

## **Factors to Consider: Promoting Speaking Competence of National Languages of Sri Lanka**

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### **Abstract**

The language factor is known to be a critical aspect in ethnocentric conflicts. Therefore, language barrier is a national-level problem in Sri Lanka regarding intercultural communication and understanding. The purpose and objective of this research is to identify the barriers to verbal communication between two national languages of Sri Lanka, Sinhala and Tamil. This study determines to find suggestions to improve harmonious co-existence among ethnicities and to increase the intercultural understanding for peaceful reconciliation in Sri Lanka. The interviewee of the study are 10 intellectuals representing prestigious government institutes, which are the Ministry of Education, Sri Lanka Police and Sri Lanka Army and Non-Governmental organizations, such as Turkish Red Crescent Society. The sample was collected from four districts, which included the representation of the highest density of the multi-ethnic community in Sri Lanka in which urban, rural and estate representation was considered. The findings of the study were elaborated through educational, political, cultural and career aspects based on interviewee responses. The main suggestions derived through the findings are conducting mandatory language competencies following the implementation of Trilingual policy of Sri Lanka for primary and secondary education to build intercultural communication. Finally, to strengthen the Sinhala and Tamil language learning as ability to gain promotion, adding salary bonuses and incentives, considering national language skills for promotions and offering special recognitions towards the employees who are competent in both national languages are identified as motivative factors for employees to improve their second national language speaking competency and other objectives.

**Keywords:** *Speaking competency, National languages, Education, Harmonious coexistence, Reconciliation in Sri Lanka*