

SUBSTITUTE *ONE* IN SRI LANKAN ENGLISH

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The way in which habitual speakers of Sri Lankan English use *substitute one* is compared to the ways in which it is used in Standard British and American English as described by Biber et al. (1999). The differences result from speakers of Sri Lankan English (SLE) having broadened the rules of Standard English to accommodate their needs. The rules are in essence the same, but whereas in Standard English *one* always implies an antecedent, this is not always the case in SLE, where the antecedent is generally missing and has to be interpreted using one's own knowledge.

1. Sri Lankan English

One of the features of English that is sometimes realised differently in Sri Lankan English than in Standard British and American English is substitute *one/ones* (Biber et al. 1999:354ff). Halliday and Hasan (1976:91ff) define *substitute one/ones* as presupposing some noun that is to function as head in the nominal group. They note that not all occurrences of *one* are instances of substitution and that apart from functioning as a substitute, *one* can also function as a personal pronoun, as an alternative form of the indefinite article, or as a pronoun. Here, I will only examine the uses of substitute *one* in its function as a pronoun which replaces a noun or noun phrase that has been mentioned or is inferred from the context.

Since Passé's (1948) thesis on 'Ceylon English', which is a pioneering work on Sri Lankan English devoted mainly to the study of Sri Lankan English phonology and idiom, there have been numerous attempts to characterise the distinctiveness of this variety of language in terms of its phonology, morphology and syntax (Gunasekera, 2005, Parakrama 1995). For instance, Gunasekera (2005:132ff) gives the following examples of Sri Lankan English syntax.

Use of tags, equality markers

You don't know no, when they're going to show up
They used to come in a black car, isn't it?
What men, the social no?

Expressions transferred from Sinhala and Tamil

But that's a case of koheeda yannee malle pol, no?

where the tag questions 'no', 'isn't it' and 'men' are used, which are direct translations from Sinhala and Tamil. As a consequence, the formal features of Sri Lankan English seem to be well documented (see Gunasekera 2005). In as early as 1948, Passé observed that some of the translated idiom that characterises Sri Lankan English is 'not only defensible and acceptable' but also essential for effective communication (1955:73). However, despite the research carried out in the 58 years following Passé, it seems little progress has been made toward fully understanding some features of syntax such as the use of substitute *one*. Studies pertaining directly to Sri Lankan English (such as Parakrama 1995; Gunasekera 2005) highlight a number of characteristics of Sri Lankan English and provide solid evidence that it does constitute a distinct variety of English. Case studies of particular varieties of English in the 'outer circle' (Kachru, 1990) reveal similarities between these varieties of English and English in Sri Lanka.

Although different approaches have been used to study the features of New Englishes, what is evident from the syntactic features described in these studies is that, together with the diversity that they show, there is also a considerable degree of commonality. Platt et al. (1984), who survey a wide range of Englishes, identify a number of features common to many of them. At a syntactic level features they identify typically include:

- A tendency not to mark nouns for plural (1984:65);
- Variation in the use of articles: the tendency to use a specific/non-specific system for nouns rather than a definite/indefinite system (1984:65);
- Frequent use of zero copula (1984:78);
- A tendency to omit subject and object pronoun (1984:130);
- A tendency to use invariant tag questions (1984:130);
- Relatively frequent use of pronoun copying (1984:131);
- A tendency to change word order: use of topicalisation and focusing constructions; inversion is avoided in WH questions and YES/NO questions; adverbs such as *already*, *only*, *even* are used sentence finally (1984:131).

While these syntactic features do not constitute a comprehensive list, they do illustrate the kinds of commonalities found in varieties of English (including, in many cases, Sri Lankan English), and they suggest the need to look beyond language interference for explanations in accounting for the structural characteristics of these varieties of English. Gupta (1986, etc) suggests that many of these are found in inner circle varieties too, and that they result from intrinsic areas of difficulty in Standard English. Similarly, Kachru (1990:39ff) mentions a number of features which are similar across varieties of South Asian English and says that speakers of English recognise variation within their standard. This is supported by his (Kachru, 1990:37) study of speakers of English from Indian Universities, where almost 35% claimed that there may be more than one variety of Indian English whereas only 16% thought that Indian English constituted a single variety. I would argue that this would also be true of Sri Lankan English. As Kachru (1990:37) notes, the language function would determine what subvariety or register is used.

