

Sri Lankan English: A Unique Variety of English as Manifested in Sri Lankan Postcolonial Literary Works

07 Nov.
SSH09

Rashini S. Daluwatte^{1(†)}

¹*Department of Languages, Faculty of Social Sciences and Humanities, Rajarata University of Sri Lanka, Sri Lanka*

(†) E.mail: rashdaluwatte@gmail.com

Sri Lankan English is a unique variety of English that emerged in post-independence Sri Lanka when the standardized variety of British English came into contact with the indigenous languages like Sinhala in the country. Sri Lankan English can be identified as a “new” variety of English which has the capacity to perfectly encapsulate the Sri Lankan experience as opposed to any other variety of English. This study explores the characteristics which makes Sri Lankan English a unique variety of English as manifested in the Sri Lankan postcolonial literature. A theoretical survey of some Sri Lankan postcolonial writers and their English works was conducted in order to underline the unique features of Sri Lankan English: *The Call of the Kirala*, *The Jam Fruit Tree*, “*The Cobra*”, “*The Scorpion*”, “*From the Life of a Folk Poet, Ysinno*” and “*Action and Reaction*” by James Goonewardene, Carl Muller, Lakdasa Wickramasinghe and Chitra Fernando respectively. I incorporated theoretical ideas and concepts like “fulguration”, the idea of Sri Lankan English as a variety of “New Englishes”, the concept of “De-hegemonizing Language Standards” and the idea of Sri Lankan English as “a language without metaphor” presented by renowned linguists like Thiru Kandiah, Arjuna Parakrama, Godfrey Gunatillake, Siromi Fernando and Manique Gunasekara to support my argument. The study revealed that there are morphological, phonological, syntactic and semantic structures that are unique to Sri Lankan English. Furthermore, the idiomatic language, the colloquialisms, code switching and code mixing, direct literal translations, compound words and reduplications that shape the local identity were discovered to be some unique features which makes Sri Lankan English a unique variety of English. Thus, it is conclusive that Sri Lankan English is an exceptional variety of English.

Keywords: Sri Lankan English, unique variety, postcolonial literature, local identity