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Sri Lankan English or not? Lexical Choices and Negotiations in Postcolonial Women's Writing in Sri Lanka

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Introduction

Postcolonial studies as well as sociolinguists have long asserted the significance of language in postcolonial societies and the unquestionable power that language has in constructing reality. Both disciplines explore the complex and dynamic relationship between the English of the colonisers and the emerging World Englishes, and the process of adaptation and appropriation (Ashcroft et al. 1989, 1995, 2002) of the language which no longer belongs solely to what postcolonial studies refer to as the "Imperial centre" (Ashcroft et al. 1989, Boehmer 1995), or what World Englishes terms the "Inner Circle" or the "norm-providers" (Kachru 1982). Both disciplines have also acknowledged that the languages of postcolonial societies, whether it is their own indigenous languages or their adaptation of the coloniser's language, offer postcolonial writers a much richer and more appropriate linguistic resource to express their own unique realities than the language of the imperial centre. (New 1978, Ashcroft et al 1995 and 2002, Boehmer 1995). Similarly, in World Englishes studies Kachru (1992) sees the positive and enriching effect of postcolonial adaptation of language which defines a new identity to the postcolonial writer:

Using a non-native language in native-like contexts is like redefining the semantic and semiotic potential of a language, making language mean something which is not part of its traditional “meaning”. [using World Englishes] is an attempt to give a new African or Asian identity, and thus an extra dimension of meaning. ... In purely linguistic terms, it entails developing a meaning system appropriate to new situations and contexts. (Kachru 1992, pp. 316-317)

The empowering potential of varieties of English is celebrated by World Englishes researchers as well as by postcolonial writers themselves. Kachru (1986), using the term “contact literature”, affirms the ability of postcolonial varieties of English to convey the realities of their societies more effectively than Standard English of the Inner Circle, thus affirming the use of Indian, Sri Lankan, Nigerian or Singaporean English in postcolonial writing. Writers such as Rao (1938) and Braithwaite (1984) have asserted the need to adapt English in order to give better expression to what they see as their own postcolonial realities. Thus, the appropriation and adaptation of the language of the coloniser is an act of freedom and a celebration of difference for the postcolonial writer:

The english language becomes a tool with which a world can be textually constructed. The most interesting feature of its use in post colonial literature may be the way in which it also constructs difference, separation and absence from the metropolitan norm. But the ground on which construction is based is an abrogation of the essentialist assumptions of that norm and a dismantling of its imperialist centrism (Ashcroft et al 2002, p. 43).

At the same time, the terms used by postcolonial theorists in the celebration of difference and the assertion of identity suggest a revolutionary approach to language use, as they advocate the destruction of the power of the English of the Imperial Centre in order to appropriate it for postcolonial writing. For instance, English should be “seized and captured” (Ashcroft et al. 2002, p. 37), and “dismantled”, “dislocated” and “dislodged” (Boehmer 1995, pp. 210-211) in order for writers to free the language, and themselves, from a colonial past. Ashcroft et al (2002, p.37) state that this will allow the language to be “fully adapted to the colonized place.... and to new usages”, while Boehmer (1995,

pp. 210 - 211) described the need for writers to “subject English to processes of syntactic and verbal dislocation” by “adopting local idioms and cultural referents”. Their choice of words suggests that the English of the Imperial Centre should be destroyed before the local variety of “english” is adopted and reinstated as the rightful linguistic heir to the authentic expression of the realities of these societies.

Essentialisations

More recent researchers have criticised the essentialisations implicit in these assertions on several grounds. Wright and Hope (2002) problematise the post-colonial theorists’ view of language and language varieties as mutually exclusive and fixed entities, whether they are the English of the centre, the English of the peripheries, or the indigenous languages of the postcolonial societies, stating that this “binary characterisation” is inadequate and misleading in several aspects.

Primarily, they question the implicit assumption of postcolonial theorists that Standard English¹ is synonymous with the “English of the Imperial Centre”, and that World Englishes signify the “peripheral’ postcolonial nations, or the Outer Circle in Kachruvian terms. Thus, they also reject as simplistic the tendency to view the use of Standard English as inherently “colonialist”:

The politicisation of language within post colonial literature has made language a central issue for many writers and critics – but this debate has tended to focus on political / power issues rather than linguistic ones, treating languages as discrete entities (for example, ‘English’ versus ‘Yoruba’) and often assuming that languages which are used to transmit cultures also somehow endorse and embody the value(s) of the cultures they transmit (so ‘English’ is seen as inherently colonialist). (Wright and Hope 2002, pp. 334)

Adopting a linguistic approach to study the use of language in contemporary postcolonial writing, Wright and Hope (2002) argue that this assumption also contradicts the sociolinguistic reality that Standard English is not a geographically definable variety, but a dialectal choice that is available to all speakers of English in the world:

Standard English is a common core of syntactic and lexical features which are shared by all formal varieties of English around the world. It would be simplistic, and Anglocentric, to assume that increased standardisation in [post colonial writing] implied a shift towards the cultural norms associated with England – all developed national Englishes show a continuum of styles which writers and speakers can exploit. (Wright and Hope 2002, pp. 344)

More seriously, the implications of such an essentialisation suggest that it is also an inherently colonialist view. Ashcroft et al (1989) refer to World Englishes as “english”, ascribing a lower-case character to all postcolonial languages in a homogenised view, while the Imperial Centre retains exclusive ownership of the Standard variety as “English”. This is also rejected by Wright and Hope (2002: 346): “Such a binary characterisation of language does not conform to the linguistic facts: it explicitly denies Standard English to ‘the peripheries’, and implicitly ignores the variation which occurs in English at the centre.” Thus, they question the very labels of “Centre” and the “periphery” favoured by the postcolonial theorists such as Ashcroft et al (1989, 2002) and Boehmer (1995).

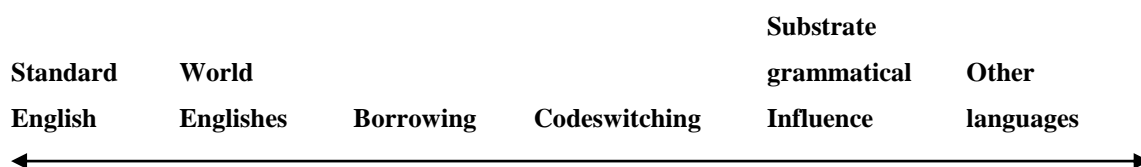
As Wright and Hope (2002) point out, this essentialisation limits the language choices available to the postcolonial writer, as it ignores the influence of indigenous languages on the varieties of English, as well as the access that postcolonial writers have to Standard English. Rejecting this essentialisation, they point out that postcolonial writers from the so-called peripheries have access to, and successfully manipulate, several codes, which include both the Standard English of the Centre, their own varieties of English as well as the indigenous languages of their own countries. This, according to them, allows the

postcolonial writer a much greater choice of languages, or linguistic codes, than in the rejection of Standard English in an attempt to adopt a postcolonial identity in their writing.

