

Ibrahim, Rukshaan
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Political Implications in the Standardization of Language

Rukshaan Ibrahim, English Language Teaching Unit, University of Peradeniya

The standardization of language is a political process that takes control subtly and exercises dominance. Standardization of language is established using processes related to human experiences. Standardization creates a 'self' and an 'other' and defines/ prescribes elements that can be identified with the 'self', which in return marginalizes the 'other'. Also 'the other' is defined using the parameters endorsed and accepted by the 'self'. Thus, there is no isolated existence of an 'other' devoid of a 'self'.

Standardization of language is not an isolated process that is confined to a linguistic categorization of a 'formal', 'accepted' version of a language. Instead, this validation or acceptance of a variety as 'the standard' has an influence on other aspects class, gender, and ethnicity. As language plays a very important role in creating human reality and experiences, standardization of a particular variety of language can play a prescriptive role, as it tends to advocate the norms of the 'self'.

This prescriptive nature of the language is clearly seen in the definitions provided in the structure of language: In morphology, the word formation process of a standard variety is categorized and defined. In syntax, the 'correct' formation of a 'proper' sentence is given, while in phonology, the proper occurrence of sound systems is presented. These definitions tend to be prescriptive as they are taken as a norm. If one has to study other variations, it has to be done relatively as the formal variety plays the role of a model or a 'given' entity. Thus, in a context of language teaching, the presence of a standard variety is inevitable. Yet, in prescribing a language variety for teaching, it is important to study the politics of a standard variety as well as its linguistic features.