Status of English

In this section I examine the observations the participants made about the role of English in their lives as well as their perceptions about various language practices related

to it. I examine what they said about English to show that the situation of English extends beyond that of a "link language" as defined in the constitution. As such, the analysis of data in this section shows how the situation of English within the language ecology is far more nuanced than suggested by the label "link language." Some of the points covered in this section relate to and are examined in more detail in Chapter Five which focuses solely on the situation of English. As such, this section of data analysis may be considered as providing a springboard for the detailed study of the role of English within the language ecology of Sri Lanka which Chapter Five comprises.

The participants' talk seemed to reveal that although defined as a "link language" in the constitution, English plays a more prominent role in their lives than Tamil. For example, two of each of the three Tamil, Muslim and Burgher participants and one Sinhala participant said that English is their first or dominant language. Of these, Dino and Saranya, and Shakira and Mumtaz, who are Tamil and Muslim participants respectively, said that they use English as their home language and always use it whenever possible in the public sphere too as both have limited proficiency in Tamil and Sinhala. The two Burghers, Sharon and Margie also said English is dominant both in the home domain and also outside except in situations when the other party does not know English. Geethika is the single Sinhalese participant who said that she uses English as her dominant language and that she uses it along with Sinhala at home and also in the public as appropriate and necessary. Even Revathi, the Tamil participant, and Shameena, the Muslim participant who said they do not use English as their dominant language, are confident speakers of English. Of them, Shameena, the Muslim participant whose dominant language is Sinhala, said that she has a high proficiency in English and that it is

her dominant language in the workplace as she is an English teacher. Although Revathi's dominant language is Tamil, she is fluent in English and uses it as her home language as well as chose to take part in the interview in it instead of Tamil. Patricia, who said that she feels more comfortable using Sinhala to talk about things close to her heart, also uses English at home alongside Sinhala, and predominantly in the workplace as she is an English teacher. Only Sumanadasa and Ranasinghe, the two Sinhalese participants who claimed Sinhala to be their dominant language, said that they have a limited knowledge of English and used it very rarely. This shows that English, although defined as a "link language" plays a prominent role in the lives of all the participants (even those participants who consider another language to be their "dominant" language). While the earlier examination of data related to the use of Sinhala and Tamil showed that all the participants had some level of proficiency in Sinhala, the data pertaining to English shows everyone except Sumanadasa and Ranasinghe have a high level of proficiency in English and importantly that many of them use it in the home domain. This shows that the status of English in the lives of the participants goes beyond its official role of "link language."

The participants' talk about the status of English in their lives also showed that its role is more complicated than can be described through clear-cut labels such as "dominant" or "first" language. For example, Dino, one of the Tamil participants who said that English is the dominant language in her life, described how her allegiances to the Tamil language influence her interactions in the English language within the home domain. She said:

> Sometimes I make it a point because I have a one-year-old daughter and I want her Tamil to be a little bit better than mine. So, I kind of try to encourage her to learn it, so I refer to certain words, I refer to certain things in Tamil. My mother sometimes speaks Tamil, when I stop and think about it only I realize she's speaking to me in Tamil and I'm responding in English.

This excerpt shows that although English is Dino's dominant language, she associates Tamil with her ethnic identity and this seems to influence her relationship with English and complicate its role and status in her life. The situation recounted by Dino above shows that she does not want her daughter to grow up speaking only English. In this Dino seems to act in the same way as her mother, who she remembered had made her and her sister speak in Tamil at home when they were children out of the fear that their growing familiarity with English would make them get out of touch with Tamil. One wonders whether the mother speaking to her in Tamil in the above excerpt stems from a continued attempt at keeping her now adult daughter in touch with the Tamil identity and culture. The above excerpt also shows how Dino and her mother use resources from English and Tamil in their interactions within the home domain. It appears to be an instance of translanguaging which Garcia (2018) defines as the bilinguals' "accessing of different linguistic features or various modes of what are described as autonomous languages in order to maximize communicative potential" (p.140). The fact that Dino needs to "stop and think" before she realizes that her mother has spoken to her in Tamil and that she has replied in English could illustrate how resources from the two languages are spontaneously used by the two speakers to ensure that the communication runs smoothly without any breakdown in the meaning-making process. The excerpt also shows that in a

context such as the one described by Dino where each speaker carries a different level of competency in the languages they know, the roles and functions played by the languages are extremely fluid and can change not only from domain to domain and context to context but moment to moment within the same domain, context and even within the same interaction. The experiences related by Revathi about the role played by English in her life also point towards the fluidity of language use in the complex multilingual context of Sri Lanka. Although she described herself as a dominant user of Tamil, the following excerpt from her interviews shows that she predominantly uses English in the home domain. She said:

> At home I have to talk in English because my husband doesn't know Tamil. My kids are studying in English, so we speak in English. With my mum and with my sister I talk in Tamil. In the public sphere wherever I go, if I meet somebody I speak in Sinhalese or English.

Explaining the reasons for her use of English within the home domain, Revathi said that it is because her husband who comes from the Tamil sub-group known as Colombo Chetties and her children who study in the English medium use English as their dominant language and are not fluent speakers of Tamil. Thus, English seems to serve the purpose of a link language in Revathi's interactions with her family. Revathi's language use within the home domain therefore seems to go against the general assumption that the language of the home is the dominant language in a person's life as her dominant language, Tamil, is not her home language. The excerpts from the interviews with Dino and Revathi also show that the role of English in people's life in a multiethnic,

multilingual context like Sri Lanka can carry many nuances that cannot be depicted through static labels such as “first”, “second” or “link” language.

The participants also described how the context in which an interaction takes place impacts whether and when they use English. This is illustrated through the observation made by Shakira that “you’re required to speak in English in the corporate world” and that “automatically, if you enter that space, you would choose English first.” The fact that English is considered the dominant language of the corporate world, and the belief that one is expected to switch to it when one enters it, shows that it is a space one would not be able to enter or operate in without a knowledge of English. Thus, the role of English in the corporate world seems to extend beyond that of a link language. Sumanadasa, one of the Sinhalese participants, said that his lack of proficiency in English limits his contact with people in certain domains because he knows that they speak English in such places. He said:

> Now, when you go to places like private banks, they always speak in English no? It’s the same if you go to big shopping malls in Bambalapitiya. For example, Liberty Plaza in Bambalapitiya – they will definitely speak English there.

This excerpt from the interviews with Sumanadasa shows an awareness that there are certain domains within the public sphere where English dominates. As such, he comments, reflects and reinforces a belief that English seems to influence who has access to certain domains in the public sphere in the Sri Lankan context, possibly contributing to the association of English with a certain class in society. In these ways, language

ideologies which value English over other languages in Sri Lanka are intertwined with ideologies about social class in certain spaces.

In addition to context, the use of English in the public sphere seems to also be shaped by an awareness of audience and/or the participants involved in an interaction. Talking about the use of English in relation to the two vernacular languages Sinhala and Tamil in the public sphere, Dino observed that many speakers would choose Sinhalese over English:

> It (English) may be a link language in the Colombo corporate world. I think mostly Sinhalese is the link language for most people. If there are two groups going, a Tamil group and a Sinhalese group and if they needed to communicate, they would speak in Sinhalese as opposed to speaking in Tamil or English…if I get into the bus and I need to speak to somebody...I would never speak to them in English unless I think they know English. It's very rarely that English is used as a link language. It's hardly used as a link language, there's no widespread use of it.

What Dino seems to highlight here is the fact that English cannot play the role of a link language in the public sphere because not everyone knows the language. She also makes note of the necessity of making sure that a person knows the language before she can speak to them in English in the public sphere. Thus, English does not seem to serve the purpose of a link language on public transport, because, as she says, of the lack of a "widespread use of it". This shows that the use of English in the public sphere depends on context as well as audience. Dino later talked about how English did play the role of link language between students from different ethnic groups at her school which also

shows that the role played by English differs from context to context as well as audience to audience:

> My parents really didn't enforce that but maybe it's the environment that pushes you, like in school where we grew up in, we were always encouraged to speak in a language that others would understand. Like you don't exclude people from the group if you are speaking in Tamil when there are people who don't understand the language there… so most of us ended up speaking in English most of the time unless you were in a group where everybody else was more comfortable speaking in Tamil. So, it would be assembly, prayers or the things where lots of Sinhalese students, Tamil students and Muslim students get together (there was) lots of opportunity to just speak in English. It was just easier and more convenient.

According to Dino, it is possible for English to function as a link language when everyone is able to speak English (e.g., in the context of school). The school that she has studied at is a reputed girls' school in Colombo attended by children of middle-class families where English is commonly used as the home language. English usually functions as the language of interaction amongst students from different ethnic groups in such contexts as everyone is comfortable speaking the language as they use it in the home domain. However, in the situation on public transport which she recounted in the earlier excerpt, it is necessary to know if a person speaks English before talking to them in the language. The observation made by Sharon that she does not use English to link with people as not everyone knows English, also shows the importance of context and audience in the use of English. Sharon also said that "in a perfect world" where everyone

spoke English and "had equal opportunities to learn the language," it would be possible to treat it as a link language to communicate between people from different ethnic groups. Thus, according to the participants in my study, although the constitution defines it as such, whether English is used as a "link" language seems to be influenced by context, situation, audience, and the competencies of the speakers. In addition, a speaker's choices are influenced by their own level of competency, which can be shaped by their social class.

Participants also talked about different usages in relation to Sri Lankan English, some more highly valued than others. For example, Saranya's comments on who uses English as a first language and second language in Sri Lanka given below show that she defines first language status of a language in a person's life based on their use of it within the home domain.

> My feeling is that if your family has been speaking English, if your parents, your grandparents have been speaking English, then very often English is the first language you've heard, English is the language you've picked up, so you speak it. And certainly, when I was in school, in a private school all my classmates spoke fluent English.

Saranya here refers to the common perception prevalent in Sri Lanka that first language speakers of Sri Lankan English are those who have acquired it in the home domain. All of the participants who said that English is their first or dominant language also said that they use it in the home domain. This could also be the reason for English to be associated with social class as those who use the language in the home domain are few and usually belong to the upper-middle class social tier. Saranya also went on to talk about the

common perception regarding the use of English in Sri Lanka that those who use it as a first language speak it differently from the large majority of the people who use it as a second language. Explaining that speakers of Sri Lankan English speak a different variety in public from the one spoken by those who use it at home, she said:

> And of course, there is, wherever you go, whether it's a shop or a supermarket there will be people who serve you who obviously speak English but at a different level. English is obviously not their first language. But the way I can manage Sinhala, they can manage English.

By comparing these speakers' level of proficiency in English to hers in Sinhala, Saranya clearly identifies them as second language speakers of Sri Lankan English. She seems to make a clear distinction between the speech of the people she talks about in this extract and the capacity in which they use English, and those who use English in the home domain whom she talked of in the previous excerpt. The comparison she makes between two different uses of the language, and the roles in which the speakers are cast in the second excerpt, suggest that the first-language speakers of Sri Lankan English she speaks of in the first excerpt belong to a higher social tier than the second language speakers of it she mentions in the second excerpt. However, the observations that Saranya later makes about the language use of her students and their parents contests the long-established notion that first-language speakers of Sri Lankan English are those who use it in the home domain. She said:

> I also realize as a teacher that kids in private and international schools, sometimes they come from a non-English speaking background. I find that especially in international schools because I give English A/L tuition. So sometimes a mother

> will phone me, and she will talk to me entirely in Sinhala, she is unable to conduct a conversation in English. But when she puts the child on the phone the child has been to an international school, he or she speaks fluent English. So, it's a little difficult to know where exactly English is spoken.

The excerpt shows that English-medium education has resulted in the children of non-English speaking parents acquiring a high level of proficiency in English. Her surprise at the different levels of proficiency seen in the speech of the mother and the child suggests that the identification of first language speakers from the use of English within the home domain may not be as clear cut as it used to be. The fact that the children Saranya talks about in the except have been educated in English-medium international schools may indicate an interest on the part of the parents to give their children an English education. This could be due to the dominance of English within the language ecology of Sri Lanka and also its significance in the education and employment sectors, which is examined in further detail in Chapter Five. This connects well with an observation made by Sharon who said that Sinhala is necessary to "survive" in Sri Lanka while English is needed to "thrive," which she feels makes people place an excessive importance on learning the language. According to this comment made by Sharon, Sinhala is necessary to accomplish one's day-to-day activities, while English is associated with improving one's situation in life. Apart from Sharon, other participants like Patricia, Shameena and Ranasinghe also identified this as a possible reason why many parents try to give their children access to an English education although they themselves may not be proficient in it. Thus, ideologies which value English also seem intertwined with ideologies about social class and social prestige, driving speakers of English to try to acquire the more

highly valued variety of those who speak English as a home language as a way of reaching a higher tier in the social ladder.

The social prestige attached to English was another aspect of the language practices related to it that came out in the interviews with the participants. Patricia was one of the participants who constantly drew attention to the fact that English derives prestige from its association with a privileged social class. She observed a clear distinction between the situations of English and Sinhala and said while English enjoys considerable prestige Sinhala does not – and this continues to be true more than 50 years after the policy of 1956 (which tried to elevate the Sinhala language) was passed. For example, after saying that Sinhala is her dominant language in answer to the very first question in the first interview, Patricia said that the only reason that she can openly admit it is because of her social situation. She said:

> Now see for me Sinhala is my strong language, it's ok, because I'm a Burgher, I know English, I have a degree in English, I teach literature, you understand, so for me it's okay. Otherwise, I may not say it. Because from a position of privilege I can deny the use of English you understand? But if I'm not coming from a position of privilege, then I may not be honest about it. Did you get what I'm saying?

Patricia here seems to refer to the prestige that is attached to English in the social sphere in Sri Lanka which she clearly links with social class. Her observation that people are generally reluctant to admit that Sinhala is their stronger language, especially if they lack fluency in English, and come from a background where English is not the dominant

language, shows that Sinhala is associated with a lower social class and carries less prestige than English. She implies that people pretend to be stronger in English than Sinhala even if they're not, because they believe it is an indicator of their social class. This shows that the two languages seem to be inextricably linked to two starkly disparate social classes and therefore function as identity markers of their users' social situation. Thus, the extract from Patricia's interview suggests that people's evaluations of English as a more prestigious language than Sinhala are influenced by their association of it with a privileged social class. An anecdote that Patricia related later on in the same interview provides a real-life depiction of the social prestige she attaches to English. The narrative centers around an antique dealer who supplied goods to Patricia on a regular basis. As her spoken communications with him were always in Sinhala, she had texted him in Sinhala to inquire about an order that he was supposed to deliver. However, to her surprise, he replied to her in English, saying, "Yes, madam, it's ready. I will bring it today." Patricia observed that although he does not speak to her in English (possibly because of the fear of making a mistake), he used English to text (possibly because he could take time to write the message and had studied the language at school from grade three). Explaining how she felt when she received the message, Patricia said:

> Now, how am I to know? Do you understand? When he speaks, he would speak to me in Sinhala, then he's very fluent and I'm fluent and we get our job done. But when it comes to writing, he also wants to show that he knows the language and he will not reply in Sinhala.

The prestige associated with English seems to influence the antique dealer to not use English in one instance, yet use it in the other, which shows that ideologies that associate English with social prestige can influence people's language use in contradictory ways. His fear of speaking English may stem from a lack of familiarity with the spoken form and the fear of making a mistake, both of which are common amongst second language speakers. On the other hand, using English in text messaging may be an attempt by him to win her esteem for his business as he would know she comes from a background where English is the home language.

An extract from one of the interviews with Shakira shows another aspect related to how ideologies about social class seem to shape ideologies about English. Talking about how some of her friends take offense if someone compliments them on their high level of fluency in English, Shakira said:

> Caucasian or White people may look at me, or anyone I know who is brown and say, "Your English is very good," and I have friends who get offended. And I say "You shouldn't get offended, we're anomalies you know. We are the minority who speaks English, so it's more probable we shouldn't be speaking English."

At a glance it may appear ironic that Shakira's friends take offense at a compliment from a non-Sri Lankan about their fluency in English. However, an examination of the social background that Shakira and her friends belong to could explain the reasons for their annoyance at being complimented on their language use. Given that Shakira claims English is her dominant language, it is likely that she and her friends would belong to the social class where English is used as the home language. As such, her friends' reaction

could stem from a belief that English is part of their social heritage and as such their fluency in it should be no cause for surprise. This highlights again that English fluency is a crucial part of the identity of the relatively small number of people who fit into the Sri Lankan upper-middle class, and that they take pride in it. The fact that they feel insulted instead of complimented at being commented on their "good English" shows that they are far removed from the majority of Sri Lankans amongst whom, as pointed out by Shakira in the excerpt, English fluency is the exception rather than the rule. It could also indicate that they are reluctant to be identified with the larger majority of the population who use English as a second language. These extracts from the interviews with Patricia and Shakira show that ideologies about the social situation of English are inseparably linked with ideologies about social class and that they both influence people's language use as well as their perceptions about language use in complex ways.

The data also revealed that the status of English in Sri Lanka is affected by its dominance as a world language. For example, Mumtaz spoke about how the place of English in her son's life is so dominant that it even influences how he speaks Sinhala. Recounting her difficulties teaching Sinhala to her son who is a first language speaker of English, she said that although he speaks the language, he does not have the local accent because he is constantly "watching TV series and cartoons in English." Comparing her own experiences with the younger generations, she said that more and more people are speaking English today as opposed to the time when she was a child because they are more exposed to the language through technology. Thus, English seems to be acquiring dominance within the language ecology of Sri Lanka as a result of its prominence in the outside world as the medium of entertainment and technology. Mumtaz also said that she

is not unhappy about the fact that her son speaks Sinhala with an accent because she does not think that Sinhala is an important language or that it should be given any significance. This shows that as a first language speaker of English, Mumtaz places more importance on English than Sinhala. This seems to show that while the role that English plays in the lives of its users and in various domains in the public sphere may be linked to factors related to the local language ecology such as ethnic allegiances, context and audience as examined in the previous sections, it is also influenced by the overarching factor of its dominance as the leading language in the world. An observation made by Patricia in relation to the extensive use of English in the public sphere also illustrates how its position as a world language seems to affect its situation in the language ecology of Sri Lanka. She said:

> Now I was travelling in Rakwana...in the middle of the road in some godforsaken village, "Road under construction. Sorry for the inconvenience!" And I was thinking who's going to read it? They might as well do it in French.

This excerpt is from one of Patricia's responses to a question regarding how English is defined in the language policy, and it shows that its status and role in society extend far beyond those of a link language. The incongruity of displaying a notice related to public safety in English in a remote area like Rakwana situated close to hundred miles from Colombo, which Patricia comments on here relates to the fact that a large majority of Sri Lankans struggle with English (even though it is taught in all government schools from grade three) and fluency in it is assumed in urban areas where resources for teaching the language are more easily available. However, the notice being in English could be due to the simple fact that the road repairs were being done by an international construction

company that functions in English. Although Patricia says that "it might as well be in French," it is not by pure happenstance that it is in English and not French. While the notice may be in English due to the language policy of the company doing the repairs, the fact that it is in English, a language that the people of the remote Rakwana area would know even if they cannot read the notice, and not in French which is totally alien to them, could illustrate its dominance as a world language.

In summary, this section of data analysis demonstrates that the roles and functions of English influence and are influenced by perceptions about and attitudes towards the language practices related to it in the Sri Lankan language ecology. The analysis of data in this section showed that the role of English in the lives of the participants extends beyond that of a "link language" as defined in the constitution. It also showed that the participants' use of English was affected by the context in which an interaction took place as well as the audience and participants involved in it. Some of the excerpts illuminated translanguaging in the interactions of English-dominant participants, and other excerpts revealed that English might be adopted as the dominant language within the home domain by a participant who identified themselves as Tamil-dominant. These language practices suggest that language use in a multiethnic and multilingual context such as Sri Lanka are too complex to be captured under static labels such as "dominant" or "first" language. The examination of data in this section also showed that the use of English is surrounded by a sense of prestige and that certain varieties are more valued than others. Lastly, the participants' observations illustrated that the prominence of English in the global sphere affects its position within the language ecology of Sri Lanka. Thus, the analysis of data in this section illustrated that the situation of English in the language

ecology of Sri Lanka is multifaceted and influenced by various aspects related to the social, economic and political milieus of the country. It also showed that language use is an inherent part of its environment and therefore reflects and is impacted upon by the dominant ideologies circulating in it.

The status of Malay and Arabic

In this section I examine what the Muslim participants said about the role of Malay and Arabic in their lives. Malay is used by the Sri Lankan Malays who comprise 0.2% of the population of the country as a home language while Arabic is used by all Muslims for religious purposes. Given the fact that both languages are used by Muslims within their community, what the Muslim participants say about them is closely tied in with their cultural identity. It also shows the status of the two languages within the language ecology of Sri Lanka in contemporary times.

The study participants' talk about the language practices of the Sri Lankan Muslims showed the diversity of the language ecology prevailing within the Muslim community. While Tamil seems to be used by the Muslims as their native or first language in general, they also mentioned different subgroups within the community who use additional languages. For example, Shakira and Saranya said that there are ethnic sub-groups within the Muslim community who use different languages such as Malay, Memoni, Gujarati and Urdu. Recalling that her great grandmother had been able to speak both Malay and Urdu, Shakira said that the use of many languages in the earlier generations of Muslims would have resulted from the fact that pre-independence Colombo was far more diverse than today, with "migrant communities from India who had come for trade" living there. She said that such communities would have been able to

speak as many as five languages including the main languages of the country and those dominant around the area they lived in. According to Shakira, these languages are used within the Muslim sub-groups today, each of which comprises a small portion of the Muslim community, the entirety of which comprises less than ten percent of the country's population. Mumtaz and Shakira spoke in detail about the role of Malay in their lives which showed that the Malay language is faced with the threat of extinction as a result of the dominance of Sinhala, English and Tamil in the language ecology of Sri Lanka. They both spoke at length about how the Malay language, which had earlier played a central role in the culture of Malays, is gradually becoming a dead language. Speaking of it as a "lost heritage" with which she is attempting to get back in touch, Shakira said:

> It's not like you can choose it as a language to study or… it's something you only speak at home if you have extended family members to speak with. And a lot of people are switching to English language because if you want qualifications, professional growth, that kind of thing. So yeah, at least in the Malay community you find more Sinhalese speaking and English speaking and I think Tamil comes third.