In Sri Lanka, as elsewhere, the use of English is highly politicised. Since the democratisation of English, it is no longer the prerogative of a small elite. In fact, it is increasingly used in the public domains by a large number of people who have another language as their best and/or native language. With democratisation, English in Sri Lanka has undergone a process of change, especially in syntax. The pattern of usage of substitute *one* which is discussed in this paper is a feature that is now common in Sri Lankan English speech but that has not been mentioned in the literature. As Gunasekera (2005) illustrates in her book, in order to express key cultural concepts which are not available in English, speakers of Sri Lankan English often resort to processes of borrowing and extension from local languages. As a result, Sri Lankan English contains many words, expressions and syntactic structures that originate in Sinhala and Tamil, one of which is substitute *one*. The changes that have taken place in syntax have given rise to increasing debate as to which Sri Lankan English forms are 'correct' and 'acceptable'. However, this is not an aspect that will be investigated here.

2. Who uses English and when?

English in Sri Lanka exists alongside Sinhala and Tamil. Fernando (1977) has discussed the domains in which the different languages are used in Sri Lanka, and how they are used by different groups of people and to whom, which are helpful in identifying the attitudinal, historical and social aspects of language use among Sri Lankans. There are certain expectations among people as to where, when and to whom different languages should be used. In Sri Lanka English can be found in all domains (for example, education, business, domestic, religion, etc.) and is used by all ethnic groups. Gunasekera (2005:13) notes that 'in Sri Lanka today, most people are quite happy to speak English'. As such, English is also used domestically in many families of all ethnicities and (increasingly) all social classes. However, as Gupta (1998:13) has noted in connection with Singapore, although English is used in many domains, it is hard to pinpoint domains in which it is required, as a person can function in all domains using either Sinhala or Tamil. Although any one language can be used in a particular domain there are certain domains in which language choice will depend on whether those involved in a conversation are proficient in a particular language or not. In other cases considerations such as ethnic solidarity might overcome domain expectations.

Reliable figures for language knowledge in Sri Lanka do not exist. As there are no survey data from Sri Lanka on either knowledge of English or native speaker status, the figure can only be an extrapolation or an educated guess. The only available information is taken from census data gathered since 1953. The data from these censuses are different in several respects, and needs to be critically examined. The 1953 census collected information on mother tongue as well as information on ability to speak specific languages, while in 1981 and 2001 the census data appears to have reduced the amount of bi/multilinguality by asking respondents only for ability to speak, read or write a particular language. It therefore does not take into account the percentage of people speaking more than one language such as Sinhala/English, Tamil/English, Sinhala/Tamil, Sinhala/Tamil/English. The language questions asked in 2001 also present many problems: firstly, the census in 2001 was conducted after a time-lag of 20 years, as the census which was scheduled to be conducted in 1991, was not implemented due to the disturbances in Northern and Eastern parts of the country. Therefore language knowledge in 2001 is based only on data collected from 18 districts and excludes speakers in other parts of the country such as Jaffna, Killinochchi, Mullativu, Mannar, Vavuniya, Trincomalee and Batticaloa. Secondly, the data from 2001 only takes into consideration the language use of those over 10 years or more. Those under 10 are also likely to speak English. Additionally, the data also has an obvious subjective element as they are based on respondents' own evaluation of their ability to speak, read or write a particular language. As such, strictly speaking, the data measures perceived ability than real ability or knowledge in a language. The data also does not measure language use in different domains, such as the economy, which may be more important in planning language use in the country than examining language use in the home.

According to the 1953 Census (see Table 1), 80% of the population spoke only one language. Nearly 60% spoke only Sinhalese and more than 20% spoke only Tamil. English was spoken only by about 0.2% of the population. Both Sinhala and English were spoken only by 4.2% while Tamil and English were spoken by 2.0%.