Thus, Wright and Hope (2002) argue that the relationship between languages and language varieties available to the postcolonial writer is not an antagonistic one but a continuous one. To them, this relationship is best represented in a dialect continuum, which they present as a more appropriate and useful tool to reflect language use in postcolonial literature.

Speakers and writers of these dialects naturally mix and switch between dialects of English and any dialects of other languages that they know.... ‘Languages’ are in fact behavioural continua, continually merging and out of each other. Multilingual and multi-dialectal post colonial writers have several grammars available to them (corresponding to different dialects, registers, substrate languages), and from these they make choices. These choices can be seen as movements up and down a linguistic continuum characterising the extent of mingling of languages and dialects. (Wright and Hope 2002, pp. 334-335).

For them, this relationship between language varieties is best represented in a dialect continuum, which they present as a more appropriate and useful tool to reflect language use in postcolonial literature:



(Wright and Hope 2002, p. 336)

Elements of Wright and Hope’s (2002) continuum include borrowing and code-switching, and “substrate grammatical influence”, which are features of World Englishes, with Standard English and the writers own language/s at the two extreme points of the continuum.

According to Wright and Hope (2002), postcolonial writers are capable of movement along the continuum in both directions, leading to a continuous interplay of linguistic elements from Standard English, World Englishes and their own indigenous languages, reflecting the diverse and complex possibilities of language in multilingual and multidialectal postcolonial societies.

This continuum is by no means a perfect one. The writers themselves allude to its limitation by problematising their own effort to identify and thereby ‘fix’ the elements in it: “of course the very point about representing this linguistic behaviour as a continuum is that the positions are not discrete.” (Wright and Hope 2002, pp. 334-336).

The elements in the continuum also simplify the often complex lexical and syntactic processes of World Englishes. They could be redefined and expanded to better reflect the diverse features of World Englishes such as SLnE. For example, the term “substrate grammatical influence” is an overgeneralisation based on the interference approach in World Englishes studies, which assumes that all grammatical variation in World Englishes is caused by the interference of grammatical structures of indigenous languages. In the case of Sri Lankan English, this can be easily contested, as all features of SLnE syntax and lexical processes are not caused by the interference of Sinhala and/or Tamil structures. An example of this is the alteration of formulaic idiomatic phrases which do not exist in either local language, as in *a soft corner* (British Standard English *a soft spot*).

The continuum also does not account for other features of World Englishes lexis such as meaning change, when Standard English lexical items acquire a new meaning in SLnE usage. Examples of this process are words like *hotel* (a restaurant in BSE), *boutique* (a grocery shop) and *boy* (a male servant of non-specific age). (Medawattegedera & Devendra 2004, and Meyler 2007).

However, despite its limitations, the continuum effectively demonstrates the inadequacy of the binary “Standard English vs World Englishes” approach to describing World Englishes lexis. More significantly, Wright and Hope’s study (2002) also demonstrates that the choices offered in the very diversity of World Englishes lexis are also underpinned by attitudes to language, which include the human tendency to privilege what is considered the ‘standard’. Their findings on Indian women writers Anjana Appachana and Kamala

Markandaya show that successful writers are able to exploit these attitudes as well as choices offered by Standard English and Indian English in their writing, while also exploiting the assumption that readers will naturally accord values to the text according to the extent of standardisation:

Appachana uses the resources of the Indian English dialect continuum to influence the degree of identification between the reader and her characters, and to imply approval or disapproval of them. We are all strongly conditioned to value more standardised speech and writing over less standardised language, and Appachana makes use of this: the narratorial voice is given authority by its relatively high degree of standardisation, and Mrs Srivastava [a character in the text]'s voice is associated with it. (Wright and Hope 2002, p.344)

Wright and Hope (2002) thus prove convincingly that postcolonial writers' negotiations with their lexical choices are not based merely on an outright rejection of Standard English, or on an unquestioning adoption of their own variety of English. Neither is the writer's own variety her sole means of conveying her postcolonial experiences, nor the sole means to preserve the authenticity of her postcolonial reality. Instead, they demonstrate that linguistic choices made by postcolonial writers display their access to several codes, as well as their understanding of attitudes to these codes, which allow them a greater flexibility to convey the complex realities of postcolonial societies today.

Essentialisation is also evident in the tendency to view varieties of English such as Indian, Sri Lankan, Nigerian or West Indian English as fixed and exclusive entities of the Outer Circle, polarised from the "Standard English" that is often associated only with the Inner circle. As a result many studies often ignore the lexical and syntactic overlaps between varieties, as well as the phonological, lexical and syntactic variation that exists within varieties, causing Kachru to bemoan the "non-recognition of varieties within a variety" (1990, p. 18). Indeed, it is only the more recent descriptions of World Englishes that acknowledge the differences within these varieties, and which have

begun to reveal the complex picture of language variation even within extremely small English speaking communities as those in Singapore (Zhiming & Huaquin 2006) or even in Sri Lanka (Herat 2001).

The notion of standards in World Englishes is a controversial one, and one which particularly affects the written form of World Englishes in postcolonial societies. The negative and dismissive view of World Englishes was epitomised by applied linguists like Randolph Quirk (1990) who rejected them as sub-standard 'learner varieties'. However, recent SLnE studies have dealt with the need to identify a standard Sri Lankan English, which also reveal that such an attempt is a complex one that is influenced by a combination of factors such as attitudes, social class, access to learning, identity and ideology (Parakrama 1995, Gunesequera 2005).

Thus, the assertions made in the Wright and Hope's (2002) work are of significance to the study of postcolonial creative writing in English in Sri Lanka in several ways. It reflects the complexities of language variation as well as the choices offered to the writers writing in English, highlighting the fact that, if necessary, postcolonial writers are able to access the lexicon of their own variety of English, their indigenous languages and Standard English in their writing.