What Shakira says in this excerpt shows the influence that Sinhala, English and Tamil have on beliefs regarding the relative value of the Malay language and subsequently on the language ecology of the country. It could be that the assigning of official and national status to Sinhala and Tamil and "link language" status to English through language policy has elevated their status and served to diminish the importance of other languages such as Malay. According to what Shakira says in this excerpt, Malay seems to be in a similar situation to that of Tamil as recounted by some of the Tamil participants who said they

use it only with older members of their families. However, it is not likely that Tamil would die out completely as it is used by both Tamils and Muslims as opposed to Malay which is used by a smaller subgroup of Muslims and therefore more vulnerable. As such, the tenuous situation of Malay seems to be directly related to the fact that it is a language used by an ethnic sub-group within the Muslim community and it is not used or even welcome in the public sphere. The fact that it has not been recognized as a language of instruction or a language that could be formally studied, which Shakira mentions in the excerpt, may reflect and contribute to its current less coveted status. The excerpt above also suggests a language hierarchy based on the number of people speaking each language and that the advent of Sinhala, English and Tamil as the dominant languages in the modern times has had an impact upon the diversity of the language ecology of Sri Lanka in post-independence times. These observations made by Shakira and Mumtaz about language practices related to Malay shows how the power of the state, operating through language policy, could affect the language practices of individuals and thus shape the language ecology of a country by creating the conditions under which certain languages are more dominant, prestigious, or widely used than others. They also show that language policies can simultaneously reflect and influence people's ideologies about different languages and which languages are valued by them.

Both Shakira and Mumtaz said they make an attempt to keep the Malay language alive by speaking it whenever possible in the home domain because they consider the Malay language an important part of their identity. Mumtaz said that she tries to use Malay with her siblings and also encourages her children to speak it but that they are not

interested. She also indicated that not using in the public sphere might cause it to die out. She said:

> Our Sri Lankan structure is such that with the time we have we use Sinhala and English more than any of the other languages with the time, so you take twenty-four hours of the day, only maybe one or two hours of quality time you spend with your family if you are a working parent. Personally, for me I get to speak in Malay only very rarely, very occasionally. Other than that, it's in the other languages because I'm mostly engaged in work.

What she says here seems to suggest that the changes caused in the lives of women also have an influence on the current situation of Malay. Considering the fact that Malay has functioned predominantly as a home language in Sri Lanka, traditionally women would have played a more prominent role in keeping it alive and carrying it forward to the next generations. This becomes apparent through the memories of their grandmothers and great grandmothers speaking the language recounted by both Shakira and Mumtaz. However, unlike her grandmother or great grandmother who would have spent most of their time inside the house, Mumtaz is a working mother, which impacts the amount of time she spends with her family and, consequently, her chances of speaking in Malay with her children. Despite this, she tries her best to "keep it going" because she does not want it to be a "dead language." This shows that although Malay is under a threat of dying out due to it being a home language of a minority group, the fact that it is closely bound with their ethnic and cultural identity as Muslim Malays seems to make Shakira and Mumtaz want to keep it alive. However, the fact that she is a career woman seems to have made her life much more hectic and significantly less home-bound than that of her

grandmother and great grandmother, which in turn affects her use of Malay. These observations show how language practices and language ideologies reflect and are influenced by social changes such as those affecting the situation of women.

Mumtaz's talk on her language practices as a Muslim also showed that the advent of English as a world language has affected the role of Arabic in her life. She said that Arabic is not a language that is used for communication or social interaction by the Muslims in Sri Lanka as they generally learn it in order to be able to read the Quran. As such, Arabic seems to fulfill a more practical role in her life as it does not seem to be tied to the ethnic identity of Sri Lankan Muslims in the way that Malay appeared to be tied to the ethnic identity of the Sri Lankan Malays as shown in the previous sections. However, Mumtaz said that the need to learn Arabic in order to know the Quran has been rendered obsolete due to the Quran being translated into English and made available as a downloadable version on the internet. She said:

> Now with all these technological advancements and developments it's all at the tip of your fingers. You can just download the Quran in English and the translation is there. So, I don't have to memorize the entire Quran. What I always do, whenever I read the Quran, I always look at the meaning, the translation. So, what I have told my kids is you don't have to know Arabic to know the Quran. You don't have to know it in Arabic as long as you know what it means, that's what matters.

This shows how the advances in technology along with the advent of English as a world language have influenced the status of Arabic in the life of Mumtaz. She said that the

availability of Quranic scriptures in English on the internet has made Arabic a "dead language" to her. The only other use that she can think of for Arabic in her life is in the event of travel to a country where it is used for communication such as Saudi Arabia, but she also said that she knows she will be able to manage communicating in that context by using English. This shows how the growth of English as a global language seems to impact the language practices used by Sri Lankan Muslims and the language ideologies that associate Arabic with Islam.

The data analyzed in this section showed that the advent of Sinhala, English and Tamil within the language ecology of Sri Lanka has weakened the situation of Malay – a language traditionally associated with the ethnic identity of the Sri Lankan Malays. On the other hand, the observations made by Mumtaz showed how the importance of Arabic in her life has diminished as a result of the growth of English as a global language. Thus, socio-political developments taking place both within and outside Sri Lanka have caused certain languages to come into prominence, impacting the language practices of the Malays and Muslims of Sri Lanka as well as the status of Malay and Arabic.

Summary

The data analyzed in this chapter showed that the status of the Sri Lankan languages Sinhala, Tamil, English, Malay and Arabic is affected by a multiplicity of factors such as language policy changes, ethnic relations and allegiances, context, audience as well as the increasing spread of English as a world language. The position of Sinhala and Tamil seems directly related to the 1956 policy changes and the subsequent establishment of political power led by the majority Sinhalese. For example, the establishment of Sinhala as the dominant official language went hand in hand with the

rise of ideas of national belonging in which the history and the culture of the Sinhalese as the majority community predominated. Thus, the fact that Sinhala is the language of the Sinhalese, the majority ethnic community in the country, seems to have had a significant impact on its status as the most commonly used language in the public sphere and also the language that a majority of the people know regardless of the ethnic group they belong to. On the other hand, the fact that Tamil is used as a native language by Tamils and Muslims who are two minority ethnic groups, seems to have contributed to its low profile in the public sphere. The data analyzed in this chapter also showed that the situation of English is far more fluid than suggested by labels such as "first" "second" or "link" language which often convey static ideas about the practices related to it as well as the people who use them. The interactions taking place in English that the participants talked about seemed to comprise translanguaging and vary from context to context and audience to audience which showed the complexities of its situation within the language ecology of Sri Lanka. The examination of data also showed how English, in its now powerful status as a global language has come to influence the status of Malay and Arabic, two languages used within the Muslim community of Sri Lanka.

The analysis also showed that Sinhala and English hold a high status within the language ecology of Sri Lanka while Tamil, Malay and Arabic hold a lower status. While the position of Sinhala as defined in the constitution seems to align with its actual status, the place that Tamil and English hold within the language ecology seems to deviate from their officially assigned status in actual practice as shown by what the participants said about their roles and functions in their lives and others'. Thus, although Tamil is defined as a national and official language in the constitution, it does not seem to enjoy the same

status that Sinhala holds within the language ecology as the other national and official language. On the other hand, the influence that English holds within the language ecology seems to reach beyond the status of a "link" language as defined in the language policy. This shows that the language planning efforts of the government seem to have been unable to change the actual language practices of the people in relation to these two languages. A number of participants saw the discrepancy between the official and actual status of Tamil as resulting from the lack of interest shown by the majority Sinhalese to learn Tamil. Geethika, one of the Sinhalese participants, also suggested that the low status of Tamil results from the weak policies and methods related to the teaching of Tamil at school level and promoting it in the state sector. Although the specific reasons may be unclear, these ideas show that there are practical problems involved with the implementation of Tamil as equal in status to Sinhala as defined in the language policy.

The status of Sinhala, Tamil, English, Malay and Arabic as perceived through the language practices and evaluations of the participants examined in this chapter seems to be linked to the power dynamics in operation within the socio-political realm of the country. Influenced by ethnic relations, social class, the official status of Sinhala as well as the world language status of English, their position in the language ecology seems to be closely grounded within the local and global power structures enmeshed within the socio-political context of Sri Lanka. Therefore, the language hierarchy revealed by the analysis of data in this chapter seems to reflect and go hand in hand with other social hierarchies prevailing in the Sri Lankan context.

Lastly, the chapter paints a powerful picture of the complex multilingual context of Sri Lanka. On one hand, it shows the way in which the language policy has come to

affect the situation of Sinhala and Tamil and elevated the status of one and diminished that of the other. On the other hand, the chapter shows how the situation of English defies being defined by the role of "link language" assigned to it by the language policy. The language practices, attitudes and perceptions related to English described by the participants showed its situation in the Sri Lankan context to be far more fluid and carrying many more nuances than can be captured through the static labels that are frequently attached to it. Thus, the chapter shows that the multilingual context of Sri Lanka is both marked with and a reflection of its colonial past, the events of its contemporary socio-political life as well as global socio-political developments.

CHAPTER 5

CHAPTER FIVE THE SITUATION OF ENGLISH IN POSTCOLONIAL SRI LANKA: THE LANGUAGE OF THE ELITE OR THE LANGUAGE OF THE MASSES?

In the previous chapter I examined the participants' talk about practices, perceptions and attitudes related to different languages used in Sri Lanka to understand their status within the complex multilingual context of the country. In this chapter, I add to my analysis of the status of English in the previous chapter by examining in more depth and detail the observations that the participants made about the situation of English in Sri Lanka. I analyze what my participants said about the situation of English in education and employment as well as on evaluations about Sri Lankan Englishes to examine the influence of colonialism on the position of English in Sri Lanka. As such, my analysis of data in this chapter shows how ideologies which hold colonialism in high regard continue to influence the situation of English in education and employment, as well as perceptions of varieties of Sri Lankan English. It shows that although the colonial language policy which gave prominence to English was changed in 1956 and established Sinhala - the language of the majority community, Sinhalese – as the official language, the high status of English has continued to thrive even in the period after colonial rule. My examination of data in this chapter also shows how two starkly disparate ideologies such as colonialism and nationalism have served to elevate English, the language of the colonizer, which illustrates the complexity surrounding the situation of English in the post-colonial context of Sri Lanka.

The analysis of data in this chapter comprises two sections. In the first section I examine the participants' observations and evaluations about the policies, practices,

perceptions and attitudes related to English in education and employment. In the second section of data analysis, I examine what the participants said about different varieties of Sri Lankan English. In an effort to simplify the presentation of a series of complex and interrelated observations about how English is perceived and responded to in education and employment, I have separated my analysis of data in the first section into four sub-sections. The four sub-sections examine the participants' observations regarding the impact of the 1956 policy on education as well as the situation of English in schools, higher education and employment.

The examination of data in the two sections of this chapter paints a picture of the complexities underlying the situation of English in the post-colonial context of Sri Lanka. As such, it adds more depth to the analysis of data I presented in the previous chapter which showed the complexity of the multilingual context of Sri Lanka. Taken together, my data analysis in the two sections of this chapter shows how English serves as a principal means through which aspects of the country's colonial history continue to bear down on its socio-political affairs in the post-independent era and reinforce the structures of power established under colonial rule. By showing how it has both contributed to some of the most pressing problems the country has faced in the post-colonial period and poses as the natural solution to them, the chapter illustrates the multilayered, yet intrinsic relationship that English has with Sri Lanka's post coloniality.

The influence of colonialism on the role of English

In this section I examine participants' observations about policies and practices related to English in education and employment in order to understand how colonial power structures and cultural practices bear upon the situation of English within these

two sectors and produce and reinforce a social inequity that limits the opportunities available to underprivileged segments of society to make socio-economic progress. A prominent part of the data that I analyze here is on the situation of English in schools and universities as a number of participants spoke in detail about the situation of English within the education system. This may be related to the fact that many of them are employed as teachers. For example, two out of each of the three Tamil, Muslim and Burgher participants are employed as English language teachers. Patricia and Shameena have retired from teaching in the government service and are now working in private schools. Others like Mumtaz and Saranya have years of experience teaching at both government and private schools. The observations they make about the situation of English in education are necessarily linked to, and sometimes even serve to explicate, what they said about the situation of English in the employment sector, which I examine at the end of this section. My analysis of data in this section comprises four sub-sections. I first examine the participants' observations about how the 1956 policy affected the role of English in education and employment. Next, I examine what they said about the situation of English in different types of institutes, such as missionary, international and rural schools. In the last sub-section, I examine their talk on the situation of English in the universities and the employment sector.

The impact of the 1956 policy on the role of English in education

The participants' observations of and evaluations about the 1956 language policy showed that the power structures of colonial rule continue to influence the politics of postcolonial Sri Lanka in complex ways and have caused long lasting impacts on its socio-economic situation. A number of participants seemed to identify the 1956 language

policy which removed English from the status of official language as paving the way for the development of the policies and practices currently prevailing in the education system. Their observations and evaluations about the impact that the language policy of 1956 had on the role of English in education seem to suggest that, although projected as a nationalist policy which sought to prioritize the interests of the rural masses and mark a new era in Sri Lankan politics, it ironically ended up reinforcing English as an elitist language serving the interests of a privileged social class.

Until I examined the data closely, I did not realize the direct impact that the language policy had had on education and access to English. However, the detailed observations that Patricia and Saranya made explained how the removal of English from official status also meant that it ceased to function as the medium of instruction in education. They said that this eliminated the principal means through which those who did not belong to the English-speaking upper-middle class could access the language. They strongly felt that the demotion of English from official language status strengthened its position as an elite language available only to those who used it as a home language, and further distanced it from the Sinhala and Tamil speaking masses in rural, underprivileged parts of the country. When I asked her how the 1956 policy affected her life, Patricia, who comes from an upper-middle-class English-speaking background, said:

> It's like for us, for certain classes, I don't think that affected at all because they continued in English. Because the Sinhala Only Policy was not detrimental to everyone, no? So, the Anglican schools flourished in English medium, they went abroad, they got themselves educated. Not that English totally disappeared, no?

In this extract Patricia explains how the changes brought about by the transition from English to Sinhala were not felt by the elite minority of people of her social circles who used English as a first language as the change in its official status did not impact their use of it within the home domain. The actual process through which the transition from English to Sinhala took place in the education sector remains largely unclear. However, the observations made by Patricia and Saranya regarding the language practices at two elite missionary schools in Colombo in contemporary times (examined in the next sub-section) suggest that English would have remained as the dominant language outside the classroom in previously English-medium schools even if they had to adopt Sinhala as the medium of instruction immediately after the 1956 policy was passed. According to Canagarajah (2005), "English remained the language of higher education" and was a "working official language in many institutional domains" (p. 423) even after 1956. Even if its dominance within the education sector may have diminished, the excerpt from Patricia's interviews above clearly shows that English continued as a home language amongst the upper-middle class elites. The continued use of English as a home language was echoed by Saranya who said that the demotion of English in an official capacity "did not kill the language among the elite" as they continued to use English in their households. Although the 1956 policy's elevation of the status of Sinhala is often projected as giving precedence to the needs of the underprivileged masses in rural areas and a symbolic rejection of western values, the ideas expressed by Patricia and Saranya seem to indicate that they believe the policy served to privilege the English-speaking upper-middle class over the Sinhala-speaking majority. Canagarajah (2005) explicates this further when he says that the "nationalistic language planning activities" of 1956 did

not bring about a marked change in the *status quo* because the "power of English" was never fully challenged (p.423).

Saranya's narrative of an anecdote about a driver who had worked for her family in her childhood, given below, presents another poignant description of the impact that the language policy seems to have had on those who did not have the privilege of using English as a home language.

> We had a driver, an old man, and I would sit in the front. And when I got down to do something I would leave my books in the car. And very often when I came back, he used to be reading one of my books. And the thing is, he had studied till he was in grade seven or eight in English when they changed it. So, he can speak in English, it was then that I realized that he could speak in English because I had been speaking to him in Sinhala all along. And that he could speak English, but he married a girl from the village who couldn't, and his daughter struggled with the language. They took away English from the people who actually needed it and needed English education to progress.

This extract from Saranya's interview shows how the demotion of English impacted on those who acquired the language as a second or third language through school education. While English-medium education would not have been available in all schools even during the time of British rule, its availability in some schools would have made English accessible to at least some of the non-elite segments of society for whom English was not a home language. The extract provides a glimpse of how English might have contributed to the socio-economic growth of the masses and allowed them greater social mobility had

it continued to serve as medium of education and been accessible to the larger majority of the population. Phillipson (1992) defines linguistic imperialism as the assertion and maintenance of the dominance of English through "the establishment and continuous reconstitution of structural and cultural inequalities between English and other languages" (p. 47). His contention is that imperialism continues to influence and control the former colonies even after political control had been relinquished, by ensuring the supremacy of English through the allocation of more resources to its development than was allocated to other languages. However, ironically, the situation of English in Sri Lanka as described by Patricia and Saranya in the above examples shows that, although the 1956 policy had demoted the status of English and allocated resources for the development of a local language (Sinhala), it had not succeeded in lowering the status of English in Sri Lanka. In fact, as Patricia observed, English gained an even more privileged status than before – in part because the 1956 policy "denied it to the average citizen." This shows that the situation of English in a post-colonial state such as Sri Lanka is much more nuanced than what is proposed by Phillipson (1992) as the non-allocation of resources alone does not seem to have produced a demotion in its status. In fact, although it was the official language during the colonial period, even the British did not allocate sufficient resources for its development as to make it accessible to the masses (Canagarajah, 2005; Herath, 2015). Herath (2015) contends that "British language policies prompted what Skuttnabb-Kangas (1998) terms linguicism, i.e., the unequal distribution of power to speakers of a certain language over speakers of other languages" (p. 250), by confining its availability to an elite minority. According to Canagarajah (2005) the British limited the supply of English with the view of making its status

enviable (p. 422). By causing the concentration of English within a privileged social class, the language policy of 1956 also seems to have reinforced the *status quo* established by the British language policy although it elevated Sinhala in an official sense.

Although it seems to have served to distance English from the masses and further privilege an English-speaking elite minority, the 1956 language policy was an essentially nationalist policy seeking to benefit the non-English speaking rural masses, many of whom would have felt victimized by the language policies established during British colonial rule. According to Herath (2015), the Official Language Act of 1956, popularly known as the "Sinhala Only Bill," was introduced to "appease the disaffected Sinhalese majority" (p. 251). In other words, at the time of its introduction, the 1956 policy was projected by the government and embraced by a large majority of the population as an effort to empower the rural masses by elevating one of the local languages and wiping out the power of the colonizer. The prominent portrayal of the Sinhala Only Bill in the election campaign of S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike in 1956 and his subsequent victory attest to the popularity of the policy. Patricia herself talked about the popularity that the bill had enjoyed at the time it had been proposed when she said:

> Definitely with Bandaranaike my father was. Sinhala Only policy, මං හිතන්නේ එයා පෙළපාලිත් ගියා. සිංහල මුකුත් වචනයක්වත් කතා කරගන්න බැරුව (I think he even took part in the campaigns for it, although he didn't speak a word of Sinhala). Because it was also see, colonization created, it was a very messy thing no? දැන් අපේ අම්මා කියනවා ඉස්සර සිංහලෙන් කතා කළොත් සත භාගයක් fine කරනවලු (Now my mother used to say, that

> they used to fine people half-a-cent if they spoke in Sinhala). So අම්මා (mother) resented it.

The extract provides a powerful depiction of the complexity of colonialism and how it continued to bear upon and complicate the sociopolitical affairs of the country even after political subjugation had officially ended. The fact that Patricia's father had participated in the campaigns in support of the Sinhala Only Policy although he himself did not speak Sinhala, shows that the policy represented a movement against colonial rule and the oppressions that it had inflicted on the people and was thus not only about language. The extract suggests that the language policy's rejection of English may have been well-received even by the Burghers who use it as a first language because it was perceived as a symbolic rejection of the foreign power that had held the country under its heel for more than a century. This shows that the language ideology which influenced the removal of English from official status in 1956 is inseparably linked with a widespread understanding of the politics of colonial rule and its continued impact on the affairs of the newly independent nation. Another observation made by Patricia about the situation of English in her school when she was a student also shows how English had been closely impacted upon by the rise of nationalism at the time. She said:

> The English medium continued in the schools up until the 1970s. We were in the Sinhala medium, but I remember there was English medium, there were English medium kids. But those days it was the *lansi* children who couldn't do anything else that went to the English medium class. Now it has a social status, no? But those days the English-medium class was the class that *lansi* children who couldn't do anything else were in. It didn't have the social status it now has. If we

were mistaken to be in the English medium those days, it was a demotion. It was a demotion.