Language(s) Spoken	Population 3 years of age and over 1953	Population 3 years of age and over 1981	Population 10 years of age and over 1994	Population 10 years of age and over 2001
Sinhalese Only	58.9	70.7	81.9	92.8
Tamil Only	21.6	31.6	12.7	20.2
English Only	0.2	25.0	21	14.4
Sinhala and Tamil	9.9	Not given	4.6	Not given
Sinhala and English	4.2	Not given	19.7	Not given
Tamil and English	2.0	Not given	3.8	Not given
Sinhala, Tamil and English	3.2	5.3	2.7	Not given

Table 1 Percentage distribution of Languages spoken by Sri Lanka population three years of age and over, 1953,1981, population 10 years of age and over1994 (demographic survey) and 2001 (excluding North and East in 1981, 1994 and 2001)
Source: Department of Census and Statistics, Sri Lanka

In 1953 with English being spoken only by about 0.2 of the population, the data from Table 1 suggest that English was the preserve of a small elite group whereas the most recent data from the 2001 census indicate a decrease in the number of speakers which suggest serious problems with the available data. The data from the 2001 census are given only for 18 districts where the Census of Population and Housing was carried out completely and excludes other areas where there may be a considerable number of English speakers who are unaccounted for. Even with this decrease in number, a comparison of data between 1953, 1981 and 1994 suggest how rapidly the English speaking population has grown in the past 50 years. The English speaking population in 1953 consisted of only 0.2 % whereas by 1981 it has increased to an overall total of 25% English speakers. However, since 1981, there has been a decrease in the total percentage speaking English; 21% in the 1994 demographic survey and 14.4% in 2001, which can be attributed to difficulties in enumerating data because of the civil war in the North and Eastern parts of the country. Traditionally, the North of Sri Lanka has had a very high percentage of Sri Lankan Tamils who are literate in English, while the East has had a large number of Tamils, Moors and Portuguese Burghers. If the Tamil population in traditionally Tamil speaking areas were enumerated in the census, it is likely that the percentage of both Tamil and English speakers would be even higher. Likewise, the numbers speaking Sinhala and English show a marked increase from 4.2% in 1953 to 19.7% in 1994. Comparatively, those speaking Tamil and English show only a slight increase from 2.0% to 3.8%. Once again this could be because the statistics given for the 1981 census and the 1994 demographic survey excludes most of the North and East.

Despite the fact that the census data do not give a true picture of English knowledge in Sri Lanka, it is still fairly clear that the use of English has grown immensely. This can be seen whatever perspective or whatever measurements we use to study the growth of English. Those learning English at whatever level of education have increased in large numbers; according to the 1994 demographic survey the percentage of speakers literate in either Sinhala, Tamil or English was an estimated 90.1%, which puts Sri Lanka on par with developed nations; similarly literacy in English has greatly increased. In 2001 the ability to speak English was 14.4% and the

ability to read and write English was slightly higher (17.2%) with males and females demonstrating similar literacy levels: males (18.1%) and females (16.4%) As Gupta (1994) notes 'this trend reflects the extension of education to both sexes and all social groups' after the 1950s. These data show that the general position of English since independence has been that the knowledge of English and the public use of English have spread from a small elite to a wider population. The available data from the 2001 census suggest that since independence in 1948, the use of English, which was previously the preserve of a privileged few, has increased to include a greater proportion of people from different social strata.

3. Habitual user

There are different types of users of Sri Lankan English. The usual classification agreed upon by linguists in Sri Lanka is based on fluency in the language. In Sri Lankan English studies, the term 'habitual speaker' normally refers to a person who uses English as an 'effective first language' (Kandiah 1981). In this paper, I use the term 'habitual speaker' somewhat differently from Kandiah to refer to people who have a fairly high level of fluency in the language, but who do not use English as a first language in the home. The term 'habitual speaker' applies to a particular group of speakers who use English mainly in the public domain. In this sense the term 'habitual speaker' may be seen as equivalent to the term 'Second Language Speaker'. Today, many bilingual speakers in Sri Lanka who have Sinhala or Tamil as an L1 use English in the public domains as a way of gaining access to more lucrative avenues of employment. As a Second Language, English serves both intranational and international purposes. People use English as a Second Language for communication with people outside Sri Lanka. In addition, it is also used in such areas as education, tourism, administration, the domains of family and friendship, and in journalism and entertainment within the country.

4. Sri Lankan English speech

Previous studies on Sri Lankan English (Passé 1948, 1955, Kandiah 1979a, 1979b, 1981, 1996 Parakrama 1995, Gunasekera, 2005) have examined a number of features as distinctive of Sri Lankan English (SLE). These include the use of tag questions, syntactic deletion in question and answer sequences (Kandiah 1996), topicalization, and word order differences from British and/or American Standard English. In this paper, I will examine a feature that has not been studied before. This feature is the use of substitute *one* in Sri Lankan English speech.

The data examined is based on the discourse of 18 habitual users of English who are at different levels on the scale of proficiency. However, it must be noted that all speakers use English in the public domain and are therefore able to use English regardless of where they may be in the scale of proficiency.