Attitudes to Sri Lankan English in writing

Although both postcolonial studies and World Englishes, either explicitly or implicitly, assert the significance of varieties of English such as SLnE, general perceptions and attitudes to World Englishes by its own users have often been less positive. This is no less apparent in Sri Lankan English. Research shows that by and large, SLnE is still considered non-standard and unacceptable, particularly by members of the urban, English speaking upper middle class in the country (Raheem & Gunesequera 1994, Gunesequera 2005), who often speak English as

a first language. In addition, Medawattegedera and Devendra (2004) found that Sri Lankan teachers of English consider SLnE lexical features unacceptable, particularly in the written form. However, more recent research suggests that Sri Lankans who are not part of the English speaking elite tend to have a more positive attitude towards SLnE (Gunsekera 2005), and demonstrate a preference for SLnE lexical items over those of Standard English (Fernando 2007).

Lexical items and lexis of a language

Lexical items may be defined as individual meaning carrying words or groups of words in a text. They are thus not limited to single words, but also include two-, three- or four-word lexical ‘chunks’ that create a single unit of meaning (Crystal 1980, Halliday 1985). These include phrasal verbs (e.g. *turn up, let down, put up with*), compound words (e.g. *window-cleaner, handbag*), as well as longer ‘strings of words’ such as idioms and idiomatic expressions that carry a single meaning. Thus, *kick the bucket*, the colloquial expression for death, is considered a single lexical item. All these types of lexical items occur in World Englishes like SLnE, as well as in Standard English.

Lexis is the largest and the most dynamic area of a language. The lexicon of a language is perpetually evolving, with new words entering it almost daily, while others die out, or acquire new meaning. It is also complex area of language, particularly of World Englishes, because its use is underpinned by domains of use, and by levels of formality. Closely tied with the use of lexis are notions of standards and norms, and attitudes that determine acceptability.

Several researchers have attempted to codify lexis in World Englishes such as Fiji English (Tent 2001), Ghanaian English (Dako 2001) and Singapore English (Brown 1999) through glosses or dictionaries. The lexis of Indian English, in particular, has been extensively documented, with the first dictionary of Indian English appearing over 150 years ago (Yule and Burnett 1903), in addition to several others in recent years (Nihalani et al 1979, Muttiah 1991, Hankin 2003). In

Sri Lanka, a comprehensive gloss of SLnE lexis was first produced by Gunesequera (2005) comprising 500 lexical items, and a dictionary of Sri Lankan English by Meyler (2007) of over 2500 lexical items. As the largest area of a language is lexis, lexical items can also be assumed to be the feature that is most evident in Sri Lankan literature in English.

Sri Lankan Writing and Sri Lankan English (SLnE)

Since the 1980s, there has been a marked increase in women's writing in English in Sri Lanka, leading to the development of a significant body of contemporary Sri Lankan literature in English. Fiction, and in particular the short story, has arguably been the most popular genre, both among male and female writers.

Significantly, the majority of writers who use English in Sri Lanka, both men and women, are members of the urban upper / upper middle class, either speaking English as a first language, or are predominantly English speaking bilinguals with varied levels of proficiency in Sinhala and/or Tamil, the two main indigenous languages of the country. Thus, most women writing in English in Sri Lanka belong to the group that rejects the validity of SLnE as identified by Gunesequera (2005). The negative attitude demonstrated towards SLnE by the social group to which most Sri Lankan women writers in English belong to will be significant in the study of SLnE in Sri Lankan women's writing.

Another feature that defines Sri Lankan writing in English is that many writers also tend to publish their own work, a result of the lack of an effective publishing industry for writers in English. In the absence of a publisher, the writers themselves undertake all the technical and editorial tasks in the process of printing their work, from typing, copy-editing and proofreading of final prints. This is also significant in the study of their use of language, because without the intervention of an editor, changes to the writer's original text are minimal, with the final product preserving much of her own lexical and stylistic choices.

With the celebration and the assertion of World Englishes in creative writing, several researchers have studied the use of language by Sri Lankan writers (Kandiah 1982, Fernando 1989, Gunesekera 2005). At the same time, Sri Lankan writers have also been criticised for their failure to adequately exploit their own variety of English in their writing (Kandiah 1982). However, despite this much-cited early criticism, no empirical research has been conducted in a systematic or principled way to investigate the extent of SLE usage in Sri Lankan writing to date. As such, there is no study that presents evidence of the frequency of use of SLE lexis in Sri Lankan fiction, particularly in the context of a greater acceptance of features of World Englishes in contemporary postcolonial fiction (see, however, Canagarajah (1994) and his analysis of SLE in four Sri Lankan poets). The basis of the current research is this absence.

Early women writers' use of SLE lexis

A reading of early Sri Lankan short stories by women writers reveals a limited use of SLE and a general preference for a formal, literary style more closely associated with Standard English. This is evident in Punyakante Wijenaike's short story "The Tree Spirit" written in 1963:

The river flowed on its slow, sluggish course. The tree stood proudly holding its head in above the shorter vegetation. The four men flung themselves down beside a thick bush and waited hidden in its shade. Soon the three women were visible walking alongside the fields, their bodies outlined beneath the loose bathing attire. (Wijenaike 1993c, p. 14).

In this passage, the lexical choices made by the writer to describe a rural Sri Lankan setting show conformity to universally acceptable Standard English, and an avoidance of the use of SLE terms. Instead of the SLE *diya redda*, the writer has coined a Standard English approximation – "the loose bathing attire" -- to describe the cloth traditionally worn by women for bathing (Meyler 2007, p. 77). This is evident in other short stories as well, when she uses a Standard English translation or approximation over the SLE term: *offering*

ceremony for *pooja* in “The Retreat”, (Wijenaikē 1992a: 1), and *hoe* for *mamoty* in “The River” (Wijenaikē 1996: 6).

In the extract above, the writer has also avoided naming “the river”, “the tree”, “the vegetation” and the “thick bush”, choosing generalised, hyponymic terms instead of specific SLnE lexical borrowings from indigenous languages. In particular, the writer avoids naming the tree in much of the short story, even though the specific genus of tree, its appearance and its fruit (a goraka) are central to the events of the story. Thus, the writer resorts to avoidance of SLnE through lexical generalisation when specificity requires the use of a SLnE transfer, here, in this case, from the Sinhala.

Such strategies of avoidance are also seen in the work of Vijita Fernando, another Sri Lankan writer. Fernando also appears to prefer Standard English equivalents of SLnE, particularly in the use of SLnE kinship terms, a very fertile area of World Englishes lexis exploited by many contemporary postcolonial writers. In her short story “Wedding in the Family” (1990), her characters address their parents as “*father*” instead of *thaththa* (p.20), *mother* instead of *Amma* and refer to an older brother as *big brother* instead of *aiya* (p. 22), conveying a tone of formality that is possibly unintended by the writer.