Patricia here describes how English seems to have suffered a brief decline in status as a result of the 1956 policy's elevation of Sinhala. The association of English at the time with Burghers could indicate the prejudice against the latter which was rampant in the time before and after independence. The Burghers were a common target of the resentment of the Sinhala nationalists fighting against the political and cultural supremacy of the British (Roberts et al, 1989) during the time of independence. The Burghers, due to their fair skin and the "western" lifestyle may have been regarded at the time as the people bearing the closest physical resemblance to the colonizer. They may also have become subject to the animosity of the other communities on account of the dominance they enjoyed in government employment because of their command of English (Coperahewa, 2009). Thus, the impact of the nationalist movement that was center stage within Sri Lankan politics would have led to the Burghers being associated with the then repudiated language of the colonizer and caused both to be perceived and marked as low status in the public eye at the time. The above excerpts from the interviews with Patricia therefore show how closely linked the language policy of 1956 was with the nationalist movement that took center stage of Sri Lankan politics of the time.

The observations made by the participants that I have shared here seem to suggest that, although the goal was to prioritize the interests of a majority of the population and uphold the local culture over that of the colonizer, the language policy of 1956 ended up bringing about an unequal division of society by privileging an elite minority who had

adopted English as their dominant language. Their observations also point towards the idea that nationalism, which emerged as a reaction against colonialism, had ironically re-established the colonial power structures which it had sought to dismantle. The data analysis in this section also showed that the situation of English in Sri Lanka has fluctuated based on the events taking place within its socio-political terrain as it illustrated that the rise of nationalism and the language policy of 1956 briefly undermined the status of English in the aftermath of independence. The discussion of various opinions held by the participants regarding the 1956 language policy in this section shows that the ideologies which elevated the status of English in colonial times and those that elevated Sinhala in the time after independence had both resulted in vesting power within an English-speaking elite social tier.

The role of English in Missionary Schools and International Schools

What Patricia and Saranya said about the situation of English in two elite schools they have worked in revealed that remnants of the culture introduced during colonial times continue to prevail within them, which seems to further contribute to the English-based social inequality that the language policy had brought about. Patricia and Saranya who have both previously taught English at Winston Girls' School (an elite girls' school in the heart of Colombo) and are now employed at St Vincent's College (a prominent Anglican school for boys in Colombo) spoke in detail about the English dominant culture prevailing in these schools. They are elite private missionary schools founded during British rule and attended by a student body belonging to the social segment that C. Fernando (1976) described as the "multi-racial non-European population of Sri Lanka" (p. 189) who adopted English as their home language. They also offer both the local and

British curriculum and instruction is available in all three languages, Sinhala, Tamil and English. Talking about the language practices she has observed at the two schools, Patricia said:

> …at Winston Girls' School - I've taught there for twelve years - I didn't hear Sinhala spoken at all. You know, even though the medium of instruction is Sinhala, social interaction is in English. Even now at St Vincent's – I hardly hear Sinhala spoken at all because I make it a point to talk in Sinhala because I tell the boys all the time "this is your mother tongue, and you have to have your ears trained to catch the sounds, you know?"

According to this speaker, in these two schools attended by students who speak English as the home language, Sinhala takes a secondary place to English. The fact that Patricia has to emphasize the importance of knowing Sinhala to her students at St Vincent's suggests that its situation is that of a second language that students have to be persuaded to learn. Recounting her early experiences as a teacher at Winston Girls' School, Patricia said that her students had been shocked to find out that she, a teacher of English, could speak Sinhala fluently. She said:

> I went there in 2006 and I always use Sinhala and I will use it. So, one of my kids asked, "Oh Miss you speak in Sinhala?" and I said, "Yeah why?". සිංහලෙන් කතා කරන එක පුදුමයි, පුදුමයි.මේ සිංහල රටේ ඉදලා, සිංහල නම් තියෙන හොද වික්‍රමනායකලා හොද රත්වත්තෙලා සිංහල කතා කරද්දි ඔන්න reaction එක. (They're shocked at somebody speaking in Sinhala. Sinhalese kids, living in this Sinhala country, coming from good Sinhalese families like the Wickremanayakas, the Rathwattes but this is

their reaction when they hear someone speak Sinhala). It's *infra dig* (demeaning), you understand?

The students' perceptions and evaluations regarding English and Sinhala show how interconnected colonial educational policies and certain language ideologies are in Sri Lanka. The language practices and attitudes described by Patricia suggest that ideologies that devalue Sinhala (and which may have been bolstered by official and unofficial language policies during colonial rule) continue to operate in the two schools. Thus, although the official colonial language policy was changed in an attempt at prioritizing the needs of a larger majority of the population, it seems to continue to operate in a de facto way in certain exclusive domains such as Winston Girls' School and St Vincent's College. After hearing the above anecdote about the students' surprise at her use of Sinhala, I asked Patricia whether the school has a screening procedure to ensure their academic staff are fluent in English prior to recruiting them. She said that although there was no screening, no one without English fluency would walk in for an interview there. She went on to say that "it's like I would dress in a particular way to go to a particular place" and that all teachers at Winston School "can speak in English if they want to." Although students would not ridicule anyone for not being able to speak English unless they were an English teacher, Patricia emphasized that "there is no way, no way that a non-English speaking principal can survive there." These observations made by Patricia suggest that there are tacit rules which help sustain the dominance of English at Winston School by minimizing the culture promoted by the official language policy of the country infiltrating the school. The practices and attitudes related to English which Patricia describes in the extracts also seem to show that the schools continue to espouse the ideals

on which missionary schools were founded during British colonial rule. Explaining the reasons that led to the introduction of English medium schools in Sri Lanka, Canagarajah (2005) states that they were set up in order to produce a group of people who could "help integrate the island's colonial administration with the rest of the empire" (p. 421). The practices, evaluations and attitudes related to Sinhala and English observed by Patricia at Winston Girls' School and St Vincent's College seem to be influenced by language ideologies that hold English in a higher regard than Sinhala which indicate that although colonial rule has ended, remnants of the education system and culture introduced during that time continue to live on in these schools.

The participants' talk about the situation of English in education showed that aspects of the colonial system of education and the colonial culture are not confined to missionary schools founded by the British. International schools that offer the British curriculum were introduced after independence, but the observations the participants made about them showed that they follow traditions similar to those described by Saranya and Patricia as prevailing in missionary schools. For example, Mumtaz spoke about Metropolitan College, an elite international school in Colombo, which, she said "was always for the rich and the elite segment of the society where all the politicians' and ambassadors' children and even the presidents' children attended." This shows that schools providing English-medium instruction and catering to a privileged segment in society continued to operate even after the 1956 language policy which intended to raise the prestige of Sinhala went into effect. The establishment of international schools may have been done with the specific aim of catering to the English-speaking elite who took over the political leadership of the country after independence. According to Canagarajah

(2005) and Herath (2015) the new leadership who belonged to the local elite were reluctant to demote the status of English. Canagarajah (2005) also holds that the "Marxist-oriented populist government" of S.W. R. D. Bandaranaike, which finally brought about the demotion of English, was also led by "the anglicized elite." This also connects up with Phillipson's (1992) contention that in postcolonial contexts the supremacy of English is sustained through the intervention of the indigenous elites "who have strong links with the Center" and have been either educated in the Center countries or "in the medium of the Center language" (p. 52). These ideas suggest that the setting up of English medium schools in contravention of the language policy of 1956 would have been done with the aim of benefiting the English-speaking elite class to which the political leadership belonged. Shameena talked about disparities in regulations related to English-medium education between government and international schools which shows how educational policies of post-independence Sri Lanka continue to promote the elitism of English dominant schools. Shameena, who now teaches English in an international school after retiring from service in a government school, told me that she is familiar with the systems of education at both types of institutes. She said that although English medium education is available in a select few government schools, there is a regulation which restricts it to only four out of the eight main subjects in the Ordinary Level curriculum as it is mandatory to study religion, history, aesthetics and mother tongue in either Sinhala or Tamil medium based on which of them is the students' mother tongue. However, this rule does not apply to fee levying international schools where the entire education is offered in the English medium as they offer the British curriculum. This shows that the culture of education introduced by the British continues to be sustained in

postcolonial Sri Lanka through institutes of learning that are modeled upon or influenced by the colonial system of education, and the attending ideologies of language that value standard Sri Lankan English more than any of the local languages. In all of these ways, language ideologies have contributed to and/or strengthened the dominance of English in Sri Lanka and how it continues to play a prominent role in fostering the elite, westernized culture prevailing in these schools.

The situation of English in rural schools

The participants' observations of and evaluations about practices and policies related to English within the education system also show how the elitism of English that prevails in schools like Winston Girls' School, St Vincent's College and Metropolitan College examined above is further promoted due to economic factors that place limitations on the teaching of English in schools in non-urban areas. The extracts from the interviews with Patricia that were examined in the previous sections of analysis showed how the 1956 language policy's establishment of English as an elite language is fostered through language practices of the colonial educational system that seem to live on in elite schools such as Winston School and St Vincent's College. The participants' observations about the situation of English in rural schools show that the shortage of economic resources further promotes the elitism of English by producing a social inequality resulting from limited access to English learning resources. Economic factors feature prominently amongst the issues that the participants highlighted as contributing to the issues related to English teaching in rural schools. For example, both Mumtaz and Shameena said that although English is a main subject in the school curriculum, the lack of qualified teachers has restricted English-teaching to schools in cosmopolitan areas.

Thus, although English continued to be offered as a subject in the local school curriculum after its removal from the medium of instruction by the 1956 policy, the participants commented on how the lack of qualified teachers seemed to restrict its availability to students from non-urban areas. Sumanadasa, one of the Sinhalese participants who said that he had only a very limited knowledge of English, talked in detail about the meager resources that he had for learning English during his school career. Born in a village in southern Sri Lanka, and educated in a school close to his home, he said he never had an English teacher during his thirteen years of school education.

> English is available only in Colombo and areas close to Colombo. As you move away from Colombo the facilities available for learning English become less and less. English was not available in the village school I went to. It is only after moving to Colombo that I even learnt the alphabet. Till then I didn't even know A, B, C, D. I did my O/Ls and A/Ls and passed out of school without knowing the English alphabet. That was my experience. It is only after going out into society that I learnt even the little bit of English that I know – not from school. With God's help our children can work in English now because we moved to Colombo. They are okay – they can manage. I am happy that I came here because I could give my children what I didn't have. They have made good use of the opportunity we gave them, so I'm happy.

Sumanadasa's first-hand experiences very clearly show that resources for learning English are concentrated around schools in urban areas, especially in Colombo - the commercial capital. It also shows the stark disparity in the situation of English in the schools looked at in the previous section and the village school that Sumanadasa has

attended. The extract also makes clear how the 1956 policy has impacted the rural masses' access to English. Finally, it shows that despite the demotion in its official status, English continues to function as a means for socio-economic betterment for underprivileged segments of the population like Sumanadasa. Although the nineteenth century marked the collapse of the British empire, it also marked the end of the Cold War and the subsequent rise of the USA as a global superpower. This would have sustained the global dominance of English and its power to influence the lives of people in the former colonies as seen in the extract from Sumanadasa's interview above. These global developments which increased the importance of English would have further secured the privileges enjoyed by the English-speaking upper-middle class on account of having English concentrated within their social class. Canagarajah (2005) talks about this phenomenon when he says that postcolonial contexts found themselves faced with the challenges of globalization even before they had dealt with decolonization, a situation which he compares to having the carpet pulled from under their feet (p. 419).

Another participant, Sharon, also explained the difference between Colombo schools and schools in less privileged areas of the country when she compared her own experiences with that of the masses. She said:

> I feel that it's still taught like when it comes to local syllabuses, from what I am aware it may be taught like, something...I went to a private school, so it was quite different how English was taught. For us even these books were also, they were like easy-peasy. We didn't even bother about the English paper. I'm just talking for the masses because I think still there are not many English teachers also to go to villages and teach students so because of that I feel for the majority it still feels

> like a challenge rather than a link language per se. I think most people feel like that about English. I mean I'm not speaking for everybody, but I feel most people because they couldn't, they aren't taught to embrace the language the way it's mentioned in the policy. It's not a link language, it can't be when there aren't enough teachers to teach the language and it's like a challenge to acquire the knowledge.

These observations made by Sharon show that although everyone values English, not everyone has access to it. This causes the disparity between the way in which English is perceived by students in elite urban schools and underprivileged rural schools as described by Sharon in the above excerpt. The description of how she felt about the English syllabus in school shows that English is not a challenging subject for the upper-middle-class children because they are familiar with the language from the home domain. However, acquiring English seems to be one of the main challenges that rural school children have to overcome in order to progress in life. Citing Wickramasuriya (1976), Canagarajah states that upon its introduction during colonial rule "English education became a 'craze' in the island" as it had limited accessibility and "was key to social status and economic affluence" (2005, p. 422). The difference in the situation of English in the lives of students from elite Colombo schools and rural schools which the above excerpts illustrate, shows that the status of English in contemporary Sri Lanka is similar in many ways to its situation as described by Wickramasuriya (1976 as cited in Canagarajah, 2005). The extract from Sharon's interviews also explains that although defined as such in the constitution, English cannot function as a link language for a large majority of the

population which comes from rural areas because they do not have the resources for acquiring fluency in it.

Saranya who has years of experience as an English teacher at Winston School and St Vincent's College (discussed above), shared her experiences conducting seminars for students and teachers from rural schools which shed more light on the situation in those contexts. She said that "it is desperately sad how bad the teachers' English is" and that "some of them teach English for Advanced Levels." English at the Advanced Level is considered a challenging subject even for students in English dominant elite schools in Colombo because its curriculum comprises the appreciation of advanced literary texts. Saranya said that some of the teachers she met at the seminars were "teaching a Hemingway story in Sinhala, they tell the child the story in Sinhala, or Tamil." With years of experience teaching Advanced Level English at schools in Colombo, Saranya sounded shocked at the idea of teaching an English literary text in the local languages. While teaching an English literary text in the students' mother tongue could be a celebrated practice, Saranya's attitude seems to show an internalization of colonial ideologies which elevate the status of English with notions such as what she mentions here. This shows that restrictive ideologies and attitudes regarding the teaching of English also contribute to disparities in its situation in urban and rural schools.

Participants commented on this disparity in teaching practices and resources in urban and rural schools and indicated this might be linked to various socio-economic factors. Explaining the reasons for the teacher shortage, for instance, Saranya highlighted how the salary of a teaching position in a government school is too meager to interest

anyone with fluency in English as there are other more lucrative career prospects available to them. She said that the government needs to intervene at the policy level and provide monetary incentives to English graduates as a way of encouraging them to join the government service. She also observed that although more people in the younger generations are learning English these days, it is not going to help with the teacher shortage because a government teaching job does not "turn a living wage" compared to which, she said, her "maid is paid more." Explaining the concentration of teacher resources within Colombo, she said that "English teachers want to come to Colombo" because "there are more students, and they can do tuition" and also because the pay at private schools is much better than in the government service. Talking about her own experiences as a teacher of English, Saranya said that her "entire earning" comes from her private tuition, and she can "easily give up her job at St Vincent's." These examples and extracts from the interviews show that factors such as the limited resources available for teaching English, the shortage of qualified teachers, the allocation of underqualified teachers for teaching English in rural schools and the fact that teachers are underpaid, all seem to add to the challenge of opening up English to the underprivileged segments of society. As such, the factors that contribute to a social inequality around English by confining it within a privileged social class seem to indicate and contribute to the economic status of the non-English speaking population throughout the country as well as the teachers. At this point, it's not clear what might help to break the cycle described here.

The situation of English in higher education and employment

The situation of English within higher education as illustrated through the conversations with the participants show that the concentration of English within a privileged social class and the social inequity resulting from the influence of colonialism within the school education system extends to the university system too. Mumtaz explained that "back in the day in 2002 when she was an undergraduate," English medium instruction was only available in English language and literature which she majored in, but "all the other subjects in all the other areas in the Faculty of Arts were conducted in Sinhala." However, she said that it was possible to take classes in the Sinhala medium and sit the exam in English, an option which she, along with two of her friends, had gone for. Although this added to their workload, Mumtaz said that there was an advantage to taking the exam in English as when they "went to the library, all the books, all the research was in English." She recalled the words of one of her instructors who had praised their ability to do their reading and research in English, saying, "see only these three girls are doing it in the English medium, you all should also do; you all will not understand the importance of English now but only later." Mumtaz also said that she and her friends were treated as a resource in the classroom and "always put into different groups" when they were working on assignments and presentations to help the other students who did not have the English knowledge that was needed to do the reading for the projects. This shows that knowledge of English was held in high regard in the university that Mumtaz attended, and she and her friends were placed at an advantage due to their fluency in it. Another aspect of the university education system that Mumtaz and Saranya talked about in which students with English fluency seem to be placed at an

advantage is the compulsory English classes for which students are recruited through a placement test upon admission. Mumtaz said that she was exempted from the compulsory English language classes because she was placed in the highest level in the placement test. This shows that students who have fluency in English enjoy a privileged position right from the start of their college career on account of the fact that, although no longer serving as the medium of instruction, English continues to play a dominant role in higher education as its global dominance has made it the leading knowledge disseminator. Saranya provided more detail on how the system works saying that students have to do "six hours of English a week" if they do not pass the placement test held by the English Language Teaching Unit which "means that for children who can speak English and who pass that test, there's six hours less of work a week, six hours less of lectures a week." Although it may appear fair to exclude those who already have the required level of language fluency for university education, the disparities in access to English education which were examined in the earlier sections show that this is a practice that further disadvantages a socially underprivileged group. Thus, English seems to function as an additional challenge which the non-English speaking students from the underprivileged segments of society have to contend with in universities.

Shameena spoke about how removing English from official language status has affected the rural youth at universities by limiting their opportunities on the job market. Talking about the impact that the language policy has had on university students, a majority of whom come from Sinhala or Tamil-speaking backgrounds in underprivileged areas, Shameena said:

> Our poor people have to suffer but their children, they benefit from going to European countries to learn but only the poor children, that is why this problem is there no? Even those who're coming out of the universities, they're not capable enough to do any jobs because what they learnt there, it does not do anything for them. Now, finally they have to do teaching, only teaching can be done, no other jobs because their education is limited for certain things. That is why they make protests and strikes, all these things are going on because I think now job areas are there, they don't get these white-collar jobs when they come out of the universities. That is why they protest, that is the outcome of that policy.

Here, Shameena identifies a number of ways in which university students from underprivileged areas are disadvantaged due to their lack of English. She seems to suggest that the 1956 policy's removal of English from official status has only affected the underprivileged segments in society as the privileged have continued to study in the English medium in universities abroad. The extract also shows that the university degree is devalued in the job market because a majority of local graduates do not have English fluency which has become an essential skill for most jobs. Thus, although the 1956 policy had opened the doors of higher education to the Sinhala and Tamil monolingual masses, the fact that only certain types of English are valued by larger society continues to function as a barrier which prevents them from accessing the opportunities available to the English-speaking students.

Shameena also seems to think the lack of fluency in English and the restrictions it places on the youth in terms of job opportunities as a major factor contributing to unrest amongst university students which frequently manifests in the form of public protest

campaigns against the government. Saranya also observed the lack of fluency in English as a principal factor leading to discontent amongst undergraduates saying that "a lot of the frustration" results from knowing that "some person straight out of school who speaks English fluently is going to get a job and they can't." This shows that although the change of official language to Sinhala helped rural youth to access higher education which was available to only a privileged class in society during the British colonial period as the medium of instruction in higher education was English, their lack of proficiency in Sri Lankan English continues to serve as a barrier which prevents them from getting jobs that match their educational qualifications. This is also emphasized by Canagarajah (2005) who notes that the 1956 policy enabled "some Sinhala and Tamil monolinguals" to gain employment in "middle-rung positions as teachers, clerks and administrators," while the English-speaking Tamils and Sinhalese from the middle-class continued to dominate the "professions and other elite positions" (p. 423). Thus, the opening up of higher education to the underprivileged masses through changing the official language to Sinhala does not seem to have opened to them the opportunities for socio-economic growth available to those who have English language fluency. Shameena went on to observe later on in the interview that lack of English was also the root cause of the youth insurgencies of 1971 and 1988 – 1989 which cost the lives of many young people and also made a significant impact on the country's economy. She used the words "nowhere people" to describe the situation that the youth have been reduced to due to the limited access they have to English. She seemed to consider it as providing an apt description of the sense of hopelessness and lack of direction that the youth seem to be faced with as a result of gaining access to an education that has left them stranded in a

place that they see no way out of as it is unable to provide them with any sense of social or economic security due to their poor English skills.

The observations participants made about the situation of English in employment showed that it is not only university graduates who are affected by the lack of English skills. Patricia said that it is not only high-end jobs that require English as an essential skill because it is needed even "to be a *tuk* (a three-wheeled taxi) driver, a Uber driver" because you need to "listen to GPS messages and follow instructions." She also spoke about how the village youth enlisted in the military during the time of the civil war had trouble assembling a gun during training because they could not read the instruction manuals which were in English. Sumanadasa, the Sinhala participant who spoke about the limited resources he had in his village school for learning English, spoke in detail about how the high status that English had within the military had a direct impact on his career prospects there. Now retired from military service and working as a taxi driver, Sumanadasa explained how his lack of English prevented him from moving up the ranks in his career in the military. He said that he had joined the military as a private but that he could have been appointed at the rank of cadet officer if he was competent in English. He said:

> If I joined as a cadet officer, I would have been a general by the time I retired. That is the best example I can think of to show the importance of English. When it comes to interviews for cadet officers, they are conducted in English. So, the men who are taken for star grades are interviewed in English.