5. Methodology

5.1 Informant selection and interviews

The data for the present study was collected through Labovian type interviews with 18 habitual speakers of Sri Lankan English, which attempted to incorporate some of the goals mentioned by Labov. The interviews conducted with these speakers were designed to record one or two hours of speech; to obtain specific information on linguistic structures including substitute *one*; to elicit narrative of personal experiences where speech style is shifted toward the colloquial. These aims meet some of Labov's (1984:31ff) techniques for a reliable sociolinguistic interview. All

interviewees were tour guides who used English in the course of their work escorting foreign tourists around Sri Lanka. All the interviewees said they were educated in government Sinhala medium schools, up to, but in most cases, not beyond GCE Ordinary Level (a government examination taken at the age of 16). This is approximately equivalent to year 10/11 in the UK (GCSE) and tenth grade in the United States in terms of years of study. Platt and Weber (1980) have used educational status as the primary indicator of the range of varieties which a given speaker will have at his or her disposal. They have also pointed out, however, that educational status alone may not always be an accurate indicator of language use, and that occupational status is equally important. Some speakers with Ordinary Level education may work in higher status occupations than their educational level would indicate, and this may, in turn be reflected in their use of English and vice versa. The median level of education for my interviewees was some secondary education, that is, they all had at least some secondary schooling or more with nine interviewees completing the GCE Ordinary Level and five gaining GCE Advanced Level qualifications. Their overall educational attainment consisted of an average of 10 years of formal education.

The interviews were conducted in very relaxed and comfortable surroundings (Herat 2005) although 'the possibility of interlocutor effect is virtually inescapable in the interview context' (Hannah 1997: 349). The occasional presence of laughter during the interview sessions, however, makes it possible to conclude that the informants' behaviour is, at times, 'casual' in Labov's sense. As well as laughter, the interviews contain jokes, a whole range of personal topics, references to social events, money, food, etc.. This suggests that the informants were generally not unduly self-conscious despite being recorded. As a result of the procedures used in gathering data, I feel the analyses have the benefit of being based on data which are as close to conversation as reasonably possible. This methodological advance must increase the validity of the findings in terms of new areas and in replicating aspects of other studies. As Labov (1972:118) states 'the value of new data for confirming and interpreting old data is directly proportional to the difference in the methods used to gather it'.

As the purpose of the interviews was to obtain large bodies of spoken data, a single interview generally lasted about one hour or a little longer. Prior to the interviews I had prepared a list of 25 interview questions (Herat, 2005). However, in an attempt to keep the tone of the interviews informal, I did not follow my printed questionnaire. Instead, I allowed my respondents' interests and work experiences to guide my questions, lingering long over topics that drew them in while passing over ones that seemed to hold little interest for them (Hannah 1997:349). The topics we explored broadly fell into two categories: (1) non-linguistic (work experience, how particular destinations are introduced, how questions are dealt with, family, religious affiliations, etc.), and (2) linguistic (pronunciation, grammar, attitudes to language).

6. One 'eka' in Sinhala

The use of 'one' is interesting as a feature because it is often seen as a feature of Sri Lankan English transferred from Sinhala 'eka' for 'one'. Premawardhena (2003:7) notes that the existing morphological structure of Sinhala has undergone change due to English loan words, particularly, the addition of /eka/ 'one' as a singular marking for the nouns borrowed from English thus causing an extension to the existing singular and plural markings in Spoken Sinhala. In Sinhala the 'eka' form is commonly used with borrowed words from English such as car, bicycle, telephone,

Compatible antecedents in SLE	Common nouns or noun phrase	Pronouns	Proper nouns	Mass nouns	No retrievable antecedent
No of instances used	54	5	2	0	73

Table 2 Antecedents for *one*

Biber et al. (1999) and Halliday and Hasan (1976) observe that *one* can occur in different NP environments such as with demonstratives, possessive determiners and adjectives, and in the following section I will examine the distribution of *one* in SLE in these NP environments.