Such avoidance suggests a lack of confidence and an uncertainty in Sri Lankan women writers’ use SLnE lexical items in their work. This lack of confidence is also found in among speakers of English in Sri Lanka in recent sociolinguistic studies on Sri Lankan users’ attitudes to their own variety. These studies have revealed a tendency to revert to Standard English lexis in writing (Gunsekera 2005), and a rejection of SLnE lexical items particularly in the written form (Medawattegedera and Devendra 2004).

However, given the increasing popularity of using lexical items of World Englishes in contemporary postcolonial writing, writers such as Ameena Hussein, Anthea Senaratne and Sunethra Rajakarunanayake

who represent Sri Lankan women writers in the 21st century could be assumed to be more confident in the use of SLnE lexis in their work. It could then be also assumed that they choose from a wider range of lexical classifications than writers like Wijenaikē and Fernando, and that their writing reflects the range of possibilities illustrated in Wright and Hope's (2002) dialect continuum. Finally, it could also be argued that the SLnE in their writing extends beyond word-level lexical choices to a more extensive use of phrase-level syntactic transfers of local idiom and to code switching, reflecting the possibilities of the dialect continuum.

Research Questions

Based on the discussion and the assumptions above, this paper sets out to seek answers to the following questions:

1. Can a development in the use of SLnE be traced from early women's writing in the 1960s and the 1970s to the present?
2. To what extent do SL women writers use SLnE lexical features in their writing, as reflected in Wright and Hope's continuum of language use?

Methodology

The texts selected for study include five short stories by Punyakante Wijenaikē written between 1963 and 1979, and five stories from Ameena Hussein, Sunethra Rajakarunanayake and Anthea Senaratne, all of which were published after the year 2000. Wijenaikē's short stories were selected to represent early writing, and as such, these short stories will provide a point of comparison to assess the use of SLnE in the later writers. The texts and their years of publication used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1

Punyakante	The Harvest (1963)	Anthea Senaratne (AS)	Two Pieces of Chicken
Wijenaik (PW)	The Visitor (1963)	<i>The Mango Tree</i>	Aftermath
	The Tree Spirit (1963)	2007	Moments in Time
	Retreat (1979)		Better Half
	The Hut (1979)		New Shoes
Ameena	An Ordinary Death	Sunethra	Sambol
Hussein (AH)	Muslim on the Periphery	Rajakarunanayake (SR)	The House on the Bridge
<i>Zillij</i>	The Glass Block	<i>Sambol+</i>	Sound of Raban
2003	The White Girl	2005	The Second Wife
	The Immigrant		The Veda Uncle

All four writers are residents of Sri Lanka, unlike the better known expatriate Sri Lankan writers like Michael Ondaatje, Romesh Gunasekera and Shyam Selvadurai. Whether they are set in rural Sri Lanka or in an urban or suburban setting, all these stories capture some aspect of the socio-cultural reality of postcolonial Sri Lanka. They also depend on a realistic narrative of events, and in this, their aim appears to be to create sociocultural as well as linguistic verisimilitude, reflecting a common feature in contemporary Sri Lankan writing.

This study employs an approach that combines stylistics and corpus linguistics to examine the use of SLnE lexis in these short stories. Stylistics, or the systematic study of recurring linguistic features in the analysis of literature, has been identified as a more impartial and quantifiable approach to analyse language use in literary texts (Crystal 1980). Corpus linguistics allows researchers to more accurately identify patterns and frequencies of lexis in texts by using corpus software.

The word counts and lexical classifications in this preliminary study, however, have been done manually, as access to electronic copies of the texts was not available. As such, there is a margin of human error in

all the figures presented in the tables in the Findings section. Using corpus software would have naturally allowed greater accuracy in investigating collocations and frequencies of SLnE lexis.

This paper will use the term “Standard English” in its sociolinguistic sense, i.e., as a neutral term that refers to the universal variety of English “with a common core of syntactic and lexical features [...] shared by all formal varieties of English around the world,” (Wright and Hope 2002, p.344) in its analysis of the texts by Sri Lankan writers.

The identification of SLnE lexis is based on my intuition as a speaker of Sri Lankan English, and on a dictionary of Sri Lankan English (Meyler 2007). After identifying and listing SLnE lexical items in each text selected for study, I analysed the extent to which these lexical items have been used by each writer, as well as in each short story. Finally, the lexical items were classified according to broad areas of meaning such as “food and edibles”, “clothing and ornaments” and “religious and cultural practices” based on the patterns of usage that emerged. The SLnE lexis selected for study in this paper were coinages, loan words, transfers or blends of single lexical items or multi-word units of two, three or four words such as compound words, phrasal verbs or idiomatic expressions.

The word counts were based on the number of different SLnE lexical items that appear in each short story (see annexe 1 for wordlists). As the length of short stories varied quite considerably in the four writers, the average of SLnE lexical items per short story was then calculated by dividing it by the total number of words per short story. Next, the average use of SLnE lexis by each writer was then calculated using total word counts of all five short stories.

Findings

The main findings of the lexical analysis of the four writers are presented in this section of the paper under the subheadings 1-3:

1. The number of SLnE lexical items used by the four writers

The initial results of the number of SLnE lexical items in each short story, and the total number of SLnE lexical items used by each writer are presented in the Table 2::

Table 2

	Short story (SS)	Word Counts per short story	Total word count	No of SLnE lexical items in each SS	Average no. of SLnE in each SS	Total SLnE lexis*	Average use of SLnE lexical items
Punyakante Wijenaik	The Harvest (1963)	4550	19474	14	0.31	78*	0.40
	The Visitor (1963)	4396		15	0.34		
	The Tree Spirit (1963)	2268		14	0.62		
	Retreat (1979)	4312		30	0.70		
	The Hut (1979)	3948		9	0.23		
Anthea Senaratne	Two Pieces of Chicken	2002	12683	14	0.70	57*	0.449
	Aftermath	4169		14	0.34		
	Moments in Time	1540		6	0.39		
	Better Half	2123		10	0.47		
	New Shoes	2849		19	0.67		
Ameena Hussein	An Ordinary Death	1070	16620	17	1.59	87*	0.52
	Muslim on the Periphery	4300		18	0.42		
	The Glass Block	2800		18	0.64		
	The White Girl	4960		16	0.32		
	The Immigrant	3490		16	0.46		
Sunethra Rajakarunanayake	Sambol	3146	22858	45	1.43	254*	1.11
	The House on the Bridge	6908		72	1.04		
	Sound of Raban	583		13	2.23		
	The Second Wife	9460		99	1.05		
	The Veda Uncle	2761		60	2.17		

*The total number of SLnE lexical items per each writer is less here than in Column 5 as repetitions were eliminated.