This shows that English functions as a basic qualification for getting enlisted at the higher ranks in the military. Sumanadasa explained that conducting the interviews for officer ranks in English meant that those who had no English did not stand a chance of applying for those positions even if they had all the other required qualifications. He said that he had retired as a Regimental Sergeant Major (RSM), which, according to him, is the highest non-officer rank and as such the highest rank that he could possibly reach with no competence in English. The Sri Lankan Army was first established as the Ceylon Army in 1949 when the country, although granted independence, was still a Dominion of the British Commonwealth. The dominance of English in the military could thus possibly show the continued influence of power structures introduced by colonial rule. Like in the missionary schools looked at previously, the status of English within the military also seems to surpass the status it is assigned in the constitution. Canagrajah (2005) observes that despite the change of language policy in 1956, English continued to serve as a "working official language in many domains," of which the military, as described in the above excerpt from the interviews with Sumanadasa, seems to be one. An examination of Sumanadasa's account of the limited access that he had to English in the village school he attended in a previous section and the explanation of how it seems to have affected his career in this extract shows that English plays a crucial role in the lives of the underprivileged and acts as a factor determining how far they can go in life.

The examples from the interviews with Shameena, Saranya, Patricia and Sumanadasa examined in this section show how the influence of colonial power structures and cultural practices have contributed to the production of social inequities that have led to the concentration of English within a certain social class and rendered

those outsides of it less able to navigate the social terrain of the contemporary world. The extracts also show the dominance that English seems to hold in its role as the global medium for disseminating information, the language of digital domains and technology as well as the lingua franca for providing product information and instructions. Thus, the observations made by the participants in the above extracts and examples show how, while English has spread to all areas of contemporary life with globalization, within Sri Lanka, it has not spread amongst all groups of people, which has placed limitations and restrictions on the opportunities available to underprivileged groups. They also show that although the 1956 policy brought a demotion in the official status of English, its concentration within a privileged social class has resulted in its continued dominance within the language ecology which, along with its global dominance, has placed restrictions on the opportunities at social betterment available to the rural masses despite the development of secondary and tertiary education in the indigenous languages.

In this first section of the chapter, I examined the participants' observations and evaluations about practices, policies and perceptions regarding the situation of English in education and employment. I first looked at their evaluations of the 1956 language policy which many of the participants identified as paving the way for the situation of social inequality related to English which they observed to exist in many domains within the education and employment sectors. I examined their observations and evaluations about the policies and practices related to English operating within different contexts of the education system such as missionary, international and rural schools as well as universities to show how factors such as remnants of the colonial education system, educational policies and practices introduced by the government and resource allocation

for teaching English influence upon the situation of English in those institutes. The situation of English in these different types of institutes within the education sector allowed an analysis of how the 1956 policy, which was influenced by language ideologies that devalue English, have impacted differently on different domains within education and served to advantage privileged segments of society and further disadvantage underprivileged groups. I also examined the participants' observations about the situation of English in employment which showed that effects and influences of the policies and practices that the participants observed in different institutes within the education system have produced a social inequality based on English that has worked to restrict the employment opportunities available to underprivileged social groups.

My analysis of data in this section of the chapter also showed how nationalist ideologies which led to the Sinhala Only Policy have not had much influence over language ideologies that have been circulating for decades or the power structures which were in operation during colonial rule, which nationalism professed to dismantle. Thus, although Sinhala replaced English as the official language of the country, the structures of power that the colonial language policy helped set up seem to continue to operate even in postcolonial Sri Lanka.

As examined in the data analysis above, the language policy of 1956 was driven by nationalist ideologies which sought to prioritize the interests of the masses over an elite English-speaking minority that was privileged under colonial rule. However, the observations that the participants made in relation to the situation of English in education and employment showed that, instead of changing the situation of the rural masses, the

policy further promoted the elitism and social inequality based on English which existed during colonial rule. Although the official language changed from English to Sinhala which opened up opportunities for education to the rural youth, it did not make a significant difference in their socio-economic situation. As examined in the discussion, this may have resulted from the continued supremacy of English in the global socio-political context despite the collapse of the British Empire. Thus, the examination of the participants' observations about the situation of English in education and employment in the post-colonial context of Sri Lanka showed how ideologically opposite forces such as colonialism and nationalism have worked to establish the supremacy of English through which the suppressive power structures of colonial rule have been reinstated.

In the next subsection, I examine how the prestige that has got attached to English as a result of it being concentrated within a certain social class has extended to language use and attitudes towards and perceptions of different varieties of English that have developed in Sri Lanka over time.

The situation of Sri Lankan Englishes

In this section I analyze observations and evaluations made by Patricia and Sharon about perceptions of and attitudes towards different varieties of English used in Sri Lanka to show how the variety that is closest to the input British variety is valued over varieties carrying indigenized forms. In the previous section of data analysis, I showed how the limited access that the rural masses have to English and its concentration within a social class comprising an elite minority has produced an English-based social division. In this section I examine the differences in attitudes and perceptions regarding

the high-status variety used by the upper-middle class who have easy access to English and the low-status variety used by the masses who use English as a second or third language. Through this examination of different varieties of English, I show that the English-based social division that was seen to prevail within education and employment as examined in the previous section is reinforced through ideologies that place different values on forms of language use based on who uses them.

The data that I examine in this section come from the interviews with Patricia and Sharon who spoke in detail about how they feel about the dominant perceptions and attitudes about the use of English in Sri Lanka. In my data analysis in this section, I refer to two varieties of Sri Lankan English; the high-status Standard Sri Lankan English used by the English proficient, and the low-status Non-standard Sri Lankan English used by the non-English-speaking masses. The literature on Sri Lankan English identifies these varieties as high and low status and aligns them with the speech communities mentioned above (Canagarajah, 2005; C. Fernando, 1976; Kandiah, 1979; S. Fernando, 2006). I also use the term Sri Lankan English as an umbrella term to distinguish the varieties that developed in Sri Lanka from the input British variety or other non-Sri Lankan varieties.

Patricia talked in detail about indigenous forms in pronunciation that are devalued because speakers of Standard Sri Lankan English who use English as a home language look down on them. For example, in the extract given below she talks about how the phoneme /ɔ/ carries prestige because it is a sound that does not exist in the local languages and therefore not found in Non-standard Sri Lankan English as it is used by those who acquire English as a second language outside the home domain. She said:

> Because there is mother tongue interference no, see the /o/ sound. Now we say, not [not] pot [pot] no? …Why can't we say [ɔ], because we don't have the /ɔ/ sound in the Sinhala language. How can we tell students to say [ɔ], [nɔt] when the sound is not there in the alphabet?

Patricia highlights here a central concern related to Sri Lankan English that is frequently commented on both within and outside academia. The distinction between the mid-closed short and long back-rounded vowels /o/, /o:/ and the mid-open short and long back rounded vowels /ɔ/, /ɔ:/ are generally considered the main characteristic that differentiates Standard Sri Lankan English used by the upper-middle-class speakers who use English as a home language from Non-standard Sri Lankan English which is used by those who use it as a second language (C. Fernando, 1976; S. Fernando, 2006; Gunasekera, 2005). Patricia highlights here that those who learn English outside of the home domain find it challenging to distinguish between these two features as the phoneme /ɔ/ does not exist in the Sinhala language. She refers to the two words "not" and "pot" which are pronounced as [not] and [pot] by speakers of Non-standard Sri Lankan English and also often used as a derogatory epithet by Standard Sri Lankan English speakers to ridicule the pronunciation of speakers of Non-standard SLE. The argument she makes here is that the importance attached to the phoneme /ɔ/ makes it challenging for speakers of Non-standard Sri Lankan English to speak the language because they are not familiar with this phoneme as it is not part of Sinhala phonology.

These observations made by Patricia about the derogation of Non-standard Sri Lankan English show that the English-based power structures that were seen to operate within the domains of education and employment in the earlier section are reflected in the

attitudes towards Standard and Non-standard Sri Lankan English. The analysis of data in the previous section showed that English has become concentrated within a privileged class in society to whom political power has passed at the end of colonial rule. The observations made here show that the division of society established and maintained through limitations on access to English is reinforced through the language ideologies which place a lower value on Non-standard Sri Lankan English spoken by those outside of the upper middle class who use English as a home language. Patricia went on to observe that mother tongue interference should be accepted and that the insistence on forms that are alien to the students on account of them not being part of the mother tongue is unreasonable and unfair. She also said that the insistence on phonemic features not found in the local languages places an additional burden on second-language speakers of English in Sri Lanka who want to acquire fluency in the language. These observations gather further credence when examined in juxtaposition with what was shown about the situation of English in the education and employment sectors in the previous section which clearly illustrated how those using English as a second language had limited access to learning the language as opposed to the upper-middle-class who had easy access to it as it was a home language for them. Later on in the interview, Patricia also observed that forms of use that show the influence of the local languages evidenced in non-standard Sri Lankan English are ridiculed by the upper-middle-class speakers of Standard Sri Lankan English who use English as a home language. Talking about her experiences at a Shakespeare Drama Competition, which is dominated by participants from elite English-dominant schools in Colombo, she said:

> Let's take a Shakespeare Drama Competition[3]? Now, I was sitting there and there were some boys from a Colombo school sitting at the back. I mean the way they were laughing at the way these boys pronounced from a school in Anuradhapura[4], the way they were pronouncing, pronouncing the language…They're so terrified to speak in English. You know there was a girl who wanted to join my class from Anuradhapura, my A/L class. She was too scared even to speak to me on the phone. I said, "darling can I call you?" and she said, "No, I'm scared." "I'm scared." She'll write it, "I'm scared." Perfect in the writing but scared to speak.

This shows that non-standard forms are ridiculed by Standard Sri Lankan English users, which, as Patricia points out, deters those outside of the traditional upper-middle-class from speaking the language. Thus, Standard Sri Lankan English speakers, by looking down on forms that show the influence of the local languages, seem to contribute to a prestige around the variety used within their social circles. This shows that the social divisions created through limiting access to English to a privileged class are reinforced through ideologies of language which place a lower value on Non-standard Sri Lankan English spoken by the underprivileged groups outside of the circles who use English as a home language.

Patricia compared this situation in Sri Lanka with what she has observed in other World Englishes contexts such as India and Malaysia and said, "they have their own accent and intonation, but we are loath to use it." She also said that other countries have a

[3] The all-island inter school Shakespeare Drama Competition is open to all schools but elite schools in Colombo and Kandy are known to dominate it.

[4] Anuradhapura is the capital city of the north-central province of Sri Lanka and is located at a distance of 131 miles from Colombo.

more liberal attitude towards the use of local forms in grammar as they use language to "bridge a gap" which makes it permissible to "drop a verb or preposition" which suggests that in Sri Lanka, English is used to create boundaries. Drawing comparisons between the situation of language use in India and Sri Lanka, she said:

> Whereas in places like India now, if you read Arundathi Roy and people like that, what India did was they enlarged the language to incorporate their experiences. අපි මොකක්ද කරේ? (What did we do?), we limited the language, we shrunk our experiences because when we're writing in English, පොඩි අම්මා, පුංචි අම්මා, බාප්පා - ඒවා කියන්න බෑනේ (aunt, uncle – we can't say those terms), we can't say those things, kinship relations we can't use no? So, what did we do? We shrank our experiences to fit the limited vocabulary we have.

Patricia here highlights how the prescriptivism which influences the use of English in Sri Lanka seems to prevent it from growing as an indigenized, uniquely Sri Lankan form. She talks here about a concern that has been much debated in World Englishes research as well as post-colonial studies – the need for new Englishes to adapt the language to give expression to aspects of the indigenous cultures they have been implanted in. Numerous scholars and writers from post-colonial contexts in Africa and India have written extensively on this (Achebe, 1975; Kachru, 1990; Okara, 1963; Rao, 2006 & Thiong'o, 2006). However, the excerpts in which Patricia described her experiences at Winston Girls' School and St Vincent's College showed that some of the students were not even conversant in Sinhala and considered it a low-status language. The fact that the Standard Sri Lankan English speech community comprises such speakers who have little

familiarity with the indigenous language, and that they are also the ones who define what is acceptable and unacceptable in relation to Sri Lankan English could explain the taboo surrounding indigenous forms in Sri Lankan English.

The observations made by Patricia above regarding perceptions of and attitudes towards different forms of English used in Sri Lanka showed that the variety that deviates the least from British English is valued over varieties that are influenced by any of the local languages. Sharon said that although she would like to believe "there is something called Sri Lankan English," "the little things we use, little language snippets from Sinhala that we use" which make the language "uniquely Sri Lankan" are only used in the spoken form and not in writing and reading. She also made the point that it is only a certain segment of the speech community of English in Sri Lanka who feel "empowered" enough to "code switch" and use the language in creative ways, even in the spoken form. She said:

> Because we feel like we can, we are fluent enough to speak and write fluently in English so we're fluent enough to twist it and turn it and make it our own. But I don't think many others would feel that way. In school you're taught to read and write standard English no? So the majority wouldn't feel empowered to twist it and turn it and embrace this Sri Lankan English. Only a few feel empowered enough to use it that way.

In this extract Sharon explains that British English is the accepted standard in reading and writing. She observes that as the focus within the school system is on reading and writing where standard British English still dominates, the creativity that comes out in the spoken

form which gives the language its Sri Lankan identity seems to stay confined within the circles where English is the main language of social interaction and intimate relationships. This idea suggests that it is only in Standard Sri Lankan English which exists within the upper-middle-class where the users are familiar enough with the language to be creative with it, that features that make it uniquely Sri Lankan can be found. She goes on to observe that a truly Sri Lankan identity would not be found in Non-standard Sri Lankan English used by a majority of people who use English as a second or third language because, not using it extensively in spoken interactions, they would not feel "empowered"" enough to adapt the language to suit their needs like those who use it within the home domain do. Sharon also said that even amongst speakers of Standard Sri Lankan English who do feel empowered to use the language in creative ways like herself, there are various restrictions and inhibitions regarding the use of deviant forms such as code switching and code-mixing. Sharing her experiences, she said that she found herself in a dilemma when, at university as an English major, she was told to "embrace" Sri Lankan English because throughout her school years she had been told to use Standard English. She recalled how her mother who works as an English teacher had admonished her when she used Sinhala words or local expressions when speaking in English. Sri Lankan English is identified as a unique and independent "linguistic organism" (Kandiah, 1979, p. 89) carrying "a distinct flavor of its own in regard to pronunciation and intonation" (Passe, 1943, p. 64) and a variety that "developed into a distinct, rule-governed" form (S. Fernando, 2010, p. 304) essentially individual from the input variety. However, Sharon's observations above problematize this idea on two grounds. Firstly, she says that the uniquely Sri Lankan identity of Sri Lankan English is confined to its spoken form, and secondly that even

Standard Sri Lankan English speakers like herself hesitate to use creative forms even in the spoken form. The idea of a uniquely Sri Lankan English is also contested by the comments made by Patricia examined previously, which showed that the influence of indigenous languages seen in forms defined as "non-standard" was frowned upon by speakers of Standard Sri Lankan English. These comments question the validity of presenting Standard Sri Lankan English, which is the least deviant of Sri Lankan Englishes as well as spoken by a social group who share affinity with the culture of the colonizer than the indigenous people, as "Sri Lankan English." Their observations also pose the question whether the limited access to English available to the underprivileged masses and the taboo surrounding indigenous forms in their language use shown in the examination of data in this chapter prevents English in Sri Lanka from growing into a truly Sri Lankan variety representing the unique Sri Lankan identity.

The examination of data in this second section of the chapter showed that the structures of power established under the colonial language policy (and reinforced under the 1956 policy) are further strengthened through language ideologies about different varieties of Sri Lankan English. The participants talked about two varieties of Sri Lankan English, one high-status and the other low-status, which are identified as Standard Sri Lankan English and Non-standard Sri Lankan English respectively in the literature. The data analysis in this section showed that the low-status Non-standard variety is spoken by speakers belonging to the underprivileged segments in society who use English as a second language. It also showed that the ideologies which place a lower value on the variety spoken by the socially underprivileged are produced and espoused by the socially privileged who speak Standard Sri Lankan English. Thus, the structures of power seen to

operate in the spheres of education and employment in the previous section seem to be reinforced by and reflected through the ideologies about varieties of Sri Lankan English.

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the participants' observations and evaluations about the situation of English in education, employment as well as varieties of Sri Lankan English. In the first section, I analyzed what the participants said in relation to policies, practices, perceptions and attitudes about English in the sectors of education and employment in Sri Lanka. I examined in detail their observations about how policies related to English have influenced the practices, perceptions and attitudes about English in different types of institutes in the school education system, universities and the employment sector of Sri Lanka. The examination of data in this section showed the policies bearing upon education to be shaped by the country's colonial history as well as its socio-economic situation in the post-independent period. The forces of colonialism and nationalism, although appearing to carry two opposite ideologies, seem to have both contributed to a *status quo* which favors a socially, economically and linguistically privileged group. Thus, the policies, practices, perceptions and attitudes that the participants observed about the situation of English have contributed to the creation of a social inequality around English within the school education system, universities and employment which has served to disadvantage the rural masses.

In the second section of data analysis in this chapter I examined the participants' observations and evaluations about perceptions and attitudes they have encountered in relation to different varieties of Sri Lankan English. The participants spoke about two different varieties of English used by Sri Lankans. Their observations and evaluations

showed that language ideologies which devalue forms influenced by the local languages dominate amongst the upper-middle-class where English is used as the home language. According to the participants' observations examined in this section, the variety of Sri Lankan English used by the upper-middle-class is more valued than the variety used by those outside of this social tier who use English as a second language. Thus, the division of society produced through ideologies about English as well as the concentration of English language learning resources within a certain social tier that was shown to prevail through the data analysis in the previous section seem to carry over to the language use of the two social classes as well.

The analysis of data presented in this chapter illustrates the complexity of the situation of English in the postcolonial history of Sri Lanka. It shows that a social class that represents the colonial culture through language and way of life has come to hold dominance in the social hierarchy, thereby further strengthening the presence of coloniality and its ideological influence on socio-political affairs of postcolonial Sri Lanka. Although there was an attempt to empower the rural masses who were victimized by colonization through a language policy driven by ideologies that devalued English, the discussion above showed that it only led to further strengthening the dominance of English and confirming the social power of the groups that were advantaged in colonial rule. The analysis of data showed this unexpected outcome of the nationalist language policy of 1956 to have created a social inequality around fluency in English, and the division of society into two groups – one using English as their dominant language and the other striving to acquire fluency in it to make use of its potential for socio-economic empowerment. The Non-Standard Sri Lankan English of the less privileged group being

subjected to derogation by the privileged Standard English Speakers seen in the examination of data in the second section of the chapter also showed that the language-based social division is reinforced through ideologies about different varieties of Sri Lankan English.

According to the observations of the participants of this study, English in postcolonial Sri Lanka seems to function as a class marker as well as key to social change. Its continued concentration within a privileged social class would sustain the power structures introduced during colonial rule as well as the socio-economic issues resulting from it. On the other hand, although it might appear that providing the rural masses increased access to English would enable them to make use of the potential it holds for socio-economic empowerment, the derogatory attitudes prevailing about Non-standard English examined in the second section suggest that the democratization of English in the Sri Lankan context would not come about through an increase in material resources alone. Thus, a material effort at changing the situation of English in the lives of the underprivileged would have to be accompanied by a shift in the language ideologies that value different forms of use differently which seem to serve the current *status quo* in society. Finally, the participants' observations about the practices, attitudes and perceptions related to English show that language ideologies about its situation and use are inherently linked with the power structures, social processes, political events and the cultural life of the postcolonial context of Sri Lanka.

CHAPTER 6

CHAPTER SIX: THE RACIALIZATION OF THE SRI LANKAN POLITY THROUGH LANGUAGE POLICY

In the previous chapter I examined the participants' observations about English in education and employment as well as varieties of Sri Lankan English to understand the influence of colonialism on the position of English in Sri Lanka since gaining independence from the British. In the current chapter, I analyze the numerous observations that the participants made about ways in which the language policy of 1956 has contributed to the racism that seems to have developed into an inherent part of the Sri Lankan mindset in its postcolonial years. Everyone except two of the three Sinhalese participants saw a clear link between the language policy and the ethnicity-based tensions that have become a constant phenomenon in the socio-political scenario of Sri Lanka in the postcolonial period. I examine this link between the language policy and racism observed by the participants to show how language seems to have got intermingled with ideas about ethnicity and nationhood in the Sri Lankan context.

The observations made by the non-Sinhalese participants show that Sinhala Buddhist nationalism - which, over the years, has grown into one of the most influential political forces in Sri Lanka – had derived ideological support from the changes introduced by the language policy of 1956 and gone on to acquire dominance over the nation-building enterprise which took place in the aftermath of colonial rule, at the expense of relegating the Tamils to a peripheral position within the ideological boundaries of the newly formed nation state. The talk of the Sinhalese participants also showed how the Tamils had shown a retaliation to Sinhala Buddhist nationalism in the

form of an armed movement that pushed the country into a civil war which had consumed a significant portion of its socioeconomic capital as an independent nation. In this chapter, I examine these observations made by the participants in relation to the language policy's influence on ideas about nationhood and ethnicity to investigate how ideologies about language seem to be closely enmeshed within ideologies about nationhood and power in the Sri Lankan context. I also examine them to show how the language ideologies that influenced the language policy of 1956 were also underlain with the racism that permeated the ideologies of nationhood and power in the Sri Lankan context.

I analyze my data in this chapter in three separate sections. In the first section, I examine what the participants said about how the linguistic homogeneity promoted by the 1956 policy is linked to colonialism. Through my examination of data in this first section of the chapter, I show how ideas of nationhood and power together with ideologies of language are informed and amplified by colonialism. In the second section of the chapter, I look at the observations that the participants made about the influence of the language policy on the socio-political context of Sri Lanka to show how it had contributed to the gradual development of a political atmosphere in which racism is not only tolerated but also operates as a principal force. In the third section of the chapter, I examine what the non-Sinhalese participants said about the discriminations that they had had to undergo as a result of the changes introduced by the language policy of 1956. Taken together, the analysis of data in this chapter shows how the ideologies behind the language policy of 1956 have served to combine language with race and used the former as a tool to racialize the Sri Lankan polity in the post-independence years.

