

Perkumpulan – May 2017

English in Sri Lanka: Pride and Prejudice

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Abstract

The broad aim of this guest lecture is to explore the role of English in Sri Lanka in reconciliation. The talk critically brings to the fore the existing status of English *in* Sri Lanka and *among* Sri Lankans. How English is learnt and taught in classrooms, what attitudes and emotions are associated with English, and whether English leads to social mobility or inequality will be discussed. The presentation draws on a couple of ‘anecdotes of English’ and theoretical assumptions such as ‘linguistic future’ and ‘predatory action of English’ (e.g. David Crystal, 2000, 2001, Jack Richards, 2015 and Graham Hall 2016). The lecture will shed light on the ‘position’ of English in Sri Lanka, and help you understand the obvious realities of English, afresh and anew.

(This paper was originally delivered as the keynote address at the 9th International Conference on "The Role of English and ELT in Reconciliation", of Sri Lanka English Language Teachers Association (SLELTA), on 17th February 2017 at the National Institute of Education, Sri Lanka).



Dr. Chitra Jayathilake is a Senior Lecturer in English in the Department of English, University of Sri Jayewardenepura. Her research interests lie at the intersection of postcolonial literatures, especially postcolonial theatre, English and cultural studies, Psycholinguistics, Second Language Acquisition and Teaching English as a Second Language (TESL). Chitra holds a PhD in English from the University of Keele, United Kingdom, an MA in TESL from the Postgraduate Institute of English of the Open University, an MA in Linguistics from the University of Kelaniya and a BA (Hons) in English from the University of Sri Jayewardenepura, Sri Lanka.

Traversing postcolonial studies, cultural and English studies and theatre, Chitra carried out her PhD research on 'Biopolitics and Postcolonial Theatre'. She was the first candidate to earn an MA from the PGIE and her thesis, broadly on Psycholinguistics, focused on Negative Evidence and classroom interactional feedback. Her two-year research-based MA in Linguistics is within the domains of Sociolinguistics and Bilingualism; the thesis is specifically about code-switching in e-communication.

Date : 30 May 2017

Venue : DELT (Department of English Language Teaching)

Time : 1.00 - 3.00 pm

Attendance compulsory for students following the course

TESL 21544: SLE in the ESL Classroom