The table shows that there is a much variation in the number of SLnE lexical items used by the writers, with Rajakarunanayake's total, at 254, much higher than that of Wijenaik, Hussein and Senaratne. The average number of SLnE lexical items per short story indicated in the last column of the table shows that Rajakarunanayake, at 1.1%, uses more than double the number of SLnE lexical items than both Senaratne and Hussein, and nearly three times more than Wijenaik.

The table also demonstrates that the length of the short stories of each writer varies widely. Senaratne’s short stories contrast with the length most of those of Rajakarunanayake, with the total number of words in Senaratne’s texts at 12,683, and Rajakarunanayake’s total word count at 22,858, which is a difference of over 10,000 words between the two writers. The stories of Wijenaik and Hussein, with word counts of 19,474 and 16,620 respectively, also show a difference, although less significant, of over 2,500 words.

This table also shows that there is variation in the use of SLE lexical items in each short story, as indicated by the figures in Columns 5 and 6. There is least variation in the five stories of Senaratne (0.34% – 0.70%), with Wijenaik showing slightly greater variation (0.23% – 0.7%). However, there is much greater variation in the short stories of Hussein (0.23% – 1.59%) and Rajakarunanayake (1.04% – 2.1%). The greatest variation is found in Hussein, whose short story “An Ordinary Death” yielded 1.59% SLE lexical items, whereas “The White Girl” records only 0.23%. These numbers suggest that the content of the stories determines the use of SLE lexis.

2. Types of SLE lexis used by the four writers

The classifications of SLE lexical items used in the 20 texts of the four writers are presented in the table below. This table includes the number of words used by each writer under each classification.

Table 3

		Number of words used by each writer				
		PW	AS	AH	SR*	Total
	Lexical classifications					
1	Food and edibles (condiments, fruits, vegetables, leaves, medicines)	15	13	25	83	136
2	Clothing and ornaments	10	2	9	7	28
3	Kinship terms, endearments and insults	6	10	7	18	41
4	Titles, professions, terms of address,	9	6	6	37	58
5	Household items, furniture, buildings, spaces, vehicles	15	15	8	45	83

6	cultural / religious festivals, concepts, clergy	14	1	14	14	43
7	Admin, political, educational terms	0	1	2	12	15
8	birds animals, trees, plants	3	5	0	11	19
9	expressions, coinages, idioms	4	6	9	25	44
10	Exclamations	2	0	0	7	9
11	Onomatopoeia	1	1	0	0	2
12	Code switching	0	0	1	20	21
	TOTAL words					499

This table shows that the four writers access a range of different lexical items from at least ten semantic areas in their writing, such as food and edibles, clothing and ornaments, kinship terms, terms of endearment, insults, titles, professions, terms of address, household items, furniture, buildings, spaces, vehicles, cultural and religious festivals, concepts and clergy, words from administration, education and politics, fauna and flora.

The greatest number of SLE lexis used by the writers belongs to the category of “food and edibles”. This number is highest in three writers, with only Senaratne recording a higher use of the classification, “Household items, furniture etc.” in her short stories. There is nearly twice as many lexical items to do with ‘food and edibles’ than those of ‘household items and furniture etc’, which records the second highest use of SLE lexis. Both Wijenaik and Senaratne record their highest use in household items and furniture (n.b. Wijenaik records the highest use of both categories in her short stories). The third highest use is in the fourth classification, “titles, professions and terms of address”, which however, at a total of 58 uses in the four writers, is less than a third of the lexical items to do with food and edibles. This is followed by expressions, coinages and idioms (category 9) and by cultural and religious concepts and festivals (category 6), which at a total of 44 and 43 lexical items, show a similar number of uses in the four writers.

3. The continuum

In terms of the elements identified by Wright and Hope (2002) in their continuum, the findings show that borrowings, or loan words from Sinhala and Tamil, the indigenous languages, form a dominant part of the SLE lexical items used by all four writers in their texts (See annexe 1).

Syntactic transfers, or “substrate grammatical influence”, are also evident in the texts, seen predominantly in the tendency to create compound words. In addition to the codified SLE terms such as *country rice*, *jam bottle*, *flower vase* and *batchmate*, the writers also create their own compounds of two, three and even four lexical items such as *street sweeping woman*, *white sand rice*, *out-of-caste marriage*, *Burgher engine driver mahattaya* and *gem mine accident*.

Substrate grammatical influence is also seen in the transfer of Sinhala expressions and idioms such as *no medicine for foolishness*, *can even eat salt and rice* and *what and what things have happened here?*, all used by Rajakarunanayake. The first two expressions are examples of ellipsis, and the third of duplication, which are frequently found in informal SLE speech as well as in local languages.

In addition, in the use of exclamations (e.g. *Made deiyo!* *Budu Mahattayo!*) and onomatopoeia (*sara... sara....*) from Sinhala, the writers show movement towards the right side of the continuum (see page 5), where it reflects code switching into Sinhala.

There is a much higher degree of code switching in Rajakarunanayake than in any other writer: *kolamba mahaththaya*, *ejantha hamuduruwo*, *budu mahaththayo*, *bath koora*, *Punchi rajjuruwo*, *savandar*, *iskole lamaya*, *kiri baba*, and exclamations such as *mage deiyo!* and *Deiyo saakki!*

There is also an extensive use of kinship terms in Rajakarunanayake, which extends beyond the commonly used terms that refer to close family members such as *amma* and *thatha* which are used by all four writers. Rajakarunanayake uses *appachchi*, *aththamma*, *balamma*, *ralahami bappé*, *vathu bappé*, as well as *veda mama*, *veda atha*, *Dayawathi Nanda*, *Nirmala akka*, which reflect the extended family as well as the traditional forms of address

to non-related acquaintances based on Sinhala/Tamil kinship terms.

At the same time, there is also much evidence of avoidance in Rajakarunanayake, recalling Wijenaikē in her early writing, when she uses Standard English equivalents instead of borrowings from Sinhala or Tamil. Some of these transfers are codified and widely accepted SLnE terms, such as *coconut scraper* and *milk rice*, while the others are of the writer's own innovation: *herbal porridge*, *herbal decoction/herbal mixture*, *wooden mortar and pestle*, *stone grinder*, *honey bangles*, and *woven coconut branches* instead of *kola kenda*, *peyava/kasaaya*, *vangediya* and *molgaha*, *mirisgala*, *peni valalu* or *pol athu* respectively.