The influence of colonialism on the 1956 language policy

In this first section of data analysis, I examine the observations that the participants made about the language policy of 1956 to show how it seems to be linked to colonialism. The participants said that the language policy was primarily a response to colonialism and also saw a misalignment between the linguistic homogeneity proposed by the language policy of 1956 and the principles of diversity which pre-colonial Sri Lankan society had been founded upon. I analyze these observations made by the participants in this section to show that although comprising a response to colonialism by carrying the proclaimed objective of dismantling the structures of power introduced by colonial rule, the language policy was also ideologically grounded within the "divide and rule" policies promoted by colonial rule and marked a deviation from the principles of diversity characteristic of pre-colonial Sri Lanka.

Although the participants seemed to hold two contrasting views regarding the language policy of 1956, they all also saw it as a response to colonialism. For example, Dino, Patricia and Geethika said that it was a racist policy introduced with the aim of discriminating against the minorities, while Ranasinghe, who came across as a strong proponent of the policy was of the view that it was a nationalist policy seeking to do justice by the majority Sinhalese who were marginalized by the colonial language policy. These two viewpoints are examined in detail below in order to understand how the language policy is intertwined with ideologies of racism and nationalism, both of which the participants seem to interpret as linked to colonialism.

Dino and Patricia, who are Tamil and Burgher participants respectively, contended that the change in official status of languages that the policy brought about

was implemented with the objective of stripping the Tamils of the privileges they enjoyed under colonial rule on account of the fact that their language skills in English were better than those of the Sinhalese. Dino said that it was a "racist policy" that "deliberately intended to sideline the Tamil community" because they "enjoyed a bit of prominence under the British administration." Dino and Patricia both observed that the Tamils held high positions in the administrative service and also had a high rate of university admission under British rule, both of which the language policy effectively curtailed. De Silva (1984) argues that although Tamils had constituted only 11 % of the country's population at the time, they had comprised 33% of the civil service and 40 % of the judicial service at the time Sri Lanka gained independence. Patricia said:

> The Tamil people, they were in the government service, they were educated, they knew the language. So, as soon as the British left, the Tamil people, because of the knowledge of English, which is widely spoken amongst them, they gained prominence. එතකොට එස්. ඩබ්ලිව්. ආර්.ඩී ඔය පොලීසි එක ගෙනාවේ එක target එකකට ගහන්න. (So, SWRD brought this policy to attack a certain target.)

According to this viewpoint, the language policy of 1956 was introduced with the specific aim of marginalizing the Tamils, and language seems to have been used as a tool in order to create an ethnicity-based division within the Sri Lankan polity. Both Patricia and Dino as well as Geethika, the one Sinhalese participant who acknowledged that the language policy of 1956 contributed to a division between the two main ethnic groups, said that the policy was used by the politicians who introduced it to gain the favor of the Sinhalese majority. Geethika said that the popularity of nationalist sentiments at the end

of colonial rule were used by politicians to rally support for the "Sinhala Only" bill and ultimately to gain an electoral victory. According to this view, the ideologies supporting the change in official language that the 1956 policy brought about seem to have been aligned with the anticolonial sentiments that became popular at the end of colonial rule. Geethika said:

> Nationalism was a famous topic at the time. In the aftermath of colonial rule people would have keenly felt that they and the country were free from foreign rule. The feeling that we are an independent nation would have been riding high at the time and using a slogan like this would have strongly appealed to the Sinhala Buddhist electorate.

This extract from Geethika's interview suggests that the nationalist sentiments that were popular at the end of colonial rule have been capitalized on by the local politicians to come into power. The following excerpt from Herath (2015) adds weight to Geethika's observation above.

> When S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike became the Prime Minister of Sri Lanka he recognized how the emotional power of the Sinhala-only Movement can be manipulated for political gain. His 1956 election victory and the passing of the Sinhala-only bill represented the victory of linguistic nationalism for the Sinhalese (p. 251).

Thus, language seems to have been used as a tool by the ruling political party of the time to reinforce an existing sense of discord between the Sinhalese and Tamils and also to undermine the language policy of the British administration which had privileged the

Tamils. This shows that language has been used by the Sinhalese politicians to gain a political advantage by amplifying an ethnicity-based division within the newly independent nation.

In contrast to this viewpoint expressed by Dino, Patricia and Geethika, Ranasinghe, who came across as a strong proponent of the 1956 policy, said that it had brought about a change that was much needed in order to put an end to the disenchantment that prevailed amongst the Sinhalese at the time as a result of the colonial language policy. He said that the granting of privileges to the minorities was a hallmark of the "divide and rule" policy of British colonial rule and that it was adopted in Sri Lanka too in order to create a division between the two main ethnic groups. Explaining his stance further, Ranasinghe said:

> Privileging the minorities and making them the ruling class was one of the tactics used by the British. When I was a student, the Exams Commissioner was a Tamil. If you went to any government office at the time, the accountant was a Tamil. Why did that happen? It was intentionally done by the British. They created a division and planted that ideology in the minds of the Tamil people. They wanted to use that ideology in order to get the minority to rule over the majority. The 1956 policy was an attempt at rectifying this situation.

This viewpoint sees the 1956 policy as an attempt made by the government of the time to resolve the sense of dissension that the colonial language policy had created by addressing the grievances of the majority Sinhalese who had suffered discrimination under it. Thus, Ranasinghe's perspective seems to echo the nationalist rhetoric that was

used by the government of the time to promote the language policy and justify the need for it. He went on to talk about how he had suffered due to the language policy of the British under which the Sinhalese could not even send a telegram in their own language. He also said that in rural areas sufficient facilities were not available for education which was in English medium at the time and that in the Catholic school he attended there was only one English teacher (who he described as underqualified). Ranasinghe also argued that it was good for the country to unite under one language in order to progress. Such comments show that his perspective on the policy stands in stark contrast to that given voice to by Dino, Patricia and Geethika examined above.

Ranasinghe's equation of the "Sinhala Only" policy with political unity also echoes the ideas of linguistic homogeneity that were part and parcel of the nationalist ideology which the field of language policy and planning was caught up in in its early years of development (Wright, 2012). According to Ranasinghe,

> The mother tongue needs to be given prominence if a country is to progress. Now countries like China and Japan reached development in their own mother tongue. I haven't heard of a single nation that has become developed by giving prominence to a foreign language. Now see today's social context, we have local universities, local intellectuals – all that was made possible because of the 1956 policy. If that change of language did not happen, we would have had an English-speaking class and a non-English speaking class. So, what Mr. Bandaranaike did created a united nation and paved the way for the rapid development of the country.

Although unity and development, which Ranasinghe highlights here, may have appeared as two goals that could be realized with linguistic homogeneity back in 1956, they are also the two key challenges that Sri Lanka seems to have failed to overcome even today after seventy-three years of independence. The country was engaged in a civil war with the militant group known as the Liberation Tigers of Tamil Eelam (LTTE) for close to thirty years, and also had to deal with ethnic tensions surfacing in varying forms within the socio-political context of the country up until then. The civil war is considered to have taken a massive economic toll on the country which is still often described as a "developing" economy even after seventy-three years of independence. Although the LTTE was brought to heel and the civil war put an end to in 2009, ethnic tensions have continued to surface in different forms from time to time. The latest manifestation of this were the bomb attacks on three churches in different parts of the country on the Easter Sunday of 2019 which are considered to have been carried out by Islamist suicide bombers, in the aftermath of which the country was beset with a wave of Islamophobia that seriously disrupted the relations between the Sinhalese and the Muslims. The fact that, in spite of the benefit of hindsight, Ranasinghe talks of development and unity as goals that the language policy of 1956 had helped realize may indicate the enduring popularity of the nationalist rhetoric which has continued to hold sway within Sri Lankan politics well into contemporary times. These observations made by Ranasinghe stands in contrast to that held by Dino and Patricia looked at above which saw the 1956 policy as a "short-term policy with short-term political goals" brought about to appease the majority Sinhalese who were feeling a sense of inferiority because the Tamils, despite being a minority, were "getting ahead" under colonial rule.

Although the four participants hold two different perspectives on the language policy, they all see it as linked to the sense of dissonance between the two main ethnic groups which later developed into an even more overt ethnic conflict. They also seem to consider the change in official language enacted in 1956 to be at least partly a response to the colonial language policy, which shows how ideologies about giving prominence to Sinhala are closely intertwined with ideologies about nationalism and therefore linked to and possibly even directly triggered by the power structures established under colonial rule. The extracts from the interviews with Patricia, Geethika and Ranasinghe looked at above present two different perspectives on the language policy and show how language has played a prominent role in both colonialism and nationalism and served to create a sense of division between the two main ethnic groups of the country.

In her observations about the language policy, Shakira talked about a different perspective on it which also shows how it is linked to colonialism. In the above extract from the interview with Ranasinghe, he talks about the idea of linguistic homogeneity, which was a concept that was born in Europe at the end of the French Revolution and later reached the newly independent former colonies along with the idea of the nation-state (Wright, 2012, p. 59). However, an observation made by Shakira revealed the irony of upholding linguistic homogeneity as part of national unity as it was a western concept that stands in stark opposition to the diversity that was a natural element of life in pre-colonial Sri Lanka. She said that the division of people into categories was a concept introduced by the British for administrative convenience and that it ignored the possible socio-political consequences that could emanate from such a categorization. She compared the division of people into ethnic groups under colonial rule in Sri Lanka to the

identification of a group of people by their skin color such as “Black.” Recalling how this notion had been contested in a book she had read, Shakira said that the author had argued that “someone European or White called an entire continent Black whereas no one in that continent called each other Black.” Elaborating on the author’s contention that colonized people should resist the terminology imposed upon them by colonials, Shakira observed:

> I think colonials who kind of parachute from somewhere else, they don’t fully understand the context and they categorize...because for them that’s how they divide things maybe. You know they were not super multicultural societies, they were very homogenous, for a long time. Yes, there were the Welsh and the Irish, but they were constantly trying to beat each other up so it became all one, whereas our ethos here was a little different, you know.

In this extract Shakira identifies the idea of homogeneity as a concept that has originated in the West and does not align well with the multiculturalism of pre-colonial Sri Lankan society. Thus, while Ranasinghe talked about the division of communities based on ethnic disparity as a common practice of colonial rule (in an extract looked at previously), Shakira here talks about the attempt at resolving those communal divisions created by colonial rule through linguistic homogeneity which is yet another Western concept. These observations made by Ranasinghe, and Shakira therefore seem to reveal the irony of presenting the linguistic homogeneity proposed by the 1956 policy as a solution to a problem created by colonialism itself. Shakira went on to talk about her understanding of pr-colonial Sri Lanka, which further clarifies her previously expressed idea that the division of people into distinct groups was a colonial practice. Talking about

what life was like in pre-colonial Anuradhapura (377 BC - 1017 AD), Polonnaruwa (1017 – 1232) and Kandyan (1597 – 1815) periods in the history of Sri Lanka, Shakira said:

> And it was this bustling multicultural Kandyan kingdom, where everyone was considered Kandyan irrespective of religion because you paid allegiance to the King and you were Kandyan based on that, it wasn't just a caste thing as it is now. So, I have a very romantic idea of life under the Sinhalese kings, because it was about taking care of the people under you irrespective of who they were. There were traders, there were people who were Jewish. You know Anuradhapura was quite multicultural, Polonnaruwa was multicultural. There is evidence of sites of Europeans living there for whatever purposes. So, our sense of self and identity has become manmade and that has been the conflict. So, it's not for me restricted to the 1956 language policy, it goes a little beyond that psychologically to what journey the country has taken to reach there.

Shakira here shares a more nuanced understanding of the 1956 policy than those proposed by Dino, Patricia, Geethika and Ranasinghe in the earlier extracts. Instead of seeing the policy as either negative or positive, she looks at it here as related to the country's transition through precolonial and colonial to postcolonial times. The heterogeneity of life in different periods of the precolonial history of Sri Lanka which Shakira describes in the extract, along with her observations about colonials' predilection for categorizing people in the previous extract suggests that the linguistic homogeneity proposed by the 1956 policy is grounded within European thinking. These observations

could show that although it may be possible for a postcolonial nation to reject the material aspects of colonial rule, it is not so easy to shake off its ideological impact in its transition from coloniality to independence. They also show that the numerous issues caused by the 1956 policy which the participants gave voice to and are examined in the following sections of this chapter are therefore inextricably linked to colonialism and the material and ideological impact that it continued to have on Sri Lanka's journey as an independent nation.

The ideological impact of the language policy on the socio-political history of Sri Lanka

In this section I examine the observations the participants made about the larger and longer-lasting impact that the language policy of 1956 seems to have had on the socio-political context of Sri Lanka, a topic which a large portion of the participants' talk on the language policy centered around. In their attempt at theorizing a raciolinguistic perspective, Rosa & Flores (2017) examine the implications of "the co-naturalization of language and race across differing nation-state and colonial contexts" (p. 622). In the following sections I examine the observations related to the impact that the language policy seems to have had on the socio-political history of Sri Lanka in postcolonial times to show how language has come to play a prominent role in the ethnic tensions that the country had been inundated with throughout its independent years.

Dino, Saranya, Sharon, Patricia and Geethika talked about how the changes introduced by the language policy came to have a profound impact on the socio-political context of the country in the post-independence era and marked a turning point in the country's history because of the influence it had on the mindset of the people of the two

main ethnic groups. Dino said that if one were to look back on the "thirty years of armed conflict," the language policy would stand out as "one big event" that added up to it. She talked about how language was one of the central characteristics of her ethnic identity and the language policy's prioritization of Sinhala at the expense of sidelining Tamil was a symbolic gesture that gave out the message to the Tamils that they held a less important position than the Sinhalese in the newly formed nation. She said:

> …language, religion those are...for some people it's the factors that determine their place in society or the fact that they consider themselves as that particular community. Those are the things that sort of made that community identify themselves as such. So, for the Tamil community, the Tamil-speaking community, when they took away that element it sort of effectively told them that they're second class citizens that don't have a place there.

This extract clearly indicates that Dino considers the Tamil language an inherent part of the ethnic identity of the Tamils and as such provides a possible explanation for the ethnic tensions that broke out between the Sinhalese and the Tamils in the years subsequent to the passing of the "Sinhala Only" bill. Although Ranasinghe, one of the Sinhalese participants, claimed that making Sinhala the official language did not affect the Tamils in any way and that it was a conflict created by politicians, what Dino says above shows the larger implications that the language change seems to have signified from the perspective of the Tamil community. The fact that the country was going through a stage of transition at the point the language policy was introduced may have also caused it to be seen as representative of the values that the newly independent nation would be founded upon, and thus added to the sense of injustice that Dino gives voice to.

Commenting on the ideological message that the language policy gave out to people of different communities, Geethika, the only Sinhalese participant who said that the language policy of 1956 was unfair to Tamils, observed:

> I feel that giving priority to Sinhala ignored the fact that there was another community who used a different language living in Sri Lanka. It was something like, say I am seated at the same table with a Tamil friend, and we speak two different languages…what the language policy did was like asking the Sinhala-speaking person to come forward. It completely ignored the Tamil speaker. It's something I feel deeply. I see it as giving prominence to my language and ignoring the language of my friend.

The analogy that Geethika draws here clearly indicates the discriminatory nature of the changes implemented by the language policy, even if one were to ignore the close relationship between language and ethnicity which Dino talked about in the earlier extract. The extract provides a powerful image of the extent to which the Sinhalese were privileged, and the Tamils pushed to a peripheral position within the newly formed nation by the "Sinhala Only" bill. According to Shameena, these ideological implications of the language policy which Dino and Geethika elaborated on in the above extract had been highlighted by the leader of the LTTE too to convince the Tamil people that they had no place in independent Sri Lanka. This suggests that the language policy's privileging of the Sinhalese potentially influenced the Tamil nationalist movement.

An observation made by Sharon showed how the Tamils were not the only minority group who felt sidelined by the introduction of the 1956 language policy. In my first interview with Sharon, she mentioned that her father had often talked about the

statement “let the Burghers bugger off” which had allegedly been made by S. W. R. D. Bandaranaike – the prime minister and leader of Sri Lanka Freedom Party (SLFP) responsible for the passing of the “Sinhala Only” bill. As she did not know whether these words had actually been uttered by the late prime minister, she offered to check its accuracy with her father. When I inquired from her if her father was able to confirm its accuracy in my second interview with her, Sharon said:

> He wasn’t sure, so I Googled it. Also, I then realized that…I couldn’t verify it so it’s just hearsay. And quite a few Burghers left the country and I guess, even people who…anybody could have created a quote like that just observing what was happening around them. So, still it’s kind of accurate in a sense because many had to leave the country because they couldn’t find jobs etc. and couldn’t fit into that new way of life.

This response from Sharon shows that the accuracy of the statement was not important to her because she felt that even if the statement itself had not actually been made by the prime minister, the fact that the language policy had influenced large numbers of people of her community to leave the country seems to suggest that the Burghers had interpreted it as such. Thus, this extract suggests that although Sharon originally attributed the words to the prime minister, they seem to be a more accurate depiction of how the Burghers as a people would have felt about the attitude and ideology behind the language policy. This shows that the Burgher community’s understanding of and attitude towards the language ideologies behind the “Sinhala Only” bill reflect a sense of discrimination and neglect.

While the above views expressed by Dino, Geethika and Sharon described the sense of subordination which the Tamil and Burgher communities were subjected to by the language policy, Sharon also spoke about how it created a sense of superiority amongst the Sinhalese. Sharon also said that choosing Sinhala as the predominant language of the newly formed nation "put Sinhala on a pedestal," which would have made the Sinhalese people feel that they were "the most important group of people" and "set the tone for this whole Sinhala Buddhist nationalism," which, she said, started with the language policy, and "is continuing." This indicates how the change introduced by the language policy influenced the mindset of the Sinhalese people and gave rise to the Sinhala Buddhist nationalism which comprises one of the most influential ideological forces within the political context of postcolonial Sri Lanka. According to Nadarajah (2014), Sinhala Buddhist nationalism altered the teachings of the Buddha "which emphasized love and compassion," into a political ideology which reflects "division and hatred towards non-Buddhists" (p. 64). He contends that it was "taken to an unprecedented level" in the period between 1960 and 1970 under the premiership of Sirimavo Bandaranaike, the widow of S.W.R.D. Bandaranaike. The fact that Buddhism is the religion of a large majority of the Sinhalese may have led to it being associated with the ethnic identity of the Sinhalese and used in the political ideology known as "Sinhala Buddhist" nationalism. Saranya said that the influence of Sinhala Buddhist Nationalism even came to be felt within the education sphere and impacted how history was taught in schools which further helped elevate the identity of the Sinhalese as more important than that of the Tamils. Talking about the content of the history textbooks used in the

government school curriculum which are designed by the department of education, Saranya said:

> My Sri Lankan history is very bad because for me it was like learning the history of some small, strange, foreign country. Because it was all about the Sinhala rulers, the tanks, the dagobas, the priests etc. And the only little bit of Tamil history we had was Dutugemunu's defeat of Elara. So, studying history was very strange. Even when I talk to my friends, we all realize that we have a far better understanding of European history than we do of Sri Lankan history. You know when you feel yourself written out, you disengage.

The Kingdom of Jaffna mentioned by Saranya in the extract is considered to have been founded and occupied by the invading Tamils from South India and to have existed from 14th to early 17th century ("Jaffna", 2012). According to de Silva (2019), it had been the "the most powerful kingdom on the island" for some time in the fourteenth century and had even exacted tributes from the Sinhalese kings ruling in the southwest and central regions of the island at the time (p. 113). The fact that the only mention of a Tamil king in the history books is in association with Dutugemunu – a Sinhalese king highly acclaimed for unifying the country after the defeat of Elara – a Tamil king of the South Indian Chola dynasty who had captured the throne of Anuradhapura – also shows that the narrative of the history of Sri Lanka in modern times has become conflated with the history of the Sinhalese (where the Tamil rulers are portrayed only in the role of antagonists). Thus, observations that Saranya makes in the extract about the erasure of the Jaffna Kingdom and Tamil kings from the history textbooks shows how the identity of the Sinhalese seems to have been formulated as the Sri Lankan identity in the post-

colonial period. The words “small, strange and foreign” used by Saranya to describe her feelings about the experience of studying the history of Sri Lanka as told in the school textbooks provide a powerful portrayal of the sense of marginalization and loss that she seems to have experienced as a Tamil at the omission of any record of the Tamil rulers of Jaffna in them. The fact that she goes on to explain that she and her friends have a “better understanding of European history” seems to show how the post-colonial nation-building enterprise in Sri Lanka has failed to include the Tamils in the narrative of its history as formulated in the period after independence. The extract above therefore shows how the Sinhala Buddhist nationalism to which the language policy made a significant contribution (as mentioned by Sharon in the earlier examined extracts) seems to have even extended to decisions regarding the content of school textbooks in the post-independence period. The extract also shows how the language policy’s association with Sinhala Buddhist nationalism has made Saranya conflate the ideologies that have caused the history of the Jaffna kingdom to be erased from the history textbooks with the language ideologies which brought about the “Sinhala Only” bill. The extract therefore suggests that the nationalist ideologies embedded in the language policy of 1956 appear to have contributed to language becoming complicit in the nationalist politics of post-independence Sri Lanka through which the Sinhalese had been elevated to a superior position than the Tamil.

By talking about how the ethnic tensions that the language policy of 1956 policy gave rise to continued to play out within the sphere of language the non-Sinhalese participants further illustrate how the language ideologies that gave rise to the 1956 policy are intermingled with the nationalist ideologies of post-independence Sri Lanka.

