An insider perspective on Michael Meyler's codification of Sri Lankan English Vocabulary: Towards a broadening of the standard

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Defined as "the language used by Sri Lankans who choose to use English for whatever purpose in Sri Lanka" (Gunesekera. 2005, P.11), Sri Lankan English is regarded as a newly institutionalized variety of English, with its distinctive phonological, morphological, and syntactic features capable of representing the unique socio-cultural and linguistic circumstances of the Sri Lankan speech community. Language codification is regarded as one of the most significant aspects in the institutionalization process of world Englishes, and *mirisgala.net*; the digitized, extended and an updated, up-to-date version of Michael Meyler's *A Dictionary of Sri Lankan English* (2007), is considered one of the "very first steps" (Mendis, 2007) towards an elaborate codification attempt of Sri Lankan English. Though Meyler himself has highlighted that his dictionary is not intended as a prescriptive work but a descriptive one where his intention was to describe the way in which the English language is used in Sri Lanka, without attempting to make any judgment on whether it is 'correct'" (Meyler, 2007), given that codification attempts are traditionally regarded as an attempt in legitimizing a language variety as the standard, there is the danger that meaning, spelling, and usage of codified lexical items in *mirisgala.net* to be perceived as standard and acceptable usages of Sri Lankan English. This situation is further intensified given the digital nature of the *mirisgala.net* dictionary with increased and flexible knowledge sharing, while allowing the lexicographer to update and upgrade the printed version anytime, "leaving the text malleable" (Earhart, 2012). However, given the codifier's position as an "outsider" (Meyler 2007, p. x), where he essentially lacks comprehensive knowledge on the socio-cultural, political and linguistic facets of the Sri Lankan speech community, the credibility of the codification process is challenged and the inadequacy of insider's perspective on codified Sri Lankan English vocabulary is underscored. Further, given that Meyler's "outsider status" significantly hinders him from acquiring in-depth insights into the English language usage of the "majority "non-elite" average Sri Lankan English speakers", whose English language usage is noticeably influenced by their L1 native language varieties, Meyler's codification attempts display a propensity towards the codification of the language used by the "anglicized Colombo English speaking elite minority" where a noticeable lack of representation of the non-elite variety of the language is observed.