Discussion

The findings show that overall, there is an increase in the use of SLnE lexical items in the three contemporary writers when compared with the early stories of Wijenaikē. However, the increase is not very significant in the case of Senaratne's writing, though slightly greater in the short stories of Hussein. The increase in SLnE lexis is most significant in the case of Rajakarunanayake, who uses nearly three times more SLnE lexis in her writing than in the early writing of Wijenaikē.

The high use of SLnE lexis in Rajakarunanayake's stories makes the oral quality of her narrative, or the author's spoken voice, strong in her stories. This is seen to a lesser extent in the stories of Senaratne and Hussein, and seen least in Wijenaikē's stories, where the narrative maintains a formal literary register of Standard English.

Overall, however, the findings reveal that all four writers use a significantly small amount of SLnE lexical items in their writing. Even Rajakarunanayake's use of 1.11% words means that nearly 99% of her lexical choices are made from non-SLnE sources. The three other writers' use of SLnE falls below 0.6% of their total word choice, which indicates an even smaller use.

Although the writers record a very limited use of different SLnE lexical

items, in some of the texts, certain SLE terms appear very frequently. For example, although Senaratne records a limited use of SLE lexis overall, in “Aftermath”, a story about an injured soldier, the lexical item *putha*, the kinship term a mother uses to address a son, appears eight times. In Rajakarunanayake’s “Sambol”, the lexical item *pol sambol* occurs 13 times, which is to be expected as the *pol sambol* is a central trope in the story employed to convey the writer’s homesickness and nostalgia. All these lexical items are accorded a single count in this study, as the focus is on types rather than tokens.

Among the diverse classifications of SLE lexical items in the texts selected for study, it is clear that the lexicon of food, one of the most ubiquitous signifiers of cultural difference in literary texts as well as in everyday usage, is the most widely used type of lexis by the majority of the writers. In contrast, lexical items associated with religious and cultural concepts, and clothing and ornaments, which are also commonly used signifiers of culture, are used far less frequently. This suggests that the four writers primarily depend on references to food and edibles to convey aspects of their postcolonial reality in their writing.

The Wright and Hope continuum of language use (2002), as discussed in the Introduction to this paper, reflects the use of World Englishes in the writing of the four postcolonial women writers in this study. The lexical classification in Table 4 corresponds with this continuum in the use of language by the four writers, where all four writers show a degree of movement along the continuum. The greater degree of movement along the continuum as well as the greater number of SLE lexical items found in Rajakarunanayake’s texts indicate a more extensive use of the possibilities of language choice available to the postcolonial writer. Her use of SLE reveals an extended use of Sri Lankan English lexis, even a departure from the more widely accepted SLE terms that have gained currency in other texts types such as newspapers. As listed in the Findings section, this includes examples not only of word-level borrowings as seen in the other three writers, but phrase level borrowings, phrase-level transfers of Sinhala idioms, and extensive compounding. Thus, overall, the

writer's ability to extend her lexical choices beyond the codified and the accepted has led to a higher degree of linguistic variation than in the other four writers.

Conclusion

The findings of this study show that contemporary Sri Lankan women writers do not use a significant amount of SLnE lexis in their writing. Even the texts of Rajakarunanayake, which revealed the highest use of SLnE lexis, contain less than 2% of SLnE lexis. The overall low use of SLnE lexis by the four writers suggests that Sri Lankan women writers do not depend on an extensive use of SLnE lexical items to convey aspects of the postcolonial reality of Sri Lanka. Thus, the findings of this study indicate that it is possible for those who write about uniquely Sri Lankan socio-cultural realities to do so effectively using lexical and syntactic choices that are closer to Standard English than to SLnE. The findings also suggest that a greater use of SLnE lexis does not necessarily mean a greater ability to convey the complexities of postcolonial Sri Lanka.

However, despite the limited use of SLnE lexical items, the study also reveals that there is much variation in the use of SLnE lexis by all four writers in the different types of lexical items as well as in the movement along the Wright and Hope continuum.

Therefore the writers lend credence to the contention (Wright and Hope 2002) that it is simplistic and Anglocentric to assume that an increased use of SLnE indicates a greater ability to convey postcolonial realities, and an assertion of postcolonial identity, and that the more extensive use of Standard English lexis indicates a slavish conformity to the variety of the Imperial Centre. Instead, the findings shed some light on the extent of lexical overlaps between Standard English and Sri Lankan English, further proving Wright and Hope's suggestion that the boundaries between what is considered SLnE and Standard English are not fixed, nor are they mutually exclusive units of language varieties. The boundaries are at best blurred, with many

overlaps and similarities within them, which defy classification in binary terms of SLE vs. Standard English.

At the same time, in the context of postcolonial societies and the uncertainty with which the users of World Englishes regard their own varieties, an increased use of SLE lexis in one's own writing would indicate greater confidence in one's own voice as a speaker of SLE, as well as the confidence of a creative writer to access and exploit the diverse linguistic choices available to her. In this study, this is best exemplified by Rajakarunayake, who, in comparison with Wijenaike, Senaratne and Hussein, appears to be much more at ease with all the linguistic codes available to her, whether they are her own indigenous language/s, Standard English or Sri Lankan English, and is aware of them as a resource for her creative expression.

The reasons for Rajakarunayake's greater willingness to make more extensive lexical choices in SLE may be found in her linguistic and creative writing background, both of which contrast with that of the other three writers. Among the four writers, she is the only one who is not a member of the urban, Colombo based English speaking upper middle class, the group to which most women writing in English belong, and which is also the group that has been identified as having negative attitudes towards SLE. Rajakarunayake is also the only bilingual writer among the four writers who writes chiefly in her first language, Sinhala. She is a highly successful novelist and short story writer in Sinhala, with an established reputation among the local Sinhala reading public.

Thus, the findings of this study support Gunsekera's assertion (2005) that SLE speakers who are not part of the Colombo-based urban upper middle class have a more positive attitude towards using SLE. Furthermore, a greater degree of bilinguality – i.e., using two languages extensively in several domains – may contribute to a greater willingness to make bolder linguistic choices from varied sources. Finally, this study also suggests that such a willingness is a result of the

confidence that is greater in a more successful and established writer.