For example, Sharon also told me that she had heard that “nameboards were scratched off” in the Tamil dominant Jaffna area in the aftermath of the passing of the “Sinhala Only” bill in parliament, which provides a pertinent illustration of the ideological impact that the language policy had on the ethnic relations between the two communities. Patricia also talked about how the use of “sri” on vehicle registration plates caused a clash between the two communities. She said:

> …if you look back from the 1970’s, you know 1956 or ’59 was it? මට මතකයි අම්මත් කියනවා මට "ශ්‍රී " (I remember my mother also used to talk about it – “sri” [ʃɾɪ]). ඔය චූටි චූටි දේවල්, (these little, little things) you know. “ශ්‍රී” කාර් එකේ දැම්මනෙ (“sri” was put on cars no), you should read back on the issues. “ශ්‍රී” (“sri”) is exalted for the Tamil, the Hindu people. දැන් ඕක දැම්මා වාහනවල (Now, they went and put it on vehicles). Then they said, “don’t do that.” You know because වාහනේ මඩවල යනවා (vehicles go on muddy roads) you understand, so don’t put it on a vehicle. We can have “ලා” (“la” [la:]) or something no without putting “ශ්‍රී” (“sri”)? No, they insisted, they insisted on just irritating, on nit picking. So, I think the gradual decline based on, let us say mistrust and suspicion, who is the dominant race, establishing dominance, power struggles - this also is human no?

Patricia here talks about how the “Sinhala Only” policy led to the replacement of English characters with the Sinhala “ශ්‍රී” (“sri” [ʃɾɪ]) character on vehicle license plates in 1958, which is considered to have contributed to a series of ethnic clashes around the island popularly known as the ‘58 riots. The syllable “ශ්‍රී” (“sri”) is considered sacred in Hinduism as it is used in “prayers and invocations” and as a prefix before the names of gods and goddesses “to denote their purity and power (Jayaram, n.d.). As such, Patricia

asks the valid question as to why it was chosen to be used on vehicle license plates when it was possible to use another letter free of ethno-religious connotations such as “la.” She also observed that it may have been done intentionally to offend the Tamils, a majority of whom are Hindus. Ironically, while “sri” seems to have been placed on vehicle license plates with the intention of hurting Tamils, it was also added as a prefix in front of “Lanka” due to the ideas of sacredness and prosperity that it was supposed to denote when the country name was changed from Ceylon to *Sri* Lanka in 1972. By illustrating how the ethnic tensions that the language policy of 1956 gave rise to manifested as language-related conflicts, the extract above presents another example of ideologies about language being closely intertwined with ideologies about ethnicity and nationalism in the postcolonial Sri Lankan context.

The detailed accounts presented by the non-Sinhalese participants on the violence and abuse that Tamils had to face at different points in the post-independence period echoed their accounts of how the violence unleashed during the 1983 ethnic riots and the civil war had also often taken the shape of language-based violence. This suggests that, for the participants in this study, language, ethnicity, and ideas about power and nationhood are related and possibly played a role in the growth of ethnic violence and (later) the civil war that comprised the most crucial political phenomenon of postcolonial Sri Lanka. The inseparability of language from ideas about nationhood is clearly depicted through the words “one language two nations, two languages one nation” that are attributed to Colvin R. De Silva – a minister of parliament who had foreseen the division that the policy would pave the way for – which both Shameena and Saranya referred to in their interviews. Shameena also talked about how accent was used by the Sinhalese mobs

in the 1983 riots to identify the Tamils from the Sinhalese before they were subjected to harassment. She said:

> They were asking, the Sinhalese mobs, tell the word of 'bucket' in Sinhala, in Sinhala you have to say "බාල්දිය" [ba:ldɪə] (bucket) no? But the Tamils can't pronounce it like that, they said, big professional people, they said "வாளி" [wa:lɪ] (bucket), once they said that word they were harassed and attacked and put into the vehicle and they left. This is the situation, when such a situation comes, this is the struggle, that is because they were ill-treated because of their language. That is the worst thing of language policy.

This excerpt highlights concerns raised by many participants about the ways in which ideologies of language are infused with understandings of the history of ethnic violence that had increased after the passage of the 1956 language policy. As there is no clear physical distinction between the people of the two ethnic groups, language had become a proxy for ethnicity. The Sinhalese mobs that Shameena mentions in the extract seem to have resorted to language in order to differentiate the Tamils from the Sinhalese. "බාල්දිය", the word for "bucket" in Sinhala, sounds similar to the word for bucket in Tamil "வாளி." However, the Sinhala word starts with the [b] sound as opposed to the initial phoneme in the Tamil word which is a [w] sound. Shameena explained that the Tamils were picked out for harassment on the basis of the fact that they could not pronounce the word the way a Sinhalese would pronounce it. This shows how language has continued to be used as a tool assisting the violence that had grown into a prominent part of the divisive narrative that the 1956 policy had initiated. Dino also recounted experiences of how some of her relatives had discouraged their children from learning Tamil because it

was a clear marker of the Tamil ethnic identity, and the relatives feared speaking Tamil might expose them to different forms of danger during the time of the civil war. She said:

> My cousins whose both parents were Tamil speaking, like Tamil and English were their prominent languages, they would opt to put their children in the Sinhala medium. So, I thought it was just because it was kind of easy on them, for instance say you're stopped at a checkpoint, and you stumble through your Sinhalese, then people checking would be kind of "now show me your ID card and where do you come from."

Military checkpoints were a common sight in Colombo during the time of the civil war because of the constant threat of suicide bombings on the commercial capital and Dino here talks about how being identified as Tamil at them caused them to be viewed and treated as suspects. The extract shows how from being relegated to a secondary place in an official capacity in 1956, the Tamil language had grown into a marker of the ethnic identity of Tamils through which they were identified as targets for various forms of ethnicity-based abuse. The relationship between language, identity and violence in Sri Lanka in the postcolonial period shows that language practices and language ideologies seemed to reflect and influence the ethnic conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils.

While I previously examined the observations made by Sharon, Patricia and Dino to show how ethnic conflicts and tensions were both revealed and amplified by the 1956 language policy, the participants also commented on the ways that language practices and ideologies continued to shape the ethnic relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils. For example, Shakira said that the policy triggered "a lot of hate speech that was not about language" and sought to "demonize the other communities" which led to

ethnic riots. She also said that this has made it difficult for a lot of people to dissociate the language policy from the violence that followed on its heels. Talking about the experiences that she has heard of from her Tamil friends, Shakira said that they said they had had to "run", "hide" and "worry about their life and property" as a result of the ethnic riots that took place in the years following the language policy which make them her "first association with it." Saranya made a similar observation when she said that she could not help but see the 1983 riots, which is generally considered the immediate event leading to the breakout of the civil war, as being linked to the "Sinhala Only" policy. She said that out of the thirty-two of her Tamil school friends with whom she had been in the same class till the Ordinary Level, only six are left in Sri Lanka now as "everybody else fled round about the time of the '83 riots." Providing further explanation of why she sees the language policy as linked to the violence that it was followed by, Saranya said:

> One of my classmates, her father was the attorney general, they fled, their house was attacked, they fled. And eventually he became the lead constitutional lawyer for the LTTE in Australia. He was the attorney general here. So, I think it (the language policy) has had political ramifications that led to the '83 riots, I can't disengage the two.

This extract along with the observations made by Shakira that were looked at previously show how the language policy seems to have got associated with the ethnic tensions that had become a common feature of the socio-political life of the country in the post-independence era. The above extract from Saranya's interview in which she talks about how the attorney general of independent Sri Lanka became a lead constitutional lawyer for the LTTE shows how Tamil nationalism seems to have emerged in response to

Sinhala Buddhist nationalism, which some of the participants saw as being triggered by the language policy of 1956. Thus, the observations made by Shakira and Saranya examined above show how the ethnic violence resulting from the changes brought about by the language policy have not been confined to the sphere of language.

The participants also highlighted how the edicts of the language policy of 1956 continue to hold sway in relation to language practices in Sri Lanka despite the fact that it was amended in 1987 and Tamil also accorded official language status. Sharon talked about how although attempts have been made to implement the official status accorded to Tamil within the constitution, they have failed due to the fact that they were not "warmly welcomed" by the majority Sinhalese. She commented on reconciliatory efforts such as Prime Minister Rajapaksa - who headed the Sri Lankan government when the civil war ended – speaking in Tamil and the decision to sing the national anthem in both Sinhala and Tamil and said that she felt they were done "in a very cosmetic sense." This shows that just like it was used as a tool to develop the divisive ideology of Sinhala Buddhist nationalism which, as examined in the earlier sections, had led to the civil war, language was also used by the Sinhalese leaders in their attempts at reaching a reconciliation to the conflict. The words "cosmetic sense" suggest that Sharon feels that the efforts were not genuine and merely used as a ruse to convince the Tamils that the conflict had ended. Elaborating on her feelings about the efforts at giving prominence to Tamil, Sharon said that such efforts seem to forget that "adding a few words and sentences to a speech doesn't make people really understand what a culture is and what a language is and its functions." These observations made by Sharon suggest that she does not have much faith in the efforts made on the part of the Sri Lankan government to reach a reconciliation

through language-based gestures as she feels that they do not emanate from a genuine interest in understanding and accepting the culture of the Tamil community. Saranya also recounted experiences related to the effort to teach the language of the other to both Sinhalese and Tamil students in the school curriculum. Reporting the experience of a Tamil teacher delivering a Tamil lesson to a group of Sinhalese students, Saranya said that the teacher had written the words, "We all are friends" on the board at which one of the students had replied, "No, we are all enemies." She also talked about the responses of Sinhalese students and parents at having to learn Tamil as a second language at Winston Girls' School where she teaches and said that she has had "cases where students have handed in blank exam papers" because their parents had told them not to learn "*that* language." These observations by Sharon and Saranya therefore suggest that although language has been used in efforts to resolve the ethnic conflict, they had failed to convince the Tamil community that they were genuine gestures arising from an ideological shift signaling a willingness to understand, accept and embrace the cultural identity of the other.

Sharon also observed how the Tamil language, because of its recent association with ethnic violence, has acquired negative connotations over time. She said:

> Even now, sadly, it has shifted to the Muslims no, and there too you kind of… people are always wondering what kind of Tamil does this person speak, Muslims also speak in Tamil but they also have adapted it no in their own little way? So, then you pay attention to how they dress and how they speak and then you look down on certain languages and look down on certain people. So, this has affected relationships. When you think about it from a macro perspective, all these little

> things about how we look at a language then boils down to how we look at a certain people and in turn it affects relationships. And also now, the gaze has shifted to the Muslims and now you're kind looking at them and checking how they're different and, in a sense, then once again the language is subordinated because you're looking down on a certain group of people.

This extract from the interviews with Sharon provides a compelling depiction of how language seems to both reflect and fuel the ethnic tensions that seem to have become a constant in the relations between different Sri Lankan ethnic groups. The Easter Attacks of 2019, which comprised a series of suicide bombings, had been allegedly carried out by a Muslim terrorist group which had resulted in a wave of Islamophobia which swept across the country and affected the relations between the Sinhalese and the Muslims. As explained by Sharon in the above extract, the fact that they also use Tamil as a dominant language seems to have helped in the process of marking the Muslims as different in the aftermath of the attacks. Thus, according to this viewpoint, the negative connotations that the Tamil language seems to have acquired on account of it being the language of the Tamils seem to have become associated with the Muslims as the Sinhalese-Muslim relations started to be strained as a result of the Easter attacks. In addition, the negative sentiments that seem to have built up towards the Muslims in recent times further contribute to negative evaluations of their language. This shows that ideologies about language are informed and shaped by ethnic relations between different ethnic groups.

In this section, I examined the participants' observations about how the language policy reflected and shaped relationships between groups in the sociopolitical context of Sri Lanka in the post-independence years, and I showed that participants believe there

is a relationship between language, identity and ethnic tensions—and that these tensions had increased over time. The data analysis showed that ideologies of language which led to the introduction of the language policy are linked to ideologies about ethnicity and national belonging in the context of Sri Lanka. In the next section of data analysis, I examine the non-Sinhalese participants' observations about the material impact of the 1956 policy's change on the lives of people of the minority communities.

The language policy's violation of minority language rights

In this section I examine what the non-Sinhalese participants said about how the language rights of minority groups were violated as a result of the introduction of the language policy of 1956. The 1956 policy was amended in 1987 through the 13th amendment to the constitution so that Sinhala and Tamil were both defined as official and national languages of Sri Lanka and English was declared to be a "link language." However, according to some of the stories and experiences that the participants shared in their interviews, ideologies of language that devalue Tamil and Tamil speakers and the language-based injustices resulting from the 1956 policy change continued despite the amendment made in 1987. They talked about how their language rights continue to be ignored even in modern-day Sri Lanka, which suggests that the 1956 policy still seems to hold sway while the amendment appears not to have been implemented effectively. In the following sections I examine what non-Sinhalese participants said about the immediate and long-term impact of the language policy of 1956 on the language rights of the minorities. Although examined separately for clarity of presentation of data, the individual experiences of language rights violations looked at in this section are closely

linked to and may have even resulted from the ideological impact of the language policy that was the focus of the previous section of data analysis.

All nine of the Tamil, Muslim and Burgher participants described in detail the many injustices that people of the minority communities had to suffer due to the change of official language brought about by the language policy of 1956. The incidents and instances they recounted related to either themselves or their family members and friends. In contrast, the three Sinhalese participants did not talk about difficulties experienced by anyone they knew as a result of the change of language policy. Even Geethika, who was the only Sinhalese participant to acknowledge that the language policy of 1956 was discriminatory towards the Tamils, did not relate any experiences of it having affected anyone personally known to her. This suggests that the negative impacts of the language policy were mainly felt by the non-Sinhalese. Dino and Saranya described the policy as racist and talked about the various injustices they have experienced as a result of the changes that it has brought about.

A number of non-Sinhalese participants spoke about the immediate impact that the language policy had on people close to them. The most potent immediate effect of the language change on members of the minority communities seemed to be the requirement it had made on students and employees to shift to Sinhala from English. Dino recounted that her father and a number of his cousins who had been medical students about to start their practice at the time had been extremely frustrated at having been made to take an additional course to show Sinhala language proficiency. Patricia said that all government servants were required to pass an efficiency bar exam to show language proficiency, without passing which they could not get promoted, as a result of which, according to

Saranya, the Burghers had "fled in droves." Margie described in detail the difficulties that she had to face at school on being required to study in Sinhala – a language that she said was completely alien to her because her childhood had been spent in the tea plantation areas which are Tamil dominant due to a majority of the estate workers being Tamils. Margie recalled how coming from an English-dominant household and a Tamil-dominant neighborhood, it was particularly challenging for her to adjust to education at schools like *Viharamahadevi* and *Passara Kanisht*a which, she said, were "raw Sinhala schools." Sharon said she herself did not know anyone affected by the language policy but had heard about many Burgher families that had faced difficulties and migrated from her parents.

The above excerpts and examples from the interviews focused on the immediate impact that the change of official language had on those close to the Tamil and Burgher participants. However, they also talked in detail about language practices that continued to marginalize the minorities even after the 1956 policy was amended in 1987 and accorded official language status to Tamil and "link language" status to English. These discriminatory language practices recounted by the Tamil, Muslim and Burgher participants seem to indicate that the policy amendment failed to put an end to the language-based discriminations which the "Sinhala Only" policy had initiated. A discriminatory practice that most of the non-Sinhalese participants talked about was the non-availability of official documents and announcements in Tamil despite it being currently defined as an official language in the constitution. Saranya categorically stated that the amendment to the language policy is not practiced in many government offices. She said she had conducted a close study of the official website of the Pensions

Department as part of a project she had done for her master's degree and found that "only a minuscule number of forms and notifications were available in Tamil" which comprised "a tiny proportion of all the forms they had online." Dino also commented on the non-availability of pension forms in Tamil and said that her mother always receives pension forms in Sinhala which creates a great difficulty as "nobody in her family can read Sinhala." Saranya also said that until very recently the Tamil teachers at her school received official documentation in Sinhala and "they had to walk around with the form to get it translated." Dino and Saranya also talked about how even notifications and announcements related to the current pandemic situation such as information on vaccination schedules were given out only in Sinhala, which made the Tamils who were not familiar with Sinhala depend on their Sinhala-speaking neighbors to understand them. Talking about the difficulties she faces when many important announcements are delivered only in Sinhala, Saranya said:

> I can't see any difference between now and pre-87 in terms of my access. I'm still getting stuff in Sinhala, I'm still having to translate them, notices are still in Sinhala. There is a van that comes with a loudspeaker telling people when and where they can get their covid vaccine. The vans come down the road, Dehiwela-Mt Lavinia[5] they do it by van. This van comes with a loudspeaker, telling us what age group, when and where we can get the vaccine, it's all in Sinhala. So, I have to tell Dilan, listen what are they saying? And this is the same when the electricity board decides they're going to have a power cut, when the water board decides

[5] Dehiwela-Mt Lavinia is the largest suburb of the City of Colombo.

> they're going to have a water cut. The van will come, and they will only speak in Sinhala. I mean electricity and water, you can do something but your Covid vaccine?

The extract shows that the non-implementation of the official status accorded to Tamil by the 18th amendment to the constitution continues to oppress minorities who are unfamiliar with Sinhala on a daily basis. The experience recounted by Saranya above shows that the non-implementation of the policy amendment has made her dependent on her husband who is Sinhalese to gain access to crucial official information. Although two of the three Sinhalese participants claimed that no ethnicity-based discrimination resulted from the 1956 language policy, the extract above from Saranya's interviews shows how even in a crisis situation such as the covid pandemic, the Tamils are placed at a disadvantage simply on account of being unfamiliar with Sinhala – the dominant official language of the country. Thus, while Dino said that "no one thinks of language rights in a health crisis," the extract from Saranya's interviews shows the importance of ensuring that nobody is discriminated based on language so that everyone receives the same treatment in an emergency situation. Dino also said that there are other difficulties that Tamils have had to face when it comes to accessing and submitting official documentation even in the rare instances when it is actually available in their language. She said:

> Colombo has a very huge, very big non-Sinhala speaking population but despite that lots of the documentation, 100% of the documentation is available only in Sinhalese. Or like... I can remember now somebody had said that the forms for a Justice of Peace applicant was… they gave the forms in Tamil, but they asked

them to fill it in Sinhalese. Like you know, because there's nobody to accept it in Tamil. It's like an added thing, they don't want to go through the hassle.

This extract shows that the problems related to providing official information in Tamil does not stop at the non-availability of the documentation in that language. The person in the experience that Dino recounts here has not been able to submit the information in Tamil in spite of the fact that the forms had been available in it. Dino also seems to highlight the lack of empathy on the part of the authorities about their hardships when she says that the fact that there is no one to accept the forms in Tamil is because they are not bothered enough to go through the trouble. She seems to imply that it is something that could be rectified easily if the authorities were willing to take the trouble to do so. This suggests that the day-to-day injustices such as what Dino recounts in the above extract could be linked to the ideological impact that the language policy seems to have had on the mindset of the people from various ethnic groups.

Another long-term effect of the language policy which the participants talked about related to the difficulties that they and those close to them have to deal with in the education sphere as a result of Sinhala continuing to play a dominant role in education despite the policy amendment. Dino and Saranya commented on the fact that the subject choices are limited at many universities in Colombo for Tamil medium students. Saranya talked about how a student of hers who had performed brilliantly at the Advanced Level exam had been unable to follow a classical studies major due to the limited number of subjects available in Tamil or English medium. She said although the student had sought admission to University of Kelaniya which was "the only university in her area offering

classics," she had been told that they "can't take Tamil students because they couldn't give her any other subject other than classics and English in the English medium." Dino also said that when she was at university reading for a major in international relations, she had to take the lectures in the Sinhala medium and sit for the exam in the English medium even though the lectures were available in Tamil because the exam covered content available in the Sinhala medium lectures (and this made it more challenging for those who followed the Tamil medium lectures). She said that she decided to switch from Tamil to Sinhala medium lectures when "she realized that she would be at a disadvantage if she didn't follow the Sinhala lectures" because "the papers were going to be set based on that and not based on what the Tamil instructors were teaching." She also recounted how she had had to give up on a sociology major which she had been interested in because of the non-availability of classes in the Tamil or English medium. She said:

> I can remember I was thinking of doing a special degree in sociology, but I saw a notice saying that all instruction will be in Sinhala even if you're sitting for it in English and if you don't know Sinhala, it will be very difficult for you to follow this course.

These examples and extracts show that although Tamil was also made an official language in 1987 which placed it technically on par with Sinhala, the language practices in many institutions continue to be shaped by ideologies of language that devalue Tamil. As Dino, Saranya and Ranasinghe observed, one factor that led to the introduction of the 1956 policy was the higher rate of Tamil students gaining admission to the universities in comparison to Sinhalese students (a remnant of colonial rule). The difficulties described

by Dino and Saranya here in relation to the status of Tamil in the universities shows how the language policy of 1956 seems to have brought about a complete turnabout in this alleged privileged position enjoyed by Tamil students in the higher education sphere.

The participants' talk on the immediate and long-term impact of the language policy of 1956 (and the ideologies of language that accompanied it) examined in the preceding sections show the many ways in which the lives of the Tamils and the Burghers have been affected by the change in official language. The data analyzed here indicate a close relationship between language practices, language ideologies, language policies, and the status of different ethnic groups within the Sri Lankan polity. On the one hand, the adoption of Sinhala as the official language seems to have effectively privileged the Sinhalese over minoritized groups, thereby marking the language as an essential element of the ethnic identity of the Sinhalese. On the other hand, the discrimination experienced by the Tamils and Burghers (since 1956) also seem to have marked them as an ethnic other on account of the language they speak. Thus, the analysis of data in this section shows that language and ethnic identity together seem to have played a central role in relegating certain ethnic minorities to a marginal position in the Sri Lankan context.

