

Division of Gender Roles and Responsibilities in the Register of Contemporary Sinhala Newspapers

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The term 'Gender role' refers to how men and women play distinctive roles based on their gender in the society. Social scientists such as Kargan and Kimmel assert that children are assigned to different gender roles and are socialized to conform to certain gender roles based on their biological sex. Differences in gender roles can be seen all over the world. Commonly, female roles can be identified as the girl, fiancée, house wife, mother etc. and male roles as the boy, fiancé, breadwinner, father etc. Different cultures impose different expectations and responsibilities upon men and women who live in that society. The connection between language and society is tightly anchored and language is one of the most powerful emblems of social behavior. Social customs and attitudes are mainly transmitted through language. Therefore sociolinguists argue that socially constructed gender roles are inscribed in the language. This argument is further explained in the concept of language socialization and this observation will be placed in that conceptual background. According to Wood (2005), newspapers empower human attitudes. The register of newspapers has been selected as the sample of this observation and this study attempts to observe whether the register of contemporary Sinhala newspapers contributes to carry forward traditional gender roles and responsibilities in society and if so how it happens. In addition, the research attempts to find out what kind of linguistic strategies are used to sustain ideology. *Lankadeepa* (Friday), *Tharunaya* (Saturday), *Divaina* (Sunday) and *Sirikatha* (Monday) newspapers published in 2014-2015 have been selected as the sample of this research. As the study is mainly based on primary data on the register of contemporary Sinhala newspapers, it is expected that the findings will contribute new knowledge to the field of sociolinguistics and will reveal a new aspect on current Sinhala newspaper register and its influence on gender roles in contemporary Sinhala society.

Keywords: Gender roles and responsibilities, Register of Sinhala newspaper, Language socialization