In comparison with other postcolonial writers, especially migrant writers of the South Asian diaspora like Michael Ondaatje, Romesh Gunasekera and Salman Rushdie, the four writers of this study are significantly different in their use of language. They do not attempt to subject the variety that they speak to ‘dislocations’ and experimentations. The SLnE that they choose to use in their writing is close to their own natural codes of speech and writing, which convey realities of their postcolonial experience in a style that is free of artifice and embellishment. The “chutnification” of language that was characterised by writers like Salman Rushdie, which was largely based on deliberate experimentation with features of World Englishes, is rejected as a stylistic device by the four writers. For them, their own, natural code, a result of their access to SLnE, their indigenous languages as well as to Standard English, is clearly adequate for the realistic narrative of their postcolonial experience.

Directions for further study

The conclusions in this paper are presented with some caution because of the ongoing nature of this study. This section attempts to detail some areas for further investigation in this topic of research.

The frequency of SLnE use in the writers naturally needs to be investigated further in order to make more concrete the initial finding that the repeated use of SLnE lexical items contribute to creating a richer texture of SLnE in a short story. The study so far sheds initial light on the frequencies of SLnE lexical choices, and the initial assumption on the effect caused by the frequent repetition of lexical items in a text needs to be investigated more comprehensively. For this, each of the 20 texts could be analysed for frequencies using corpus linguistics software.

Preliminary findings on how women writers use SLnE may be confirmed further by creating a more comprehensive language

profile of each writer, for example, on their choice of language for day-to-day use, the domains of use and the level of each writer's bilinguality. Interviews of writers will also reveal more information on how and why writers make their lexical choices in their writing.

This study of SLE lexis also sheds some light on the wider issues of making lexical choices in women's writing. The process of making these choices is not an isolated one that allows a highly personal and unencumbered engagement between the word and the writer's lexical preferences. It is influenced by several concerns that can affect this choice in varying degrees, the most significant one being the reader and the need to create reader-oriented texts. This in turn is predicated upon by the demands of sales and marketing. Most Sri Lankan writing in English is published locally and individually, but the market for these texts is not made up of a homogenous group of similarly lexically aware readers, but of diverse readership, among which the levels of awareness and acceptance of SLE, and most significantly, attitudes to the variety will vary widely. As much as there is room for creative lexical experimentation in postcolonial languages, lexical choices, the eternal questions of acceptance and intelligibility, naturally constrain the choices available to writers. Further research is needed to ascertain the extent of the influence of these factors on their use of SLE lexis.

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Annex 1. List of SLnE lexical items used by the four writers

1)Punyakante Wijenaikē

1	achchi amma	41	old relation
2	Acolyte	42	Ordained
3	Aiyo	43	Pali
4	Akka	44	<i>Panere</i>
5	Aramaya	45	pirith ceremony
6	Armchair	46	plate of rice
7	auspicious day	47	Pooja
8	Avase	48	Poya day
9	Bahirava	49	prepare [tea]
10	Banian	50	Priest
11	Betel	52	relation
12	betel juice	53	retreat
13	Boarder	54	rice
14	bodhi tree	55	sacred city
15	Bungalow	56	sambur
16	camboy (cloth)	57	sara...sara...sara...
17	chewing betel	58	saree
18	cloth and banian	59	senile flightiness can vault even over a house top
19	cloth and jacket	60	she is forever smiling
20	Compound	61	sil
21	curd and honey	62	spittoon
22	devatava ' '	63	stanza
23	fully satisfied	64	string hoppers
24	Gods	65	superintendent mahatmaya
25	Goraka	66	suvaminwase
26	Goraka tree	67	sweetmeats
27	Hoppers	68	temple
28	husband and wife (no articles)	69	thambili
29	image house	70	the boy (male servant)
30	Jacket	71	the estate
31	jak pita mak pita pita	72	tie charms
32	kala gediya	73	tree spirit
33	Kasippu	74	Vas season
34	Konde	75	veddah
35	Loincloth	76	vihare
36	loku seeya	77	yellow rice
37	Mat	78	yellow robe
38	Monks		
39	mosquito net		
40	Mulligatawny		

2)Anthea Senaratne

1	<i>Aiyo</i>	45	Prema aunty
2	Akka	46	Putha
3	<i>amma</i> , amma	47	<i>roti</i> , <i>rotti</i>
4	araliya tree	51	sixth in the whole Island
5	back garden	52	slippers
6	back verandah	53	sweep [the garden]
7	Banian	54	thaththa
8	<i>Bankuwa</i>	55	the buggers
9	biscuit packet	56	three wheeler
10	bloody weird	57	you'll
11	bo tree		
12	chiri chiri sound		
13	cool drinks		
14	damn fuss		
15	Dimiyas		
16	flamboyant trees		
17	front verandah		
18	<i>gamay'</i> ' relatives		
19	Grade five scholarship exam		
20	<i>haansi puttuwa</i>		
21	Honey suckers		
22	identity cards		
23	<i>Kade</i>		
24	<i>Kade</i>		
25	Kaludodol		
26	Kevum		
27	Kokis		
28	koli kuttus		
29	Lady		
30	lanterns [vesak]		
31	loku akka		
32	<i>lunumiris</i> , lunumiris		
33	<i>Machang</i>		
34	magpie-robin		
35	<i>Malla</i>		
36	Malli		
37	mango chutney		
38	Mat		
39	Missy		
40	<i>Mudalali</i>		
41	<i>Mulla</i>		
42	<i>Nangi</i>		
43	no? (tag q)		
44	oil lamp		
48	Sambol		
49	scrape [coconut]		
50	<i>siri siri</i> bag		

3) Ameena Hussein

1	<i>Amma</i>	45	pariah dog
2	baby (codeswitch)	46	<i>Pathola</i>
3	Banyan	47	<i>Penuma</i>
4	<i>Belli</i>	48	pol sambol
5	Bharata Natyam	49	<i>Poruwa</i>
6	<i>Brinjal</i>	50	Pottu
7	<i>buth</i> packet	51	pottu
8	can't. (single word response)	52	previous birth
9	Cease	53	raja uncle
10	Celltell	54	Ramadan
11	custard apple	55	red rice
12	Dada	56	rice and curry
13	<i>Dhal</i>	57	<i>sari pota</i>
14	domestic (n)	58	sarong
15	<i>dumbara</i> wall hanging	59	scold
16	egg curry	60	shalwar
17	Fellows	61	shalwar kameez
18	full suit	62	slippers
19	<i>Gona</i>	63	slowly slowly
20	<i>gotukola sambol</i>	64	so much of
21	Hajj	65	soursop
22	<i>Hoppers</i>	66	string hoppers
23	<i>Iddlis</i>	67	<i>sudda</i>
24	<i>jumbo</i>	68	<i>suddi</i>
25	jumma prayers	69	<i>swabasha</i>
26	<i>Keera</i>	70	tamasha
27	Lakhs	71	<i>tasbih</i>
28	Loafing	72	tea ammes
29	looked (as if) straight from the village	73	teledramas
30	<i>lunu miris</i>	74	<i>Thala Fathiha</i>
31	Mahattaya	75	<i>thalanabatu</i>
32	<i>Mallung</i>	76	<i>thosai</i>
33	<i>Manavare</i>	77	those days
34	Mangosteen	78	three wheeler (1)
35	market woman	79	thuggery
36	Marketing	80	trishaw (12)
37	<i>Meher</i>	81	<i>Ummah</i>
38	mother seated at the d- table	82	uncle (nonrel)
39	<i>Mowlood</i>	83	<i>vaddai</i>
40	Mudliyar	84	visa-standers
41	<i>Mukuthu</i>	85	watte
42	<i>Mureed</i>	86	what to do
43	Papaw	87	woodapple
44	<i>parangi maama</i>	88	<i>zikr</i>