Summary

In this chapter, I examined the observations the participants made about the language policy of 1956 and amendments to that policy in subsequent years to show the influence that this policy has had on ideologies of language and language practices circulating within the socio-political context of Sri Lanka in the period after independence. In the first section of data analysis, I examined what the participants said

about the 1956 policy and its relationship to colonialism. Although Dino, Patricia and Geethika said that the language policy carried a divisive narrative, Ranasinghe said that it helped unify the country. Despite having different perspectives on it, all of them saw the language policy and the socio-political environment necessary to it to have been triggered by the structures of power established under colonial rule.

In the second section of data analysis in this chapter, I examined participants' talk on the language policy to understand the ideological impact it seems to have had on the social and political events that have played a dominant role within the Sri Lankan polity in the subsequent years. As such, my analysis of data in this section showed how ideologies of language–many of which influenced and were influenced by perspectives on ethnicity and nation-building–were intermingled, with each having a significant bearing on the other. Rosa & Flores (2017) argue that "institutionalized hierarchies of racial and linguistic legitimacy are central to processes of modern subject formation" (p. 622). The examination of data in the second section of the chapter showed how the linguistic hierarchies bolstered by the official language policy of 1956 played a central role in amplifying racial hierarchies dominated by the Sinhalese, as well as constructing the ethnic identities of the Tamils and Muslims.

In the final section of data analysis, I examined the participants' accounts of the difficulties they experienced as a result of the changes enacted by the language policy of 1956. They related experiences about the hardships they endured in the immediate aftermath of the passing of the "Sinhala Only" bill and afterwards, which showed that the 1956 policy continues to dictate over language practices in official institutes despite the fact that it was amended in 1987 to place Tamil on par with Sinhala as an official

language. The experiences examined in this third section are linked to and emanate from the ideological impact that the policy was examined to have on the socio-political context of post-independence Sri Lanka.

The analysis of data presented in this chapter demonstrates that ideologies of language are inseparably linked with ideologies of ethnicity, power and nationalism in the Sri Lankan context. The three sections of data analysis showed how the Sinhalese, who currently hold significant power within the Sri Lankan polity, have since 1956 used language as a central tool to establish themselves as the dominant group and relegate the minorities to the periphery within the ideological boundaries of the newly formed nation state. The data analysis also showed that, formulated as a response to colonialism, the process of using language to establish the supremacy of the Sinhalese became a tool of nation building and played a prominent role within the political context of Sri Lanka since gaining independence from the British. As such, the examination of the observations the participants made about the language policy in this chapter showed that language has helped to shape relations between different ethnic groups by establishing and dismantling structures of power as well as constructing ideas of national belonging.

CHAPTER 7

CHAPTER SEVEN CONCLUSIONS AND IMPLICATIONS

I conducted this study to understand and examine the language ideologies of Sri Lankans belonging to different ethnic communities with the aim of understanding how they may align with ideologies about ethnicity and national belonging as well as structures of power operating within society. The analysis of data provided a nuanced picture related to the status of different languages since the 1956 language policy as well as their current status and situation in the lives of actual users as described by the study participants. The study showed that the status of different languages within the language ecology of Sri Lanka influences and is influenced by and inextricably linked with policy changes, the nature of relations between ethnic groups, ethnic allegiances, ideas about nationhood, colonialism, the role of English as a world language as well as the context and audience in which the languages are used. In this concluding chapter below, I present the findings of the study and their theoretical implications.

Key Findings

Status of different Sri Lankan languages

The perceptions and practices related to language use which the participants talked about showed the complexity of language use within the multilingual context of Sri Lanka. Findings show that the situation of Sri Lankan languages Sinhala, Tamil, English, Malay and Arabic is affected by a multiplicity of factors such as language policy changes, ethnic relations and allegiances, context, audience as well as the advent of English as a world language. Sinhala seems to hold a high status within the language ecology of Sri Lanka on account of the fact that it is the language of the majority

community and also because it was assigned the sole official language status after independence in 1956. Although Tamil was also placed on par with Sinhala as an official and national language in 1987, the observations made by the participants showed that it continues to hold a lower status than Sinhala, which seems related to the fact that it is the language of the Tamils who have been minoritized since independence. The study also showed that the situation of English in Sri Lanka is more fluid than suggested by the status of a 'link' language that is officially assigned to it. The dominance of Sinhala and English also seem to impact upon the situation of Malay and Arabic, two languages used within the Muslim community of Sri Lanka, and contribute to further restrict their use.

The language practices described by the participants showed that language use within the complex multilingual context of Sri Lanka cannot be defined by static terms such as "first", "second" or "home" language. Although some of the Tamil-speaking participants identified themselves as dominant speakers of English, the language practices that they described showed that the close association of Tamil with the ethnic identity of Tamils seemed to push them towards wanting to use Tamil in their interactions with family in the home domain. On the other hand, other participants who claimed to be dominant speakers of Tamil showed themselves to be using English dominantly within the home domain as it is a language known and understood by all members of their family due to its status as a world language. The analysis of data also showed that the participants frequently shifted between languages and adopted translingual practices between contexts, interactions and even within the same context or interaction. The fact that the participants' choice to use a particular language in a particular context or interaction was affected by different factors related to their identity as well as the status

of the languages in use and also that they adopted various resources such as translanguaging to ensure that the communication process did not break down indicates the complexity of language use within the multilingual context of Sri Lanka.

The situation of English in Sri Lanka

The study shows that there are two main varieties of Sri Lankan English, one considered 'standard' and used by the upper-middle class using English as a home language and the other considered 'non-standard' and used by a large majority of the people who use English as a second language. These two main varieties of English have been identified by a number of Sri Lankan English scholars (C. Fernando, 1976; Canagarajah, 2005; Gunasekera, 2005; Kandiah, 1979; S. Fernando, 2006).

The study also showed that the situation of English in Sri Lanka is still largely influenced by ideologies and cultural practices introduced by colonialism. For example, language practices and ideologies dominant in urban elite schools attended by the English-speaking upper-middle-class showed closer affinity with the culture of the colonizer than the locals. The participants described clear disparities between language practices in urban elite schools where English functions as a first language and rural schools where English is a second or third language. The students at urban elite schools where English functions as a first language outside of the classroom seemed to not only lack proficiency in Sinhala but also consider it a low status language and look down upon it. Other cultural practices in these schools and the lives of the students that they were attended by as described by the participants also showed them to be sharing closer affinity with the West than the indigenous Sri Lankan culture. A social class that represents the colonial culture through language and way of life seems to hold dominance

in the social hierarchy, thereby further strengthening the presence of coloniality and its ideological influence on sociopolitical affairs of postcolonial Sri Lanka.

Language and ethnicity

The study found that ideologies about Sinhala and Tamil, their status within the language ecology as well as practices related to them are shaped by ideologies about ethnicity. The study participants illustrated that the immediate and long-term effects of implementing Sinhala as the sole official language of the country through the language policy of 1956 have been largely discriminatory towards the non-Sinhala speaking minorities. The study also showed that language had played a significant and constant role in the ethnic conflict between the majority Sinhalese and the Tamils. While language policy decisions such as promoting Sinhala/Tamil bilingualism in the school education system had been proposed as a solution to the ethnic conflict, it had proved largely unsuccessful due to the reluctance of the Sinhalese to learn Tamil, which could be a result of the Tamil language being associated with the Tamil people and the ethnic conflict.

The study also found that the roles of Sinhala and Tamil within the language ecology of Sri Lanka are closely linked to ideas about national belonging. The supremacy of Sinhala established through the language policy of 1956 was a symbolic gesture that illustrated the prominence given to the Sinhalese in the founding of the newly independent nation. The non-Sinhalese participants identified it as marking a turning point in the history of Sri Lanka by aligning the country's identity with that of the Sinhalese. The ensuing rebellion of the Tamils against the linguistic nationalism of the Sinhalese and the significance given to the Tamil language in the Tamil nationalist

movement show that ideologies about Sinhala and Tamil are also closely linked to ideologies about national belonging.

Theoretical Implications

Multilingualism

The findings of the study add more nuance to various theoretical aspects related to multilingualism as well as what has been observed in relation to it in other world contexts. The observations made by the participants about their own and others' language practices as well as their perceptions about different languages showed that monolingualism and multilingualism have a distinctive relationship in Sri Lankan society. The multilingual situation of Sri Lanka as revealed through the data analysis seems to illustrate that experiences with and attitudes toward multilingualism vary according to factors such as ethnic identity and class affiliation. The practices related to multilingualism and monolingualism as observed by the participants also showed that the sociolinguistics' celebration of multilingualism as "an indicator of social justice for minority speakers" Duchêne (2020), does not hold true in the case of the Sri Lankan context. Although bilingualism has been presented as a solution to Sri Lanka's long-drawn-out tensions between communities and thus celebrated, the participants' observations about practices related to Sinhala, Tamil and English showed that bilingualism functions as a mandatory language practice for the minorities while monolingualism works as the prerogative of the majority Sinhalese. For example, all of the non-Sinhalese participants said that they are fluent in Sinhala while none of the Sinhalese participants were fluent in Tamil.

The study also problematizes the promotion of bi-/multi-lingualism in the education sphere. Bilingualism in Sinhala and Tamil has been promoted within the school education system as a strategy for improving relations between communities. However, the data analysis showed that the Sinhalese, who comprise the majority community, devalue Tamil and are therefore reluctant to learn it. It also appears that the reluctance of the Sinhalese to learn Tamil is linked to and influenced by the relations between the Sinhalese and Tamils, which have been fraught with tensions for years. However, the Tamil and Muslim students are keen to learn Sinhala as it is difficult for them to get their daily work in the public sphere done without some knowledge in it. In their examination of mother-tongue-based multilingual education (MTB-MLE) in the Southeast Asian region, Tupas (2015) claims that although MTB-MLE sees it as a "cultural and pedagogical resource" multilingualism is not characterized by a perception of all languages as being equally valued (p. 115). Tupas (2015) also claims that MTB-MLE is "deeply situated within this political economy of multilingualism, where some languages are invested with much more symbolic and cultural capitalism than others" (p. 115). The reluctance of the Sinhalese to learn Tamil and the keenness of the Tamils and Muslims to learn Sinhala shows a similar disparity in symbolic and cultural capital accrued by Sinhala and Tamil as the social power that the Sinhalese hold as the majority community seems to give them the choice to not learn Tamil while the minority communities who have lesser social power have no choice but learn Sinhala, the language of the majority.

On the other hand, although English has also been promoted as a "link language" which could help strengthen the strained relations between communities, access to learning it seems restricted to those living in urban areas and the upper-middle class who

speak it as a first language and thus the settings in which it can function in the role of a "link language" seem limited. Therefore, in the case of English, those who hold higher social power due to their higher socio-economic status are able to learn it and acquire bi-/multilingual proficiency. This shows that multilingualism is closely linked with the power that a community or an individual holds in society, which poses its presentation as a solution to ethnic tensions and social inequity as problematic.

The failure of multilingualism to serve as a solution to the ethnic tensions and social inequities shows that the linguistic homogeneity promoted by the 1956 policy has taken deep if contradictory root amongst the general public. The promotion of linguistic homogeneity through the elevation and propagation of the language of the majority community drew ideological support from the "Western notion of one language, one nation and one culture" (Tupas, 2015, p. 116) - an idea that had become popular in Europe in the twentieth century. Linguistic homogeneity based on Sinhala – the language of the majority – was presented as a solution to the marginalization suffered by indigenous languages under the supremacy of English established under colonial rule. Multilingualism is now promoted as a solution to the conflicts arising from the linguistic homogeneity established after independence. This suggests that language ideologies and practices that gain ascendence in the West may not always work well in non-Western contexts and also that postcolonial contexts are constantly under the influence of the west despite the fact that political subjugation has now ended. Thus, multilingualism as manifested in the Sri Lankan context is essentially linked to the structures of power operating in the society at large which are still influenced by western ideologies as well as remnants of the practices and ideologies left behind even after independence. The

study therefore shows that multilingualism is rooted within the very social, political and economic conflicts that it is presented as a solution to and therefore has its limitations.

Language policy and planning

The study yielded a number of findings which are significant to the field of language policy and planning. It showed that the status that a language holds in society as well as the social power enjoyed by the people who speak that language influence its situation within the language ecology rather than the status that a language is assigned through policy and planning decisions. Although the 1956 language policy which implemented Sinhala as the sole official language of the country was changed in 1987 and official status was also given to Tamil, the language practices and attitudes that the participants described showed that the policy change had failed to take root on ground. Thus, despite it being placed on par with Sinhala and defined as one of the two official and national languages, the study showed that Tamil continues to enjoy a lesser status within the language ecology of the country. This links back to what was examined earlier in relation to the status of languages within the Sri Lankan language ecology being closely tied to the social power attached to the people who speak those languages.

The study also showed that the language policy planning situation of post-independence Sri Lanka has similarities with those of the Philippines and Malaysia as examined by Dumanig et al (2012). Although the 1956 policy sought to undermine the status of English by removing it from official language status, it ended up re-establishing its dominance. The 1956 policy was projected as a nationalist policy that attempted to change the structures of power established during colonial rule, in which English played a dominant role in creating a division of the people into two classes. The rural masses, on

account of the limited access they had to English were deprived of the opportunities and privileges available to the English-speaking locals. Thus, demoting English from official status and replacing it with Sinhala – the language of the majority population – was taken up as one of the priority tasks that would pave the way for the social liberation of the underprivileged rural masses. However, the participants in their observations pointed out that the 1956 policy, ironically, had ended up further strengthening the status of English, even though it was no longer an official language. They illustrated how the language policy, by removing English as the medium of instruction in education, had taken it away from the very people who needed it the most – the rural masses. On the other hand, the continued use of English within the upper-middle class which was not affected by its removal from official status, led to an even stronger social division along the lines of English proficiency. This shows that even a nationalist language policy carrying the objective of dismantling the structures of power established by the colonials could end up re-establishing them.

A similar situation of English gaining dominance as a result of the elevation of a local language through policy has been examined in Philippines and Malaysia (Dumanig et al, 2012). Although Filipino has been assigned official language status and adopted as the medium of instruction in education in the Philippines, English plays a dominant role in many spheres, especially in education (Dumanig et al, 2012, p. 108). The association of English with better opportunities on the local and overseas job market has pushed Filipino to a lower status despite its official language status. The situation of English in Malaysia shows even closer resemblance to that of Sri Lanka. Malay was established as the national language of Malaysia after independence to bring about a change in the

domination of business and commerce by the English educated urban non-Malays and to give more prominence and opportunities to the rural Malays whose interests had been largely neglected during colonial rule (Dumanig et al, 2012, p. 109). This has caused a deterioration of proficiency levels in English leading to increasing numbers of local graduates facing difficulties in securing employment (Dumanig et al, 2012, p. 111). These situations of English in the Philippines and Malaysia show many similarities with that of Sri Lanka in postcolonial times as reported by the study participants.

The continued dominance of English despite the elevation of a local language through language policy shows that the linguistic imperialism of English still operates in the postcolonial context of Sri Lanka. Suhat (1992) claims that "colonialism's economic, political, and cultural deformative traces" are still in operation in territories that were formerly under colonial rule although taking forms "other than overt colonial rule" (as cited in Tupas, 2015, p. 118). This claim, which is used by Tupas (2015) to explain the situation of English in the Philippines, is relevant to Sri Lanka as well. However, the continued prominence of English in Sri Lanka, and the failure of its language policies to elevate a local language shows that the language problems of postcolonial countries are far more complex than can be resolved through simple policy decisions such as replacing one official language with another.

World Englishes/Sri Lankan English

The study questions the principles of plurilingualism on which the World Englishes scholarship is founded on. It showed that in Sri Lanka, the socially superior upper-middle-class speak the variety known as 'standard' Sri Lankan English and also define the characteristics of 'standard' and 'non-standard' varieties of Sri Lankan

English. The validity of labeling the variety used by an elite group of the population as 'standard' is questionable as the World Englishes" enterprise itself is founded upon ideas of inclusivity rather than exclusivity. The ideals of pluricentricity which the World Englishes was founded upon are clearly given voice to by Kachru and Smith in the editorial for the first issue of the World Englishes journal. They contend:

> The term 'Englishes' is significant in many ways. 'Englishes' symbolizes the functional and formal variation in the language, and its international acculturation, for example, in West Africa, in Southern Africa, in East Africa, in South Asia, in Southeast Asia, in the West Indies, in the Philippines, and in the traditional English-using countries: the USA, the UK, Australia, Canada and New Zealand. The language now belongs to those who use it as their first language and to those who use it as an additional language, whether in its standard form or in its localized forms (Kachru & Smith, 1985 as cited in Bolton, 2018, p. 204-205).

The ideas of pluricentricity and inclusivity which Kachru and Smith define in no uncertain terms as a central facet of World Englishes in the above extract seem to be disregarded in the Sri Lankan context as shown in the observations related to attitudes and perceptions about varieties of Sri Lankans made by the study participants. Thus, ideologically, the power structures conveyed through language ideologies that place a lower value on the varieties used by those who use the language as a second language seem no different to those that the field of World Englishes sought to dismantle in relation attitudes about the native and non-native varieties of English. The fact that the labels of 'standard' and 'non-standard' usage are produced by the upper-middle-class users of English – who, as shown in the observations made by the participants, show

closer affinity with the west than the local culture – provides further evidence to the idea that the ideologies governing the hierarchization of Englishes in the global context are replicated in the Sri Lankan context. It also strengthens Kachru's observation in his introduction to the second edition of *The other tongue: English across cultures* that "the powerful ruler, the wily colonizer, the commercial exploiter, and the religious zealot are not the only ones who envision their language being recognized" (1992, p. 1).

If the language use of a socially superior group who are culturally more similar to the former colonial ruler than to the locals who were under their heel is labeled as the 'standard' form in a socio-economically underprivileged Outer Circle context like Sri Lanka, it shows that the hierarchization of language varieties in operation in Sri Lanka appears to be robust and difficult to disrupt. The fact that ideologies surrounding the 'non-standard' variety serve to socially marginalize its users while simultaneously serving to elevate the users of the 'standard' form shows that the situation of English within Sri Lanka is largely similar to those outside where ideologies about different global varieties of English work to align language use with socio-economic status. Thus, the study draws attention to the need for Sri Lankan English to break free from the ideological confines handed down by colonial rule and embrace all varieties of language use as equal which would help align it with the ideals of pluricentricity and inclusivity that the field of World Englishes was founded upon.

Raciolinguistics

The study holds theoretical implications for the study of raciolinguistics as no studies have been conducted in this area in the context of Sri Lanka. Although language ideology has been studied in contexts within and outside the U.S., studies focusing

specifically on raciolinguistics have mostly been conducted in the U.S. and other western contexts. This scholarship has investigated the ways in which language ideologies are used in such contexts to racialize non-White minority populations and establish white supremacy and shown raciolinguistics to be a practice that employs language ideologies to mark the language use of Whites and non-Whites as different and the latter as inferior to the former. The study examined language ideologies of a non-White people from a context in the Global South who have experienced political independence from colonial rule for close to seventy-five years, which adds more nuance to the theory of raciolinguistics.

In their theorization of raciolinguistics, Rosa & Flores (2017) explicate that "raciolinguistic ideologies must be placed within colonial histories that have shaped the co-naturalization of language and race as part of the project of modernity" (p. 623). The study showed that the use of Sinhala – the language of the Sinhalese – in projecting the Sinhalese race as superior to other minority communities has played a significant role in constructing the modern Sri Lankan nation. The ideologies of the racial superiority of the Sinhalese are also accompanied by the construction of the Tamils as the "racial other" – and, in both cases, language has played a central role. This shows that the idea of a modern Sri Lanka that had newly gained independence from the British was founded upon western ideologies that co-naturalized language and race.

The study made it possible to examine whether the links that other studies have found between language ideology, race and power in society would operate in the same way in the Sri Lankan context where the society is not primarily organized along a White/non-White division. The participant observations showed that although the Sri

Lankan society is not organized along a White/non-White division, language has served as a principal criterion for constructing an ethno-social hierarchy on which the Sinhalese reign superior to the Tamil-speaking minorities in much the same way as the Whites have been shown to reign over non-Whites in the west. The study therefore shows that the co-naturalization of language and race as explicated by Rosa and Flores (2017), operates in the context of Sri Lanka too, despite the fact that Sri Lankan society is not primarily divided along the lines of skin color.

The study also holds implications for on-the-ground efforts to promote conflict resolution and communal harmony. Sri Lanka has a long history of experiences with conflict resolution with outside stakeholders like India and Norway getting involved in the process of finding a lasting solution to the conflict between the Sinhalese and Tamils. Although the military face of the ethnic conflict has been successfully managed, tensions between the two parties can be seen to raise their head in unexpected moments indicating that the problem needs to be addressed at its roots. Providing insights on ethnic tensions from a language-ideology-based approach, the study shows the crucial role played by language in constructing and reinforcing ethnic and social categories as well as ideas about national belonging. Thus, the study points towards the idea that language is closely embroiled within the ethno-social hierarchies and ideologies of national belonging and as such any attempt made at utilizing language to resolve the conflict needs to be grounded within language ideologies rather than surface level changes to language practices of the nature adopted in Sri Lanka in the post-war period.