7.1 Distribution of *one*

Type of <i>one</i>	The no. of times <i>one</i> was used
Modified <i>one/ones</i>	56
Demonstratives	35
Adjectives	16
Possessives	5
Unmodified <i>one/ones</i>	10

Table 3 Distribution of modified and unmodified *one*

As seen from Table 3 modified *one* is more commonly used than unmodified *one*. This could be because *one* can be more freely used with modifiers than without modifiers. In SLE the modifiers that are most commonly used are the demonstrative pronoun *that* and adjectives. Although not on the same scale, these data show some similarities to and differences from those found by Biber et al. (1999:354) for their LSWE corpus. They found that substitute *one* with *that*, as in *that one* is the most common in conversation with a total of 600 occurrences per million words. According to Biber et al. (1999:354) the special significance of substitute *one*, is that it provides a general means of countable reference. In this sense, however, my data differ significantly from Biber et al's data in not providing a countable reference at all. In SLE, when *one* is used with *that* the antecedent is generally not recoverable from the immediate context.

7.2 Types of *one*

Biber et al. (1999:353) further imply a distinction between two types of substitute *one* NPs: those with and without modifiers. In their view, substitute *one/ones* is always accompanied by one of several modifying elements which functions as defining in that particular context. Two constructed examples are given below. Of these, example (5a) is a modified *one* NP, where *one* has the syntactic position of the head of the NP. This type of *one* NP can be contrasted with example (5 b), which is an unmodified *one* NP, where *one* has the syntactic position of a whole NP.

- (5) a. **She wanted a skirt. So I gave her a blue one**
 b. **Phil gave Carol a sandwich because she asked for one**

I do not discuss unmodified *one* in this paper, as its use in the speech of my respondents was the same as is described by Biber et al. Modified *one* on the other hand, is used differently in SLE than in other varieties of colloquial English. For instance, in Singapore Colloquial English, *one* is often used as a nominaliser; if it does not function as a nominaliser, then it is a pragmatic particle. Gupta (1992a:328) concludes that the use of *one* in Singapore English is a syntactic feature arising from the meeting point of the Chinese nominalizer and the Standard English pronominal *one* although not everyone agrees with this conclusion. SLE speakers use *one* somewhat differently, as they tend only to broaden the functions of modified substitute *one*.

a) **Modified *one***

In Sri Lankan English modified substitute *one* NPs can occur freely with other modified NPs. As illustrated in (6), a modified *one* NP and its antecedent can occur in the same clause, and even in the same NP.

- (6) *VM: Sometimes after tours some foreigners give big commission or some small one*

Similarly in Sri Lankan English modified *one* NPs can also be used in utterances such as the following (7), which is ungrammatical in Standard English, where *money* is not an actual noun but a substitute for ‘foreign notes’ which appears to be the antecedent for *local one*. In this context, however, *foreign money* is being treated in the sense of ‘currency’, not ‘notes’ in a physical sense and is the antecedent for *local one*.

- (7) *VM : Personally I don’t care what they give, I +// uh foreign money or local one doesn’t matter*

8. Environments in which modified *one* is realised

a. Demonstratives

As Biber et al. note, *one/ones* is commonly used after demonstrative pronouns such as *this* and *that* even in British and American varieties of English. In these cases, however, the use of *one* with *this one* and *that one* refers to a member of a set of something that has been clearly established as a countable referent or topic in the utterance preceding the one in which substitute *one* is used. For instance, in the example provided by Biber et al. the presence of *one* always relates clearly to the antecedent, but the implication in SLE, as mentioned before, is sometimes significantly different from these examples.

- (8) A: **That picture of a frog, where is it?**
 B: **Yes, yes I was looking at that one just now. What’s the other one down the bottom there**

As we can see, in (8), *that one* implies reference to a countable entity (**picture of a frog**). However, in the following examples (9 and 10) from my data

the antecedent of *that one* is not retrievable from the context and is not clearly marked as a member of a set that has been previously established as a topic.

(9) *ST: Another thing I forgot to tell. I always tell them you know about Sri Lankan women especially the girls [how they are looked after like flowers] and I tell that one.*

(10) *PJ: You know # you know I learned on my own so I read a lot to develop the English and know [how the clients think]. Then contrast that one with our values*

In these examples *one* appears to be used as a slot filler (Gupta1992a:329) since there is no nominal head. For instance, in example (9) and (10) there is no clear antecedent or referent, as in the example provided by Biber et al. (example 8), although as shown, the bracketed clauses *how they are looked after like flowers* and *how the clients think* could be seen as clausal antecedents.

