Debating *Meaning* as blurring boundaries kaleidoscopes birth…
Codeswitching : Sinhala (s) : Sri Lankan Englishes : Music !!

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Widespread multilingualism, a defining feature of Sri Lanka's linguistic milieu, forms the underlying source of my doctoral research involving a novel interdisciplinary focus on an emergent genre of Sri Lankan contemporary song. These songs are characterised by 'texts' ostensibly representative of Sinhala /English codeswitching (CS) and/or 'varieties' of Sinhala and local English (termed 'Sri Lankan Englishes'). A myriad of distinctive linguistic patternings absent in 'normative' non/textual Sri Lankan discourse further distinguish these texts.

Semantically, however, evidence from a recent case study that I conducted on a select sample of the corpus demonstrates that these 'multi-category' texts appear analogous to dynamic yet entirely cohesive systems eliciting unique semantic manifestations unavailable within the individual domains of the various categories (i.e. CS, Sinhala(s), Sri Lankan Englishes etc) that source them. Crucially, the texts undergo further semantic alteration when juxtaposed with their musical/'non-linguistic' counterparts. The musical components, themselves conglomerates of varying 'notational schema', also display an inextricable structural reliance on their respective textual siblings. Specifically, these multiple dependencies realize a form of bi-directional yoking within and between the linguistic and non-linguistic attributes that comprise the songs/systems: the cumulative blends of 'meaning' generated thereby, rendering each individual 'song' a dynamic yet cohesive systematically structured semantic network.

The study further illustrates the inadequacy of prevailing theoretical perspectives both linguistic and non-linguistic for purposes of providing a comprehensive representation of the semantic bi-directionality that define these 'systems' instead predicting the need for an alternative analytical focus tailored to represent the dynamic interplay between all the individual attributes that variously merge and evolve to inform the respective semantic fields of these systems. Consequently, the objective of my doctoral research concerns the formulation of an analytical paradigm capable of articulating the dialogue between these linguistic *and* non-linguistic elements in terms of their collaborative semantic output. A re-evaluation of such concepts as CS and language 'varieties' inevitably implicated within this epistemological context will parallel the process.

In this presentation, following a brief introductory overview of Sri Lanka's linguistic milieu relevant to the context of my research, I will list some salient features that define the context and distinguish it as a 'genre'. Drawing on evidence from the case study referred to above, the locus of the presentation will involve a discussion of some 'sites' of semantic mergers; 'sites' that illustrate why prevailing theoretical perspectives both linguistic and non-linguistic are incapable of representing the semantic bi-directionality of these 'systems' and which evince the need for an alternative analytical vision capable of doing so. I will also comment briefly on some related epistemological implications that such an orientation is likely to entail

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Preferred method of presentation – Paper

Technical support required – Power-point