Future directions

The study points towards the need for more extensive language ideology-based research in contexts in the Global South to unravel the complexities related to the ways in which language ideologies operate in a postcolonial context such as Sri Lanka. Its findings revealed that ideologies of language that are complicit with colonialism and white supremacy are subtly intertwined with many of the social, economic and political conflicts that Sri Lanka has had to grapple with in the period after independence. Motha (2020) draws attention to this when, citing Tuck & Young (2012), she says "the decolonial desires of white, nonwhite, immigrant, postcolonial, and oppressed people, can … be entangled in resettlement, reoccupation, and reinhabitation that actually further settler colonialism" (p.132). The study showed that practices related to multilingualism, language policy planning and English are often influenced by ideologies that support the global socio-economic and cultural dominance of the West. Further studies on language ideologies in global peripheral contexts such as Sri Lanka would help broaden our understanding of the numerous and illusory ways in which the West continues to bear its influence over territories that they have seemingly relinquished control on.

REFERENCES

Achebe, Chinua (1975). *Morning Yet on Creation Day.* Doubleday.

Ali. (1981). The Genesis of the Muslim Community in Ceylon (Sri Lanka): A Historical Summary. *Asian Studies (Quezon City, Philippines)*, *19*, 65.

Alim, H. S. (2016). Introducing raciolinguistics: Racing language and languaging race in hyperracial times. In Rickford, J. R., (Ed.), *Raciolinguistics: How language shapes our ideas about race*. Oxford University Press.

Anderson, B. (2006). *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. Verso Books.

Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (2013). *Postcolonial studies: the key concepts* (3rd ed.). Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/978023777855

Bhabha, H. (1984). Of Mimicry and Man: The Ambivalence of Colonial Discourse. *October*, *28*, 125–133. https://doi.org/10.2307/778467

Blommaert, J. (2006). Language Ideology. In *Encyclopedia of Language & Linguistics,* (Second Edition, pp. 510–522). Elsevier Ltd. https://doi.org/10.1016/B0-08-044854-2/03029-7

Blommaert, J & Verschuren, J. (1998). The role of language in European nationalist ideologies. In Schieffelin, B., Woolard, K., & Kroskrity, P. (Eds), *Language ideologies: practice and theory.* Oxford University Press.

Bolton, K. (2018). World Englishes: Current trends and future directions. In E. L. Low & A. Pakir (Eds.), *World Englishes: Rethinking paradigms* (pp. 200-221). Routledge.

Cameron. (2006). Ideology and language. *Journal of Political Ideologies*, *11*(2), 141–152. https://doi.org/info:doi/

Canagarajah, S. (2005). Dilemmas in planning English/vernacular relations in post-colonial communities. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 9(3), 418–447.

Casinader, Wijeyaratne, R. D. S., & Godden, L. (2018). From sovereignty to modernity: revisiting the Colebrooke-Cameron Reforms - transforming the Buddhist and colonial imaginary in nineteenth-century Ceylon. *Comparative Legal History,* 6(1), 34–64. https://doi.org/10.1080/2049677X.2018.1469273

Census of population and housing 2012 – Final report. In Department of Census and Statistics. Retrieved April 20, 2020 from http://www.statistics.gov.lk/Population/StaticalInformation/CPH2011

Ceylon Tamil. (n.d.). In *Britannica.* Retrieved January 20, 2022 from https://www.britannica.com/topic/Ceylon-Tamil.

Coperahewa, S. (2012). Purifying the Sinhala Language: The Hela Movement of Munidasa Cumaratunga (1930s–1940s). *Modern Asian Studies*, *46*(4), 857–891. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0026749X11000291

Coperahewa, S. (2009). The language planning situation in Sri Lanka. *Current Issues in Language Planning*, 10 (1), 69-150.

Crotty, M. (1998). *The foundations of social research: meaning and perspective in the research process.* Sage Publications.

De Silva, K.M. (2019). *A history of Sri Lanka*. Vijitha Yapa Publications.

de Silva, C. R. (1984). Sinhala–Tamil relations and education in Sri Lanka: The university admissions issue: The first phase 1971–77. In R. Goldman & J. Wilson (Eds.), *From independence to statehood: Managing ethnic conflicts in five Asian Countries* (pp. 125–146). Palgrave Macmillan

Duchéne, A. (2020). Multilingualism: an insufficient answer to sociolinguistic inequalities. *International Journal of the Sociology of Language*, 26(3): 91-97.

Dumanig, F.P., David, M. K., & Symaco, L. (2012). Competing Roles of the National Language and English in Malaysia and the Philippines: Planning, Policy and Use. *Journal of International and Comparative Education*, 1(2), 104–115. https://doi.org/10.14425/00.45.77

Errington, J. (2001). Ideology. In A. Duranti (ed.), *Key Terms in Language and Culture,* (pp. 110–112). Blackwell.

Errington, J. (2000). Indonesian ('s) authority. In Kroskrity, P. (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, polities, and identities,* (205 – 227). J. Currey.

Fernando, C. (1976). English in Sri Lanka: a case study of a bilingual community. In Pride, J. (Ed.) *New Englishes* (pp188–207). Newbury House Publishers.

Fernando, S. (2010). Does Sri Lankan English (SLE) have dialects, and can one dialect be identified as Standard SLE? In Fernando, S., Gunasekera, M., & Parakrama, A. (Ed.), *English in Sri Lanka: Ceylon English, Lankan English, Sri Lankan English (pp.304–314).* SLELTA

Fernando, S. (2006). When is a 'hall' a 'hole'?: Issues and guidelines in Sri Lankan English pronunciation. In Fernando, D., Mendis, M. (Ed.), *English for Equality, Employment and Empowerment,* 72 - 81. SLELTA.

García. (2018). Education, Multilingualism and Translanguaging in the 21st Century. In *Social Justice through Multilingual Education* (pp. 140–158). Multilingual Matters. https://doi.org/10.21832/9781847691910-011

Garcia, O. (2012). Ethnic identity and language policy. In Spolsky, B. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511979026

Gunasekera, M. (2005). *The post-colonial identity of Sri Lankan English.* Vijitha Yapa Publications.

Hall, R. (2019). The mouths of others: The linguistic performance of race in Bermuda. *Journal of Sociolinguistics*, 23(3), 223–243. https://doi.org/10.1111/josl.12345

Herath, S. (2015). Language policy, ethnic tensions and linguistic rights in post war Sri Lanka. *Language Policy*, 14(3), 245-261.

Irvine, J. & Gal, S. (2019). *Signs of difference: language and ideology in social life* (1st ed.). Cambridge University Press.

Irvine, J. & Gal, S. (2000). Language ideology and linguistic differentiation. In Kroskrity, P. (Ed.), *Regimes of language: Ideologies, polities, and identities* (School of American Research advanced seminar series) (35 – 83). J. Currey.

Jaffna. (21, August 2012). In *Encyclopædia Britannica*. Retrieved December 23, 2021 from academic-eb-com.ezproxy1.lib.asu.edu/levels/collegiate/article/Jaffna/43232.

Kachru. (1992). Introduction: The Other Side of English and the 1990s. In Kachru, B. (Ed.). *The Other tongue: English across cultures*. University of Illinois Press.

Kachru, B. (1990). *The alchemy of English: the spread, functions, and models of non-native Englishes* (Illini Books ed.). University of Illinois Press.

Kandiah, T. (1979). Disinherited Englishes: The Case of Lankan English. *Nawasilu 3, 75 – 89.*

Kearney, R. N. (1978). Language and the rise of Tamil nationalism in Sri Lanka. *Asian Survey,* 18 (5), 521 - 534

Kroskrity, P. V. (2007). Language ideologies. In *A Companion to Linguistic Anthropology* (pp. 496-517). Blackwell Publishing.

Lee, K. Y. (2000). *From third world to first: the Singapore story: 1965-2000: Singapore and the Asian economic boom* (1st ed.). Harper Collins Publishers.

Manogaran, C. (1987). *Ethnic conflict and reconciliation in Sri Lanka.* University of Hawaii Press.

Mayan, M. J. (2016). *Essentials of Qualitative Inquiry,* 2nd Edition. Routledge.

Maxwell, J. A. (2013). *Qualitative Research Design: An Interactive Approach, 3rd Edition*. SAGE

Merriam, S. B. & Tisdell, E. J. (2016). *Qualitative Research: A Guide to Design and Implementation*, 4th Edition. Jossey Bass/ Wiley.

Motha, S. (2020). Is an Antiracist and Decolonizing Applied Linguistics Possible? *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, *40*, 128–133. https://doi.org/10.1017/S0267190520000100

Nadarajah, S. (2014). *Nationalism in Sri Lanka: Origins-Growth-Impact: Challenges for Democracy in a Multiethnic Society.* Vijitha Yapa.

National Symbols of Sri Lanka. (2018, February 04). *Sunday Observer.* Retrieved January 20, 2022 from https://www.sundayobserver.lk/2018/02/04/junior/national-symbols-sri-lanka?msclkid=05ce7f28ae3d11ecbaf70d6d75a199b7

Nordhoff, S. (2012). *The Genesis of Sri Lanka Malay: A Case of Extreme Language Contact*. BRILL.

Okara, Gabriel (1963) 'African Speech…English Words', Transition 10 (September): 15–16.

Passe`, H.A. (1943). The English language in Ceylon, *University of Ceylon Review, 3*, 50-65.

Pennycook, A. (2000). English, Politics, Ideology: From Colonial Celebration to Postcolonial Performativity. In Ricento, T. (Ed.), *Ideology, Politics and Language Policies: Focus on English*, 107-119. John Benjamins. Retrieved from http://search.proquest.com/docview/85538079/

Phillipson, R. (1992). *Linguistic imperialism*. Oxford University Press.

Rao, R. (2006). Language and Spirit. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.) *The post-colonial studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.

Roberts, M. (2010). *Fire and storm: Essays in Sri Lankan Politics*. Vijitha Yapa Publications: Colombo.

Roberts, M. Raheem, I. Colin-Thome, P. (1989). *People Inbetween – The Burghers and the Middle Class in the Transformations within Sri Lanka, 1790s-1960s (Volume 1).* Sarvodaya Book Publishing Services.

Rosa, J. (2019). *Looking like a language, sounding like a race*. Oxf Studies in Anthropology of.

Rosa, J. D. & Flores, N. (2017). Unsettling race and language: Toward a raciolinguistic perspective. *Language in Society, 46*(5), 621-647.

Rumsey, A. (1990). Wording, meaning, and linguistic ideology. *American Anthropologist*, *92*(2), 346–361. https://doi.org/10.1525/aa.1990.92.2.02a00060

Sarvan, C. (1997). Carl Muller's trilogy and the Burghers of Sri Lanka. *World Literature Today*, *71*(3), 527–532. https://doi.org/10.2307/40152829

Said, E. (1978) *Orientalism: Western Conceptions of the Orient*, Penguin (1991).

Skuttnabb-Kangas, T. (1998). Human rights and language wrongs—a future for diversity? *Language Sciences*, 20, 5–28.

Spivak, G. (1985). Can the Subaltern Speak? Speculations on Widow Sacrifice. *Wedge,* 7(8). (Winter/Spring).

Spolsky, B. (2012). Definition and principles. In Spolsky, B. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511979026

Thiong'o, W.A. (2006). The Language of African Literature. In Ashcroft, B., Griffiths, G., & Tiffin, H. (Eds.) *The post-colonial studies reader*. Taylor & Francis.

Tupas. (2015). Inequalities of multilingualism: challenges to mother tongue-based multilingual education. *Language and Education*, *29*(2), 112–124. https://doi.org/10.1080/09500782.2014.977295

Woolard, K. (1998). Language ideology as a field of inquiry. In Schieffelin, B. Woolard, K.A. & Kroskrity, P. V. (Eds.), *Language Ideologies: Practice and Theory* (pp. 3-49). Oxford University Press.

Woolard, K. (1994). Language ideology. *Annual Review of Anthropology*, 23(1), 55-82.

Wright, S. (2012). Language policy, the nation and nationalism. In Spolsky, B. (Ed.), *The Cambridge Handbook of Language Policy*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511979026

Young, R. (2001). *Postcolonialism: An Historical Introduction*. John Wiley & Sons, Incorporated.

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM

ASU Knowledge Enterprise Development

EXEMPTION GRANTED

Aya Matsuda
CLAS-H: English
480/965-7504
Aya.Matsuda@asu.edu

Dear Aya Matsuda:

On 6/28/2021 the ASU IRB reviewed the following protocol:

Type of Review:	Initial Study
Title:	A language ideology-based exploration of ethnicity, nationhood, and power in Sri Lanka
Investigator:	Aya Matsuda
IRB ID:	STUDY00014045
Funding:	None
Grant Title:	None
Grant ID:	None
Documents Reviewed:	• Back translation certificate.pdf, Category: Translations; • Consent form translation - Sinhala, Category: Consent Form; • Consent form translation - Tamil, Category: Consent Form; • Consent_Form_A language ideology-based exploration of ethnicity, nationhood, and power in Sri Lanka.pdf, Category: Consent Form; • Questionnaire Sinhala.pdf, Category: Translations; • Questionnaire Tamil.pdf, Category: Translations; • Questionnaires_A language ideology-based exploration of ethnicity, nationhood, and power in Sri Lanka.pdf, Category: Measures (Survey questions/Interview questions /interview guides/focus group questions); • Recruitment script translation - Sinhala, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment script translation - Tamil, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Recruitment script_A language ideology-based exploration of ethnicity, nationhood and power in Sri Lanka.pdf, Category: Recruitment Materials; • Research protocol, Category: IRB Protocol;

The IRB determined that the protocol is considered exempt pursuant to Federal Regulations 45CFR46 (2) Tests, surveys, interviews, or observation on 6/4/2021.

In conducting this protocol you are required to follow the requirements listed in the INVESTIGATOR MANUAL (HRP-103).

If any changes are made to the study, the IRB must be notified at research.integrity@asu.edu to determine if additional reviews/approvals are required. Changes may include but not limited to revisions to data collection, survey and/or interview questions, and vulnerable populations, etc.

Sincerely,

IRB Administrator

cc: Agra Rajapakse Lekamlage
Agra Rajapakse Lekamlage

APPENDIX B

CONSENT FORM

Consent Form - English

STUDY TITLE A language ideology-based exploration of ethnicity, nationhood, and power in Sri Lanka

I am a graduate student under the direction of Professor Aya Matsuda in the Department of English/ School of Liberal Sciences at Arizona State University. I am conducting a research study to gain a broader understanding of the language policies of Sri Lanka and also how people think and feel about the three main languages used in the country.

I am inviting your participation, which will involve two interviews which will take approximately three hours. You must be 18 or older to participate in the study. You have the right not to answer any question, and to stop participation at any time.

Your participation in this study is voluntary. If you choose not to participate or to withdraw from the study at any time, there will be no penalty.

You will be compensated for the time you spend on the interviews with a gift voucher from……..worth 2500Rs (15$).

There are no foreseeable risks or discomforts to your participation.

Your responses will be confidential. The interview data will be stored anonymously. The identification label used for the storage of data will not link the data with your identity in any way. The results of this study may be used in reports, presentations, or publications but your name will not be used.

I would like to audio record this interview. The interview will not be recorded without your permission. Please let me know if you do not want the interview to be recorded; you also can change your mind after the interview starts, just let me know.

If you have any questions concerning the research study, please contact the research team at: Aya.Matsuda@asu.edu or +94718123640/arajapak@asu.edu

If you have any questions about your rights as a subject/participant in this research, or if you feel you have been placed at risk, you can contact the Chair of the Human Subjects Institutional Review Board, through the ASU Office of Research Integrity and Assurance, at (480) 965-6788. Please let me know if you wish to be part of the study.

Consent Form - Sinhala

කැමැත්ත ප්‍රකාශ කිරීමේ පෝරමය

අධ්‍යයන මාතෘකාව : භාෂා දෘෂ්ටිවාදය මත පදනම්ව ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ ජනවාර්ගිකත්වය, ජාතිකත්වය සහ බලය පිළිබඳ ගවේෂණය

මා ඇරිසෝනා ප්‍රාන්ත විශ්ව විද්‍යාලයේ ඉංග්‍රීසි / ලිබරල් විද්‍යා පාසලේ මහාචාර්ය අයා මට්සුඩාගේ මඟ පෙන්වීම යටතේ අධ්‍යයන කටයුතු සිදු කරන උපාධිධාරී ශිෂ්‍යයෙක් වෙමි. ශ්‍රී ලංකාවේ භාෂා ප්‍රතිපත්ති පිළිබඳ පුළුල් අවබෝධයක් ලබා ගැනීම සඳහාත්, රටේ භාවිතා වන ප්‍රධාන භාෂා තුන පිළිබඳව මිනිසුන් සිතන හා ඔවුන්ට හැඟෙන ආකාරය පිළිබඳව මා පර්යේෂණ අධ්‍යයනයක් සිදු කිරීමට අදහස් කර ඇත.

ඒ සඳහා සම්පත් දායකයකු ලෙස සහභාගී වන ලෙස මා ඔබට ආරාධනා කරමි. එයට සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණ දෙකක් ඇතුළත් වන අතර ඒ සඳහා ආසන්න වශයෙන් පැය තුනක් ගත වේ. අධ්‍යයනයට සහභාගී වීමට ඔබට වයස අවුරුදු 18 හෝ ඊට වැඩි විය යුතුය. ඕනෑම ප්‍රශ්නයකට පිළිතුරු නොදීමට සහ ඕනෑම වේලාවක සහභාගීත්වයෙන් ඉවත් වීමට ඔබට අයිතියක් ඇත.

මෙම අධ්‍යයනයට ඔබේ සහභාගීත්වය ස්වේච්ඡාවෙන් සිදු කරන්නකි. ඔබ ඕනෑම වේලාවක සහභාගී නොවීමට හෝ අධ්‍යයනයෙන් ඉවත් වීමට තීරණය කළහොත් කිසිදු දඩයක් නැත.

සම්මුඛ සාකච්ඡා සඳහා ඔබ ගත කරන කාලය වෙනුවන් ..... ආයතනයේ රු 2500 (15 $) වටිනා තෑගි වවුචරයක් ලබා දෙනු ලැබේ.

ඔබගේ සහභාගීත්වයට අපේක්ෂා කළ හැකි අවදානම් හෝ අපහසුතා නොමැත.

ඔබගේ ප්‍රතිචාර රහස්‍ය වනු ඇත. සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණ දත්ත නිර්නාමිකව ගබඩා කරනු ඇත. දත්ත ගබඩා කිරීම සඳහා භාවිතා කරන හඳුනා ගැනීමේ ලේඛලය කිසිදු ආකාරයකින් ඔබගේ අනන්‍යතාවය පිලිබඳ තොරතුරු සමඟ සම්බන්ධ නොවනු ඇත. මෙම අධ්‍යනයේ ප්‍රථිපල වාර්තා, ඉතිරිපත් කිරීම් හා ප්‍රකාශන වල භාවිත විය හැකි වුවත් ඔබගේ නම කිසිවිටකත් භාවිතා නොවනු ඇත.

මෙම සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණය හඬ පටිගත කිරීමට මම කැමති මුත් ඔබගේ අවසරයකින් තොරව සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණය පටිගත නොකෙරේ. සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණය පටිගත කිරීමට ඔබ අකමැති කරුණාකර මට දන්වන්න; සම්මුඛ පරීක්ෂණය ආරම්භ වූ පසුත් ඔබට ඔබේ අදහස වෙනස් කළ හැක. ඒ පිළිබඳව මට දන්වන්න.

පර්යේෂණ අධ්‍යයනය සම්බන්ධයෙන් ඔබට කිසියම් ප්‍රශ්නයක් ඇත්නම්, කරුණාකර පර්යේෂණ කණ්ඩායම අමතන්න: Aya.Matsuda@asu.edu හෝ +94718123640 /arajapak@asu.edu

මෙම පර්යේෂණයට දායකයකු / සහභාගිවන්නෙකු ලෙස ඔබේ අයිතිවාසිකම් පිළිබඳව ඔබට කිසියම් ප්‍රශ්නයක් ඇත්නම්, හෝ ඔබ අවදානමට ලක්ව ඇති බවක්

ඔබට හැඟේ නම්, ඔබට පර්යේෂණ අඛණ්ඩතාව සහ සහතිකය පිළිබඳ ඇSU කාර්යාලය හරහා මානව විෂය ආයතනික සමාලෝචන මණ්ඩලයේ සභාපති අමතන්න (480) 965-6788. ඔබ අධ්‍යයනයට සහභාගී වීමට කැමති නම් කරුණාකර මට දන්වන්න.

APPENDIX C

INTERVIEW PROTOCOL

Interview 1

1. What languages do you speak and which of them is your dominant language?
2. What other languages are spoken in Sri Lanka? Who speaks those languages? Where and when are those languages spoken?
3. It seems like you speak multiple languages. Which settings do you use these languages in?
4. Which language/s are you most comfortable using at home and in different settings in the public sphere such as grocery stores, temple/church/mosque/kovil etc.? (If they say they use more than one language in the same setting ask to explain).
5. Why do you think different languages are used in different settings in the public sphere?
6. If you could speak only one language which language would you pick and why?
7. Are you familiar with the language policy of 1956? (explain the policy to them without assuming that they would know it) What are your thoughts about it? Do you think that policy has influenced you and/or your family in any way?
8. Do you think the 1956 policy has affected users of other languages? (relate interviewer's own experiences in order to prompt participants)

Interview 2

1. During our previous interview we talked about… Could you say more about…? Could you help me understand...?
2. During our previous interview, you said… I'd like to hear a bit more about that. Could you please explain... ?

3. Last time we met, we talked briefly about the 1956 language policy and how it has affected users of other languages. I'd like to hear more about what you think about the current language policy and the changes it has introduced. (if needed, interviewer can explain that the current language policy holds Sinhala and Tamil as official languages and English as a link language)
4. In what ways does this language policy influence your day-to-day life?
5. How do you think speakers from different communities are affected by it?
6. Do you think that language policy affects relationships between groups of people?
7. If you were advising a team making language policies, what advice would you give them?
8. Is there anything else you would like me to know or understand?