In the case of the plural demonstratives *these* and *those* Biber et al. data suggests that British and American varieties of English are more likely to use ellipsis, although *ones* is occasionally used (6 times with *those* and 13 times with *these*). As with Standard English *ones* is variable in SLE so that speakers have the option of using either the elided form or demonstrative + *ones*.

(11) *AP: In Sri Lanka legend has it [that person who is gone once and not gone once is a fool] and [the person who is gone more than one time also fool]. So those ones I tell.*

As with most other examples previously discussed, the antecedent in (11) is not immediately apparent and could be either of the clauses indicated by square brackets, for example, *that person who is gone once and not gone once is a fool* or *the person who is gone more than one time also fool*. These are the two possible antecedents retrievable from the context. Although 'legend' may also suggest itself as a possible antecedent for 'those ones, since 'legend' is singular but 'those ones' are plural, it is unlikely to be the antecedent. However, here too, *ones* appears to be used as a slot filler for an absent nominal head.

b. Possessives

As with plural demonstratives, with possessives too Sri Lankan English has a choice. Standard English generally requires the ellipsis of *one* when no other pre-modifiers are used with possessive determiners. Although Halliday and Hasan (1976:97) note that in possessive environments substitute *one* can be heard, giving a choice between *mine*, *my one*, *hers*, *her one* and so on, they refer to these examples as 'doubtful cases'. In SLE, the use of *one* with possessive determiners varies between ellipsis and substitution, so that either *ours* or *our one* is possible, as in the following examples:

(12) *LB: I touch on both religions I know. Actually if you look into most other countries probably our one is the only one that gives holidays for all.*

- (13) *ST: We always call them brother and sister, uncle and aunt no that type of thing that we have in our one.*

In the first slot where *one* is used in example (12) either *ours* or *our country* are possible. Instead what is used is *our one*. In the first slot *one* is used as a replacement nominal for the nominal head (*country*) which has been elided, whereas in the second slot *one* substitutes as a head for the complement in which the nominal head is absent. In (13) there is no clear antecedent for *our one* which can be recovered from the context. Therefore, the antecedent has to be interpreted to mean something like ‘the ways of speaking in our culture’. However, since the antecedent is missing, other interpretations may be possible depending on a person’s cultural knowledge.

c. Adjectives

In SLE *one* is very often used with adjectives. Although as in Standard English the use of *one* generally implies an antecedent in this context, the implication in SLE is somewhat different from that of Standard English. In SLE the rule appears to be that objects and complements should if possible be used as NPs and have a head. If there is no head *one* is used as the head, as in the following examples.

- (14) *ST: With the British clients we have to be very careful not to ask two times because they get annoyed then they think this guy horrible one*

- (15) *SL: If you do good things you are okay, if you follow a bad one different story. He gives a choice to find out best one*

- (16) *ST: There are the good and bad products hide that bad one and give only best*

In examples (14) through (16), the antecedents of *one* can be seen as referring to members of a class in which the modifiers determine additional qualities about that particular member.

9. Conclusion

The use of *one* in SLE broadens the functions of Standard English *one*, to enable it to be used in environments in which Standard English would prefer to use ellipsis or would use some other form as in the case of possessive determiners. The rules are in essence the same, but whereas in Standard English *one* always implies an antecedent, this is not always the case in SLE, where the antecedent is generally missing and has to be interpreted using one’s own knowledge.

Extensions of English grammar of this sort are often seen as ‘errors’. The description and analysis of substitute *one* might help to establish this feature along with other features such as *zero article use*, *zero copula*, *tag questions forms*, *pronoun copying*, etc., as systematic and rule governed, as opposed to the common public perception of it as a ‘deviant’ feature of English. This kind of research could contribute albeit in a limited way towards changing public attitudes towards the variety, and make the features more acceptable in the eyes of the public.

Since Sri Lankan English is the variety used by the majority of habitual speakers in informal contexts, it can be seen as one which is of growing social importance, and inherently worthy of study. This study can also offer broader insights into the likely development of English in Sri Lanka. The varieties of English used in

multilingual settings are likely to play an increasingly influential role in the future of English, as a growing proportion of the daily users of the language are people who have another language as their best and/or native language. Sri Lanka offers a microcosm of the global situation, with a small group of native speakers (becoming larger) and larger group of speakers who use English habitually as their ‘other’ language in particular situations, and in increasingly innovative ways. The issues of ‘correctness’, the negative attitudes towards different features, and the valorising of Standard English as an exonormative standard, are issues that affect all users of English in multilingual settings.

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