4) Sunethra Rajakarunayake

1	a big job (important job)	44	campus roommate
2	a drama	45	caste problem
3	advanced level	46	children's picture book
4	Affair	47	Chunam
5	Akka	48	chuti menike
6	Almsgiving	49	clay pot of water
7	Aluwa	51	cloth and jacket
8	ambul thiyal fish	52	cocnut milk
9	Amma, amma	53	cocnut sambol
10	Ammi	54	coconut fronds
11	Anamalu	55	coconut leaves
12	ancestral home	56	coconut milk curry
13	ancestral house	57	coconut oil
14	Ane	58	coconut sambol
15	Appachchi	59	coconut scraper
16	Appuhami	60	coconut shell
17	Aththamma	61	coconut shell spoon
18	Attendant	62	coconut trees
19	ayurvedic drugs	63	Colombo people
20	Ayurvedic Health Centre	64	comb of bananas
21	Balamma	65	compound
22	banana bunch	66	condensed milk can (tr)
23	Banian	67	cook woman
24	batch mate	68	cooling food
25	bath koora	69	country rice
26	Beedi	70	curd
27	Betel	71	curd and treacle
28	betel chewing	72	curry powders
29	betel leaves	73	cutlets
30	betel tray	74	cycle (n)
31	big 'nona'	75	dahati
32	bites (with toddy)	76	daily help (n)
33	black pol sambol	77	dayawathi nanda
34	bo tree	78	deiyo saakki
35	boarded in a big school	79	devil dancer
36	Boarder	80	dhoby man
37	boarding house	81	District Medical Officer
38	bombu branch	82	District Revenue officer
39	bombu stick toothbrush	83	dried tuna (maldive) fish
40	Breadfruit	84	dry fish curry
41	budu mahaththayo!	85	Dry Zone
42	Burgher engine driver mahattaya	86	dry-fish
43	bush shirt		

87	dry-zone villages	133	jathaka stories
88	Eakel broom	134	jumbo
89	easy chair	135	Junction
90	eight distinctions	136	Kachcheri
91	Ejantha Hamuduruwo	137	kade (or grocery store)
92	elder child	138	kadju nuts
93	eldest sister	139	Kandyan drape
94	even eat salt and rice	140	katta sambol
95	family function	141	king coconut
96	family members	142	Kiosk
97	Fish vendor	143	kiri baba
98	flood relief	144	kiri bath
99	flower vase	145	kithul tree
100	food parcels	146	kolamba mahaththaya
101	friendly with (romantically incl. with)	147	Kudichchiya
102	Gabriel Aiya	148	kumbuk tree
103	gem business	149	lime pickle
104	gem mine accident	150	Loku akka
105	gem pit	151	kola kenda
106	give a call	152	loku mahaththaya
107	God Saman's temple	153	machang
108	good proposal	154	mage deiyo!
109	Government agent	155	Mage devi Rajjuruwo!
110	Grama Sevaka	156	mahaththaya, mahattaya
111	green banana	157	make a vow to God Saman
112	green chillies	158	Maldive fish
113	grinding stone	159	malefic planets
114	gunny bag	160	malliye
115	hal pittu	161	mantra
116	hal pulp	162	matching horoscope
117	Hearth	163	medicinal plants
118	heaty food	164	milk rice, milk-rice
119	heen bovitiya	165	month
120	herbal decoction	166	mudalali
121	herbal mixture	167	munguli
122	herbal porridge	168	nanda
123	his time is bad	169	nearby estate (WO)
124	honey bangles	170	nearby house
125	Hoppers	171	next door neighbour
126	Hotel	172	Nirmala akka
127	I tied a coin	173	no medicine for foolishness
128	ice water	174	old arrack
129	ironwood tree	175	ordinary level
130	iskole lamaya	176	orphan girl
131	jack trees, jak trees	177	our children's father
132	jam bottle	178	our village (gama)

179	out-of-caste marriage	220	she charmed x
180	paddy field	221	she-devil
181	paper man	222	soft drinks
182	patties	223	Sprats
183	pilgrim's rest	224	stomach pain
184	pol sambol (13 uses, first one with')	225	stone grinder
185	Poya full moon day	226	street sweeping woman
186	prostrate (v worship)	227	string hoppers
187	Punchi Rajjuruwo	228	tea kiosk
188	putha	229	Teashop
189	puwalu	230	Temple
190	rajjuruwo	231	temple compound
191	ralahami bappé	232	Thathi
192	rambutang	233	There is no medicine for foolishness
193	red betel spittle	234	three credits
194	red onions	235	Toddy
195	red rice	236	Treacle
196	register your name	237	Tuna
197	remote villages	238	vali thalapa, veli thalapa
198	rice ration books	239	vathu bappé
199	rolls	240	veda atha
200	roti	241	veda mahaththaya
201	rubber estate	242	veda mama
202	rubber plots	243	veda uncle
203	sacred city	244	Veddah
204	sacrificed a lot (tr)	245	Verandah
205	Sambol	246	village woman
206	Sambur	247	wattle and daub
207	sandslide relief	248	western drugs
208	Sardines	249	western food
209	Saree	250	What and what things have happened here?
210	sauw dodol	251	when my father was living
211	Savandara	252	white sand rice
212	savandara roots	253	wooden mortar and pestle
213	school hostel	254	woven coconut branches
214	Seer	255	yellow sambol
215	servant girl	256	you will gain merit for this good deed!
216	servant woman		
217	Seven gods!		
218	Seventh day almsgiving		
219	Seventh house		